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Practices and Educational Affordances of Sound in the Postcolonial Hong Kong Protests

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ABSTRACT

Sound has been theorised for its functional role as informative agent in political advocacy and participation in political studies, yet the investigation on the pedagogical potential has been largely absent. This paper examines the pedagogical impact and educational affordances of sound through a case study of the political struggles in post-colonial Hong Kong. Among the series of large-scale disputes, the use of sound is multifaceted and has invited knowledge through different means including social media sonification, practices of sound as protesting tactics, and the alternative position, representation, facilitate understanding and learning of sound within the postcolonial framework. These sonic practices revealed the educational affordances of sound that goes beyond the conventional function to transfer knowledge and information, serving as a catalyst to sustain political resistance and make available the opportunity to learn through participatory studies and reflective practices. Within the postcolonial Hong Kong context, sound extends the political confrontation to the non-physical and affective space, where the listeners can afford to recognise and engage in the actualisation of sound. It also unfolded social discourses that characterised the postcoloniality of Hong Kong and revealed the evolving power relation among citizens and authorities.

Introduction

Political advocacy and the form of protests can be highly dynamic, they evolve due to factors outside the political realm such as technological and sociocultural developments. Recent decades have seen a variety of innovative practices, ranging from leaderless protests to disinformation campaigns (Choi 2018; Lukito 2020). Despite the ever-changing silhouette of political activities situated in different eras, the position of sound as the main vehicle driving political movements and social change has seldom been challenged. The emerging field of sound studies which draws upon interdisciplinary approaches for social inquiries and humanistic understandings has provided new perspectives and yielded research findings to support the potential of sound in respect of meaningful (re-)discoveries (Thibeault 2017).

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Apart from political studies that rely on the representativeness of the 'human microphone' to challenge authorities' monopoly of amplified public speech utilised (Radovac 2014), sound as a pedagogical approach to excel beyond the conventional function of the informative agent has recently been receiving a rediscovery in educational studies (Derek and Sasaki 2021). Sound serves as a medium to transmit knowledge between teachers and learners, as well as telling us about our relationship with others, revealing our understanding of the world as listeners (Gershon 2011). While conventional and mainstream education promotes impoverished approaches of listening as conscious reception and comprehension of symbolic meanings encoded in spoken language (Gallagher et al. 2017), these practices neglect the open-ended potential of sound to generate unexpected insights and experience the inherent matter (Derek 2020). In the context of politics and social movements, sound transcends well beyond the linguistic content of spoken language, formularising a site of resistance as an act of political struggle allowing new dialogue to be developed in the public realm (Sahera and Cetin 2016).

With the unlimited potential of sound unfolding new possibilities in politics and social change, perhaps surprisingly there is a dearth of research to develop and contextualise sound as a pedagogical approach in a rigorous manner, rather than as a container or representation of textual data (Derek and Sasaki 2021). In response to the vast range of opportunities to generate new discoveries in social discourse and a belief of political is deeply educational (Derek 2017), this paper examines the pedagogical impact and educational affordances of sound for the political struggles in postcolonial Hong Kong using the recent social movements as a case study. Among the series of large-scale disputes between citizens and the authorities, sound has been vital in advocating political participation both as a tool and a medium. The innovative use of sound in postcolonial Hong Kong social movements demonstrated its multifaceted potential in opening a new dialogue in social inquiries, yet it has not been fully investigated to provide comprehensive understanding of the sonic experience and generate aural insights for political and educational exploration. The rest of the paper will introduce postcolonial theory and provide a historical overview contextualising the sociocultural background in Hong Kong under the British colonial rule and beyond, which conceptualises the rationale behind the sonic practices in the social movements. Then it will proceed to the tactics and strategies that characterised the social movements and how the political struggle was embodied in the sonic practices. The pedagogy and educational affordances of sound will then be discussed with the postcoloniality of Hong Kong as the subject matter.

Postcolonial Social Movements in Hong Kong

Postcolonial theory is a body of thought concerned with accounting for the political, aesthetic, economic, historical, and social impact of colonial rule (Elam 2019). More specifically, it is a critical theory that is utilised to analyse the history, culture, literature, and discourse of imperial power, which was mainly sourced from the European colonial worldwide rule from eighteenth to twentieth century. As an ideological response to colonialist thought, postcolonial theory can be understood as a reaction to or departure from colonialism rather than a system that comes after it, which is commonly termed decolonisation. Modelled from the notion of postmodernism with certain concepts and methods in common, the validity and solidity of postcolonial theory as a school of

thought has also been criticised in the vast body of literature. For example, one major critique within the decolonial epistemology lies in the argument that postcoloniality and its derived terms are colonial products rather than a method of addressing the internal dynamics within colonial roots (Cusicanqui 2012). Despite an endless debate, postcolonial studies facilitate the understanding of the sociocultural phenomena in formerly colonised countries. This study helps to decontextualise sonic practices in post-handover Hong Kong.

It has been more than 20 years since the handover of Hong Kong from the United Kingdom to China, which ended 155 years of British colonial status and conferred the citizens with the unique identity of Hong Kong Chinese (Fok 1997). Since then, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government has striven to strengthen the national identity of its citizens, formulating the pathway for the integration of the city within the socio-political and economical regime of mainland China (Morris and Vickers 2015). Readaptation to the new sovereign has been a demanding experience for both the authorities and its citizens, as evidenced by the almost continuous series of large-scale protests that happened after the handover. The resistance does not only reflect citizens' concerns about the deterioration of civil rights and freedom of speech (Ho 2018) but also the opposing sociocultural and political ideologies between the authority and the citizens in the postcolonial era.

While Hong Kong's handover was a formal agreement between two sovereign nations, the transfer of sovereignty may not be simply regarded as a return to its motherland by Hong Kong citizens. Some considered the handover as a recolonisation instead of a renationalisation (Fung 2004; Mok and Lee 2020), although both terms are questionable in political and academic debates. When the British colony began in the mid-eighteenth century, Hong Kong was nothing more than a fishing village. Resistance also formed part of the early colonial age, as well as during the Cultural Revolution in mainland China. Opposition to the British governance was expressed through riots, with roadside bombs with the warning 'compatriot stay away' placed on the streets representing xenophobia to the colonial rulers (Song 2005). Huge efforts such as the advocacy of social reforms and the delivery of recreational activities were made by the colonial government to gain trust and support from the citizens, as well as developing their sense of belonging. It also marked the beginning for the implementation of positive non-interventionism, which helped the economic development of Hong Kong in the late-nineteenth century to become one of the Four Asian Tigers. The 155-year-long reign of the British did not only result in an economic advancement transforming the city into a financial centre and an international metropolis, but also saw the embarkation of a separated path in political and sociocultural developments with mainland China (Lai 2011). Under British colonial governance, Hong Kong imported western standards of values and governance models including civil and human rights, freedom of speech, the rule of law, and the separation of powers, whereas China instilled socialist values and placed tight controls on individual freedoms. The One Country Two Systems policy, a formal agreement between the United Kingdom and China formulating the governance after the handover, constructed the coexistence of socialism and capitalism for the national reunification (Purbrick 2020). Those developmental differences cultivated a unique Hongkonger identity with a sense of superiority over the mainland and sentiments against the Communist regime (Lau 1997), sowing the seeds of conflicts and

disputes underlying the differentiated ideology between Hongkongers and the considerably larger authority over the border.

Despite the promised degree of independence for 50 years after handover through the One Country Two Systems policy, political initiatives favouring the development of citizens' national identity and the integration with the governance model of mainland China were advocated by the pro-establishment camp and the local governmental bodies after the handover. The China factor as an organisational force became increasingly salient (Ngok 2017), whereas an inclination towards nationalistic interests over democratic and civic values has been explicit in the enactment of postcolonial policies. An aversion to the political ideology imposed by the government has resulted in public discontent, which turned into protests and social movements after the millennium. Political instability and large-scale disputes resulted over the last decade, including but not limited to the Moral and National Education controversy in 2012 (Morris and Vickers 2015), the Umbrella Movement in 2014 (Fung and Su 2016) and the Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement (Anti-ELAB) from 2019 to 2020 (Lee 2020a). Unlike many other former British colonies which became independent afterwards, the postcolonial status of Hong Kong is characterised by its involuntary reintegration into a huge socialist power (Tse 2004). Instead of a violent rebellion fighting for a destined nation-building, most of the intentions behind social movements were to retain its social and political systems as informed by some of the sonic practices adopted by the protesters detailed hereafter.

Sound as a Weapon

As the protests became more intense throughout the social movements in the postcolonial era, political prosecution had been more frequent and perhaps explicit (Wang 2019). On 5 April 2020, an ex-pro-democracy lawmaker was convicted of assault because he used a loudhailer near a police officer and hit another cop's shield with a microphone. The police officer, with the support of a medical report, claimed feeling discomfort in his ear which affected his hearing and sleeping. Although the extent of the damage could be debatable and subject to the court's decision, the use of loudspeakers is commonplace in many disputes. Many considered this as one of the political prosecutions conducted by the government who used the criterion of political correctness to purge pro-democratic political figures after protest (Lo 2021). The ex-pro-democracy lawmaker's voice, through the amplification of the loudhailer, represented the collective voice among the protesters that transmitted their demands to the authority. Authorities responded with a prosecution, considering the loudhailer as a violent weapon and rejected the appeals thereby muting protesting voices.

A contrasting interpretation of sound as a weapon was exhibited by the authority. On 17 November 2019, a long-range acoustic device (LRAD) was engaged by the police who were attempting to disperse the demonstrators in one of the protest events known as the Siege of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Ting 2020). As a sonic weapon intended to cause nausea and disorientation (Parker 2018), the police spokesman stressed that the device is not a weapon but a broadcasting system that could convey important messages over a long distance in a noisy environment. Similar claims were made by the New York Police Department who used LRAD in Occupy Wall Street, where protesters felt sick

after exposure. The use of LRAD in protests does not only inform the harmfulness of sonic weapons, but also the disobedience of sound to penetrate any physical barriers and dissolve delineations between public and private. Ellman (2019) highlighted the tactics of sonic disobedience that exploits a loophole in the increasingly privatised and securitised world, confronts the material and intangible constructions that bound everyday life and opens possibilities to imagine and produce different conditions. In the anti-ELAB movement, the notion of sonic disobedience was flipped that invisible barriers were built by removing the collective voice represented through a 'human microphone' (McIlvenny 2017). While sound has been developed as a harmful weapon for the authorities to exercise control over public protest and maintain political stability (Presley and Crane 2018), contrasting scenes have been seen for the protesters to manipulate sound as a medium addressing democratic issues in a far less harmful way including chant support and collective singing, to be detailed in later sections.

Protests in Hong Kong have mostly been peaceful throughout its colonial history, with exceptions in the 1956 and 1967 riots which were highly associated with the corresponding social issues in China at that time. The nonviolent manner was inherited for the first decade after handover, where annual protests such as the New Year march and memorials for the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests were routine with fluctuations in the number of participants depending on the social conditions of each year. With the policy inclination towards national interests over citizens' wellbeing and the ignoral of their voices, Hongkongers learnt that nonviolent protests did not pose any threat to the authority. Offensive slogans such as 'it is you who *teach* me peaceful marches do not work' emerged in later social movements, which implied the more aggressive approach adopted by the protesters. The ever-increasing opposition towards its home country challenged the postcolonialist understanding of the colonised who are supposed to resist the totalising narratives of the West (Darian-Smith 1996), whilst retaining a strong local identity as Hongkongers under China's rule (Lai 2011).

Acoustic Masking

On the night of 1 July 1997, the first day after the handover, Beethoven's Symphony No.5 was played through loudspeakers by the police outside Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre where the handover ceremony and protest advocated by pro-democratic parties took place. The choice of music is not intentional, although it was popularly known as the 'Fate Symphony' which provided room for anyone to imagine its association with the future of this city. Music was played to acoustically mask protesters' chanting in order to prevent them from being heard by the officials during the ceremony. The acoustic masking was effective, however unethical it seemed from the citizens' point of view; but the masking technique became less effective as time went by. This can be evidenced in the football field, where players and fans are often enmeshed with politics (Power et al. 2020). On 17 November 2015, a year after the Umbrella Movement, acoustic masking was utilised in a football match between Hong Kong and China where fans booed louder than the Chinese national anthem (Yu 2018). This differed from that of the handover ceremony in that the collective, organic human voices were able to exceed the authorities' amplified sound. Contrasting scenes could also be seen during the anti-ELAB movement, where 'Happy Birthday to You' was ironically, and irrelevantly

sung by the protesters masking pro-government activists who was delivering a dogmatic protest against the pro-democracy dissenters in the occupied area (Lai 2018).

These sonic events occurred in a rather unexpected manner for both the choice of protest sites and words chanted; it might be expected that there would be proper planning on what sounds to use for maximising the synergic effect for both the authorities and protesters. Protest voices masking the government's amplified sound as well as pro-government activists revealed the changing power relation between the authorities and the public consensus, as well as the undermining institutional capacity to easily resolve political crises (Hartley and Jarvis 2020). While inquiries in political and social science often determine public opinion through quantitative means such as number of votes and protesters, the changing soundscape at protest sites can provide a sonic perspective for the actualisation of public speech in an audible way. Although the magnitude can be measurable in terms of loudness and intensity, the nuance of sounds here is not the quantity but the quality of the chanting that quickly cohered public consensus in an unexpected manner. Chanting voices transformed an ordinary place into an audible protesting zone, where embodied listening experience can occur with other affective conditions that transcend the limitation of a physical space (English 2017). Protest voices were educational not because it is informative or meaningful (Derek 2020), but because it spoke for the protesters who resisted the city's postcolonial sovereignty as governed by another authority, or as aforesaid, a recolonisation of Hong Kong instead of renationalisation. It perhaps also explained why 'Happy Birthday to You' was sung as the protesting slogan in the last example, in which the literal meaning of the text was far less important than the shared sonic experience.

Chant Support

Ellman (2019) highlighted the technique of chant support to build a powerful unified constituency and the pedagogical value of timbre over the informativeness of sound. In the postcolonial Hong Kong context, chants were everywhere within the protest sites of large-scale social movements. Slogans such as 'Hongkongers, add oil' and 'restore Hong Kong, revolution of our times' did not only speak for supporting the movements and achieving the goals, but also for unifying citizens with their Hongkonger identity. The action of chanting as a collective voice facilitated a unifying effect through the participants' listening and voicing experience as part of the protesters' community. The quest of why and how participants come to voice and listen is the keynote that makes available a reflective space for them to evaluate the rationale behind the actualisation of voice through the timbral experience. These can include what the postcolonial identity of a Hongkonger is and the shaping of it under the negotiation of decolonisation and renationalisation.

Apart from the slogans and songs that sound in every part of the city during the protests, the chanting activity from Christian groups in the anti-ELAB movement is of educational interest. Compared to many other democratic countries, Christianity is a minority religion in Hong Kong making up 16% of the overall population (Lee 2021), compared to an average of 33% worldwide. However, its socio-cultural influence is disproportionate to its number of believers especially in the educational sector and elite classes. It shares a lot of common values with the democratic movements in Hong Kong such as democratic governance and cultural diversity. While the Christian

influence has already been shadowed in the Umbrella Movement, their appearance in the anti-ELAB movement demonstrated their uniqueness characterised by Christian practices including the enduring personality traits and the peaceful spirituality.

Religious gatherings in Hong Kong are exempted from the official definition of a public assembly, and therefore do not require police approval under the Public Order Ordinance inherited from the colonial legislation (Mushkat 1988). On 11 June 2019, when the amendment bill in question was passing through its second reading, thousands of Christians gathered outside the Legislative Council and started singing the well-known Christian hymn 'Sing Hallelujah to the Lord'. The singing was a mass rally that lasted for more than ten hours until dawn. The prime intention behind this act was to protect unauthorised protesters, yet it could be considered as a sonic force that supports the movement through the resilience of Christian activism. It also metaphorises and presents the sustainability of the protesters' steadfastness in achieving their common concerns among the postcolonial social movements. Internally the chant support created a space for the Christian activists to express their common view with other protesters through the voices characterised by Christian identity. Externally, their acts informed other protesters and the broader society about the Christian involvement in the postcolonial democratic movement. Similar to the singing of 'Happy Birthday to You', the meaning of Christianity within the lyrical text was not the intended message. It is the passing charge of timbre that matters within the Christian activists who internalise their Christian practices as an education through the actual experience of sounds with voicing, singing, and listening (Derek 2020). They transformed their religious beliefs into tangible, yet invisible actions to support the wider democratic movement.

Disinformation Campaign

Disinformation campaigns have been used as a tool for political propaganda targeting vulnerabilities in the news media ecosystem in order to increase the visibility and audience reach for their messages since the rise of social media (Marwick and Lewis 2017). The US has seen the political impact of fake news on presidential elections, while disinformation campaigns have disrupted normal democratic order in Europe as shown in the Brexit campaign (Bennett and Livingston 2018). The Umbrella Movement has revealed the spread of disinformation favouring both pro-establishment and pro-democracy ideologies in postcolonial Hong Kong, which made use of the anonymity in social media to deceive citizens with untruthful information attacking opposing parties (Au, Ho, and Chiu 2021; Wong et al. 2021). This includes the circulation of recorded voices with false information about on-site protest tactics on instant messaging platforms, audio and video manipulation with pre-existing media news spread through social media, and confusing commands in different protest sites communicated by word of mouth. The disinformation campaign was not only initiated by the authorities' invisible hands through the use of fake and anonymous accounts, but also explicitly issued from Chinese state media (Harold, Beauchamp-Mustafaga, and Hornung 2021).

Although fake news can be considered as noise that interferes with the transmission of truthful information and thereby hinder the effective production within a knowledge society (Derek and Sasaki 2021), the existence of it may not be totally destructive. Noise is functional in our sonic culture to inform the spatial and material components

of lived spaces (Zittoun 2012). Disinformation can be beneficial to society because it is not only informative but also educative. It makes available audible space for people to be aware of the information they perceive and critical towards the judgement of its truthfulness, thereby developing a self-regulated and motivated learning attitude. The series of social movements in postcolonial Hong Kong have revealed the growing media and information literacy of the protesters who learnt from failings of the previous movements. Tactics such as fact-checking of information shared in online forums and via instant messaging platforms to dispel rumours and call people's attention to the veracity of online information have become standard for protesters' collective action during the Anti-ELAB Movement (Lee and Chan 2018), who also made use of rumours to pressurise the political power and sustain the movement (Lee 2000b). However unethical, disinformation campaigns and fake news are effective tools for spreading libel and casting doubt on the accuracy of real news. These practices continued to exist as part of the media ecology in postcolonial Hong Kong, while initiatives have also taken place to develop citizens' media and information literacy from early age (Cheung and Chau 2017).

Archive

While part of the postcolonial practice is to decolonise the people from the colonisers' cultural knowledge and societal norms, it may lead to the depreciation of human rights and universal values cultivated during its colonial era (Barreto 2018). After the handover, the Hong Kong government has been keen to not only decolonise the citizens from deeply rooted western culture and norms, but also strengthen their sense of national identity towards the mainland. Such measurements in terms of sonic practices include the wording of speeches by government officials aligning with that of mainland China and announcements in public facilities shifting from bilingual to trilingual, with the addition of Mandarin. While not much resistance has resulted relatively, the authority's attempts after the enactment of National Security Law have gone so far to permanently delete the archival content of public broadcasting that was sensitive to the national interest, such as those political commentary programmes and critics on current affair programmes. From the perspective of the authorities, these archives belong to the colonial era and can be regarded as noise, potentially negatively impacting upon the renationalisation process. From the perspective of the citizens who used to enjoy the freedom of speech, the act to remove the archival content of their colonial history could be considered as establishing an embargo on free speech.

As a reaction against the authorities' political moves to mute the sound from the colonial era and erase recent coverage of anti-authoritarian struggles, attempts have been made by citizens to preserve the valuable archive through different approaches. Due to the government ownership of the copyrighted broadcasting archive, conventional and regulated means of copying and sharing within the internet space is not a viable option. In the search for leeway avoiding potential legal liability and disclosure of identity, cyber-activists made use of blockchain technology to archive the audio-visual data into a decentralised publishing infrastructure. It left no trace for the authority to track the original source and exercise the copyright owners' rights such as ordering the platform to delete infringed copies and asking for remedy, thus giving citizens a way to reclaim and safeguard their political history (Yiu 2021).

Instead of going through the legitimate procedure to preserve their historical archives under the authorities order whose public trustworthiness and intention behind the act were in question, protesters and cyber-activists sought solutions outside the governance system. This approach echoes the notion of hacking, originated in computer and information technology, which refers to the non-standard means to achieve a goal within a computerised system that would be impossible otherwise. Without questioning the legitimacy of the act, it is often performed anonymously leaving almost no trace for authorities to identify the source. Derek (2017) argued that hacking can be educational because it subjects to a form of collective studying as it unfolds political praxis and interrupts productivity within a modern society's undefined possibilities. While there also seems to be no achievable goals behind the archiving activities, the activists' hacking could be considered as part of the continuous resistance towards the authoritarian government, alongside with the series of large-scale disputes between the citizens and their government in the postcolonial era.

Archiving of sound can also be considered pedagogical, as it provides new insights to audiences beyond the community of activists within a social movement. While the intention behind the global reach is to seek overseas support and create political pressure, the outreach also guided the protest tactics around the globe especially in terms of leaderless practice (Ferrari and Thorpe 2021). Apart from the use of social media to capture international attention (Lee and Chan 2018), activists also made use of other means to archive and disseminate the sound and visuals of the social movements through collective efforts including the availability of field recordings in different protest sites on digital distribution platforms and curated digital archiving research through community of practice (Tondello 2021). These efforts together with the uptake of social media informed international audiences about the postcolonial social development of Hong Kong, along with the political struggles and societal resistance after the controversial handover.

Sonic Pedagogy and Postcoloniality

Previous sections provided an overview of the sonic practices of the social movements in Hong Kong after the handover. Decontextualisation of these sonic practices revealed the educational affordances of sound that extend beyond its conventional function to transfer knowledge and information, serving as a catalyst to sustain the political resistance and make available the opportunity to learn through participatory studies and reflective practices. English (2017) argued the affordances of sound can make available an intimate zone for embodied listening to occur, whereas the affective condition can also be found in the voicing experience of the protesters who actualise their support through chanting. The educational affordances of sound can also be seen from the invitation to knowing through placemaking (Brockelman 2003). The use of online spaces such as social media platforms for political advocacy revealed the tendency of activists learning to push their boundaries outward in order to reach a wider audience base beyond their community. Cyber-activists' engagement with the latest blockchain technologies to explore its potential in supporting the social movements helped guarantee the political work of teaching, who played multiple roles as hackers, teachers, and producers (Lewis 2017).

Through investigating the pedagogical impact and educational affordances of sound, this study unfolded social discourses that characterised the postcoloniality of Hong Kong. While some of the discoveries echo conventional interpretations of postcolonialism, a careful examination of the sonic practices can help contextualise dispositions unique to Hong Kong after the concern about the return of sovereignty exhibited by the activists. The first instance is the accumulated desire for self-determination. From the surpassing chanting force that gradually exceeded the authority's amplified orders, protesters' appeals have become increasingly unified as time progresses. This is different from the general trend of long-lasting social actions, in which activists have found it difficult to sustain protests over time (Fillieule 2010). The abnormality of increasing civic engagement in postcolonial Hong Kong social movements can be explained by the overwhelming attempts to advocate citizens developing their politically corrected national identity, which caused antipathy towards the renationalisation process. While the distortion and deconstruction of identity over time has been acknowledged in many other postcolonial contexts (Datzberger 2016), the consolidation of the Hongkonger identity can be considered as the resistance to the designated pathway set by the authorities, who sought to become self-determined by voicing out through social actions.

Postcolonial literature has highlighted the opposition against the coloniser, which was commonplace amongst colonists who attempt to reject the imposed Western values and cultural homogenisation and retain its own traditions (Shizha 2006). In postcolonial Hong Kong the anticolonial resistance was not found towards the colonisers, but instead to the second sovereign authority who executed the right to take over this city. Although limited opposition was received at the beginning of the handover (Fung 2004), citizens' resistance against the sovereign authority started to grow as soon as the renationalisation agenda began. Considering it a recolonisation rather than a renationalisation (Mok and Lee 2020), the resistance is a result of the huge political disparity between China and the western civilisation, as well as the deeply rooted western cultural norms and universal values cultivated during the colonial period. Evidence of the renationalisation can be reflected from the use of sonic weapons with dramatically contrasting degrees of harmfulness by the authorities and the protesters, in which the operation of sonic violence is at the heart of colonial instrumentalisation and compliance (de Oliveira 2019).

Space has been considered central in postcolonial studies (Teverson and Upstone 2011), which ranges from cultural geographies to urban space (Nash 2002; Yeoh 2001). In the case of postcolonial Hong Kong, sound moves beyond the psychosocial and quantitative condition of space and location and embraces the affective atmosphere where embodied experience of listening and voicing occur (English 2017). Political confrontation also extends to the sonic environment as a non-physical and affective space, where sounds for disinformation campaigns and digital archives could be easily found in the virtual medium. The proximity of sound affords the listeners to easily recognise and engage in the subject content, thereby unfolding the learning space for the actualisation of sound to occur.

Coda

This paper presented a case study that provides insights into the pedagogical impact and educational affordances of sound unfolding new possibilities in political struggles in the context of postcolonial Hong Kong, including social media sonification, metaphors and

practices of sound as protesting tactics, and how sound is being positioned, represented, understood, and learnt within a postcolonial framework. The multifaceted use of sound as both a sonic weapon and collective force metaphorised the power relation of opposing parties, while the actualisation experience made available a reflective space for a unified constituency to be built sonically within the protesters' community. The synergy with other media and technologies invited innovative practices that extend beyond the affordances of sound as an informative agent, serving as a catalyst to sustain political resistance and make available new learning opportunities beyond knowledge exchange. The discoveries reported here are exploratory and by no means comprehensive, yet it revealed some of the pedagogical potentials of sound and how it can afford different forms of learning outside the conventional medium. As an emerging and developing interdisciplinary area as compared to other related disciplines such as music education (Pinch and Bijsterveld 2004), the offering of sound has a lot to be discovered in an increasingly mediated world.

Di Croce (2016) proposed moving from music to sonic education for cultivating the attitude and responsibility of different communities in shaping their sonic environments, while others have reservations on how this kind of collective participation can be possible within the Chinese context (Zhang and Chow 2021). In this study, we see the possibility in the postcolonial Hong Kong context, one that transcends beyond the conservative Chinese traditional culture being unbounded by the conventional framework of formal learning. This study also provided insights to the possibilities of seeing Hong Kong studies as a method in itself (Chu 2018), as exemplified in the uniqueness of postcoloniality within the context of post-handover Hong Kong. Further research on sonic pedagogy guided from this study can investigate the interactions among sonic practices, pedagogical approaches, and contextual studies, which may deepen the social discourse on the possibilities of sound in education, politics, and other related or remote fields of study.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on Contributors

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