

MASTER'S THESIS

Post-war language policy in Hong Kong: an investigation of legitimacy crises and control

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**Post-war Language Policy in Hong Kong:
An Investigation of Legitimacy Crises and Control**

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ABSTRACT

A number of political crises which came out in post-war Hong Kong and change of political situations in the region created instability in society. This thesis is concerned with how the instability in post-war Hong Kong drove the government into creating stabilising forces in society for the sake of its legitimacy. The current research sets out the origins of the manipulation of Chinese language policy as a government's means of control during the crises in the post-war years with the aim of sustaining its legitimacy. Besides exploring how the government maintained its legitimacy by means of linguistic measures, this study illustrates how the implementation of linguistic measures in connection with the use and status of the Chinese language reflects the interplay between the government and the population during the language campaign.

The timeframe set for this study is concerned with the post-war period with a primary focus on the development of the Chinese language campaign following the subsidence of the 1960s disturbances until Chinese was accorded official status in January 1974. In this thesis, data is derived from many primary sources, largely

official archival items and media texts of different political affiliations. Social analysis is used in the investigation through the documentary analysis of media texts, Hansard of the Legislative Council, published government documents, declassified confidential files, in particular correspondence among government officials.

This thesis argues that the stabilising forces were created by the government for the purpose of sustaining its own legitimacy. It is also argued that the government's attitudes and measures towards the Chinese language campaigner's demand for officialising the Chinese language were expedient and practical.

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