

Research Assessment Exercise 2020
Impact Case Study

University: City University of Hong Kong

Unit of Assessment (UoA): 25 - political science (incl. public policy & administration & international relations)

Title of case study: Enhancing awareness and understanding of the 1967 Riots in Hong Kong

(1) Summary of the impact

The 1967 riots in Hong Kong still loom large in the region's consciousness and identity. Prof Yep's research has rekindled public interest in this important episode, offering new perspectives on the disjointedness of the British Empire and the communist camp, the administration of justice and the long-term significance of the riots. He has presented his ideas to a wide audience both locally and overseas through a TV documentary, online articles, public lectures, radio appearances and themed walking tours of significant locations and has also advised on production of a film, a theatre play and two permanent exhibitions on the riots.

(2) Underpinning research

Prof Yep started his research on the 1967 riots in 2006. His work gathered further momentum when he organised a ground-breaking public seminar on the riots at the City University of Hong Kong, on 26 and 27 May 2007. This two-day event was devoted to academic discussion as well as a "witness session" in which people with direct personal experience of that turbulent time in 1967 were invited to share their reflections with the audience of over 200 attendees. The strong public interest reinforced Prof Yep's commitment to continuing the dialogue with local and international communities on this important episode in Hong Kong's colonial history.

His research started with several internal grants funded by City University of Hong Kong, and later developed into two GRF projects, *Negotiating Autonomy: MacLehose Era (1971–1982)* and *The Nature of Colonial Rule (2016–2018)* and *Contextualizing the 1967 Riots in Cold War Politics: The Roles of the United States and Taiwan in Shaping the Colony's Response to the Leftist Challenge (2019–2021)*. Yep's research re-examines the accepted wisdom surrounding the events and presents a number of challenging new perspectives on the conflict. These include:

(a) Exploring the incoherence of the "British camp". "Team Britain" was hardly a coherent entity. The interaction and bargaining among these British players accounted for the oscillation and changes of the responses and strategies towards the Communist challenge in the colony during the turbulent time in 1967

(b) Looking beyond the culpability of Beijing. Prof Yep saw no value in reiterating the claim that Beijing was behind the confrontation in 1967, as the event was very much a spin-off of the Cultural Revolution. Two other factors however must be reckoned with in understanding the episode: the social roots of the confrontation and the self-interest of local Party bosses, which may have prompted them to fully mobilise the left-wing organisations in HK as a survival tactic amid China's surging radicalism.

(c) Questioning the long-term impact of the event. Many local commentators regard 1967 as a turning point in Hong Kong's history and some even attribute the social reforms under the governorship of MacLehose (1971–1982) solely to this event. However, Prof Yep's research challenges this simplistic view. He argues that in addition to the 1967 riots, the rise of protectionism in Britain, the philosophy of the Labour administration, and the 1997 factor are no less important in explaining the introduction of social reforms in the 1970s.

(d) Reflecting on the administration of criminal justice during the confrontations. While effective policing and public support played a key role in its success, the deployment of Emergency

Powers and other draconian measures were equally important. Unfortunately, not all of these measures were entirely consistent with the principles of the due process of law or the spirit of the rule of law. Many of the measures deployed during this period e.g. laws regulating unlawful assembly and rioting had a lasting impact on the legal framework related to the maintenance of public order today (R2, C1).

(3) References to the research

R1. Ray Yep, “1967 Riots in Hong Kong: The Diplomatic and Domestic Fronts of the Colonial Governor”, *China Quarterly*, Vol. 193 (March 2008), pp. 122-139.

R2. Ray Yep (with Robert Bickers) (eds.), *May Day in Hong Kong: Riot and Emergency in 1967* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009).

R3. Ray Yep (with Lui Tai Lok), “Revisiting the Golden Era of MacLehose and the Dynamics of Social Reforms”, *China Information*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (November 2010), pp. 249-272.

R4. Ray Yep, “Cultural Revolution in Hong Kong: Emergency Powers, Administration of Justice and the Turbulent Year of 1967”, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 46, Part 4 (July 2012), pp. 1007-1032.

R5. Ray Yep, “A Historical Perspective on Hong Kong’s Autonomy: Traditions of British Imperialism, Maritime Enclave and Contending Views of British Interest,” in Brian Fong and Lui Tai-Lok (eds.), *Hong Kong 20 Years after the Handover: Emerging Social and Institutional Fractures After 1997* (London: Routledge 2017), pp. 231-254.

R6. Ray Yep, “Confrontations, State Repression and Autonomy of Metropolis Hong Kong: Umbrella Movement and 1967 Riots Compared” in Lui Tai Lok et al. (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Hong Kong* (New York: Routledge 2018), pp. 227-244.

(4) Details of the impact

For nearly 40 years after the 1967 riots, there were no serious academic or even journalistic works on this matter. The books by journalists Gary Cheung and Chow Yick in 2005 marked a breakthrough and rekindled wider interest. The public event organised by Prof Yep on the 40th anniversary of the riots in 2007 was, however, the first public event to focus on this historical episode in more than three decades. It provoked a tremendous response from the local community, and its “witness session” brought the “people” back into the understanding of the confrontation. For the first time, those who had endured those traumatic days were given a chance to reflect and share their pain and suffering with the general public.

Building on this renewed interest and seizing the opportunity to open a window at last on these traumatic events, Yep’s research has added nuance to the debate on the dynamics and significance of the 1967 Riots, reaching a broad audience both at home and abroad through a number of different channels.

Yep advised on and presented a four-part documentary, *City Ablaze: The 1967 Riots in Hong Kong*, for Hong Kong Cable TV. The show aired on 1/5, 8/5, 15/5, 22/5 2017 in Hong Kong and to mark the 50th anniversary of the riots. It has since been broadcast on line and has received 120,000 views. Its importance and quality have been recognised through several awards (C2): Bronze Medal, New York Festivals 2018, World’s Best Television & Films Winners (History & Society documentary category); Certificate of Merit (TV Feature category), the 8th Chinese University of Hong Kong Journalist Award 2018; the Kam Yiu-yu Press Freedom Awards 2018 (electronic media), Kam Yiu-yu Foundation, Hong Kong; and Bronze Winner, Telly Awards 2018 (General Documentary: Series, Television category). Doris Law, Feature Editor of Hong Kong Cable TV News agreed that Prof Ray Yep’s advice was imperative to the production of this program and his works on 1967 are the major references used by her team (C1). This documentary is a permanent exhibit in Hong Kong News-Expo, a local museum of journalism (since December 17).

Yep also acted as advisor on a feature film and a play depicting the events of 1967. The film, *中英街一號* (No. 1 Chung Ying Street) won the Best Film Award at the Osaka Asian Film Festival 2018

(C3). Raymond Young (石中英), the investor and producer of the film attributed the success of the production to the advice and support of Prof. Yep. The play, “1967 – History Replayed”, was also written and produced by Pants Theatre Production with advice from Yep. First performed in 2014, it was restaged in a new production in August 2017 (with a total audience of around 2,000) (C5).

Yep has engaged the public more directly and intimately with the events of 1967 through his collaboration with Walk In Hong Kong tours, for whom he designed and guided a two-hour walking tour of key North Point locations specifically covering the 1967 riots. Eight such tours have taken place since October 2013, with more than 150 participants in all, comprising a mix of tourists, expatriates, mainland Chinese and Hong Kongers. Of the 20 reviews on the TripAdvisor website, 16 of the reviewers gave 5 stars (out of 5) and the others gave 4 stars. The comments illustrate the tour’s relevance to modern events. (C7) Paul Chan, co-founder and CEO of Walk In Hong Kong, confirmed Prof Yep’s involvement is instrumental to the success of these events. (C6)

Prof Yep has participated in a wide range of public events to disseminate his research findings. He has been in great demand for his views on the 1967 riots and has made regular appearances in local media. These include for examples articles for a special issue of The Initium Media (an online platform of news and commentary with more than 20,000 paid subscribers in Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China); a 2-hour documentary for Metro Radio (6/17); various programmes for RTHK (24/5/07, 7/5/07, 13/2/16). (C8)

Prof Yep was also invited to join the advisory committee of Chicago University’s overseas campus in Hong Kong, a facility located in the historical site where key protest leaders were detained during the 1967 confrontation. He played a significant advisory role during the writing of the narrative of the History Interpretation Centre on the campus (open to the public since December 2018), and his influence can be seen in one of the permanent exhibits (located in Mount Davis, Hong Kong) concerning the 1967 riots. The project is endorsed by the Antiquities and Monuments Office of the Hong Kong SAR Government. (C9)

(5) Sources to corroborate the impact

C1. Letter from Feature Editor at Cable TV confirming Yep’s contribution to the documentary
(See attachment)

C2. Links to awards won by the documentary.

第八屆中大新聞獎

最佳視像專題獎 優異獎《六七記憶 - 對峙與反思》

<http://alumni.com.cuhk.edu.hk/%E7%AC%AC%E5%85%AB%E5%B1%86%E3%80%8C%E4%B8%AD%E5%A4%A7%E6%96%B0%E8%81%9E%E7%8D%8E%E3%80%8D%E9%A0%92%E7%8D%8E%E5%85%B8%E7%A6%A E/>

第九屆金堯如新聞自由獎

電子傳媒組 大獎

<https://www.hkja.org.hk/%E9%87%91%E5%A0%AF%E5%A6%82%E6%96%B0%E8%81%9E%E8%87%AA%E7%94%B1%E7%8D%8E/%E7%AC%AC%E4%B9%9D%E5%B1%86%E9%87%91%E5%A0%AF%E5%A6%82%E6%96%B0%E8%81%9E%E8%87%AA%E7%94%B1%E5%A5%AC%E5%BE%97%E7%8D%8E%E8%80%85%E5%85%AC%E5%B8%83-2/>

City Ablaze: the 1967 Hong Kong Riots

紐約國際電視電影節2018

歷史及社會組 銅獎

記者：馮惠儀 梁昊賢

<http://www.newyorkfestivals.com/winners/2018/pieces-mobile.php?iid=524509&pid=1&d=m>

City Ablaze: the 1967 Hong Kong Riots

Telly Awards 2018

Documentary: Series (電視紀錄片組)

Bronze Winners (銅獎)

<https://www.tellyawards.com/winners/2018/television/general-documentary-series/city-ablaze-the-1967-hong-kong-riots/198024/>

C3. Link to Osaka Asian Film Festival 2018: <http://www.oaff.jp/2018/en/outline/prizes.html>

C4. Message from Raymond Young (石中英), the investor and producer of No. 1 Chung Ying Street (See attachment)

C5. Link to the play, “1967 – History Replayed”: <http://www.pants.org.hk/?a=doc&id=423>

C6. Letter from Paul Chan (See attachment)

C7. Links to tour details and summary of TripAdvisor reviews of walking tour (See attachment)

<http://walkin.hk/tours/1967/>

<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1325476/north-point-tour-takes-participants-back-1967-hong-kong-riots>

C8. Links to articles, programmes and radio shows

自由風自由Phone 《六七特輯》 (24 May 2007)

(the link no longer available)

鏗鏘集 (RTHK) 《歷史告訴我們》 (7 May 2007)

(the link no longer available)

議事論事 (RTHK)

《六七暴動與旺角騷亂》 (13/2/2016) (views 73,000/913 shares)

<https://www.facebook.com/legcoreview/videos/958143600907598/>

Initium media: a commentary series on the 1967 Riots (15,000 words) (as author)

葉健民：左派實力迅速擴張，港英自食「六七」惡果(2017-04-24)

<https://theinitium.com/article/20170424-opinion-rayyep-671/>

葉健民：戴麟趾的第二戰場——六七暴動的英方內部角力(2017-04-25)

<https://theinitium.com/article/20170425-opinion-rayyep-672/>

葉健民：六七暴動真的改變了香港嗎？(2017-04-26)

<https://theinitium.com/article/20170426-opinion-rayyep-673/>

Metro-Radio, 2 hour special on 1967 (June 2017)(interviewee):

<https://www.facebook.com/StartFromTen/posts/1233041333470873:0>

<https://www.facebook.com/StartFromTen/photos/a.820640464710964>

《香港花生》《國情解碼》(23 June 2018)，談六四晚會、六七暴動與旺角騷亂，以及年輕人從政出路。

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6u2QAedpmmo> (第一節)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxnOc3cq53I> (第二節)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6oOd9oQ77o> (第三節)

Workshop on the 50th Anniversary of 1967 Riots, organized by Students’ Union of Hong Kong Baptist University (港台《大學堂》：回望六七)(28 January 2018)

http://www.rthk.hk/radio/radio1/programme/university_knowledge_platform/episode/483939 (第一節)

http://www.rthk.hk/radio/radio1/programme/university_knowledge_platform/episode/485342 (第二節)

C9. Invitation letter from Chair of the History Interpretation Centre (See attachment)