

Crossing the Binary Line: The Politics of Establishing
a Polytechnic in Colonial Hong Kong

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The Puzzle of Border Crossing

- * The Hong Kong Polytechnic (est. 1972): A service sector institution
- * Binary system of higher education in the UK:
 1. The autonomous sector—universities, under the University Grants Committee (UGC)
 2. The service sector—polys, technical colleges etc., under Local Educational Authorities (LEAs)
- * UGC in Hong Kong (est. 1965): A buffer between the state and the autonomous sector of the higher education
- * Universities and Polytechnic Grants Committee (UPGC, est. 1972)

Question: How/Why did a service sector institution become UGC-governed?

The Colonial Nature of Higher Education in Hong Kong

1 · External pedagogic agents also have a stake in Hong Kong education

Some examples of external agents:

- i. administrators and teaching staff in technical education in the UK and other Commonwealth countries
- ii. The Technical Education and Training in Overseas Countries (TETOC, under the Ministry of Overseas Development)

The Colonial Nature of Higher Education in Hong Kong

* External agents wished the Hong Kong Polytechnic to be autonomous from the Hong Kong colonial state, because:

- i. higher status, more power
- ii. easier to exert influences
- iii. bad experiences dealing with the LEAs in England
- iv. less vulnerable to local political upheavals

→ Conflicts with local agents, notably the Director of Education, over the Hong Kong poly's form of governance

The Colonial Nature of Higher Education in Hong Kong

2 · The preponderance of non-local-based expatriates at the UGC of Hong Kong

Implication 1: status and power of these members were not derived from the autonomous sector of higher education in Hong Kong

→ not keen on guarding the boundary between the autonomous and the service sector

Implication 2: The secretary could be very influential

Members of the UGC (Hong Kong), 1968

- *1. Michael Herries (Chairman), Jardine, Matheson & Co. Ltd., Hong Kong
- *2. T. K. Ann (Deputy Chairman), Soco Textiles Ltd., Hong Kong
- *3. Patrick S. S. Yu., Barrister, Hong Kong
- *4. W. Melville Arnott, Professor of Medicine, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham, England.
- *5. N. S. Bayliss, Professor of Chemistry, The University of Western Australia, Australia
- *6. W. G. Beasley, Professor of the History of the Far East, University of London, England.
- *7. M. R. Gavin, Principal, Chelsea College of Science and Technology, London, England
- *8. A. G. Lehmann, Professor of French, The University of Reading, England.
- *9. M. Wise, Professor of Geography, The London School of Economics & Political Science, England
- *10. C. R. Griffith, Deputy Secretary of UGC, England

S. F. Bailey, the Secretary of UGC, Hong Kong, 1967-1983



Profile of S. F. Bailey

- * 1916, born
- * 1933, joined the British Civil Service
- * 1956, started serving in Kenya
- * 1961, Under-Secretary of Kenya
- * 1963, Kenya became independent
- * 1965, aged 49, returned to England, awarded a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE)
- * 1965-1967, Principal of the Financial Division of the Science Research Council of the UK
- * 1967-1983, the UGC (Hong Kong) Secretary

Conclusion