

INTRODUCTION

“Glory to Hong Kong”: Exploring Hong Kong’s Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill 2019 (Anti-ELAB) Protests and Their Implications

A week after an estimated 1.03 million people marched on 9th June 2019 to protest against the introduction of the Fugitive Offenders amendment bill by the Hong Kong government which triggered the fear that the bill if enacted would subject Hong Kong residents and visitors to the jurisdiction and legal system of mainland China, thereby undermining the region’s autonomy and Hong Kong people’s civil liberties, on 16th June 2019 up to approximately two million people, i.e. approaching 30 per cent of Hong Kong’s population, again took to the streets in Hong Kong to further the protest and to voice anger towards the perceived excessive use of force by the police on 12th June when protesters gathered outside the Legislative Council Complex to stall the bill’s second reading.

The aftermath of the activists’ 1st July storming of the Legislative Council Complex on the anniversary of the Handover witnessed further escalation of the protests that was aggravated by apparent police inaction when suspected triad members assaulted protesters and commuters in Yuen Long (元朗) in the New Territories (新界) on 21st July and the

violent police storming of Prince Edward station on 31st August. Though the extradition bill was suspended on 15th June and finally withdrawn on 23rd October, the protests have by then morphed into a broader-purpose movement including demand for the introduction of universal suffrage for election of the Legislative Council and the Chief Executive, one of the five demands on which the government has continued to refuse to concede other than the bill withdrawal.

As the protests dragged on, confrontations escalated as both sides became increasingly violent, with increasing allegations of police brutality and misconduct that were further aggravated by the death of students Chan Yin-lam (陳彥霖) in September and Chow Tsz-lok (周梓樂) in November and the shooting of an unarmed 21-year-old protester in November. There was another death, that of Luo Changqing (羅長清), an elderly man who died after being struck in the head by a brick during a clash in Sheung Shui (上水) in the New Territories.

While after the unprecedented landslide victory of the pro-democracy bloc in the November 2019 District Council election, which was widely viewed as a *de facto* referendum on the protest movement, the most intense stage of the protests seemed to have passed, the continuing refusal of the government to concede on most of the demands of the protesters probably does not augur well for any prospect of resolving the political impasse that has persisted since the 2014 Occupy Campaign/Umbrella Movement, and the temporary lull in the most severe social upheaval since June 2019 in fact just turn out to be temporary calm before the onset of a returning storm with a bombshell in the form of a Beijing-imposed Hong Kong National Security Law that could in all practical sense spell the end of the “One Country, Two Systems” arrangement and a Hong Kong that has so far been spared the outright suppression of dissent that the Mainland populace has long endured.

To contribute to a better understanding of Hong Kong’s Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill 2019 (Anti-ELAB) protests, *Contemporary Chinese Political Economy and Strategic Relations: An International Journal* has organised a special focus issue (Vol. 6, No. 3, December 2020) to explore the determining factors and impacts of the protests and the implications for Hong Kong and beyond. Topics covered include the protests’ implications for Hong Kong’s politics and economy, analysis of the protests in the context of the Special Administrative Region’s relations with the Beijing government, and the related wider context of the Chinese Communist Party’s one-party rule and non-electoral authoritarian governance model, the issues of treatment of political dissent and civil society, political freedom and civil liberties, human rights, and the pro-democracy and rights-defending movements.

“They want freedom the same way we wanted it,” so said the Lithuanian supporters of Hong Kong’s Anti-ELAB protests as tens of thousands of protesters formed the “Hong Kong Way” human chains across Hong Kong on 23rd August 2019 at the 30th anniversary of the 1989 “Baltic Way”¹ when two million people in Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia held hands to form a thousand-and-hundred-mile human chain spanning the three nations in their valiant struggle for democracy and freedom from the Soviet Communist yoke. While the element of regaining independence from the Soviet Union that re-occupied them after the defeat of their German Nazi occupiers at the end of World War II bears little similarity to the practical reality of the case of Hong Kong, free thought and free speech and related political freedom and civil liberties are international ideals, *sans* borders, and the struggle against political persecution of dissent and human rights infringement is also transborder, and it has to be recognised as such, despite the efforts of

autocratic, repressive regimes to discredit this international link by resorting to exclusionist ethnonationalism.

As Chong Yiu Kwong reflects in the opening paper of this special issue of journal, “Hong Kong, a Truly International City in 2019/2020: Timeline of Incidents – International and Human Rights Perspectives”, the tumultuous series of events over 2019/2020 had indeed propelled Hong Kong into the international limelight and made it “undoubtedly a truly international city”.

The present issue of *Contemporary Chinese Political Economy and Strategic Relations: An International Journal* entitled *For Rights and Liberty: The Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill (Anti-ELAB) Protest Movement and Hong Kong’s Struggle for Democracy* thus represents a collection of specially selected articles focusing on this momentous series of events, their background of determining factors, theoretical and ideological underpinnings, as well as its implications for the future of the Hong Kong people’s valiant struggle for democracy against the backdrop of the formidable odds.

After Chong’s informative chronological presentation of the *Timeline of Crisis Unfolding* that provides us a clear picture of how the poignant series of events has so rapidly evolved in escalating intensity over the often excruciating months, this special focus issue of the journal four sections with ten research papers that cover all the important aspects of the protests and government responses, followed by a policy commentary.

In the first section, *Governance Crisis and Social Protests*, Łukasz Zamecki in his paper “‘The Revolution of Our Times’: Reasons for the Hong Kong Protests of 2019”, presents a model developed to account for the dynamic behind Hong Kong’s 2019 protests that takes account of demand and supply of protests. The research target of the model is of great importance in the attempt to understand the factors behind the

tumultuous events of 2019 in Hong Kong, in the context of the widespread feeling of discontent, of “relative deprivation”, whether in terms of the political, economic or cultural aspects, especially amongst the young people of Hong Kong, how that leads to the political radicalization of youth, the growth of nativist and localist organizations and the flourishing idea of self-determination of Hong Kong, and the overall effect on the politics of Hong Kong and the more violent protest format of 2019 vis-à-vis the Umbrella Movement of 2014. In such a state of flux, it is interesting to see how things transpire between the authoritarian State and the civil society’s dissident movement in a process referred to by some as a “political *jujitsu*”² in which shifts of attitude on both sides are important as well as shifts of behaviour as both sides make adjustments to their actions in accordance with how they are gauging their support.³

In the light of the importance of such relations, the second paper of this section, Wai-man Lam’s “China’s Changing Ruling Strategies on Hong Kong and Their Implications”, provides a timely analysis of the CCP regime’s soft tactics of integration, cooptation and collaboration through its United Front work, as well as the harder tactics of containment and denunciation that aim to ultimately consolidate Beijing’s control of the local Hong Kong society. Such subtle or overt forms of suppression that could come in different forms also reflect what Professor Gene Sharp identified as four mechanisms of change that the State can aim to produce among its opponents besides outright violent suppression, namely, conversion, accommodation, nonviolent coercion, and disintegration.⁴

To gauge the sentiments at the receiving end of such tactics of the State, the third article of this section, “Hong Kong: The End of the City of Protest?” by Tim Nicholas Rühlig, into the streets and into the think tank and campus offices in Hong Kong and on the mainland, to listen to

the voices in the field to understand the sentiments of those directly a part of those tumultuous events of 2019 and, earlier, 2014, especially the Hong Kong people, the young, the pro-democracy protesters in all their diversity playing their respective parts of struggle for more self-determination, for genuine elections, for democratisation with all its socio-economic, identity-political and institutional dimensions. Such are the voices refused to be silenced by a repressive, dissent-intolerant central one-party totalitarian regime's long-running creeping authoritarianism penetrating this special administrative region bending on extinguishing the Hong Kong people's noble aspiration for genuine liberal democracy that promises full political freedom and civil liberties. Such are the voices of courage, of anguish, of determination, of pain and despair that poignantly echoed on the streets of Hong Kong through the tune of that almost official anthem of the anti-extradition bill protest movement, "Glory to Hong Kong" ("願榮光歸香港", also "Glory be to thee, Hong Kong", with lyric now outlawed under the new Hong Kong National Security Law imposed by the Beijing overlord): "In angst, tears are shed o'er this Land / With rage, fears are crushed, in arms we stand / We rise, undefiled, our voice shall never die / As we yearn, our freedom nighs" (何以這土地 淚再流 / 何以令眾人 亦憤恨 / 昂首拒默 沉吶喊聲響透 / 盼自由 歸於這裡)⁵.

And when ruthless totalitarian central State strikes back at its protesting, dissenting citizens, the first casualty would be the freedom of expression – freedom to criticise government action, freedom to express alternative political views, freedom in accessing information without hindered by government cover-ups and State-sanctioned lies – exactly one of major civil rights of which the fear of further eroding represents a major impetus that has triggered the pro-democracy social actions in the forms of the anti-extradition bill protests of 2019, and earlier, the Occupy Campaign of 2014. The two papers in the next section,

Free Speech and Free Press, address this issue directly, and more specifically the subject of free press.

In this regard, Chris Yeung’s article “Free Press under Threat in Hong Kong Protest Fallout” focuses on how government responses – from police actions during the protesting months to the chilling, ultimate dissent-suppressing national security law slapped on the special administrative region by the central one-party State making a mockery of the “One Country, Two Systems” arrangement – to the recent citizen protest movement is posing a gravest threat to independent and free mass media in Hong Kong. Wai Han Lo in her paper “Hierarchy of Influences on Press in a ‘Partly Free’ Society: Dismantling Journalistic Autonomy”, on the other hand, analyses how the influence of the State, political actors, media owners, advertisers, and the audience have aligned to undercut journalistic professionalism and autonomy in Hong Kong, and points to how the anti-extradition bill movement uniquely exposes the corruption of many different parties, who have aligned with the State to exercise press control, reflecting a critical structured change in press control at all levels that threatens to reach a point of no return unless some counterforces could emerge soon to sustain or rebuild journalistic autonomy.

The issue of press freedom will be picked up again by Jason Hung later in his commentary “Civil Liberties Eroding in the Aftermath of Hong Kong’s Socio-political Unrest (2019-20): A Discussion on the City’s Financial (Un)Sustainability” as part of the discussion on the erosion of civil liberties first as a result of police brutality that actually served to accentuate social conflict that leads to a cycle of violence begets violence and later of the implementation of the Hong Kong national security law (“Law of the People’s Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region”) that represents a brutal encroachment upon

Hong Kong's civil liberties and democracy.

Related to the issue of police action as catalyst of social violence discussed later by Hung's commentary, the next two articles of this special focus issue, under the section of *Legality and Law Enforcement*, focus respectively on the new challenges to the criminal justice system in Hong Kong presented by the anti-extradition bill protests and major policing issues raised by these protests.

Matthew Cheun Ngai Tang in his article "A Review of Hong Kong's Jurisprudence on the Offences of Unlawful Assembly and Riot in the Context of the Anti-Extradition Bill Movement" examines the development of case law relating to unlawful assembly and riot under the Public Order Ordinance in the context of the anti-extradition protests and how the unique features of the protests would develop future case law. The paper also raises the important, thought-provoking argument that "the Court is operating under the presumption that Hong Kong citizens still fully enjoy the constitutional rights and freedoms" while the "protesters of the Anti-ELAB Movement do not echo such views" and hence the "two parties are operating under different sets of presumptions."

Moving from Tang's study of legality to the equality important subject of law enforcement, we have Lawrence Ka-ki Ho, Ying-tung Chan and Alvin Tsang's paper "Emerging Issues in Policing in Asia: Civil Unrest in Hong Kong in 2019" that focuses on the three key dimensions of police legitimacy and accountability, protest management, and policing systems, highlighting the importance of understanding the "hybridity of the civil and paramilitary model of policing" that operates in the Hong Kong now under China's sovereignty and the debate surrounding the perceived delegitimization of the Hong Kong police during the anti-extradition bill protests of 2019 and in their aftermath, as well as the possibility of rebuilding police–community relations.

The section that follows, *Social Strain and Political Dynamics*, includes two articles: Bryan Tzu Wei Luk’s “The 2019 Social Unrest: Revisiting the Pathway of Radicalization in Hong Kong from 2008 to 2012 – An Explorative Approach with General Strain Theory” that attempts to provide a criminological perspective in exploring and explaining the causes and the evolution of radicalization in the context of Hong Kong through the scope of Robert Agnew’s general strain theory, focusing on the socio-economic factors – economic inequality, harsher living environment, degrading quality of life and increasing socio-cultural tensions, and Jinhyeok Jang’s “Another Dynamics of Contention in Hong Kong: Dimensionality in Roll Call Voting in the 6th Term Legislative Council, 2016-2020” that studies the dynamics of contention in the Legislative Council of Hong Kong (LegCo).

Before closing with Jason Hung’s commentary as mentioned above, this special issue features a postscript article by Emile Kok-Kheng Yeoh, “From the Hong Kong Anti-Extradition Bill Protests to China’s Wuhan Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia Outbreak: Implications of Two Crises for the Chinese Communist Party’s Governance Model”, investigating how the seven-decade iron-fist rule of the Chinese Communist Party has come under two consecutive unusual severe tests from 2019 to 2020 that have served to reveal the nature and global implications of the CCP’s mode of governance in general and the current Xi Jinping administration in particular.

These are indeed extraordinary times.

Before ending this introduction, we would like to thank all the contributing authors of the articles in the various sections of this special issue and the anonymous reviewers for their invaluable efforts in making the publication of this 2020 *CCPS* special issue of *For Rights and Liberty: The Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill (Anti-ELAB) Protest Movement and Hong Kong’s Struggle for Democracy* possible. As usual,

we are also grateful to Miss Wu Chien-yi (吳千宜) for the journal's website construction and maintenance. The responsibility for any errors and inadequacies that remain is of course fully mine.

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Chief Editor

*Contemporary Chinese Political Economy and
Strategic Relations: An International Journal*

Notes

1. “‘They want freedom the same way we wanted it’: Cheers and support in Lithuania as Hong Kong embraces the ‘Baltic Way’”, *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), 24th August 2019 <<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3024175/they-want-freedom-same-way-we-wanted-it-cheers-and-support>>.
2. *Jūjutsu* (柔術) is a Japanese martial art of close combat, using no weapon or only a short weapon, for defeating an armed and armoured opponent. While the contextual differences need to be recognised, reference to *jūjutsu* here does bring to mind the Bruce Lee-inspired “Be water” tactic Hong Kong’s 2019 protesters adopted in contrast to the “occupy” approach of 2014. (Antony Dapiran (2019). “Be Water!”: seven tactics that are winning Hong Kong’s democracy revolution - The strategies of Hong Kong protesters, honed through weekly clashes with police, offer a masterclass to activists worldwide. *New Statesman*, 1st August 2019. <<https://www.newstatesman.com/world/2019/08/be-water-seven-tactics-are-winning-hong-kongs-democracy-revolution>>)
3. Bob Irwin and Gordon Faison (1978). *Why nonviolence? – Introduction to nonviolence theory and strategy*, edited by David H. Albert (revised by Bob Irwin, December 1983), New Society Publishers, 1984, with editorial

note, 2001.

4. Gene Sharp (2010). *From dictatorship to democracy: A conceptual framework for liberation*, 4th U.S. edition, Boston, MA: The Albert Einstein Institution (originally published in Bangkok in 1993 by the Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Burma; 1st U.S. edition, 2002). (See pages 35-37.)
5. “曲 : thomas dgx yhl; 詞 (中文) : 眾連登仔; 詞 (英文) : 七劍浣春秋”, *LIHKG (連登)*, 7th September 2019 <<https://lihkg.com/thread/1547782/page/1>>.

* Dr Emile Kok-Kheng Yeoh (楊國慶) is the editor of the Scopus-indexed triannual academic journal *Contemporary Chinese Political Economy and Strategic Relations: An International Journal (C.C. Pol ec S.R.)* jointly published by the Institute of China and Asia-Pacific Studies of Taiwan’s National Sun Yat-sen University and the Department of Administrative Studies and Politics, Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya, and on the Comité de Arbitraje Internacional, *México y la Cuenca del Pacífico (MyCP)* (registro en Emerging Sources Citation Index - WoS, SciELO Citation Index - WoS, Redalyc, SciELO México, Índice de CONACYT, CLASE, Lat-Am-Studies, LATINDEX, LatinREV, REDIB, Biblat, Catálogo de la Biblioteca Nacional de España, publicación del Departamento de Estudios del Pacífico, Centro Universitario de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, Universidad de Guadalajara, México). He holds a Ph.D. on ethnopolitics in socioeconomic development from the University of Bradford, West Yorkshire, England (1998), was an associate professor at the University of Malaya, department head of the Department of Administrative Studies and Politics, Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya, from 1st August 2016 to 31st July 2018, director of the Institute of China Studies, University of Malaya, from 13th March 2008 to 1st January 2014, and the founder and editor of the institute’s then SJR top-tier Scopus-indexed triannual academic journal,

International Journal of China Studies (Vol. 1, 2010 – Vol. 5, 2014). His latest publications include “Between Scylla and Charybdis? – Emerging *New Malaysia* and its enigmatic relations with China” (journal article, *Bandung: Journal of the Global South*, 2020), “Malaysia: Perception of contemporary China and its economic, political and societal determinants” (journal article, *The Pacific Review*, 2019), “China-Malaysia trade, investment, and cooperation in the contexts of China-ASEAN integration and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road construction” (journal article, *The Chinese Economy*, 2018), “Environmental policy in Malaysia with reference to Taiwan’s New Southbound Policy” (book chapter, Wenzao University Press, 2018), “マレーシア —— 親中心理を支える構造 ” [Malaysia: the fundamental structure of pro-China sentiment]” (book chapter, University of Tokyo Press, 2018), “Malaysia-Taiwan relations and Taiwan’s New Southbound Policy” (journal article, *Malaysian Journal of International Relations*, 2018). <Email: yeohkk@um.edu.my, emileyeo@gmail.com / Website: <http://emileyeo5.wix.com/emileyeoh>>

Timeline of Crisis Unfolding

