

**“The grass must bend, when the wind blows across it”:
British Colonial Hong Kong’s Education Policies
and Its People’s Response, 1967-1978**

Zhelun Zhou
History
Colgate University
13 Oak Drive
Hamilton, New York 13346 USA

Faculty Advisor: Professor Ray Douglas

Abstract

This paper analyzes the primary concerns that British officials had when implementing education policies in colonial Hong Kong from 1967 to 1978 and analyzes the Hong Kong public’s responses to these initiatives, particularly in relation to their contested sense of collective identity. This project engages both the historiography of Hong Kong education policy and the historiography of Hong Kong identity. The former historiography is divided into two camps. Scholars including Anthony Sweeting, Edward Vickers, Paul Morris and Flora L.F. Kan suggest that Hong Kong education policy from 1967 to 1978 was largely shaped by collaboration between the government and the Hong Kongese as well as the government’s long-term vision of planning. Other scholars, like Ian Scott, Mark Hampton, Bernard Hung-Kay Luk, and Christopher Sutton, contend that Hong Kong education policy was deeply politicized. These scholars have argued that it focused more on crisis intervention than long-term planning and served as a public relations campaign to consolidate the government’s legitimacy. In the conventional historiography of Hong Kong identity, the Hong Kongese of the 1970s combined pan-Chinese cultural identity with a refusal to Communist China. More recent scholarship on Hong Kong identity instead emphasizes college students’ acceptance of Communist ideology and the idea of a “China Nation,” which students have employed to criticize Hong Kong’s social structures. Through archival research on the 1970 Chinese Language Movement from the Hong Kong Public Records Office, this paper demonstrates that the Hong Kong government’s education policy from 1967 to 1978 was self-serving, and that the public discussion of Hong Kong identity was more polyphonic than previous scholarship has found.

Keywords: Hong Kong, History, Education Policies, Identity

1. Introduction

Historically, the question of Hong Kong education policy has been a contentious and multilayered one. In the midst of the 2019 Anti-Extradition Bill protests, former Hong Kong Chief Executive Tung Chee Hwa criticized the Hong Kong liberal studies as the main cause of the ongoing protests.¹ Hong Kong education officials and newspaper editors rebutted Tung’s claim by suggesting that college liberal studies and college curriculum were not the “motive force” behind the protests.² The *South China Morning Post*, Hong Kong’s leading English-language daily newspaper, took pains to draw comparisons between the ongoing Anti-Extradition Bill protests and other national protests, partly defending the Hong Kong anti-extradition manifestations in Hong Kong while invoking the “rich history of protests” in Asia.³ This invocation reveals the connection between Hong Kong education policy and Hong Kong protests.

During the colonial era of the 1970s, public discussion of education policy could also result in protests. On February 17, 1978, students of the Hong Kong Baptist College burned a paper effigy named the “Green Paper Monster,” satirizing the Hong Kong colonial government’s recently released Education Policy Green Paper. During a two-hour

“carnival,” between 1,900 and 2,000 student participants engaged in “ritual burning” to voice their dissatisfaction with the Green Paper proposals. They thought these proposals over-emphasized technical studies “at the expense of their liberal education.” The students did not advocate for an outright rejection of technical education’s promotion, however, as they recognized that Hong Kong was an industrial city. Rather, they criticized the government’s lack of concern for liberal arts colleges, such as the Hong Kong Baptist College. The government’s emphasis on technical education to cater to the industrial demand for skilled laborers caused student protesters to worry that the aim of education was to turn them into “blocks and blocks of machines” once they joined the workforce.⁴

This sensational event should not be regarded as an isolated incident. The faculty and administration of the Baptist College, including its President, Dr. Daniel C. W. Tse, and its Dean of the Social Sciences Faculty and Head of the Communication Department, Chang Kuo-sin, demonstrated their frustration with the Green Paper. They found that it did not accord with the respect that the students and alumni of their college deserved. Further, they believed that the Green Paper revealed the government’s discrimination against post-secondary colleges like theirs since it failed to recognize the academic standards and reputation of the college.⁵ In December 1977, Baptist College students and faculty - more than 2,300 of them - organized protests against this perceived discrimination by the government; on one occasion Chang Kuo-sin seemed to suggest the idea of burning the Green Paper.⁶ Therefore, the “carnival” on February 27, 1978 should not be seen as a discrete event; instead, it should be considered. In conjunction with the activism of the Baptist College in late 1977, a continuous protest against the government’s education policy.

The polemics of liberal studies in 2019 and the protests against the Education Policy Green Paper in 1978, though not perfectly parallel, demonstrate that the discussion of education policy is tied up with identity and Hong Kong government’s legitimacy. And both caused the Hong Kong government to reassert and negotiate its legitimacy. The conflicting narratives between Hong Kong government and the public produced debate. Lastly, as Hong Kong remained a British colony throughout the 1970s, studying the discussion of education policy through the statements and silence of Hong Kongese can help us comprehend how they think about decolonization.

This paper analyzes Hong Kong education policy from 1967 to 1978 through the Making Chinese Language Official Movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Using archival documents from the Public Record Office, Hong Kong, I focus on the perspectives of Hong Kongese’s responses. Presented by students, workers, anonymous correspondents and Hong Kong elites, these responses focus on education policy with an emphasis on their identities. I equally scrutinize the government’s reactions to these statements as attempts to reassert its legitimacy. I aim to uncover various Hong Kong people’s ways of grasping their identity – whether ethical, cultural, civil, international or political – from a polyphony of their voices. I chose the timeframe of 1967 to 1978 because education policy in Hong Kong during this time was bookended by two protests: the 1967 leftist workers’ riots and the 1978 disturbance at the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School. An abundance of documents on education policy were produced between these events.⁷

Employing the case of the Making Chinese Language Official Movement, this paper argues that from 1967 to 1978 the Hong Kong education policy became a way to solicit government support from the public. The Hong Kong government cared most about its present legitimacy and public image when framing education policy, but some efforts were made for its long-term planning. Officials were obsessed with gauging public opinion on education policy. The government also tried, sometimes using police forces, to neutralize dissident movements related to education policy. Its discussion reflected a change in Hong Kongese’s vision of their collective identity, whether cultural, civil, or political, through a polyphony of voices. Hong Kongese voices at once called for universal human rights, appealed to concepts of citizenship, and pursued an anti-colonialist and quasi-nationalist agenda on the one hand, and advocated for a liberal identity on the other. At the same time, there was a general silence on decolonization in the education-policy debates. Taken as a whole, the Hong Kong government’s concern with education policy and the Hong Kongese’s vision offer a case study of incomplete decolonization. This paper sheds new light on the history of Hong Kong education policy by concentrating on the diverse visions of identity held by Hong Kongese in the examined period, the Hong Kong government’s response, and the language movement’s subsequent impact on education policy.⁸ This paper also contributes to the histories of Hong Kong, Hong Kong education policy, Hong Kong identity and decolonization by engaging with previous scholarship.⁹

A brief historical context of postwar Hong Kong and its education sector is necessary here. During the late 1960s and 1970s, Hong Kong remained a colony that was “ruled by a bureaucratic oligarchy which had no constitutional responsibility to the people of Hong Kong.”¹⁰ Education was a key field for the Hong Kong authorities to counter potential political influences and infiltrations in the schools from both mainland China and Taiwan during that time.¹¹ Not only was education being used by the Hong Kong government to fend off political infiltration, but it was already being employed by the government to create an identity of abstract “Chineseness” through its curriculum.¹² With a large flow of immigration from mainland China and Hong Kong’s economic take-off since 1957, the Hong Kong government catered to the greater demand of education by releasing several education policy papers, including the

1965 Education Policy White Paper, the 1974 Education Policy Green Paper, the 1977 Education Policy White Paper, and the 1978 Education Policy Green Paper.¹³ Meanwhile, the government slowly adopted TV programs from Great Britain to offer Education Television Broadcasts (E-TV) for students.¹⁴ Concurrently, grassroots groups such as the Education Action Group (EAG), local Hong Kong élites, Hong Kong high school and college students as well as other bodies also voiced their opinions on education policy.

Yet Hong Kong in the 1960s and 1970s was also living under a turbulent social context. Influenced and haunted by the growing upsurge of protests organized by European and American students during this time, the bloodletting events and chaotic movement of the Cultural Revolution in China, Hong Kong faced its own radical protests.¹⁵ These protests included the 1966 Star Ferry Riots and the 1967 Leftist Workers' Riots. The 1966 Star Ferry Riots started when workers protested the increase of fares proposed by the Star Ferry Company. The 1967 riots were much more complicated. They reflected the tense political climate of Hong Kong society. These riots were organized by pro-Communist labor unionists and the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions, which held ties with Beijing. They initially broke out in May at an artificial-flower production factory. Soon after, more violent acts were carried out by leftist workers and students, including protests, parades and the construction and detonation of home-made bombs, some of which were produced in schools. The riots, in their more mature form, became demonstrations against British colonial rule. They were terminated after the Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai called upon the leftist groups to stop bombing.¹⁶ Those protests raised the Hong Kong government's anxiety about popular support and alarmed of the possible scale of public discontent.¹⁷ With such governmental measures like the creation of a cadre of City District Officers (CDOs) and more implementation of administrative reforms and social reforms such as affordable housing, restoring legitimacy remained the Hong Kong government's goal throughout the "Long 1970s."¹⁸

2. Facing The Chinese Language Movement

Some of the first demands to establish Chinese as an official language came in 1966 to 1967. Among the pioneers was Mrs. Elsie Elliott, and English-born Hong Kong social activist and an elected member of the Urban Council from 1963 to 1995. In her 1966 speech to the Urban Council (UC) Annual Conventional Debate, she called upon the government to respect the permanent residents inasmuch as more than 90% of the population was Chinese.¹⁹ Believing that Hong Kong residents had citizen rights, Elliott urged the introduction of the Chinese language "either as the official language or as equal with English."²⁰ Her idea was soon echoed by the student unions at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and two anonymous correspondents who wrote to the *Hong Kong Standard* to appeal for making Chinese language official as the young people were increasingly conscious of their basic rights to equality and free expression, inviting officials to make real reforms.²¹

The first rebuttal of those appeals did not come from Hong Kong top officials, but rather appeared in newspaper columns. An article entitled "On Speaking English" in the *South China Morning Post* countered that as Hong Kong remains an international community for its export business, English should remain to be the dominant language used in conduct of business. The author elevated the international identity of Hong Kong and rejected the appeal of making the Chinese official. Furthermore, by evoking the phrase "nationalist sentiments" in the article, the author may have been reminding his readers of the 1967 Workers' Riots and the turmoil that has resulted from.²² This view was soon to be challenged three days later in the same newspaper by correspondent Tien-chi Chester Chow. Chow asserted that introducing bi-lingualism would not discourage the learning of English and that every community has its right to find its expression in the most fitting and natural way. He undermined the allegation of "nationalist sentiment" phrase by declaring that in Hong Kong "a very large Chinese community is a fact."²³ Chow cited Switzerland and its use of four official languages as a good example for Hong Kong to imitate.²⁴ The language debate intensified as Denny M. H. Huang, a medical doctor and an Urban Councillor, asserted that official-language status for Chinese was "the aspiration of the majority of the citizens in the colony."²⁵ Similarly, a young woman named Hannah Hung equally demanded the government take the matter of official language in their hands, since the year was 1967, not 1867, and Hong Kong people only modestly asked for an "reform under the rule of [the] British," instead of the self-government that the United Kingdom conceded to the other former colonies.²⁶ She called the government to pay more attention to address Hong Kong youth's sense of belonging to Hong Kong, fearing further dire social consequences.²⁷ Hung's statement demonstrated the constraints under which many Chinese language advocates were operating: they wanted more reform, but the reform had to be carried out under British rule. The reason was that in 1967, a majority of the Hong Kongese were appalled by the spectacle of the Cultural Revolution in China. Already distrustful and skeptical of the CCP, the majority looked to the Hong Kong government instead as a guarantor against similar chaos.²⁸ Whereas young people like Hung might be anti-colonial, they did not dare to raise the idea of de-colonization and self-

government explicitly. Hung's similar concern was expressed by another anonymous correspondent Potato Hawker as well, who criticized Huang's statement and warned the potential danger of Hong Kong becoming an "appendage of Communist China." He advocated for Hong Kong to form its own tradition, its own independent army and preferred Cantonese over Mandarin Chinese, so that they could defeat Communist propaganda, curtail political corruption, and enhance Hong Kongese's sense of belonging.²⁹ Echoed by many other following correspondents, Potato Hawker represents a localist stance on the Chinese language issue. Yet the likes of Potato Hawker failed to address the issue of governance. Many questions can be raised from their reports. Did they believe that a strong Hong Kong identity was compatible with continued British colonial status? Were they envisioning the colony becoming a self-governing sovereign state, as Singapore had done years earlier? Or were they looking toward a hybrid solution? Without any specific reference, those questions remain unasked and unanswered.

The debates on Chinese language gained further momentum in 1968, as more students, intellectuals, and local educationists participated in the debates and raised the more practical issues such as translation in the debate.³⁰ While debating, the students unions at the Chinese University of Hong Kong tried to avoid the accusation of "nationalist," a term that means accepting Communist ideology in China.³¹ Just the same, in 1969 and 1970 the question became a full-fledged cause célèbre, as many Urban Council and Legislative Council members weighed in the debates, mostly in approval of making Chinese an official language.³² One particular view was from urban councilor Henry H. L. Hu's speech at the Urban Council. Criticizing Hong Kong government's reluctance to promote democracy and adopt any necessary reforms, Hu appealed to Hong Kong government to provide a future for the Hong Kong youth by giving Chinese the same status as English as an official language and enlarging voting rights, so that a licensed hawkler or a resettlement resident could both be eligible to vote.³³ Hu's proposal of language was an anti-colonial one, yet it also aimed at self-government.

Discussions of Chinese language question tied further with a vision of Hong Kong identity in 1969. Local leaders such as Yan Chi-kit, a leader of the Kaifong association (街坊会), a traditional welfare association that emerged in Hong Kong after the Second World War, and David Lai, Commissioner of Kowloon City District, advocated for Chinese language with a position of cultural-nationalist in connecting the issue to Hong Kong identity.³⁴ Their views are equally challenged in the debates by two voices. The first voice claimed that as long as Hong Kong was a British colony, it "pays to be Europeanized," making Hong Kong identity a cosmopolitan and colonial hybrid.³⁵ Another voice, exemplified by Pauline Loong's column, an op-ed columnist at *South China Morning Post*, responded Lai's claim with the words that Hong Kongese were "*Hongkong[ers] by birth, Chinese by race, hybrid by upbringing, and British subject citizen[s] of the United Kingdom and the Colonies by passport,*" demonstrating her pessimism, frustration over the complexity and poignancy of the debate of Hong Kongese's identity and the language issue.³⁶

By 1970, fed up with what they believed as "delay tactics," the Hong Kong students became impatient with government's inactions, while the Society for Promotion of Chinese Education, a cultural group formed in October 1969 with its first membership from the education sector, created a special committee to persuade the government to promote Chinese language as an official language.³⁷ Some twenty organizations, grew tired of all those discussions, resorted to jointly formed the "Old Hong Kong Working Group to Promote Chinese as an Official Language," and elected Dr. Denny M. H. Huang as their Chairman. The Working Party approached U Thant, the then United Nations Secretary-General, for advice on how to ensure the adoption of Chinese as an official language and examples from Singapore, Switzerland, and Canada for reference.³⁸ The Working Party attempted to publicize the debates of Chinese language to a much wider international audience.³⁹

The tipping-point of Chinese language debate came on August 19, 1970 after Acting Colonial Secretary David Ronald Holmes's speech at the Legislative Council. Holmes was replying to unofficial member Q. W. Lee's questions about government's intentions. In his response, Holmes saw no need to register Chinese language as an "official language," and claimed not to understand the meaning of this term.⁴⁰ His response was so poor-received that newspaper reviews not only criticized him, but took it upon themselves to educate him as to what the term "official language" meant.⁴¹ For their part, the student groups decided to escalate their activities, sending representatives to the UK government to press their cause and continuing to organize at home. The fact that the united student front of 1967 had broken down, however, lessened the impact of these campus-based protests.⁴² The opponent of the Chinese language movement worried that the introduction of Chinese language as official language would reduce the use of English and cut off Hong Kong from the rest of the world. Unfazed, Dr. Huang announced his intention of gathering 500,000 signatures for a language-reform petition. He drew particular attention to the support that the movement was receiving, both locally, and in the case of American and Canadian students, internationally.⁴³ Amidst the current, the Hong Kong government didn't remain idle. It relied on its commission officers to file regular reports, so that the top administrations can follow the media reports (especially the communist ones) and some officials also conducted internal survey to analyze the language movement.⁴⁴ On the basis of these reports, the Secretary for Home Affairs, Denis Bray, composed a "Town Talk" document, which was circulated among senior officials on August 27, 1970,

and a memorandum for the Hong Kong Colonial Secretary a week later. In the two documents, Bray pointed out that most active and conscious participants in the movement were Chinese college students at the CUHK, who perhaps felt and suffered from language inequalities the most. He equally highlighted the support of movement from the community leaders of Kaifong Associations. He expressed concerns about possible political connection the language movement might have with Taiwan and Kuomintang agendas, or with any left-wing political influence exercised by the local communists. Bray echoed the City District Officers' advice to implement more simultaneous interpretation, claiming that the government would outdo Singapore in this field. He concluded the problems of language policy were caused by the government's miscommunications. He was unsparing in his criticism of militant organizations like the Campaigns for Chinese as an Official Language, established in June 1970 as the "CCOL," and activists like Dr. Huang. Both, he alleged, were evasive and doctrinaire.⁴⁵ Seemingly in response, the government finally decided to set up a language committee to investigate the issues of language policy on September 18, 1970, exactly one month after Mr. Holmes' statements in the August 19 Legislative Council meeting.⁴⁶ The committee was chaired by Sir Fung Ping-fan, a prominent Hong Kong politician and the then unofficial member of the Executive Council from 1962 to 1972. The committee's mandate was to examine the official usage of Chinese. While the establishment of a committee can be seen as a stratagem to play for time and lower the rhetorical temperature, the appointment of Sir Fung Ping-fan was broadly popular and earned the Hong Kong government some much-needed good public-relations benefits among the public at large.⁴⁷

Nonetheless, the growing militancy among the language movement activists made it clear that they did not intend to be placated. The CCOL, along with the Working Party led by Dr. Huang and student unions, escalated the intensity of their activism. They began distributing T-shirts and dispatched letters to then U.K. Prime Minister Ted Heath and Minister of Foreign and Commonwealth Office Anthony Royle for help. They composed their own companying song, pursued their petition drive, and organized more large-scale sit-ins and protests in the streets to attract the participants among foreign visitors.⁴⁸ Not all of their activism bore fruit, however. The participants were restrained by the police during their protests, suspected by the other Hong Kong residents over their political motivations and the potentiality of social chaos.⁴⁹ Meanwhile, the international community, though sporadically interested in the language movement, did not provide any substantial support. No official statement from the UK, the US, or the UN in support of the movement was ever received. While police restrictions on protest and public assembly curtailed some of the language campaign's activities and illustrated the very real limitations on the Hong Kong people's democratic rights that existed, there was little to indicate that the question stood high on most citizens' list of priorities.

While there was no substantial support from the international community, the Hong Kong government still seemed anxious over the threat may be posed by the CCOL and the language movement. On October 15, 1970, the Special Branch of the Royal Hong Kong Police composed a report on the actions of the CCOL participants.⁵⁰ Evaluating that the CCOL posed a minimal security threat, the report, nonetheless, came up with several counter-measures to take against the CCOL, including "legal action," "deportation," "black propaganda," and "harassment by officials."⁵¹ The report also documented extensive details on the CCOL student leaders' biographical information.⁵² Considering that in the 1970s the Hong Kong government spied on the local education pressure groups such as the Education Action Group (EAG) as well, the report on the CCOL is a telling example of how much surveillance the Hong Kong government considered it necessary to conduct. It reflects Hong Kong colonial officials' concern about legitimacy, as they employed heavy-handed and under-handed measures to stalk the CCOL.⁵³ Not all of this represented official paranoia. Some student protesters did indeed regard their language campaign as part of a broad "Cultural Revolution" under way since the turn of the twentieth century and viewed themselves as spiritual inheritors of the 1919 May Fourth Movement, an anti-imperialist, cultural and political movement initiated by Chinese students.⁵⁴

Eventually, the Hong Kong government did move to make Chinese an official language with equal status to English in 1974, though not always identical in their usage of official communications.⁵⁵ The simultaneous translation was introduced at meetings of both the Legislative and the Executive Councils. A new language official was also appointed to supervise those processes and to arrange the translation of legal and other technical official documents from English to Chinese.⁵⁶ The Education Department issued a new Education Policy Green Paper, submitted at the Legislative Council in October 1974. The paper stated that it was the school authority's individual choice to decide which language of instruction to use, so long as existing teaching standards of both English and Chinese were maintained.⁵⁷ On the one hand, Hong Kong's language policy in education reflected officials' perspectives and priorities. Faced with those language protests and groups such as the CCOL, the government thought first of how to contain and isolate them, not of listening to and considering their suggestion. This tendency reflected the government's concern about securing its legitimacy in the face of public discontent and containing any potential civil unrest. On the other hand, The Hong Kongese's discussions in the language movement subsequently informed their debates of education policy. By debating the language issue vehemently, the activists of the Chinese Language Movement became involved with the debates over education issues such as language instruction, the teaching of English and Chinese in schools. Those

issues were no trivial matters; they would impact the Hong Kong students' learning experience and their future. By making those demands via the movement, the activists thus requested the colonial government to make an amendment in education policy. With the 1974 Education Policy Green Paper, it seemed that the officials slowly adjusted to activists' concerns stemmed from the language policy.

Moreover, the language movement equally provided a lens through which to understand Hong Kongers' visions of identity. Some citizens wanted to make the Chinese language official as a component of their right to free expression. Others rejected the entire idea, wishing to preserve Hong Kong's image as an international community. Anti-colonialism underlay many activists' engagement with the question. There were those who wished to cultivate Hong Kongese's "sense of belonging," though this would manifest itself in the form of enthusiasm for Cantonese rather than Mandarin. Advocates of language reform who valued closer contacts with the mainland drew on cultural nationalism. So too did campaigners who saw the Chinese language as a way to achieve self-government for the colony. Lastly, pessimists considered any attempts to make Chinese an official language futile. Those different perceptions of identity competed against each other. They revealed a lack of consensus among the Hong Kongers on defining their collective identity.

3. Conclusion

This study of the Chinese Language Movement reveals that it was a story involving the Hong Kong government, the people of Hong Kong, and British colonial officials to a great extent. Placed under the larger periodization of 1967 to 1978, it illuminates that education is not a neutral social service, as policy was highly contested by different agencies. The contrasting voices at that time reflected the Hong Kongese's insecurity and anxiety over their future. The clashes over education policy show that Hong Kong, a British Crown Colony, never undertook a complete and thorough de-colonization process, even though the voices of anti-colonialism and appeals to liberal citizenship and universal human rights are frequently heard among the Hong Kong public. The excessive obsession with extracting public information and policing activism reveals that the government didn't pay much attention to planning education policy long-term; instead, they still placed most of their emphasis on crisis-intervention, as the officials tirelessly inspected the language movement activists, and deterred any criticisms from the grassroots groups. Crisis-management remained the key orientation of the government's education policy.

At the same time, the language movement illustrates that the Hong Kong collective identity was fractured and fragmented. The Hong Kong public placed much faith in international support for its movement. This faith demonstrates Hong Kongese's insecurity, anxiety and frustration. Moreover, the Hong Kong people's debate over education policy, specifically the Chinese language movement, was a manifestation of political scientist Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined community," as the activists were consciously promoting Chinese language as an official language to construct a popular Hong Kong identity with a shared language and a shared culture.⁵⁸

Yet it is equally noticeable from the examined archival documents that there was a lack of any radical reform plan and an overall lack of parents' voice in the education debate. The reasons, as I speculate here, can be multifaceted. As the Cultural Revolution raged on in mainland China, with the chaos bred by the 1967 workers' riots still fresh in their memory, and possibly aware of the nearby gory and shocking Vietnam War, the Hong Kong people, generally socially conservative in their outlook and valuing the Confucian moral code, desired nothing but social stability, even though they welcome any positive changes in the education policy.⁵⁹ Similarly, any discussion of de-colonization was missing from the documents. The Hong Kongese, whether élites or the grassroots, never openly raised the issue of de-colonization in their speeches. One possible way to interpret this is to employ Sherlock Holmes's expression that "the dog did not bark in the night-time," as Hong Kongese still favored the material affluence and relative social stability under Hong Kong colonial rule.⁶⁰ In the end, the story of Hong Kong education policy from 1967 to 1978 is really a case of incomplete and non-existent decolonization. The Hong Kong people were ambiguous in their demands for democracy and self-government, while the government brushed those appeals aside and remained indifferent. This case thus conveys that the Hong Kong people have never been given the opportunity to grasp their future in their own hands. This non-existent decolonization is still embedded in today's Hong Kong, as mainland Chinese and the Hong Kong people are at another crossroads marked by distrust and misunderstanding.

4. Acknowledgment

I am grateful for the help of many people in completing this research, as it was not a one-man journey. I want to thank

my honor thesis director and first thesis reader Professor Douglas, second thesis reader Professor David Robinson, my Lampert Faculty Supervisor and London Study Group director Professor Alexander (Xan) Karn, my Academic Advisors Professor Heather Roller and Professor Brenton Sullivan, as well as many other professors who supported me along the way. Similarly, my heartfelt thanks to both the History and Religion Departments, for they are “home away home” at Colgate. I thank my friends for their support, especially my friends Anna, Kate, Neil, Yuexi, Sihan, Sahil, Joakim, and also Shelley. Lastly, I thank my parents, for their love and support.

5. Endnotes

1 Jeffie Lam and Peace Chiu, “Former Hong Kong Leader Tung Chee-hwa Blames Liberal Studies at Secondary Schools for Encouraging Violent Protests among Young People,” *South China Morning Post*, July 3, 2019, <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3017180/former-hong-kong-leader-tung-chee-hwa-blames-liberal>.

2 Henry Kwok, “Don’t Blame Liberal Studies for Hong Kong’s Political Crisis — Taught Well, the Subject could actually Help Defuse Extremism,” *South China Morning Post*, July 9, 2019, <https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3017539/dont-blame-liberal-studies-hong-kongs-political-crisis-taught-well>; “Letters: No, Hong Kong’s Problem Were Not Created by Liberal Studies: But Unaccountable Officials May Have Played a Role,” *South China Morning Post*, July 9, 2019, <https://www.scmp.com/comment/letters/article/3017693/no-hong-kongs-problems-were-not-created-liberal-studies>.

3 John Power and Crystal Tai, “It’s not just Hong Kong, Asia Has a Rich History of Protests: Here are 5,” *South China Morning Post*, June 22, 2019, <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3015616/its-not-just-hong-kong-asia-has-rich-history-protests-here-are-5>.

4 The Gist, “Green Paper Burned,” February 17, 1978; *South China Morning Post*, “Students Burn ‘Green Paper,’ February 17, 1978. The Hong Kong Education Policy Green Paper can be accessed from the online archive of Hong Kong Education Department Bureau. URL: https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/about-edb/publications-the-studentstat/major-reports/secter_e.pdf (accessed on June 25, 2019).

5 Daniel C. W. Tse, “Draft Proposal on Post-Secondary Education,” November 24, 1977, Hong Kong Record Series (hereafter HKRS) 457-3-132, Hong Kong Public Records Office (hereafter HKPRO); Daniel C. W. Tse, “Comments on the Green Paper regarding Post-Secondary Colleges,” November 1977, HKRS 457-3-132; Chang Kuo-sin, “The Feeling of Being Left Out in Education Calculations,” *Hong Kong Standard*, December 2, 1977; Tang Kwok Cho, “Green Paper on Education: A Shocker,” *Hong Kong Standard*, December 16, 1977.

6 *South China Morning Post*, “Students See ‘Red’ over Green Paper,” December 20, 1977. It is not clear if the protesters during the 1978 “carnival” borrowed Chang’s idea or not.

7 Anthony Sweeting, *Education in Hong Kong: Visions and Revisions* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 327.

8 See Lam Wai-man, *Understanding the Political Culture of Hong Kong: The Paradox of Activism and Depoliticization* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2004), 121-133.

9 On the historiographical argument of legitimacy, see Ian Scott, *Political Change and the Crisis of Legitimacy in Hong Kong* (London: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), 158-160; Mark Hampton, *Hong Kong and British Culture, 1945-1997* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 25; Bernard Hung-kay Luk, “Chinese Culture in the Hong Kong Curriculum: Heritage and Colonialism,” *Comparative Education Review* 35, no. 4 (November 1991): 650-668; Christopher Sutton, “Britain, the Cold War, and ‘The Importance of Influencing the Young’: A Comparison of Cyprus and Hong Kong,” *Britain and the World* 7, no. 1 (March 2014): 101-108; on the historiographical argument of mutual collaboration, see Flora Kan and Edward Vickers, “One Hong Kong, Two Histories: ‘History’ and ‘Chinese History’ in the Hong Kong School Curriculum,” *Comparative Education* 38, no. 1 (February 2002): 73, 84-86; Anthony Sweeting and Edward Vickers, “On Colonizing ‘Colonialism’: The Discourse of the History of English in Hong Kong,” *World Englishes* (June 2005): 113-130; Anthony Sweeting and Edward Vickers, “Language and the History of Colonial Education: The Case of Hong Kong,” *Modern Asian Studies* 41, no. 1 (January 2007): 1-40; Flora L. F. Kan, *Hong Kong’s Chinese History Curriculum from 1945: Politics and Identity* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007), 3; Sweeting, *Education in Hong Kong, 1941-2001*, 238; Paul Morris and Anthony Sweeting, “Education and Politics: The Case of Hong Kong from an Historical Perspective,” *Oxford Review of Education* 17, no. 3 (1991), 249-258. Sebastian Veg, “The Rise of ‘Localism’ and Civic Identity in Post-Handover Hong Kong: Questioning the Chinese Nation-State,” *The China Quarterly* 230 (June 2017): 325;

Historian Leo Ou-fan Lee (李歐梵) maintains that the question of identity was a “non-issue” for Hong Kongers before the 1970s. Leo Ou-fan Lee, “Postscript: Hong Kong— A Reflective Overview,” *Postcolonial Studies* 10, no. 4 (December 2007): 499. 陳永傑(Danny Chan), “國惑Guohuo,” in 朱耀偉(Dr. Chu Yah-wai Stephen), ed., 香港關鍵詞：想像新未來Xianggang guanjianci: xiangxiang xin weilai (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2019), 149-156. This ambiguity and obscurity of Hong Kong identity perhaps indicated the ambivalence in Hong Kong cultural policy during the colonial era and under Chinese administration. 何建宗(Louis Ho), “模稜兩可 Molengliangke,” in 朱耀偉(Dr. Chu Yah-wai Stephen), ed., 香港關鍵詞Xianggang guanjianci, 103-111. For the recent scholarship on Hong Kong identity, see 梁淑雯 (Leung Shuk Man), ‘國族身分Guozu shenfen,’ in 朱耀偉 (Dr. Chu Yah-wai Stephen), ed., 香港關鍵詞Xianggang guanjianci, 139-148. Siuhan Chan (陳少嫻), “Chinese Nationality and Coloniality of Hong Kong Student Movement, 1960-1970s,” *Asian Journal of Social Science* 46 (2018): 330-358; Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power: The Making of the Hong Kong Chinese* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 1-6. For the traditional historiography of Hong Kong identity, see John M. Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 170-176; Steve Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 190-196. Jan C. Jansen and Jurgen Osterhammel, *Decolonization: A Short History*, trans. Jeremiah Riemer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 6, 9-10, 118; Florence Mok, “Public Opinion Polls and Covert Colonialism in British Hong Kong,” *China Information* 33, no. 1 (March 2019): 80. For scholarship on Hong Kong’s decolonization, see David Faure, *Colonialism and the Hong Kong Mentality* (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press, 2003); James Fellows, “Britain, European Economic Community Enlargement, and ‘Decolonisation’ in Hong Kong, 1967-1973,” *The International History Review* 41, no.4 (July 2019): 753-774; Chi-Kwan Mark, “Lack of Means or Loss of Will? The United Kingdom and the Decolonization of Hong Kong, 1957-1967,” *The International History Review* 31 no. 1 (March 2009): 45-71; Chi-Kwan Mark, “Development without Decolonisation? Hong Kong’s Future and Relations with Britain and China, 1967-1972,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24, series 3, no. 2 (April 2014): 315-335; and Chi-Kwan Mark, “Crisis or Opportunity? Britain, China, and the Decolonization of Hong Kong in the Long 1970s,” in P. Roberts and O. A. Westad, eds., *China, Hong Kong, and the Long 1970s: Global Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 257-277.

10 Anthony Sweeting, “Education Policy in a Time of Transition: The Case of Hong Kong,” *Research Papers in Education* 10, no. 1 (1995): 106. My friend Allan Tak Fung Pang, a history-master degree student at the University of Hong Kong, also points out to me that Hong Kong was not a democratic polity and only gradually received some benefits of democracy after the 1984 Sino-British Declaration. Historian Mark Hampton says that the Colonial Governor during the postwar Hong Kong “enjoyed virtually absolute powers.” See Mark Hampton, “Early Hong Kong Television, 1950s-1970s: Commercialisation, Public Service and Britishness,” *Media History* 17, no. 3 (August 2011): 307.

11 Morris and Sweeting, “Education and Politics,” 252-258; Sutton, “Britain, the Cold War, and ‘the importance of influencing the young,’” 101-106. Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 146-148.

12 Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 148.

13 One recent scholar identifies 1957 as a year of significance for Hong Kong’s later historical trajectory. See 張展鴻 (Sidney C.H. Cheung), “1957,” in 朱耀偉 (Dr. Chu Yah-wai Stephen), ed., 香港關鍵詞Xianggang guanjianci, 69-75; Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 167, 172. For a chronology of government’s education policies during 1965 to 1978, see Sweeting, *Education in Hong Kong*, 251-275.

14 Hampton, “Early Hong Kong Television,” 305-322.

15 David Cauter, *The Year of the Barricades: A Journey Through 1968* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 12-13, 38; Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China and Cuba, 1928-1979* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 206-208; Richard Wolin, *The Wind from the East: French Intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution, and the Legacy of the 1960s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 10-12, 48-56, 193; and Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the United States, c. 1958-c. 1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1-20, 206-208, 802-806. For an authoritative account of China’s Cultural Revolution, see Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao’s Last Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2006).

16 Ian Scott, “Bridging the Gap: Hong Kong’s Senior Civil Servants in the 1966 Riots,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 45, no. 1 (2017): 133-136; on the 1967 leftist workers riots, see Gary Ka-wai Cheng, *Hong Kong’s Watershed: The 1967 Riots* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009).

17 Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 188-190; Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 157-160; Minute by E.B Wigham, Chairman, and S. K. Yeung, Secretary, “Minutes of a Meeting of South District Rural

Committee Charimen [*sic*] with Representatives of the Education Department held at 2.15 p.m. on Wednesday, 4th December, 1968,” 1-2, File 148, HKRS2018-1-1, HKPRO; Scott, “Bridging the Gap,” 132, 140; Philip Snow, *The Fall of Hong Kong: Britain, China and the Japanese Occupation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 324-325.

18 Scott, “Bridging the Gap,” 136-145; Snow, *The Fall of Hong Kong*, 325-326; Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 160-162; Mok, “Public Opinions and Covert Colonialism in British Hong Kong,” 69.

19 To be precise, 98.5% of the Hong Kong population were ethnic Chinese. See “Parliamentary Information—Written Answers to Parliamentary Questions in the House of Commons on 7th December, 1970,” December 16, 1970, Yellow Folder, HKRS 70-3-26-1, HKPRO.

20 Elsie Elliott, “Extract from the speech by Mrs. Elliott at the UC Annual Conventional Debate, 1.12.66,” December 1, 1966, HKRS 70-3-26-2, HKPRO.

21 Tiger Standard, “Tiger Talk-New Year Resolution,” *Hong Kong Standard*, January 1, 1967; Peter Mak, Education Reporter, “Make Chinese Official: Students,” *Hong Kong Standard*, October 31, 1967; LCT, “Make Chinese Official,” *Hong Kong Standard*, November 16, 1967.

22 South China Morning Post, “On Speaking English,” November 18, 1967.

23 Chow Tien-chi Chester, “Response to the Nov. 18 Letter ‘On Speaking English,’” *South China Morning Post*, November 21, 1967.

24 Chow, “Response to the Nov. 18 Letter.”

25 South China Morning Post, “Plea for Chinese as an Official Language,” *South China Morning Post*, November 27, 1967.

26 Hannah Hung, “Must Make Chinese Official,” *China Mail*, November 27, 1967.

27 Hung, “Must Make Chinese Official.”

28 Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 157-158; Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 190.

29 Potato Hawker, “We the People — ‘Sign of Times,’” *Hong Kong Standard*, December 16, 1967.

30 Peter Mak, “Battle over Words,” *Hong Kong Standard*, January 21, 1968; *South China Morning Post*, “Seminar on Language Issue Criticized,” *South China Morning Post*, February 2, 1968; Wong Tak Chuen, “Students’ Seminar on Chinese,” *South China Morning Post*, February 12, 1968; *Hong Kong Standard*, “School Heads Clash on Language in Classes,” *Hong Kong Standard*, February 12, 1968; The STAR, “Elsie Elliott: Make Kuoyu Compulsory,” The STAR, January 27, 1968; H. F. Li, “Official Language,” *South China Morning Post*, February 2, 1968.

31 “Press Statement by Hong Kong University Students’ Union,” March 28, 1971, Yellow Folder, HKRS70-3-26-1, HKPRO.

32 The Hon. P. C. Woo, “Speech by the Hon. P. C. Woo, O. B. E., during the debate on the adjournment of the Legislative Council on 5th February, 1969,” February 5, 1969, Green Folder, HKRS 70-3-26-1, HKPRO; The Hon. G. C. Hamilton, “Speech on the adjournment by the Honourable G. C. Hamilton in Legislative Council on Feb. 5, 1969,” February 5, 1969, Green Folder, HKRS 70-3-26-1, HKPRO.

33 Mr. Henry H. L. Hu, “Urban Council Annual Conventional Debate- Speech by Mr. Henry H. L. Hu,” November 27, 1969, Green Folder, HKRS 70-3-26-1, HKPRO.

34 *South China Morning Post*, “Advice from C. D. O. to Hong Kong Chinese,” *South China Morning Post*, July 4, 1969; The Star, “Use More Chinese — Kaifong Man Hits on Language,” The Star, May 8, 1969.

35 *South China Morning Post*, “The World of the Pseudo-Europeans,” July 4, 1969.

36 Pauline Loong, “The Pauline Loong Column: When is a Chinese not a Chinese,” *South China Morning Post*, July 7, 1969.

37 The Star, “Youth Impatient,” The Star, July 10, 1970; *South China Morning Post*, “New Move to Make Chinese Official Voice,” *South China Morning Post*, July 10, 1970.

38 *South China Morning Post*, “Chinese Official? UN queried on language issue,” *South China Morning Post*, August 12, 1970.

39 Liu Tsun-yan, Professor and Head of the Department of Chinese, Australia National University, to Sir David Trench, Hong Kong Governor, June 8, 1970, Yellow Folder, HKRS70-3-26-1, HKPRO.

40 “Mr. Lee asked if the Government has any intention to use Chinese as an Official Language in due course,” August 19, 1970, Green Folder, HKRS 70-3-26-1; *Hong Kong Hansard*, August 19, 1970. Digitized by the Legislative Council. Accessed on July 24, 2019.

41 Ho Kwai-hua, “The Language Issue,” *South China Morning Post*, August 25, 1970; David Baird, “Talk of the Town,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 27, 1970; Undergrad, “Editorial – Chinese as Official Language: A Reply to Opponents,” Undergrad, September 1, 1970.

42 *South China Morning Post*, “Language Issue: Student’s Plan,” *South China Morning Post*, September 9, 1970;

Peter Mak, "Student Group Split over Language Bid," *Hong Kong Standard*, August 25, 1970.

43 The Star, "Target in Language Campaign – 500,000 Names," *The Star*, August 30, 1970; *The Star*, "Overseas Support – Language Row," *The Star*, September 17, 1970; *South China Morning Post*, "Support from U.S.," *South China Morning Post*, September 15, 1970.

44 James Y. C. So, 'Chinese as an official language,' undated, HKRS 455-4-4, HKPRO; J. W. Hayes to Hon. S. H. A., 'Memo-Chinese as an Official Language,' August 26, 1970, HKRS 455-4-4, HKPRO; James Y. C. So, to CDO (K), September 29, 1970, HKRS 70-3-26-2, HKPRO; 'China Press Review, No. 94, Pt. III,' September 23, 1970, HKRS 70-3-26-2, HKPRO; *The Star*, September 12, 1970; Michael Stevenson, Acting Director, "'Public Opinion" and "Chinese as an Official Language,"' August 26, 1970, Yellow Folder, HKRS 70-3-26-1, HKPRO.

45 Denis Bray, 'Town Talk — Special Supplement on the use of Chinese as an official language (Limited Distribution),' August 27, 1970, HKRS 285-1-1, HKPRO. Denis Bray, to Hon. Colonial Secretary, September 3, 1970, HKRS 935-1-3, HKPRO.

46 *Hong Kong Standard*, "Govt to Act on Language Issue," *Hong Kong Standard*, September 19, 1970.

47 *Hong Kong Standard*, "Fung's Job in Language Issue is Welcomed," October 11, 1970; *South China Morning Post*, "Govt Committee Asks Huang 'to Wait' for its Findings," November 14, 1970; *The Star*, "What the Star Thinks: Colonial Mentality," *The Star*, October 22, 1970; Michael Stevenson, "'Public Opinion" and "Chinese as an Official Language",' August 26, 1970, Yellow Folder, HKRS 70-3-26-1, HKPRO; 'Fung Ping-fan accepts Chairmanship of Committee on Use of Chinese In Official Business,' October 9, 1970, Green Folder, HKRS 70-3-26-1, HKPRO.

48 James Wing-cheung Chui, to Mr. Anthony Royle, July 22, 1971, HKMS 189-1-206, HKPRO; *China Mail*, "Language Drive Gets Push from Students," *China Mail*, October 23, 1970; *China Mail*, "Chinese Should Be Official too," October 23, 1970; *The Express*, "争取中文成为法定语文-数十青年静坐示威-古稀老翁自动参加-行列中亦包括外籍男女," *The Express*, March 15, 1971.

49 *China Mail*, "Politically Motivated," *China Mail*, April 21, 1971; CDO (Wong Tai Sin) to CDC. (K.), November 10, 1970, HKRS 455-4-4, HKPRO; CDO (Kowloon City), to CDC (Kowloon), November 24, 1970, HKRS 455-4-4, HKPRO; Albert C. C. Lam, 'Town Talk Supplement-Weekly Report on Chinese Language Issue,' Dec. 8, 1970, HKRS 455-4-4, HKPRO. A. C. Wong, 'Memo — Chinese as an Official Language: Weekly Progress Report,' December 1, 1970, HKRS 455-4-4, HKPRO; *South China Morning Post*, "Chaos Expected if Chinese is Made Official," *South China Morning Post*, January 18, 1971.

50 Special Branch, Royal Hong Kong Police, 'The Campaign for Chinese as an Official Language Joint Committee (C.C.O.L.) - An Assessment of the Security Threat,' October 15, 1970, HKRS 935-1-3, HKPRO.

51 Special Branch, 'The Campaign for Chinese as an Official Language Joint Committee (C.C.O.L.),' October 15, 1970, HKRS 935-1-3, HKPRO.

52 Special Branch, 'The Campaign for Chinese as an Official Language Joint Committee (C.C.O.L.),' October 15, 1970, HKRS 935-1-3, HKPRO.

53 Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, p. 164.

54 CDO (WTS), 'Weekly Progress Report: Use of Chinese as an Official Language,' HKRS 455-4-4, HKPRO. The date of this document should be around October 27, 1970.

55 Chinese Language Authority Circular, No. 6/72, August 9, 1972, HKRS 455-4-4, HKPRO; Chinese Language Authority Circular, No. 6/72, November 24, 1972.

56 C. K. K. Wong to Heads of Department, June 29, 1973, HKRS 147-7-12, HKPRO.

57 The 1974 Hong Kong Education Policy Green Paper can be accessed from the online archive of Hong Kong Education Department Bureau. URL: https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/about-edb/publications-stat/major-reports/seced_e.pdf, accessed on July 18, 2019.

58 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 2016), 37-46.

59 Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, p. 194.

60 Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Adventure of Silver Blaze,' *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (1894). URL: <https://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/40/the-memoirs-of-sherlock-holmes/573/adventure-1-silver-blaze/>, accessed on April 13, 2020.