Contextualised Destruction:

Tactics of urban protest between liberalism and democracy

Hoi Yee Cheung
supervisor: Leonard Ma

Urban Studies, Estonian Academy of Arts

EKA

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This thesis investigates the role of the temporary use of public spaces in social movements for crowd engagement, and analyses how political opinions can be expressed in space through different protest tactics. Although both traditional protest tactics and those used in the 2019 Hong Kong pro-democracy protests aimed to block the flow of movement across cities, they used different methods of achieving this goal. Traditional tactics aimed to block the flow of transport across the city, whereas the 2019 Hong Kong protests targeted two immobile spaces centralised within the flow of capital in the city; the railway network and the airport. The aim of this was to disrupt the city's 'normal'. Through the cooperation of non-violent and violent strategies, these various forms of tactic have intertwined with the daily practices of Hong Kong lives since the protests started in the city a year ago. Studying the destruction caused by the Hong Kong 2019 protests allows us to develop new insights into the configuration of urban spaces.

1. Introduction

Non-violent transform as the strategy

Protesting on streets or in the public spaces is not a strange occurrence in Hong Kong. Every year there are numerous demonstrations, marches and rallies organised in the city to demand various topics, from social justices to global issues. Following the example of legendary pro-democracy protests of the last century, such as those led by Mohandas Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther king, historically most protests in Hong Kong have remained rational and non-violent. In democratic societies, protesters peacefully march or sit-in at the registered location to express their opposition to social injustices, often using visuals such as banners, costumes, posters or sculptures to gain media and passer-by awareness. A follow-up process ensues, conducted by politicians, to rationally solve the injustice. This may involve implementation of appropriate legislation or policies. However, this theory has gradually become problematic in Hong Kong, a society neither democratic nor authoritarian, but a mixture of both.

One of the three territories of Hong Kong became a British colony in 1842 after the Opium War, and the second was gained in 1860. The British gained full sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1898, through gaining a lease of the final territory for ninety-nine years. When the end of the lease period approached in 1984, the British and Chinese governments signed *The Sino–British Joint Declaration* to decide city's structure after the transfer of sovereignty after the lease ended in 1997. The Joint Declaration allowed Hong Kong to maintain a democracy after the post-sovereignty-transfer, since China is governed under the socioeconomic system of communism. This was termed the 'One Country, Two Systems' policy, which would last for fifty years post-transfer. Under this policy, the special administrative region (SAR) of Hong Kong would benefit from a 'high degree of autonomy', which would allow the city to retain its capitalist socioeconomic system under the rule of communist China. The introduction of universal suffrage was promised as the 'ultimate aim' when electing the chief executive of Hong Kong and this condition was outlined on the Hong Kong SAR Basic Law.

However, on the 31 August 2014, the one-party-ruled government in Beijing exercised their ultimate

power to interpret this Basic Law. This enabled the Beijing government to maintain the proportion of pro-regime politicians in political institutions to maintain the majority. The election systems to decide upon the two ruling forces of the city remained unchanged. The chief executive of Hong Kong is elected by a committee appointed by the Beijing government. Within the Legislative Council (LegCo), 35 seats are elected by the means of universal suffrage, however 30 seats are elected by a functional constituency made up of representatives of particular industries. Therefore, pro-democracy politicians, activists and a large proportion of the population felt that the 'high degree of autonomy' from the Joint Declaration was diminished and expressed their dissents regarding how the Beijing government had interpreted the basic law. They expressed this frustration through the seventy-nine-day occupation movement at the central business district and the three busiest shopping districts (Admiralty, Causeway Bay, Tsim Sha Tsui, and Mong Kok), as part of the Umbrella Movement in 2014.

Even Though the Umbrella Movement was not successful in its aim to seek more democracy in the city, it is notable to the city's democratic process in some regards. It sparked a quarrel between pacifist protesters and radical protesters, who argued about whether or not protests should be violent or non-violent at their core. This argument profoundly influenced the city's democratic development. Moreover, most importantly, this movement deepened the resentment towards governments by the public, and also cultivated a distrust towards traditional democratic parties. This prompted a new dimension in the pro-democracy camp in the city, with groups of (mostly) youths leading political activists. These youths started to become more prominent, in 2012, when some teenage students led the Anti-National Education movement, including fifteen-years-old Joshua Wong. Wong, his fellow activists, including secondary school students, university students, parents and teachers, attended rallies to protest against the controversial 'Moral and National Education' proposal to the curriculum. Controversies over the proposal indoctrinated patriotic information, such as glorifying the Leninist-style 'democratic centralism' and judging the nature of multi-party politics in the West as 'a fierce interparty rivalry that makes the people suffer.'[1] This protest successfully stopped the reform in national education. However, despite this success, protesting in Hong Kong has gradually lost its effectiveness in getting conclusive responses from the government.

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1   Antony Dapiran, *City of Protest: A Recent History of Dissent in Hong Kong* (United Kingdom: Penguin Books, 2017), pp.65

img.02 Admiralty encampment, Umbrella Movement in 2014

img.03 Causeway Bay encampment, Umbrella Movement in 2014

img.04 Tsim Sha Tsui encampment, Umbrella Movement in 2014

img.05 Mong Kok encampment, Umbrella Movement in 2014

Wong became well-known during the Umbrella Movement as one of the leading figures alongside pan-democratic politicians based at the encampment in Admiralty, which was the first occupation encampment and had the biggest crowd among other occupation encampments. In the Admiralty encampment, the pan-democrats' conservative approach was to pressure the government using the size of the accumulated crowd and their solidarity. They valued the existing non-violent method in the movement. However, with no adequate response from the government, different approaches were taken at different occupation. Some protesters, who were already sceptical about the pan-democrats, refused to develop new forms of protest encourage the government to heed public opinion. Instead, these groups directed their confrontations towards police and counter-protesters at the Mong Kok encampment, in the hope that increasing disputes in society would pressure the authorities for a political reform. This aggressive approach was developed from a 'localist' camp which became more popular in the city in 2012.[2] Generally speaking, all localist groups share the same opposition to mainland China. However, there is a diverse array of political views between groups of localist when considering the democratic future of Hong Kong. A broad spectrum of views are present, from those who sustain the 'One Country, Two Systems' view, to those who want independence, with various avocations from non-violent to advocate radicalism. Localist groups are highly active in protesting for social problems which would attack the Hong Konger's identity. One example is the dispute over the tradition of street food vendors in Mong Kok on the Lunar New Year in 2016, which will be discussed later.

The pro-democracy protest in 2019 in Hong Kong illustrated the effectiveness of transforming the pacifist approach from a fundamental value to just one potential protest strategy in a society in which full democracy has been limited. The protest was sparked by the Hong Kong government, who exploited a homicide case which occurred in Taiwan, to propose an amendment bill to the extradition law. The homicide involved two Hong Kong nationals, and the murder suspect returned to Hong Kong after conducting the crime. The Hong Kong government disregarded many disagreements against the extradition bill, including two reports from the Hong Kong Bar Association which argued that the details of the amendment were highly questionable, and two separate peaceful marches undertaken by a total of three million people.[3] After a month

2   Ying-Ho Kwong, "The Growth of 'Localism' in Hong Kong A New Path for the Democracy Movement?," *China Perspectives* 3 (2016): pp.62

3   Additional Observations of the Hong Kong Bar Association ("HKBA") on the HKSAR Government's proposed further changes to the Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2019

of frequent and severe protests, the bill was not withdrawn, in line with public demand. As a result, protesters realised the need to transform their 'non-violent' form of protesting to an alternate strategy. In 2003, on the 1st July, five hundred thousand people marched to oppose the Article 23 legislation. This has since become a date of annual mass protest in the city, which also escalated the pro-democracy protests in 2019. The day reached a climax when an aggressive group of protesters stormed into the LegCo building. This was not an attack on any building or person, but instead an assault on the Hong Kong political system and, more specifically, the post-sovereignty-transfer system since 1997. Protester only vandalised objects that symbolised the post-handover governing, for instance, the HKSAR emblem and seats of the functional constituency politicians at the chamber. Portraits of presidents of the LegCo after 1997 were sprayed black.[4]
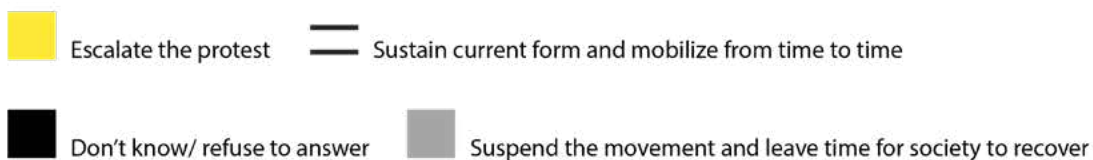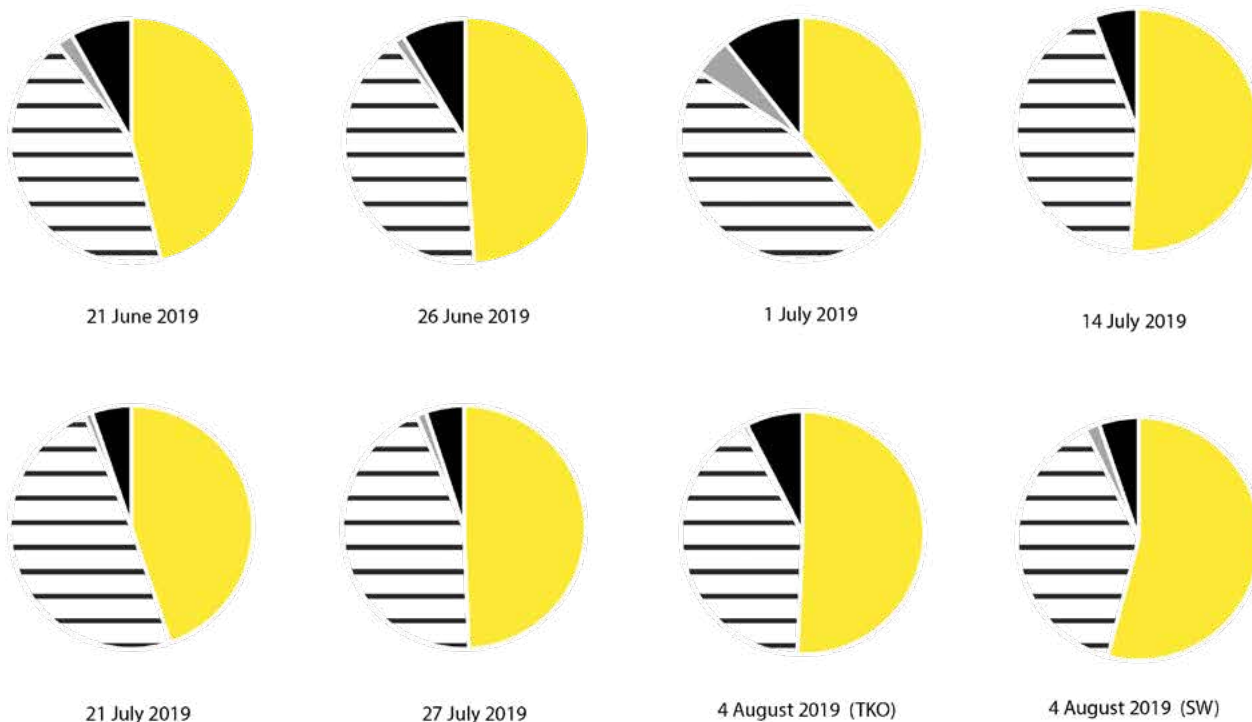
Hong Kong protesters slowly became receptive to the methods of these radical protests, in specific, protests during the Anti-World Trade Organisation (WTO) rally in 2005. Protesters from different countries, including radical and determined South Korean farmers, paralyzed transportation on the Northern Hong Kong Island, where this conference was held. This inspired a new outlook of the Hong Kong protesters, away from pacifism. Nevertheless, protests with any violent actions are demonised by the mainstream media and the government of Hong Kong, which have a draconian response towards rioting. In the 2019 pro-democracy protests, traditional pan-democrats were generally worried that storming the LegCo building would cause a loss of public support. Because of this, some pan-democrats tried to stop protesters when they were breaking the glass windows of the LegCo building, however protesters were determined to escalate the protest and the pan-democrats' attempts were unsuccessful. An onsite survey from The Chinese University of Hong Kong was conducted in twelve protest events in the period from 9th June to 5th August 2019, to better understand the protesters.[5] The survey included a sample from the protest during the day on 1 July, hours before the LegCo invasion. When asked what they thought the next step of the movement should be, 39.1 percent of the 1169

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https://www.hkba.org/sites/default/files/Additional%20Observations%20of%20the%20Hong%20Kong%20Bar%20Association%20%28%E2%80%9CHKBA%E2%80%9D%29%20on%20the%20HKSAR%20Government%27s%20proposed%20further%20changes%20to%20the%20Fugitive%20Offenders%20and%20Mutual%20Legal%20Assistance%20in%20Criminal%20Matters%20%20Legislation%20%28Amendment%29%20Bill%202019_0.pdf

4   Holmes Chan, "The Writing on the Wall: Understanding the Messages Left by Protesters during the Storming of the Hong Kong Legislature," *Hong Kong Free Press*, 2019, https://hongkongfp.com/2019/07/04/writing-wall-understanding-messages-left-protesters-storming-hong-kong-legislature/.

5   Francis L. F. Lee, Gary Tang, Samson Yuen, and Edmund W. Cheng, "Onsite Survey Findings in Hong Kong's Anti-Extradition Bill Protests", Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Survey, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, August 2019.

"If the government insists to only 'suspend' the bill but do not make any further concession, what should be the next step of the movement?"

| 21 June 2019 | 26 June 2019 | 1 July 2019 | 14 July 2019 |

| 21 July 2019 | 27 July 2019 | 4 August 2019 (TKO) | 4 August 2019 (SW) |

Escalate the protest

Sustain current form and mobilize from time to time

Don't know/ refuse to answer

Suspend the movement and leave time for society to recover

Data from: "Onsite Survey Findings in Hong Kong's Anti-Extradition Bill Protests"

responses answered that they would prefer to 'escalate the protest'.'[6] This determination was manifested by Brian Leung Kai Ping, one of the protesters who invaded the LegCo building. During the protest, he stood up, removed his face mask and shouted at the chamber "Hong Kongers have nothing more to lose!"[7] Because of the clear targets of the invasion, this action was taken as a radical strategy. Support did not fade away, but continued during the second month of the protests, with both non-violent and radical tactics.

Mobilisation of the crowd and the thesis methods

This thesis analyses public participation in expressing political views in public spaces in order to disrupt the status quo. However, this thesis only analysed the approach of the protesters; it does not attempt to cover the whole 2019 protest movement, and therefore does not cover the view of general society towards the protests. In the case of the Hong Kong 2019 protests, protesters adopted a philosophy from the local martial art artist Bruce Lee – 'Be water'- as the doctrine of the protest. Water is formless and only shaped by its container; it is invisible in the form of steam and can become solid in the form of ice; it can be as destructive to our lives as a flood and as constructive to our lives as a dam. Protesters practice both violent and non-violent concepts as strategies to create different protest tactics, which is comparable to the flexibility of water. Because a broad spectrum of tactics are used, each with a different degree of defiance, this allows protesters to choose for themselves in which they want to participate, which increases crowd engagement. This freedom widens the inclusiveness of the protest and, as a result, accumulates more supporters in society. Supporters with different protest approaches are included as protesters, either in the most typical and peaceful tactics of rallies or marches with public meeting permits, or in activities with radical strategies, such as unauthorised demonstrations, work stoppages, class boycotts, market boycotts, and vandalism. As well as these standard protesting methods, Hong Kong 2019 protesters also had a myriad of creative tactics that allowed supporters to participate in protests in their daily city lives. For example, protesters would randomly airdrop protest information to others in public

6   Ibid.

7   Holmes Chan, "'Taking Back the Legislature': What Happened during the 3-Hour Occupation That Shook Hong Kong," *Hong Kong Free Press*, July 3, 2019, https://hongkongfp.com/2019/07/03/taking-back-legislature-happened-inside-3-hour-occupation-shook-hong-kong/.

img.08 One of the many 'Lennon walls'

img. 09 One of G20 global advertisements

img.10 the Hong Kong human chain, 23 Aug

places, scream out political slogans from their windows at a specific time daily, and weaponize their power as consumers to buycott and boycott businesses based on their political connection or tendency. The streetscape in Hong Kong is similar to most of the big cities in the world, with countless unauthorised posters and flyers plastered on walls Abundant 'Lennon walls', providing information about the protests, were established as protesters reclaimed public spaces such as subways or building walls across the city.

Beyond mobilising public participation within the city, protesters also focused on building international alliances. Rallies at the airport were organised, alongside an online crowdfunding campaign to advertise the protest on various international newspapers to pursue attention from world leaders at the 2019 G20 conference. A second global announcement was advertised on 1 October, to declare the defiant determination of Hong Kong on the China national day. On the 23rd August 1989, a two-million-human chain was formed as a protest, crossing three Baltic countries, and named the Baltic Way. This inspired HK protesters in 2019 to form their own chain, named the Hong Kong Human Chain. Protesters organised different tactics shifting between non-violent and violent strategies toward a common goal.

Crowd mobilisation in social movements has largely benefited from the comprehensive digital communication technologies which have been present since the Twitter Revolution in the 2010s. Similarly, the 2019 pro-democracy protest in Hong Kong mobilised public participation using social media by developing a sense of inclusiveness in society. Although some consider contemporary occupy movements, such as Occupy Wall Street and Arab Spring, to be leaderless, other critics argue that these merely use alternative forms of leaders, rather than being leaderless. The 2019 protests were also not leaderless, in the sense that protesters had the freedom to create, mobilise and participate in protest tactics. They could become involved in planning and revising the tactics, promoting and arranging protest events, joining to evaluate the success or failure of tactics, and finally, developing new ideas for future tactics. Indeed, Professor Francis L.F. Lee, one of the authors of the Chinese University of Hong Kong's onsite survey, described the organisation of the Hong Kong 2019 protests as a 'practice of open source.'[8] Computer scientist Steven Weber described open source as 'a way of organising production of making things jointly', meaning that each protest tactic is a result of

8   Oiwan Lam, "The Organisation and Future of Hong Kong's 'Open Source' Anti-Extradition Law Movement," *Hong Kong Free Press*, July 21, 2019, https://hongkongfp.com/2019/07/21/organisation-future-hong-kongs-open-source-anti-extradition-law-movement/.

a collective process.[9] Protesters discussed and exchanged ideas to formulate new protest tactics on a local discussion forum, LIHKG, as well as through Telegram, a smartphone communication application. Use of LIHKG and Telegram allows participants to vote on tactics, which facilitates a more democratic process. Unlike in previous occupational movements, where participants had only passive involvement in protests, participants in the 2019 protests have practical impacts on the development of the movement.

Protesters may volunteer in the organisation team and coordinate particular tactics. Pro-democracy political parties also organised some rallies and marches, but they remained merely as the organiser teams of specific protest tactics, instead of a representative of the movement. This open-source format of organising the protests created a sense of community through the individual contributions of protesters integrated with the entire movement. In the same manner that crowds have been transformed by social media, online platforms have boosted the mobilisation of and participation in social movements by accounting for another power of emotion which emerged on social media. All ideas of protest tactics in the Hong Kong 2019 protests were integrated from numerous opinions on the internet. The objective mechanisms of the cause of the tactics have are subjective, based on the opinions of collective contributors. Taking the tactic of the Hong Kong Human Chain as an example, a piece of Estonian news interviewed a Hong Konger who is resident in Estonia. She believed that the Hong Kong human chain was based by on her suggestion of recreating the Baltic Way on LIHKG.[10] However, the organisation team pointed out that they carried out the stunt with reference to a political critic, and no one in their team was acquainted with the girl who claimed she gave them the idea.[11] This thesis analyses the temporary use of public spaces by protesters through the participation and mobilisation of crowds, using the example of the 2019 pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong, with cross-references to immobile occupy movements, to express the political opinions of the public through disrupting the flow of capital. Case examples are presented to understand the tactics used in the protests and how they impacted the city. This thesis aimed to provide a different perspective on the impacts of these tactics on society, such as the operation of the city and the economic structure.

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9   Steve Weber, *The Success of Open Source* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005). pp.224

10   Silver Tambur, "Estonia-Based Hongkonger Proposes the Baltic Way-Inspired Human Chain in Hong Kong," *Estonian World*, August 21, 2019, https://estonianworld.com/life/estonia-based-hongkonger-proposes-the-baltic-way-inspired-human-chain-in-hong-kong/.

11   personal conversation with the organisation team

2. Urban protest tactics

Protest tactics benefited and struggled in the age of social media

Civil disobedience since the 2010s is not limited to tactics which aim to express protesters' solidarity, such as marches and public rallies at typical protest destinations, nor tactics which aim to express protesters' anger towards social injustice with strikes, vandalism, or even rioting. These civil disobediences focussed on shaping possibilities and alternatives to the status quo, using political expression to create opportunities for reform. Michel de Certeau discovered the 'la perruque' phenomenon, in which the politically weak members of society are able to use specific opportunities to their advantage within their restricted environment.[12]

In 2011, the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement protested against inequality in the economy, since significant institutions on Wall Street – major banks and multinational corporations – used their power over the global economy to influence the democratic process.[13] Activists started by occupying Wall Street, one of the most important locations to the global economy, in peaceful protests at Zuccotti Park. Later, they launched a series of working groups, such as the Alternative Banking Group and Occupy Bank, to consider an alternative financial system. The political slogan in the OWS movement, 'We are the 99%', illustrated the income and wealth inequality in the US; 1 per cent of the US population captured 40 per cent of the nation's wealth in 2011. Hence, this minority group had significantly more advantages within the society than the vast majority of the population, and these advantages had spread to political inequality. Globalisation has structurally transformed the means of labour and capital. OWS protesters also utilised their role as factors in the globalisation production line. They aimed to disrupt the circulation of commodities on the West Coast of the US by occupying the Port of Oakland. Jasper Bernes' analysis contextualised the background of the tactics which countered the

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12   Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). pp.28

13   "About," About Us | OccupyWallSt.org, accessed May 11, 2020, https://occupywallst.org/about/.

planetary flow of production. Commodities are shipped worldwide through a global logistical system, which has become a vital factor of the flow of consumption and production within globalisation. Bernes' stated: "Logistics, we might say, is war by other means, war by means of trade. A war of supply chains that conquers new territories by suffusing them with capillarial distributions, ensuring that commodities flow with ease to the farthest extremities." [14] Through occupation of places which are not supposed to have encampments and blockages at places which can disrupt the capitalist means of productivity, protesters have found alternatives to the challenges of suppressive environments and the current social structure within globalisation.

Although the OWS movement against an unfair economic power did not manage to restructure the economic system, it was successful in using social media as a tool to create largescale public assembly. A study noted of the OWS movements in the US, "…occupying space and provoking conflict to garner media attention and inspire participation, making visible the disproportionate influence of monied interests, and creating a symbolic contrast between the concerns of the powerful and those of everyone else…" [15] News coverage of the grassroots campaign at Zuccotti Park had quickly evolved into an occupation movement across the US and also the world, and a nationalised conversation on systemic inequalities was widely circulated on international news, with further spread on social media. Contemporary civil disobediences not only take place in urban spaces with physical protests, but also in digital space, as virtual protests. It merely takes a few clicks to post, comment, and share news or political messages, and people are more open to engaging in political discourses on the internet than participating in physical protests. In this many-to-many communication eco-system, with the high prevalence of smart devices in society, Facebook and Twitter, and many other online platforms, have become critical factors in leaderless and decentralised social movements since the OWS movement, to mobilise participants, and promote and sustain the movement. Most of the commonly used networking platforms were launched in the mid-2000s, and by the 2010s, they had become an inseparable part of life for the majority of the global population. The role of this technology in the modern world has transformed social movements through its ability to circulate information in numerous forms within society.

Social media is useful for coordination, and this inclusive decision-making process, without the

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14   Jasper Bernes, "Logistics, Counterlogistics and the Communist Prospect ," *Endnotes*, n.d., https://endnotes.org.uk/issues/3/en/jasper-bernes-logistics-counterlogistics-and-the-communist-prospect. pp.10

15   Jeffrey S. Juris, "Reflections on #Occupy Everywhere: Social Media, Public Space, and Emerging Logics of Aggregation," *American Ethnologist* 39, no. 2 (2012): pp. 259-279, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1425.2012.01362.x. pp.268

presence of a 'leader', is an effective tool to coordinate physical protests across space. Paolo Gerbaudo argued that this freedom on the internet allows people to express their opinions and feelings freely, leading to the emergence 'cyber-populism'. In a study on contemporary civil disobediences within the digital era, he pointed out: "this line of analysis emphasises the neo-anarchist and individualist element of contemporary forms of protest communication, but it seems to overlook …the fact that the use of social network sites has been accompanied by the rise of new forms of leadership, rather than leaderlessness."[16] Contrary to the idea of representative democracy, as described by political theorist William Davies "…most people are content to stay home and let someone else speak on their behalf…", the borderless online dissemination of information helped to facilitate and reinforce the political determination of protests. Nevertheless, this public visibility also brought public disagreement from opponents. Davies elaborated: "[Politics] becomes less about peaceful political representation, and more about mobilisation. Whether on the street or online, crowds are not a proxy for something else, as, for example, a parliament is meant to be a proxy for its electorate or a judge is the face of the justice system."[17] Following Gerbaudo's 'cyber-populist' argument, the crowds on social media have become a model of an alternative form of counter-representation to address reforms in anti-establishment protest movements.

The OWS movement challenged the neoliberal status quo. However, Gerbaudo argued that use of the internet in grassroots participatory protests demonstrated how freedom on the internet could be exploited to build up enthusiasm among protesters because every internet user was given a chance to voice out their opinions publicly: "The 2011 activists opted for a more pragmatic cyber-populist strategy of occupation of the digital main stream, making use of the powerful capabilities of social network sites like Facebook and Twitter as the best suited means to fulfilling their aspiration of constructing a "politics of the indignant citizen"." [18] Because personal opinions are freely shared on social media, and as a result of its instant culture, the value of information has been redirected from trustworthiness to publicity and, as a result, the boundaries between knowledge and opinion are now blurry. A study of journalism within the age of prevailing social media by Ricardo Gandour pointed out the algorithms of social media which, based on user preferences and their

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16   Paolo Gerbaudo, *The Mask and the Flag: Populism, Citizenism and Global Protest* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017). pp.137

17   William Davies, *Nervous States: How Feeling Took over the World* (London: Vintage, 2019) – ch. democracy of feeling

18   Gerbaudo, *The Mask and the Flag* pp.139

trace of use, steer the spread of information to individual users.[19] This mechanism on networking platforms added addition meaning to the social media communication pattern, many-to-many, among each cluster of likeminded people. This unprecedented pattern of outreach of information on the digital space spawned a fertile environment for information operations. Since eye-catching information, such as rumours and gossip, is intertwined with traditional news spreading throughout each cluster, this digital revolution facilitated both left and right populist movements. With reference to Davies' views regarding the advancement in technology and internet and the prevailing social media in society, "In the digital age, that vacuum of hard knowledge becomes rapidly filled by rumours, fantasy and guesswork, some of which is quickly twisted and exaggerated to suit a preferred narrative" [20] social media has become an ideal environment for spreading weaponised information or political propaganda and conspiracy theories, or to become a battlefield of information war.

Over the past several years, there have been multiple cases of information manipulation in democratic processes on social media, for example, a study from the University of Washington analysed the #BlackLivesMatter movement on Twitter in 2016.[21] This study showed that Russian information operated simultaneously on both pro-BlackLivesMatter and anti-BlackLivesMatter to build up partisan discourses separately at left-leaning and right-leaning communities. Peter Pomerantse's study on the logic of the Kremlin's information warfare states: "The Kremlin's fluid use of ideology allows it to ally with an array of actors and to promote a range of principles that foster divisions within the West."[22] The #BlackLivesMatter movement amplified the polarised conversation in the society with ideological news/opinions, which provided an opportunity for Russians to orchestrate the election with cynicism. "…In showing that democracy is so easily manipulated, that everyone and everything is for sale, the Kremlin is dashing people's hopes for the possibility of an alternative politics while simultaneously insisting that the West is just as corrupt as Russia."[23]

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19   Ricardo Gandour, "A New Information Environment How Digital Fragmentation Is Shaping the Way We Produce and Consume News," 2016. pp. 9

20   Davies, *Nervous States* – ch. introduction

21   Kate Starbird, Ahmer Arif, and Tom Wilson, "Disinformation as Collaborative Work," *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction* 3, no. CSCW (July 2019): pp. 1-26, https://doi.org/10.1145/3359229. pp.7

22   Peter Pomerantsev, "The Kremlin's Information War," *Journal of Democracy* 26, no. 4 (2015): pp. 40-50, https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2015.0074. pp.43

23   ibid. pp.42

The occupation logic within in a limited participation

"Protest camps, like protest tactics more generally, are not just practical means to achieve specific ends. It is reductive to understand them simply as "instruments" of protest, whose efficiency can be objectively assessed by measuring their capacity for disruption and the pressure they put on power-holders. Rather, protest tactics are always to be understood also as a form of communication, a symbolic practice that conveys a certain understanding of the present society—its problems and possible solutions— to both their participants and to various publics; supporters, sympathisers, and opponents." [24]

In the case of Hong Kong, there is another layer of struggle in the democratic process, a frustration of knowing that even if social injustices are voiced publicly, they are unlikely to be improved. Still, there are other mechanical factors to block democratic reforms. Antony Dapiran, a Hong Kong-based writer and lawyer, analysed the democratic development of the city from 1986 to 2016, and suggested that civil disobediences in Hong Kong represented the livelihood in the city. For example, during the colonial era, people in Hong Kong enjoyed free speech and free assembly, however, with limited participation in politics; the British government appointed the governors of the city, and the administration was partly elected. Also, none of the governments consulted the public opinion on the city's future after the handover, when British and Chinese governments discussed the detail of the handover in the 1980s. Over the years, Colonial Hong Kong has been described several times as the only place that was 'liberal but not democratic.[25] The Sion-British Joint Declaration stated that the political structure, which an imbalance of liberalism and democracy, should be sustained for fifty years after the handover. Therefore, Dapiran explained this uncommon combination as having sufficient freedom except in political participation in post-handover Hong Kong:

"If they are unhappy with government policy, they are neither able to 'vote out' the government

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24   Gerbaudo, *The Mask and the Flag* pp.160

25   Dapiran, *City of Protest* pp.94

nor to participate meaningfully in the policy-making process. However, Hong Kong does continue to enjoy the freedoms of expression and assembly, among other fundamental rights and liberties guaranteed by the Basic Law and the Bill of Right Ordinance."[26]

He suggested that the change of final sovereign power from a democratic multi-party state to an autocratic single-party rule led to the imbalance of liberality and democracy becoming unstable.

"While some of the protests of the 2000s were successful, many failed to achieve their goals. These failures convinced activists that … the imbalanced governance system in which corporate and business interests were privileged by the LegCo functional constituency system and the chief executive election committee. It was clear that the government remained free to pursue any policy agenda it chose regardless of media outcry or public opinion, provided that it had the support of economic and social elites." [27]

In the same vein, Daniel Garrett also pointed out that protests in Hong Kong not only represented the freedom of speech and freedom of assembly, granted from the 'One country, Two systems' policy, but also represented restrictions from this policy to the city's democracy. For example, he mentioned a clique of 'patriotic class' in the economic and political system of Hong Kong. Clique members can have seats at the cabinet and council of the chief executive in Hong Kong, as well as be nominated to join congresses in the Chinese government. [28] Simon Shen, a scholar in international relations, pointed out that those in these official positions do not necessarily need to be skilled, although patriotism is vital. Shen noted that the collusion between the bureaucrats and entrepreneurs within the patriotic clique became more visible in recent years, and it evolved into an erosion to the value of 'One Country, Two Systems'.[29] The Umbrella Movement in 2014 is evidence of

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26   ibid.

27   ibid. pp.67

28   Garrett, *Counter-Hegemonic Resistance in China's Hong Kong* pp.12 -13

29   Simon Shen, "'One Country, Two System 3.0' Series: Destroying Corporate Freedom 'State Corporatism,'" (blog), November 25, 2019, https://simonshen.blog/2019/11/25/%e3%80%8c%e4%b8%80%e5%9c%8b%e5%85%a9%e5%88%b63-0%e3%80%8d%e7%b3%bb%e5%88%97%ef%bc%9a%e6%af%80%e6%bb%85%e4%bc%81%e6%a5%ad%e8%87%aa%e7%94%b1%e7%9a%84%e3%80%8c%e5%9c%8b%e5%ae%b6%e6%b3%95%e5%9c%98/.

all of these drawbacks in HK's democratic process.

Hong Kong Basic Law was drafted based on the Sino-British Joint Declaration.[30] The method of selecting the chief executive was unclearly written with an 'ultimate aim' to adopt universal suffrage for the election in 2017 in the Basic Law.[31] However, the controversial white paper from the Beijing government clarified the 'One country, Two systems' policy. It accentuated that the concept of 'one country' exceeded the autonomy in Hong Kong: "The high degree of autonomy of HKSAR is not an inherent power, but one that comes solely from the authorisation by the central leadership…It is the power to run local affairs as authorised by the central leadership."[32] One of the leaders of the seventy-nine day Umbrella Movement, a legal academic named Benny Tai Yiu Ting, suggested a long period of occupation in the area of Central – the political and economic headquarters of the city – as a tactic of non-violent protest. He hoped that this would create disruptions to the thing most valued in the city– economy interests– and pressured the government into negotiation e for political reform.[33]

In the end, Tai changed the location to Admiralty, adjacent to the government headquarters, and walking distance to Central. Besides occupying this location, which is linked to the central business district, protesters also occupied three other sites in the city, all of which shopping districts, i.e. tourist districts. Paolo Gerbaudo stated that: "The 2010s occupations aimed at constructing a new "agora", which, like the ancient assembly place of Athenian democracy, would be designed to gather the citizenry and involve it in public discussions, the most elementary of political acts". A sense of community among protesters emerged along with the encampments of temporary infrastructure on the reclaimed spaces in the Umbrella Movement, especially the Harcourt Village, or Umbrella Square in Admiralty.[34] Using the name of the street on which most of the encampments were located, Harcourt Road, the Harcourt Village was established progressively. Hundreds of sleeping camps were organising along the street with number order. A homework zone was established for student protesters, who joined the occupation after school and continued to go to school on the next day. The

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30   Sino-British Joint Declaration, Article 3(4)

31   Basic Law Article 45

32   The practice of the 'one country, two system policy white paper - http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2014/08/23/content_281474982986578.htm

33   Benny You Ting Tai, "The Greatest Lethal Weapon of Citizens' Disobedience," Occupy Central with Love and Peace- http://oclp.hk/index.php?route=occupy/article_detail&article_id=23&category_id=1, January 16, 2013.

34   Gerbaudo, *The Mask and the Flag* pp.159

img.11-14 Harcourt Village in Umbrella Movement, 2014

village also included a main stage for speeches, discussions and movie screenings, a shower tent, a library, and tents for supplies from food and water to sleeping bags and toiletries which were donated by protesters and supporters. First aid stations and scout stations were also present. The occupation was well-equipped to provide everything the occupiers might need, including events that occupiers may be interested in to fill their time. This aimed to develop an open, public and inclusive participation. The anxiety of society regarding the eroded 'One country, Two systems' policy fostered a utopia of those in favour of democratic Hong Kong in the occupied zones.

For Gerbaudo, the occupation tactic combined both the participatory spirits of forming an autonomous community in the anarchist aspect, as well as a focus on gaining popular mobilisation using a public stage in the populist aspects, the protest camps, which Gerbaudo described "shifted from a communal and countercultural space to a public space, a redefinition aided by its central location and reassuring external appearance." [35] [36] However, because of the location precisely at the centre of the city in the Umbrella Movement, occupations were heavily rebuked for causing considerable disruption to the city's road traffic. The immobile nature of the occupation tactic vanquished the protest through an easy process – eviction. During the Umbrella movement, after the protesters had occupied roads in the city for two months, unions of taxi and minibus drivers were granted injunctions from the Hong Kong High Court to clear the blockade on the streets in November. The government never responded directly to the political demands, but instead found other ways to handle the protests; they implemented laws to disperse the crowds by force. In Dapiran's opinion, this action utilised the justice system as a political tool because the occupations had already violated the Public Order Ordinance as a result of their unlawful assemblies on the street. He stated: "…the rule of law is undermined when the law is used as a tool to achieve a political end as occurred when the Hong Kong government relied upon civil law injunctions as political cover to justify clearing the Umbrella Movement protest site." [37] Protesters shared the same opinion as Dapiran; besides being anxious about the predicament of democratic development in the city, they also started to become concerned about the idea of the rule of law.

In a news interview with *The Atlantic,* Gerbaudo emphasised that the goal of protests was not solving the

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35 ibid. pp.160

36 ibid pp.164

37 Dapiran, *City of Protest* pp.105-106

political problem which spurred the protest, but to gain awareness of the problem. [38] The Umbrella Movement, as well as the OWS movement, were failures in that they did not manage to carry out the political reforms that they demanded in their protests. However, the OWS movement did spark public awareness of economic inequality. It also led to the development of a resistance to confront the shifting globalised geopolitical stance through the use of blockades in urban spaces in order to demonstrate the protesters' grievances against the idea of top-down decision-making policies in economy and politics. The frustration towards the system became a common thought and evolved into grassroots participatory leaderless movements around the globe. Similar to the impacts from public participation in the OWS movement, the Umbrella Movement regained the attention of the younger generation towards politics. It consolidated the collective identity of the 'Hong Konger'. However, both occupation protests illustrated the tendency of emotion to interfere in modern society, which catalysed the rise of populism in western societies, and localism in Hong Kong.

Variants in the norm

Variants in the institution of democracy in Western societies

In the year of 2016, the 'leave' result from the Brexit referendum was announced in June, and in July of the same year, the Republicans nominated Donald Trump to represent the presidential bid. In November, Trump won the United States presidential election, and soon after, the Oxford Dictionary selected the word of the year to be 'post-truth', alongside other nominations such as 'Brexiteer' and 'Alt-right'. Oxford defines post-truth as "relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief."[39] Philosophical academic Lee Mclntyre highlighted that the concept of post-truth did not emerge from the digital age society, nor from the disappointment regarding the results of Brexit and US presidential election. Incidents of people distorting truth can be found throughout the evolution of cognitive irrationalities, from the lobbying of the issue of whether smoking

38   Yasmeen Serhan, "The Common Element Uniting Worldwide Protests," *The Atlantic*, November 19, 2019, https://www. theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/11/leaderless-protests-around-world/602194/.

39   "Oxford Word of the Year 2016: Oxford Languages," Home, accessed May 11, 2020, https://languages.oup.com/word-of-the-year/2016/.

cigarettes causes cancer during the 1950s, to the current polarised opinion on whether or not global warming is real and happening.[40] One of the lobbying tactics to distort the truth utilises a common misunderstanding of undervaluing scientific findings as 'just a theory,' which are merely theories proven from specific scientists' hypothesises.[41] Some of the critics disagree with the scientific evidence of global warming, and claim that some scientific 'facts' have been selected and interpreted to present a specific opinion as a piece of tailor-made evidence.[42] McIntyre redefined the Oxford definition in 'post-truth': "the prefix "post" is meant to indicate not so much the idea that we are "past" truth in a temporal sense, but in the sense that truth has been eclipsed—that it is irrelevant," as sometimes emotions take over the importance of facts.[43] [44] William Davies also discovered that the phenomenon of emotion became more crucial than fact in modern society.

"The modern world was founded upon two fundamental distinctions, both inaugurated in the mid-seventeenth century: between mind and body, and between war and peace…As society has been flooded by digital technology, it has grown harder to specify what belongs to the mind and what to the body, what is peaceful dialogue and what is conflict. In the murky space between mind and body, between war and peace, lie nervous states: individuals and governments living in a state of constant and heightened alertness, relying increasingly on feeling rather than fact."[45]

The unexpected and shocking victories of Nigel Farage with Brexit, as well as Trump's presidency, benefited from public scepticism to the authority. [46] With reference to the rise of populism in western societies, Davies also pointed out that populism arose and escalated the negative feeling in societies; 'Populist uprisings, as manifest in the victories of Donald Trump, the Brexit campaign and a wave of nationalist surges across

40   Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoking to Global Warming* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010).

41   Lee C. McIntyre, *Respecting Truth: Willful Ignorance in the Internet Age* (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015). pp. 8-9

42   Lee C. McIntyre, *Post-Truth* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018). pp.6

43   ibid. pp..5

44   ibid. pp.13

45   Davies, *Nervous States* – ch. introduction

46   Pippa Norris, "Is Western Democracy Backsliding? Diagnosing the Risks," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2017, https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2933655. pp.3

Europe, are cases of this, and have been widely criticised for their denigration of expertise and harnessing of emotional discontents.' [47] Besides Donald Trump and Nigel Farage, other populist leaders such as Marine Le Pen in France, and the Five Star Movement in Italy, have gained massive support in long-term established democracies. It caused a wave of nationalist to challenge the concept of democracy across the US and Europe. Politics scholar Larry Diamond studied the decline of democracy and coined the term 'democratic recession' in 2009. Along the same lines as Davies, Diamond analysed how the rise of populism influenced the retreat in western democracy and its causes of a democratic recession.[48] Diamond also indicated other reasons which caused the democratic recession: bad governance in those countries had reduced freedom and created dysfunction in the rule of law. [49] The flourishing advancement in Technology in Russia and China enabled them to become more powerful and endanger democracy globally. Moreover, Diamond also made a note of twenty-five breakdowns of democracy from 2000-2014 which caused the democratic recession.[50]

Variants in the institution of democracy in Hong Kong

Parallel to the phenomenon of emotional influences to the democratic institution in Hong Kong, during Umbrella Movement, the government was not receptive to protesters' demands and only rebuked the occupations as an 'unlawful assembly' and how they damaged the rule of law. To break the limbo, some protesters suggested increasing the pressure to achieve their political demands; Edward Leung Tin Kei was among them. However, most of the critical figures in organising the movement persisted with non-violence as the core value of the campaign. They insisted that violent action would lose most of the public supports, and some traditional pan-democrats also shared the same moral ground, emphasising the importance of remaining non-violent during occupations. A sense of sceptic and disappointment towards the pan-democratic camp also grew, especially among the young generation such as Leung, who was spurred by his frustration from the Umbrella Movement

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47   Davies, *Nervous States* – ch. introduction

48   Larry Diamond, "Facing Up to the Democratic Recession," *Journal of Democracy* 26, no. 1 (2015): pp. 141-155, https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2015.0009. pp.102

49   ibid. pp.107-8

50   ibid pp.103

to form one of the local activist groups in Hong Kong. [51]

In addition to the disagreement regarding the protest tactic, there was another dispute within the pro-democracy camp in Hong Kong regarding their attitude toward the increasing political intervention from mainland China, through business integrations between the two regions involving a fight over the uses of public spaces in the city. Since the 2003 scandal in mainland China, in which babies became ill as a result of drinking low-quality milk powder, a new business of parallel traders has been thriving in districts near the borders with the mainland. It caused an unusually high number of shops selling milk powder, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals in the shopping area, because of the high demand and sustainable business of trading these daily necessities. These traders use the public space to re-package their goods and also to keep overloaded carriages. Their bulk purchases within the district also caused temporary shortages of some products. As a result, it resulted in a rise in the rent of shops, therefore placing pressure on other local business. For this incident, some localist groups organised some aggressive protests at mainland Chinese shopping districts under a strong 'anti-China' statement. The pan-democrats condemned some tactics from localist as too radical and beyond the moral common ground, suggesting that they, therefore, would not gain public support. Thus, pan-democrats think some localism avocations could spark hatred and discrimination in society. [52] The traditional pan-democratic parties showed tolerance towards this new business, even though it affected those districts. However, the localists despaired at the traditional pan-democratic parties which took a subaltern dimension in politics to believe in order to have more democracy in Hong Kong, and it is based on how democratised mainland China is.[53] Localist were frustrated about the predicament in the existing democratic structure in the city, and they thought that pan-democrats are ineffective against the city's political reform. The conflict between traditional pan-democratic parties and localist groups intensified after the violence broke out in the Mong Kok Civil Unrest in 2016, which was led by radical activities. The turbulence in Mong Kok stated over a temporary street food vendor market.

During the three-day public holiday on the first three days of Lunar New Year in Hong Kong, most of the shops across the city are closed, giving an opportunity to unlicensed vendors to sell street food amid the

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51   Grace Tsoi and Tessa Wong, "What are Hong Kong's Localists Angry About?", BBC News, 11 February 2016.

52   Kwong, "The Growth of 'Localism' pp. 67

53   ibid. pp. 66

Lunar New Year streed food hawkers, 2017

img.16 Mong Kok Civil Unrent , 2016

high demand. Lunar New Year street food markets emerged in some of the highly residential districts, and also Mong Kok, a shopping district which is highly associated with the local culture. Even though in recent years some food stores and 24h-convenience stores have remained open during this three-days public holiday, the food market has already become part of the tradition. Usually, the authority would have turned a blind eye to the unlicensed vendors. However, in 2016, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) decided to patrol the market, but claimed they had no intention of making any arrests.[54] Later the night, when the police came as reinforcement to the dispute between FEHD and supporters of the vendors, confrontations intensified, and at midnight protesters set fire to bins and threw pavement bricks at police, who fired two live rounds of warning shots into the sky. Gerbaudo has noted that the universal concept of havoc easily divert attention away from the intention of the protesters. Here the protesters claim to the use of public spaces for a cultural event on the street was diverted by the statements of the police in mainstream media.[55] Pan-democratic politicians and activists also declared on the news that they were no longer willing to be associated with the radical protesters. They condemned the violence with pro-regime supporters, while all university student unions supported this militant action. The Mong Kok Civil Unrest and the violent actions of the protesters have become a debate in every household during family gatherings at Lunar New Year.

In the recent experiences of seeking more democracy, a rift within the democracy camp has grown between the use of a violent or non-violent approach. However, the cooperation of non-violent and violent strategies in the 2019 protest was effectuated by a shared fury at the system by an outrage towards the broken of the 'One Country, Two Systems' policy. The onsite survey from The Chinese University of Hong Kong showed that between 43.7 and 67.6 percent of responses strongly agreed that the biggest form of political expression is the cooperation between peaceful assembly and confrontational actions. [56] The survey showed that most of the protesters were from the camp of 'peaceful, rational, non-violent' protests. Still, responses agreed and strongly agreed that a 'radical approach was more effective to make the government heed to public opinion' increased from 38.2 to 65.5 percent on the 27 July mass rally in Yuen Long, one week after

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54 "FHB's Statement on Handling of Illegal Hawking Activities by FEHD Staff on First Day of Lunar New Year," *FHB's Statement on Handling of Illegal Hawking Activities by FEHD Staff on First Day of Lunar New Year*, February 11, 2016, https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201602/11/P201602110826.htm.

55 Gerbaudo, *The Mask and the Flag* pp.162

56 Lee, Tang, Yuen, and Cheng, "Onsite Survey Findings in Hong Kong's Anti-Extradition Bill Protests"

img.17 'the problem is the system' sticker

the Yuen Long Train Attack. The current chief executive, who was not elected by the public, painted herself as a mother figure of Hong Kong, and described protesters as her 'spoiled children' in a patronised tone to explain the inaction of the government during an exclusive interview on a pro-government mainstream media program in June.[57] The onsite survey showed respondents 'strongly agreed' to the question on protesting with radical tactics as understandable when the government inaction to their political demands has climbed from 37 percent in June to its peak to 85 percent at the protest on 27 July. Besides the mother metaphor, the government and the pro-government sides insist that protests cause damage to the city's economic interests.

Other protest activities illustrating that protesters dismay with the government were stickers. Like a sticker on a lift button with the inscription 'The problem is on the button', a pun in Cantonese which took the pronunciation of 'the problem is on the button' is almost the same as 'the problem is from the system'. The 2019 pro-democracy protest changed from anti-extradition into an anti-Chinese hegemonic control protest. Regarding this, journalist Joseph Krauss traced the development of four protest movements in Hong Kong, Chile, Lebanon and Catalonia in 2019 to suggest a new wave of worldwide frustration towards the idea of democracy and capitalism. He stated: "the unrest on three continents, coupled with the toxic dysfunction in Washington and London, raises fresh concerns over whether the liberal international order, with free elections and free markets, can still deliver on its promises." [58]

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57   Yan Sham Shackleton, "Unelected Carrie Lam Compares Hongkongers to Children as a Tactic to Disenfranchise," *Hong Kong Free Press*, June 23, 2019, https://hongkongfp.com/2019/06/23/unelected-carrie-lam-compares-hongkongers-children-tactic-disenfranchise/.

58   Joseph Krauss, "From Beirut to Hong Kong, Protests Evoke Global Frustration," *AP News*, October 26, 2019, https://apnews.com/b96869a43ca84954be47b339277ca098.

3. In the case of Hong Kong 2019 pro-democracy protests

Case 1 - Transportation network and operations in the society

As well as mobilisation and participation of social movements being transformed by the prevailing social media in society, it has also transformed journalism. One of the transformations is reporting news with live streaming and on-the-spot coverage. Compare to traditional journalism to contextualise a *whole* situation with footages on what happened and conclude with some statements to report the news with a few minutes long montage. With live streaming, journalists use four or even eight hours long live videos to contextualise a whole *situation* by filming from the beginning to the end, even after the end of the demonstration. Despite the limitation of the lens of single perspective is unable to provide the 'whole situation', journalists in this Hong Kong 2019 protest run around in the demonstration site for live streaming reports, to contextualise the whole situation over time. On the other hand, live streaming news has caught massive attention because it provides the virtual reality of having onsite experience with the journalist — another example of emotion influencing in society. For example, on 21 July, numerous Hong Kongers witnessed a journalist fall with her camera while being beaten to the floor by a triad member during her live coverage of triad members terrorising civilians at Yuen Long railway station.

Connection and Decentralisation

This night of the Train Attack at Yuen Long railway station was a momentous incident of the 2019 protests as it provided a contextualised background on the militant means of protest tactics, in particular the escalation to more radical tactics by protesters. It began after a rumour spread on social media about a threat that some triad gangs among the villagers would assault people who came back from the protest happening in another district during the day. A news programmer gathered surveillance footage from shops near the railway station and reconstructed the situation that night. The discovered evidence showed a few hundred white-clad men

assembled on the street, with bamboo sticks in hand, however, no police came to investigate.[59] After watching the live recording of the violence that occurred when the group of white-clad men stormed the Yuen Long railway station and trains, and beat everyone in their sight, some of the residents of Yuen Long and the neighbouring district went to police stations to seek help from police. However, the police refused to make a record of the statements and shut the police station. Police finally arrived at the station thirty-nine minutes after they received the first report of the attack, when the white-clad men who initially stormed the station had already left. Police, therefore, did not take any action but waited on standby near the station. However, shortly after that, the second storm of the attack occurred. In the news reports, some victims from the attack accused police that was on standby near the station of inaction to the violence from the white-clad men. After the two storms ended at midnight, police made no arrests, even though a group of white-clad men were found with metal rods and wooden sticks at a nearby village.

On the 21st July, there was another regular weekend-protest in the city, as had occurred in the early phase of protests around June to mid-August. In this phase, the city's railway network - the Mass Transit Rail (MTR) - facilitated the decentralised and faceless characteristics of the protest with their well-covered network in the city. In contrary to the less disruptive classical demonstrations of marching within the pre-programmed route, a tactic had become an event in 'a political ritual' and thus less effective. The weekend-big-scale protests in the 2019 no longer ended with protesters returning to their home after finishing the route. Instead, they ended with practising the 'Be Water' philosophy and being flexible in the format of protest - some protesters launched other spontaneous protests in different districts. This tactic of small-scale flash mobbing protests aimed to separate and exhaust the police force, at the same time, it also acted as a form of onsite mobilisation of protesters. Where instead of going home after a demonstration, the protest found into the next districts in pursuit of prospective protesters in the vicinity and expended the sprite of resistance spinning in the society. In this stage, MTR were not directly involved in the protest. It purely provided the connection for everyone in the city, in which protesters made use of the MTR's network to leave one demonstration and form another demonstration in another corner of the city. These weekend protests often turned into scuffles between police and protesters, as police were deployed by the Hong Kong government to handle the political problem. When

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59   *Hong Kong Connection 721 Yuen Long Nightmare*, *Hong Kong Connection 721 Yuen Long Nightmare* (Radio Television Hong Kong, 2019), https://youtu.be/zpkFRsSo30o.

img.18 Car doors disruption on 30 July

these scuffles broke out, people often left piles of cash on top of ticket machines or distributed train tickets, which would allow protesters to leave the area without using their transportation cards and therefore without any leaving any identity trace.

Secondly, given that MTR is the primary mode of transportation for most citizens, protesters used MTR's function as a transportation service in the city to disrupt citizens' commute during the morning rush-hour on 30 July. They interrupted train doors closing to cause traffic jams within the railway network, which accounts for 42 per cent of public transportation movement in the city daily. Protesters tried to unite a power of labour in society to increase the political pressure by constructing a general strike on 5th August, including obstructing further means of transport in the city.

However, the relationship between protesters and MTR had changed after the sit-in at Yuen Long station on 21 August. They protested against the absence of police during the Train Attack what had happened a month previously, and the violence from white-clad men, who had been identified triad members. The event started as a peaceful expression of anger but turned into clashes with police. The reason that MTR became controversial and was eventually targeted by the protesters started when MTR provided a special train for those protesters who were stuck at the conflict on 21 August.[60] This action may have been seen as MTR fulfilling their liability as a public transportation service to provide movement within the city. However, to the Beijing government – criticised through two mouthpieces media and a patriotic organisation - it was seen as an encouragement of protesters to rise against Hong Kong government.[61] Following this public criticism of endorsing destruction in the society, MTR's operation has actively accompanied with police's arrangement. MTR shut down stations at which protests were being held nearby based on the requests from police. This approach of assisting police arrangement to contain the spread of demonstrations also negatively impacted the people in the same area who were not involved in the protests. Moreover, it had become harder for protesters to leave a protest site, and thus increased the chance of getting arrested. For example, police aggressively dispersed the passengers as if they were protesters and arrested young citizens, no matter who they were, in

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60   Jeffie Lam, Lok-kei Sum, and Danny Mok, "Chaos at Hong Kong's Yuen Long MTR Station as Protesters Confront Police While Marking One Month since Mob Attack," *South China Morning Post*, August 21, 2019, https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3023806/chaos-mtr-station-hong-kong-protesters-confront-police.

61   Jennifer Creery, "Explainer: 'The Communist Party's Railway' – How Hong Kong's Once-Respected MTR Fell Afoul of Protesters," *Hong Kong Free Press*, September 22, 2019, https://hongkongfp.com/2019/09/22/explainer-communist-partys-railway-hong-kongs-respected-mtr-fell-afoul-protesters/.

img. 19 An illustration on protester fight with 'The Communist Party's Railway'

their sight at Prince Edward station on 31 August. This police operation deteriorated further as a police 'Train Attacked' at a different MTR station. At the same time, it deepened the grievances towards MTR because the company refused to provide the security footage for the casualties. The public anger towards this transportation corporation evolved into the second phase of the protest.
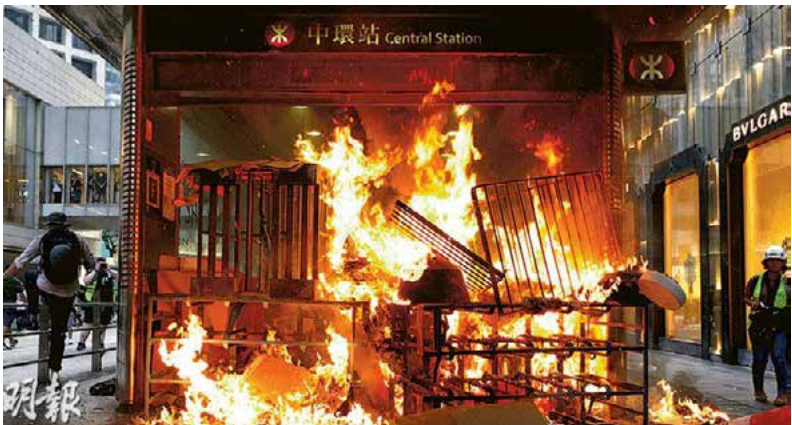
Radical approaches and the city's development

In response to MTR's new approach to the protest in compromising to the mainland authority, protesters put pressure on MTR as a political tool to suppress human rights, by pressuring the income and expenditure to intensify their actions to punish the company. In reference to the concept of political consumerism, Lauren Copeland argued "…boycotting should be more strongly associated with dutiful citizenship norms because it is punishment oriented and has several key features in common with traditional, interest-based politics."[62] Protesters suggested fare evasion or boycott of MTR and to take other public transport instead. Some radical protesters took aggressive action with militant tactics and transformed from the anarchist black bloc tactic in the West. The Hong Kong 2019 protester targeted property destruction to the MTR Corp since it has become a political tool. Protesters referred to the company as 'The Communist Party's Railway.'[63] Furthermore, they vandalised stations' facilities such as ticket machines, ticket gates, information boards, security cameras and railings. It became the new regular tactic for the weekend protests in the second phase.

Instead of responding to protesters' political requests appropriately, the Hong Kong government took measures to focus on ceasing protesters' destructions in society. They pointed out in the official gazette: "The prohibition is no more than what is necessary and proportionate to protect public order and safety in light of the escalating illegal and violent acts of the masked protesters at recent public order events."[64] With the success of containing the crowd in the Umbrella Movement, the Hong Kong government utilised the judicial system for

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62   Lauren Copeland, "Conceptualizing Political Consumerism: How Citizenship Norms Differentiate Boycotting from Buycotting," *Political Studies* 62, no. 1_suppl (2013): pp. 172-186, https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.12067. ᴾp.ᴵ73

63   Jennifer Creery, "Explainer: 'The Communist Party's Railway'

64   "The Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region," *The Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region*, October 4, 2019, https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201910/04/P2019100400613.htm?fontSize=1.

img. 20- 23 Vandalism to MTR station.

political benefit again in 2019. The invocation of the *Emergency Regulations Ordinance* by the chief executive enforced a face masks ban in the afternoon on 4 October and the new law would be implemented at the midnight on 5 October. This speedy legislation process occurred because of the Emergency Ordinance power of the chief executive to bypass the usual legislation procedure in the event of an emergency.[65] Therefore, the invocation of the Ordinance to regulate the right to protest prompted an unprecedented dispute from the populace.

On the contrary to the government's intention of the Face Covering Regulation would reduce the number of masked protesters and decrease destructions in society, the legislation prompted more destruction in the city. As protesters had already been outspoken about their political demands for months, the aggravated response from the Hong Kong government to explain escalating tactics became the only means at the protesters' disposal. Protesters vented their fury regarding the *Prohibition on Face Covering Regulation* and to the invocation of emergency law by setting blockades to city traffic, both roads and railway network, and MTR stations were also targeted. Vandalism at MTR stations intensified, particularly on the evening of 4th October, when protesters activated fire sprinkler systems, damaged lifts to the stations and even started fires at the entrances to some stations. After a restless night, the MTR Corp shut their entire system on 5 October, and only provided a limited service on the following days. The MTR halt in service triggered a halt in function across the entire city and affected every resident for the whole three-day-weekend, as the following Monday was a public holiday.

MTR Corp influences the city's development. In addition to its transportation network providing a fast and convenient way to travel between Kowloon and Hong Kong Island, and connecting suburban satellite districts in the New Territories, it represents the primary people's movement around the city. The company influenced the city development as a real estate developer. MTR's stations are at the centre of the regional development in most districts of the city. A set of MTR's developments configured a usual cityscape: pricey residential buildings, commercial buildings and shopping malls were built on top of MTR's station infrastructures. Therefore, the service suspension on the 5th October followed the same logic of occupation camps in disrupting the movement of the flow of capital in the city and intensified the surrounding atmosphere

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65   (1992), https://www.elegislation.gov.hk/hk/cap241.

by also shutting down malls and banks. [66] However, protests were not suspended, protesters decentralised the protest as city-wide regional demonstrations.

As a consequence of the various tactics ranging from non-violent to violent, the ordinary lives of those in Hong Kong were fundamentally influenced by protest tactics. A document from the panel on transport on 6th December in LegCo listed that, during the period from 12th June to 24th November, more than 90 per cent of MTR's stations had a level of damage, ranging from sprayed graffiti, broken ticket machine and turnstiles to destroyed glass panels. From 7th October, MTR's service schedule was reduced 'due to damages in the station affecting its operation', or by request from police with the aim to increase the difficulty of participating in protests. As the travel of MTR trains is crucial to citizens' daily activities, a form of curfew was imposed by early closure of the transportation service. As a result of the 'de facto curfew', ordinary activities at undertaken at night, such as dining and entrainment, were reduced as a result of the last train schedule for almost two months.[67] Damages to the MTR's operation from protesters, government, or the company itself have become some of the reasons for the downturn in the foodservice in Hong Kong. [68]

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66   Holmes Chan, "Hong Kong's MTR, Banks and Malls Close down after Mask Ban Sparks City-Wide Unrest," *Hong Kong Free Press*, October 5, 2019, https://hongkongfp.com/2019/10/05/hong-kongs-mtr-banks-malls-close-mask-ban-sparks-city-wide-unrest/.

67   LegCo report LC Paper No. CB(4)153/19-20(05)

68   Iain Marlow, Kiuyan Wong, and Jinshan Hong, "Hong Kong Under 'De Facto Curfew' as Subway Stations Shut Early," *Bloomberg*, October 15, 2019, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-10-14/hong-kong-under-de-facto-curfew-as-subway-stations-shut-early.

Case 2- Airport and economy

Squeeze the economy to increase pressure

Jasper Bernes describes logistics as a form of cognitive mapping; it visualises the flow of capital, and the capital-labour relationship becomes tangible in the tactic of counter-logistics.[69] Likewise, the disruptions at the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) obstructed the operation of the 8th busiest airport in the world highlighted the city's economic structure. [70]

According to an official report produced in 2019, 1541 multinational companies have their regional headquarters in Hong Kong.[71] Companies from the US, Japan and mainland China make up the majority, with over two hundred companies from each of these counties. One of the desired environments for setting up headquarters in the city is credited with the *United Stated-Hong Kong Policy Act,* which was signed in 1992.[72] It was not only Hong Kongers anxious about their future because two governments negotiated the 1984 Joint Declaration behind closed doors, but also the Tiananmen square demonstration in 1989 that surged the world's apprehension about the future of Hong Kong under China's rule. Therefore, this American Act is built on a recognition of the details in the Joint Declaration, such as the 'One country, Two systems' policy and elections to constitute the city's legislature, the US would define Hong Kong as a 'non-sovereign entity'. Institutional separation with mainland China in Hong Kong has become the condition of its business-friendly environment. For example, the US has a different deal with Hong Kong and China in the matter of trade export and economics control, such as export control, customs and transportation. Because of robust trust in the economic environment of Hong Kong, international businesses did not leave Hong Kong, albeit sovereignty

69   Bernes, "Logistics, Counterlogistics and the Communist Prospect pp. 12

70   "Preliminary World Airport Traffic Rankings Released," ACI World, May 15, 2019, https://aci.aero/news/2019/03/13/preliminary-world-airport-traffic-rankings-released/.

71   Doris Fong, "Economic and Trade Information on Hong Kong," HKTDC Research, 2020, https://research.hktdc.com/en/article/MzIwNjkzNTY5.

72   https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title22/chapter66&edition=prelim.

handover from the UK to China in 1997. The implementation of the Act maintained Hong Kong' position as a global financial centre.

In 2019, protesters utilised the value of the Policy Act to their city's economy to initiate a radical resistance in response to the government's intransigence to the public opinion for more democracy in the city. Similar to a cold war military concept - mutually assured destruction – protesters lobbied US politicians for the legislation on the *Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act*. In the aim of tightening the tie between universal suffrage in the city, which is one of their political demands, and Hong Kong's fiscal strength. The erosion of autonomy in Hong Kong became increasingly apparent in the current protest, especially in early November when protesters were under siege by police at two universities. The world's memory of the student demonstration in 1989 have been recalled, therefore, by the end of November, a second American policy which correlated the sufficiency of autonomy and the fiscal strength in Hong Kong has established. The *Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act* indicated that the US would assess the level of autonomy in the city to review the unique trade relations between the US and Hong Kong annually.[73] Also, those individuals who violated human rights in Hong Kong would be sanctioned, including having their properties in the US frozen or their US visas cancelled. Protesters determined to put a wager in economic downward, which may cause from this new Act to increase pressure politically.

In addition to the defensive political pressure, protesters see the potential of protesting at HKIA to cause different downturns to three primary industries in the city on a different degree – an aggressive internal pressure. Trading - logistics and financial services are the two biggest industries in Hong Kong, and value to 22 and 20 per cent of the city's GDP respectively. Tourism is the fourth primary industry which accounts for 4.5 per cent of Hong Kong's GDP. A five-consecutive day sit-in at HKIA in early August (9th to 13th) was undertaken, and in the last two days the protest intensified, blockades placed at the landside areas and on the only point of ground access to the airport. HKIA connects over 220 destinations worldwide with more than 1,110 flights daily[74], however, nearly 1000 flights were cancelled during this five-day protest; 150 flights

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73   Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 § (2019), https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/3289.

74   "About Us," Hong Kong International Airport, accessed May 12, 2020, https://www.hongkongairport.com/en/about-us/.

img.27 Water-filled barries at the new new 'Arrival hall', outside the building

and 412 flights were cancelled on 12th and 13th August respectively.[75] In order to sustain HKIA's operations, the government-owned management company of HKIA, Airport Authority Hong Kong, took swift action to grant an access control order by the High Court. [76] [77] Rather than addressing the protesters' request for more democracy in the city to end the protest once and for all, the Hong Kong government set up access control points at entrances of the terminal buildings, regardless of the damage and inconvenience this caused to passengers. The access control order meant that, by law, only events related to airport operations were allowed within the terminal buildings and travelling documents or staff identification was required to access the buildings. The Airport Authority had the right to deny access to anyone who came to the airport to accompany departure passengers. People coming to the airport to receive arrival passengers had to wait at the bus terminal, an outdoor area with two-metre-tall water-filled barriers blocking the entrance to the airport building. Under the implementation of the access control, travelling passengers were required to arrive at the airport three hours before their departure time.

Being resilient to the legal ban, protesters had another unconventional tactic to disrupt HKIA's operation again – 'Traffic pressure tests.' HKIA is located on Chek Lap Kok, an artificial island that only has buildings related to the aviation industry, such as the headquarters of Hong Kong Air Cargo Terminal Ltd and the Hong Kong-based airline, Cathay Pacific. In parallel with the blockades put in place as a logistic strategy by occupiers at Oakland port, protesters at the airport created disruptions to enable their voices to be heard. Hong Kong protesters disrupted the traffic to HKIA on several weekends to disrupt the primary connection of the airport island with the rest of the city, and hoped their demands would be answered by the Hong Kong government. On 1st September, the most significant traffic disruption occurred; road traffic, as well as the railway systems connecting the airport to the city, were completely paralysed, resulting in thousands of passengers and protesters walking to and from the terminal. This disruption was created by overcrowding the buses and trains to HKIA. Also, a few drivers dove their cars slowly on the only connecting bridge to place

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75   Austin Ramzy and Gerry Mullany, "Over 150 Flights Canceled as Hong Kong Airport Is Flooded by Protesters," *The New York Times*, August 12, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/12/world/asia/hong-kong-airport-protest-cancellations.html.

76   PERSONS UNLAWFULLY AND WILFULLY OBSTRUCTING OR INTERFERING WITH THE PROPER USE OF THE HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT § (2019).

77   the order was only valid for one week initially, but the valid date has been postponed for an indefinite period since 24 August

img. 28 Transportation to the airport obstructed

further pressure on access to HKIA, which had 74.7 million passenger throughputs in 2018.[78] Protesters set up blockades on roads, and MTR stopped trains towards the airport.

Disruptions to the flow of HKIA, both from protesters and the authority, increased global awareness of this civil unrest. Along with the impacts of the US-China trade war, the civil unrest fostered a decline in the city's tourism. By August, at least twenty-two countries had issued travel warnings against Hong Kong, including from the mainland Chinese government, who discouraged its citizens, who are the majority of visitors to Hong Kong, from travelling there. 4.8 million of the total of 5.9 million visitors who travelled to Hong Kong in August 2018 were from mainland China, whereas 2.8 million of 3.5 million total visitors were Chinese travellers in August 2019.[79] A steady decrease in the number of visitors to Hong Kong from August to December in 2019 compared to the year before was noted. The 2019 growth rate decreased by 39 per cent in August and dropped to 52 per cent in December. The hotel occupancy rate oscillated between 85 and 95 per cent. Overall, the occupancy rate remained above 85 per cent over the past five years, although some months dropped to between 75 and 85 per cent. However, a considerable fall of 20 per cent in August 2019 occurred, from 85 per cent to around 60 per cent, and by January 2020, the number had dropped to a new low of 59 per cent.[80]

This decrease in the number of Chinese tourists entering HK led to a domino effect on HK's local economy. Since the *Closer Economic Partnership Agreement* was signed in 2003, between mainland China and Hong Kong, the local economy has been more heavily reliant upon tourism from China. After an unprecedented hit by the SARS epidemic in Hong Kong in 2003, the Agreement was implemented to stimulate Hong Kong's market with increasing cross-border economic interactions, such as an 'individual visit scheme.' Nationals of mainland China had to join a group tour in order to cross the border to visit Hong Kong before the implementation of this travelling visa. The enormous expenditure by Chinese travellers on luxury brands, medicines and cosmetics when travelling in Hong Kong means that over the years, they have become
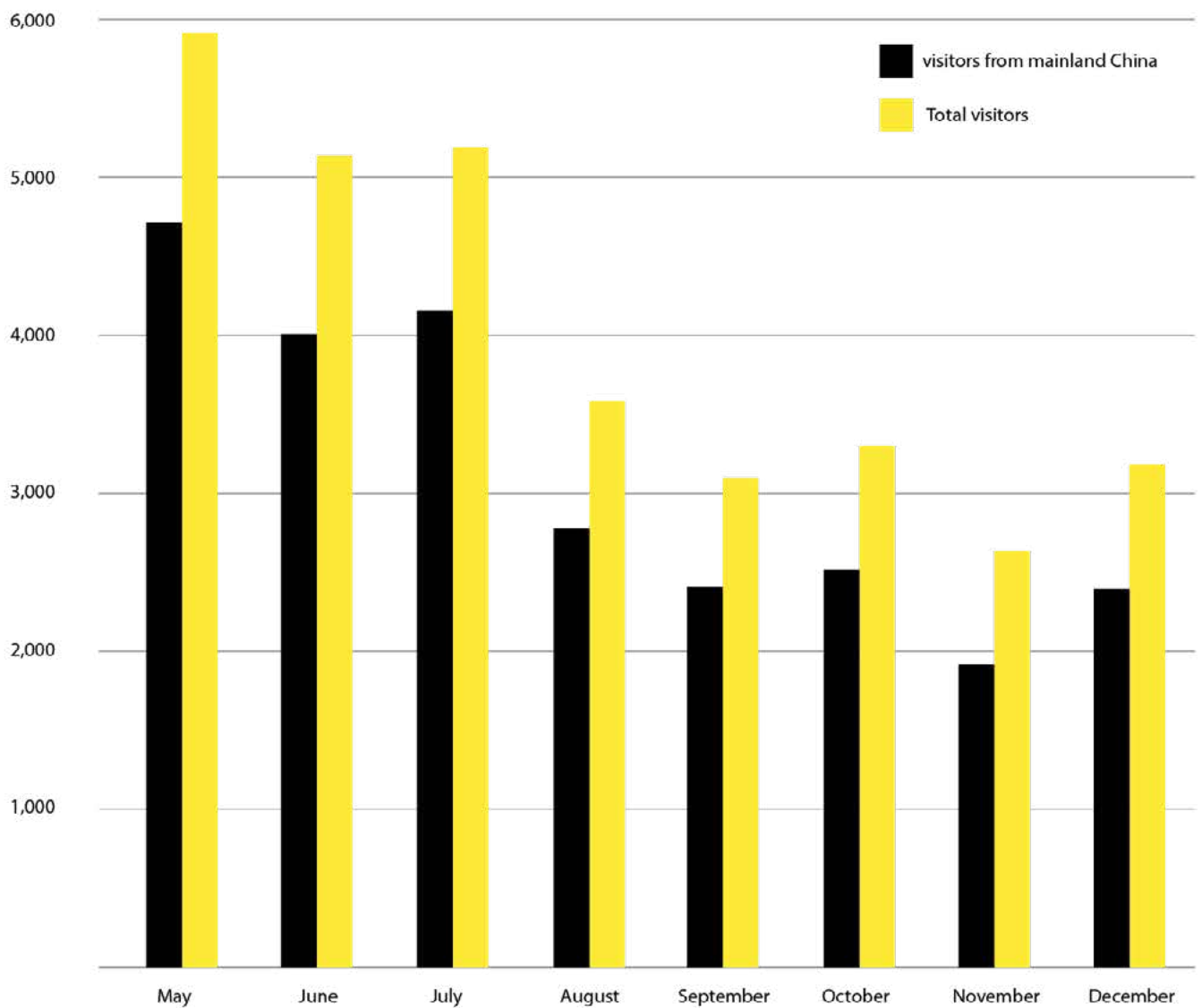
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78   "About Us," Hong Kong International Airport, accessed May 12, 2020, https://www.hongkongairport.com/en/about-us/.

79   "Hong Kong SAR, China Visitor Arrivals [2006 - 2020] [Data & Charts]," [2006 - 2020] [Data & Charts], March 1, 2020, https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/hong-kong/visitor-arrivals.

80   "Hong Kong SAR (China): Hotel Room Occupancy Rate: All Hotels: Economic Indicators: CEIC," Hong Kong SAR (China) | Hotel Room Occupancy Rate: All Hotels | Economic Indicators, March 1, 2020, https://www.ceicdata.com/en/hong-kong/hotel-statistics-hotel-room-occupancy-rate/hotel-room-occupancy-rate-all-hotels.

Visitor Arrival to Hong Kong May - Dec 2019

(,000 number of visitors)

Data from: Hong Kong Immigration Department

a significant influence on the city's economy. In November, the retail sector in Hong Kong plunged by 23.6 per cent, primarily due to reduction in sales of luxury items and department store sales. Sales of medicines and cosmetic fell by more than 30 per cent. Furthermore, sales of jewellery, watches and valuable gifts decrease 43.5 per cent. [81] Some of these retail sectors and tourism sectors had decelerated profit warnings as the result of the reduced mainland Chinese consumption, including Cathay Pacific airline. Meanwhile, the restaurant sector was also impacted by the decline in tourist numbers; the total receipts in the fourth quarter of 2019 were down by 16 per cent. Following the slump of profit in tourism, retail and foodservice, a wave of employee dismissal occurred. However, while local businesses are suffering from the downturn in the tourism, the local stock market, Hang Seng index, is still strong and down by only 2 per cent since the protests started in June.[82] Local stocks account for less than a quarter of the listed companies, and almost half of the list are stocks from Chinese companies.

The uncertain free

As well as describing how counter-logistics can unmask the underlying capital-labour relationship, Bernes also pointed out the value of logistics in bargaining, "…the development of logistics itself and the credit system alongside it, greatly multiplies the power of capital to discipline rebellious zones through withdrawal of credit (capital flight), embargo, and punitive terms of trade."[83] The equivalent of the suppression through weaponised capital, Cathay Pacific Airline was forced to undergo a trade-off between sustaining their business and political conviction by the Civil Aviation Authority of China (CAAC). Subsequent to the protests which had been underway for two months and the sit-in at the airport on 26 July which was organised by aviation workers, on 9th August CAAC seized the Chinese aviation regulation to issue an order to Cathay Pacific

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81   Cannix Yau, "Hong Kong Protests Continue to Batter Retail Sector as Sales Plunge 23.6 per Cent in November, the

82   Martin Farrer and Kalyeena Makortoff, "As Hong Kong Suffers, China Risks Losing Its Financial Window on the World," *Th Guardian*, November 27, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/27/as-hong-kongs-suffers-china-risks-losing-its-financial-window-on-the-world.

83   Bernes, "Logistics, Counterlogistics and the Communist Prospect , pp.21

allowing them to intervene in Cathay Pacific's personnel affairs.[84] Any crew member who was outspoken about their support of the protests, even only through their private account on social media, was prohibited from working on flights that fly over Chinese airspace, in the name of a security threat, according to CAAC. Since one third of Cathay's flight routes travel over Chinese airspace, the company chose to maintain its regular operation rather than its employees. Thirty employees, including a union leader, were fired or resigned under pressure, together with resignations from CEO Rupert Hogg and his top deputy.[85]

This Chinese influence enforced purge in a Hong Kong company illustrated a new prefix to the free market in Hong Kong - political correction before profit maximisation. Despite discussion as to whether the economic policy of Hong Kong should be non-interventionism or laissez-faire, the city has remained at the top of the Heritage Foundation's economic freedom index for since 1995, suggesting it is the freest in the world. However, it dropped to the second freest in the 2020 index, after twenty-five years, as a result of the political and social issues which have suggested that this freedom has become uncertain. [86] The 2020 index report suggested that business freedom and investment freedom had fallen, "Hong Kong's traditionally open and market-driven economy has become increasingly integrated with the mainland through trade, tourism, and financial links. Risks to Hong Kong's economic freedom have grown correspondingly."[87] Although the measurement on the rule of law is the only section that has increased in the entire report, the Heritage Foundation noted the negative impacts of the government proposed the extradition law.

Another warning sign of Hong Kong's political and economic relation with China is Moody's and Fitch credit ratings. Since the protest started in June, Moody's downgraded Hong Kong twice, and in September, Moody's specified the protests as the reason for the negative outlook on Hong Kong's Aa2 rating. Nine months after the protests started, in January 2020, Moody's downgraded Hong Kong's rating to Aa3. Meanwhile, Fitch

84   Tom Holland, "Beijing's Treatment of Cathay Is Just the Start. Welcome to Hong Kong's Future of Corporatism," *South China Morning Post*, October 2, 2019, https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/opinion/article/3025150/beijings-treatment-cathay-just-start-welcome-hong-kongs-future.

85   Jamie Freed, "As Protests Rack Hong Kong, China Watchdog Has Cathay Staff 'Walking on Eggshells,'" *Reuters*, October 3, 2019, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hongkong-protests-cathay-pacific-insi/as-protests-rack-hong-kong-china-watch-dog-has-cathay-staff-walking-on-eggshells-idUSKBN1WI0MA.

86   "2019 Index of Economic Freedom" (The Heritage Foundation, March 2020), https://www.heritage.org/index/coun-

87   Ibid.

Ratings also downgraded Hong Kong twice, in September and April 2020. [88] From Moody's first downgrading in September, Moody's noted that the on-going protest is an embodiment of the concern over the integration of two institutions in Hong Kong and mainland China:

> "Closer linkages with China in Hong Kong's institutional framework and policy-making would lead to an erosion in the currently very high strength of Hong Kong's governing and judicial institutions, policy effectiveness and competitive advantage over large cities in the mainland and other international trade or financial hubs." [89]

Hong Kong joined the WTO as a non-sovereign entity in 1995. The economy of HK holds an important position of a financial window between mainland China and the rest of the world. In 2018, 66.6 per cent of mainland China's inward FDI was from Hong Kong; at the same time, 60.7 per cent of the Chinese outward direct investment was to Hong Kong.[90] Amid the 2019 protests Hong Kong's political outlook wavered, which would also affect its economy. Due to HongKong's unique position as a financial window for mainland China, Alibaba, the China version of Amazon, which came to list on the Hang Seng index, and raising more than HK\$101.2 billion (12.1 billion in euros) of shares in November, the city biggest IPO that year.[91] The successful listing of Alibaba shows that Hong Kong's market is an influx of international and Chinese capital exchange.[92]

Subsequent to the concern over closer institutional and economic linkages between HK and China, in January Moody's downgraded Hong Kong's investment rating for the second time regarding the civil unrest in the city. Moody's also addressed concern to the root condition of the city's autonomy – 'One country, Two systems' policy – and the city relations to China:

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88   "Fitch Downgrades Hong Kong to 'AA-' from 'AA'; Outlook Stable," Fitch Ratings, April 20, 2020, https://www.fitchratings.com/research/sovereigns/fitch-downgrades-hong-kong-to-aa-from-aa-outlook-stable-20-04-2020.

89   "Moody's Changes Outlook on Hong Kong's Aa2 Rating to Negative from Stable; Affirms Rating," Moodys.com, September 17, 2019, https://www.moodys.com/research/Moodys-changes-outlook-on-Hong-Kongs-Aa2-rating-to-negative--PR_409149.

90   "Economic and Trade Information on China," Hong Kong Means Business, accessed May 12, 2020, https://hkmb.hktdc.com/en/1X09PHBA/hktdc-research/Economic-and-Trade-Information-on-China.

91   Naomi Xu Elegant, "Alibaba's Hong Kong Debut Is the Biggest IPO of 2019—by Far," *Fortune*, November 26, 2019, https://fortune.com/2019/11/26/markets-alibaba-ipo-hong-kong/.

92   Ibid.

'It may also point to more significant constraints on the autonomy of Hong Kong's institutions than previously thought notwithstanding the "One country, Two systems" policy which has underpinned autonomy for the last two decades, ultimately reflecting the SAR's role as part of China and the responsibility of the executive to the mainland authorities.'[93]

Through the 2019 protests at the airport, the political and economic right and freedom of the city are tied to the same contract – *Sino-British Joint Declaration*. In the externally oriented economy in Hong Kong, the movement of financial capitals are much more important than the labour. Trading and logistics, and financial services are two key industries, which accounted for more than 40 percent of the city's GDP in 2018. When the protests at the airport in 2019 August, 382,000 tonnes of cargo handled via HKIA in August 2019 which decreased 11.5 per cent compare with August in 2018.

Although the flow of capital in the city is a common target in protesting, the 2019 protests have also illustrated how disrupt the flow of finance capital has much more impact than targeting the flow of human capital. For example, the Hong Kong government devalue the human capital in the city. The future labour (ages below 30) and the professional labour (has tertiary or above education) are the majority of the participants of the protests, however, the government rebuked any acts of disorder to the status quo in addressing protesters 'have no stake in society which so many people have helped to build.'[94] Protesters took action to fight for a better future with protests, but the government values the establishment more than future.

93   "Moody's Downgrades Hong Kong's Rating to Aa3; Changes Outlook to Stable," Moodys.com, January 20, 2020, https://www.moodys.com/research/Moodys-downgrades-Hong-Kongs-rating-to-Aa3-changes-outlook-to--PR_415515.

94   Kris Cheng, "Hong Kong Leader Carrie Lam Rules out Protest Concessions, Urges Focus on Economy," n.d.

4. Conclusion

Risk analysis company Verisk Maplecroft marked Hong Kong as the world's riskiest location, alongside Chile, in a political risk outlook report for 2020, as a result of endless protests in the city, representing protesters' clear determination to continue protesting. The outlook was based on civil unrests in 47 countries, which erupted over the analysed period between 2019 to early 2020 and concluded that civil unrest in 2019 could be considered to be the 'new normal'. Most of the protests demonstrated deep-rooted grievances which would be unlikely to be resolved entirely within a short period of time.[95]

The protest tactics in the case studies described as part of the 2019 pro-democracy protests, which occurred at railway network and the airport, were only a small part of the whole protest movement. Considerable broader effects were caused by these tactics, beyond the tangible destruction of vandalism and disruptions to the status quo of political and economic order. This included further damage to the city's international identity. Other factors, for example the trade war between the US and China and the coronavirus outbreak, have had significantly larger roles in causing destruction to the economy of Hong Kong.

Destruction in democracy

Public participation to create opportunity in achieving political reforms, such as in the #Occupy movements, mobilised participants through social media in order to disrupt the status quo using public meetings, debates, and workshops. Those activities were organised in order to search for and create hope for a better future. The crowd dynamics in the #Occupy movements remained, as a representative led crowd engagement for working jointly to build a sense of solidarity. However, the emotions of the protesters which were generated and circulated on social media, gave rise to another form of political representative – populism. William Davies'

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95   "Political Risk Outlook 2020" (Verisk Maplecroft , January 16, 2020), https://www.maplecroft.com/insights/analysis/download-the-political-risk-outlook-2020-executive-summary/. p.11

analysis of emotion intensively impacted modern societies, through the means of representative democracy which was subverted by the feelings in the political process.[96] The Edelman Trust Barometer 2020 report showed that the trust of the global mass population in the media, the government, businesses and NGOs plummeted. [97]

When social movements are unsuccessful in their political demands, such as the OWS and Umbrella Movement, a cynicism to democracy may be fostered. In a survey carried out in western democratic countries, such as Australia, Britain, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United States, the younger respondents rated lower than the older age group when answering the question of whether it is it "essential" to "live in a country that is governed democratically".[98] The feelings towards democracy in Hong Kong have become cynical within society, especially since the Umbrella Movement in 2014, which jeopardised the city's autonomy through the lack of universal suffrage. The protest movement in the summer of 2019 demonstrated a loud and confident public outcry against the proposal of the extradition bill amendment, but was still discredited, leading to further destruction.

Destruction from the tactics

The Hong Kong 2019 protesters seized the current situation and created a chance to protest. Ironically, the infrastructure most important to the movement of people throughout the city, simultaneously became the largest obstacle to this movement. The 'tactics' which aimed to disrupt everyday life were described by Michel de Certeau: 'The space of a tactic is the space of the other'. MTR stations and the airport were not re-claimed fortresses, they were battlefields in this protest movement.[99] The connectivity of the railway network gave the 2019 protesters an opportunity to decentralise the protest, no matter whether the network was functioning or not. Furthermore, the 2019 protesters adapted the 'Be water' idea to their main target - the flow of labour - in

96   Davies, *Nervous States* – ch. democracy of feeling

97   "Edelman Trust Barometer 2020 Report," 2020, https://www.edelman.com/trustbarometer.

98   Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk, "The Signs of Deconsolidation," *Journal of Democracy* 28, no. 1 (2017): pp. 5-15, https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2017.0000. pp.6

99   Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). pp.37

social movement. De Certeau's tactics were to 'manoeuvre 'within the enemy's field of vision' and 'within enemy territory'; protesters were users of the transportation system just like any non-protesters, but behaved counterproductively to obstruct the connectivity without occupying the railway network. [100] There were no occupied spaces and, therefore, the Hong Kong governments method to re-claim spaces, with eviction or early service closures, backfired and added to the destruction that the protests caused to society.

In essence, the railway system's contribution to decentralising the protest was one of the key characteristics in this movement. It also contributed to maintaining the longevity of the protest, through continuing to fuel the outrage of society, who mobilised more protesters to participate in the protest movement. Boycotting and vandalism of the MTR were also tactics employed to confront the government by targeting the economy. Although the MTR Corp is a private company listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, the Hong Kong government owns 75 per cent of the shares.[101] In order to express the animosity to the company, as well as the government, protesters tried to decrease the company's earnings and increase the cost of repairing the station facilities.

Destruction to liberalism

For Gerbaudo, the reason for protesting in a democratic process was to gain public awareness of social problems, rather than to solve the problems, for example the occupation tactic in targeting the movement of labour to put pressure on political reform. However, public awareness in the situation of Hong Kong - a illiberal society with restricted democracy – public awareness could be neglected entirely by their politicians and make no changes to the current political arrangement. Therefore, the 2019 protesters found an alternative and aggressive way to ensure their voice were heard and gain the power to push the democratic process, using a strategic plan which threatened to destroy the economy.

As an international financial centre, the small externally orientated economy in Hong Kong has been impacted by the US-China trade war more than the protest movement; protests at the airport deepened the local

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100   ibid.

101   "Share Information," MTR Share Information, accessed May 25, 2020, https://www.mtr.com.hk/en/corporate/investor/shareservices.html.

market downturns and economic instability. Since the first scuffle broke out on 9th June, the frequency at which police fired tear gas rounds into the crowd forced protesters to search for a place to protect them from this. Suggestions were made to protest at the airport, because protesters thought that it would cause considerable damage to the fourth key industry in the city, tourism, if police were to fire tear gas rounds in the presence of tourists. Moreover, precisely because of these international passengers at the airport, these assemblies reached global visibility and promoted the protests, mobilising international support. Based on de Certeau's view of tactics as 'an art of the weak', the Hong Kong protesters poached this international visibility because the business-friendly environment in the city built upon other countries and international organisations. For example, the US-Hong Kong Policy Act and WTO.[102] In a sense, the assemblies at airport were protesters' 'last resort' by wagering the city's international relations, with the risk of destroying the norm and shrinking the economy. Finally, the regime also took advantage of the free-market and judicial system for political outcomes and expended their control to businesses through regulations.

Endless destruction

These temporary spaces for protest tactics had only a fleeting presence. Anywhere in the city could become a space for protest due to the association of the 2019 protests associated with everyday urban living. A tactic of buycotting yellow food service businesses built solidarity within the yellow camp (the pro-democracy camp is denoted as the colour 'yellow'). This weapons consumption. As discussed by Lauren Copeland on political consumerism, buycotting is consumer behaviour which 'rewards companies for favourable behaviour' which is 'in common with civic engagement.'[103] This tactic of consuming in yellow businesses with a sense of political participation is also, ironically, a precise reflection of the city's structure and its value to liberalism and democratic restrictions.

The abovementioned protest tactics in the Hong Kong pro-democracy protests all happened in 2019, however, the protests are still standing in 2020. When protesters invaded the LegCo building on the 1st July,

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102   de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* pp.37

103   Copeland, "Conceptualizing Political Consumerism pp72

they placed a banner the centre of the chamber, which stated: 'There are no rioters, there is only tyranny'.[104] The 2019 protests have been referred to as a riot or even terrorism. However, as diversity is one of the key features of democracy, there are always changes in social conditions which could destroy the current configuration. No matter the degree of civil liberty within a democratic society, civil liberties will never be satisfied in the ever-changing configuration in society. The fight for social improvement will never end.

However, this thesis deliberately does not address the political nuances between protesters, counter-protesters, police, and the government, which were essential to the social movement, which would draw focus away from the topic in question. Instead, this thesis is an investigation on protests, from how the tactic successfully or unsuccessfully draws the public attention to the social problem, to contextualise the shifting unban conditions. As illustrated from the Hong Kong 2019 protests, the destructions to the urban society which caused the protest, formulated and shaped the protest tactics, and created from the protest, impacted to the society, as well as were impacted by the society. In fact, this investigation on protest tacics discovers how the idea of urban is constantly being subverted.

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104   Holmes Chan, "The Writing on the Wall: Understanding the Messages Left by Protesters during the Storming of the Hong Kong Legislature,"

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