Changing Repertoires of Contention in Hong Kong: A Case Study on the Anti-Extradition Bill Movement

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Introduction

The movement opposing the Extradition Law Amendment Bill (反對修訂逃犯條例 *faandeoi saudeng toufaan tiulai*, below Anti-ELAB movement) in Hong Kong has reignited a new protest cycle after a period of abeyance following the 2014 Umbrella movement (UM). Back in February 2019, the HKSAR government put forward a proposal to amend existing ordinances to allow Hong Kong to detain and transfer fugitives to countries and territories where there is no formal extradition agreement, including mainland China. Although the bill, according to government officials, was triggered by a 2018 murder case in Taipei, public concern about the authorities' motivations gradually turned into contention inside and outside the Legislative Council (LegCo). After massive demonstrations in June 2019, unceasing waves of protests have expanded the imaginations and modes of political resistance among Hong Kong citizens. In terms of movement strategy, the organic combination of "peaceful, rational, and non-violent" (*woleifei* 和理非) actions and "militant" (*jungmou* 勇武) confrontations demonstrated an unanticipated evolution of the contentious repertoire of Hong Kong social movements. Indeed, this seemingly dramatic change emerged incrementally from a specific political context, rather than transforming rapidly.

This short article examines how the Anti-ELAB movement reconfigured former movement experiences and produced new meanings of political resistance in Hong Kong. It begins with a brief review of the development of the contentious repertoire in post-handover Hong Kong before the debate over the extradition law amendment in early 2019. After contextualisation, the article then focuses on the three distinctive dynamics underlying the parallel forms of action that have emerged between June 2019 and January 2020. In order to capture the trajectory of changing repertoires, original data gathered from protest onsite surveys will be presented, complemented by press reviews. These onsite surveys were carried out by a team of researchers from four Hong Kong universities at nearly all major protests during this period, assisted by a group of trained helpers.[1]

Contentious repertoire in post-handover Hong Kong

As a hybrid regime, Hong Kong had rarely witnessed highly disruptive or even violent social mobilisations either before or after the transfer of sovereignty because of its institutional setting and conservative protest culture (Ku 2007; Fong 2013; Cheng 2016). Even after the momentous demonstration against National Security Legislation on 1st July 2003, mass protests and rallies tended to follow the principal of being "peaceful, rational, and non-violent" (*woping, leising, feiboulik* 和平, 理性, 非暴力), seeking government concessions through large turnouts (Cheng 2016). Although some protests adopted more direct forms of action, such as occupation (*zimling* 佔領) during the pier protection campaigns in 2006 and 2007, most were non-violent and symbolic in a bid to appeal to broader society (*ibid*.). Although they addressed a variety of issues, these peaceful protests all sought to protect diminishing civic freedom and to liberalise the quasi-democratic political system of this city (Ma 2007). From the early 2010s onward, a new form of activism focused on livelihood issues rooted in the increasing interactions between Hong Kong and mainland China emerged across residential neighbourhoods, and adopted more confrontational actions targeting tourists, new migrants, and parallel traders from the mainland (Chen and Szeto 2015; Yuen and Chung 2018). Nevertheless, not until the movement to Occupy Central with Love and Peace (OCLP, *Joeng ngoi jyu woping zimling zungwaan* 讓愛與和平佔領中環) and the subsequent UM did Hong Kong's contentious repertoire undergo a significant transformation in terms of scale and intensity of participation.

The emergence of OCLP should be understood in the context of political setbacks in Hong Kong's democratisation. As stated in the Basic Law, universal suffrage for the election of the Chief Executive and for the Legislative Council (LegCo) in Hong Kong was supposed to be achieved as early as 2007 and 2008, but the arrangement was rejected and further postponed by the National People's Congress Standing Committee (*Quanguo renmin daibiao dahui changwu weiyuanhui* 全國人民代表大會常務委員會) in 2006. At the same time, routinised mass protests had gradually lost their disruptive and shocking impact. In the face of stagnation of democratisation, pro-democracy activists began contemplating the necessity and justification of more radical means. Against this backdrop, legal scholar Benny Tai 戴耀廷 proposed occupying the city's core financial district in order to force the Beijing and Hong Kong governments to make concessions on democratic reform in early 2013. After more than one-and-a-half years of preparation, the planned campaign transformed spontaneously into the UM, marked by police use of tear gas on 28 September 2014.

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1. The research team was led by Professor Francis Lee L. F. of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Dr. Samson Yuen of Lingnan University, Dr. Gary Tang of The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong, and Dr. Edmund W. Cheng of City University of Hong Kong. The author was an onsite coordinator for more than ten surveys and was responsible for preliminary analysis of the survey data. For a detailed discussion on the survey methodology, please refer to Yuen (2019).

What both local and international societies witnessed in the following 79 days was the largest civil disobedience campaign in contemporary Hong Kong history. Early on, the regime shifted its response to this unpredicted event from a strategy of repression to attrition, effectively creating a stalemate (Yuen and Cheng 2017). On the movement's side, internal dissension over action escalation and central leadership eventually widened the cleavage between *woleifei* and *jungmou* protesters, undermining the morale of participants as time went on.

The failure of the UM resulted in further movement radicalisation, notably marked by "localism" (*buntou zyuji* 本土主義) and its growing appeal to young people in Hong Kong. Historically speaking, localism in Hong Kong originated from left-wing progressive activism in the mid-2000s, and was adopted by right-wing activists to articulate their anti-mainland political agenda starting in the early 2010s (Ku 2012; Chen and Szeto 2015). In the aftermath of the UM, new political groups such as Youngspiration (*Cingnin sanzing* 青年新政) and Hong Kong Indigenous (*Buntou manzyu cinsin* 本土民主前線) quickly appropriated the discourse of localism that called for a more ideologically radical, pro-independence political agenda. Calling for priority to be given to Hongkongers, these localist activists used more confrontational repertoires in some "recovery operations" (*gwongfuk hangdung* 光復行動) whilst targeting mainlanders in residential neighbourhoods during the years 2015 and 2016.

The Mongkok civil unrest (*Wonggok soulyun* 旺角騷亂) in February 2016 brought tactical radicalisation to a new climax. To counter the government crackdown on unlicensed street vendors, Hong Kong Indigenous mobilised its supporters to protect hawkers whom hygiene officers had attempted to remove, as well as to preserve local street market culture (Yuen and Chung 2020). The action escalated after the police arrived to carry out crowd control operations, with protesters adopting more confrontational means, such as digging bricks out of the pavement and throwing glass bottles at police officers (Chan and Ng 2017). From then on, more conflictual interactions between protesters and the police appeared in Hong Kong's street politics. As Yuen and Chung (2018) highlighted, despite a violent outcome, the localist camp actually gained more popularity and sympathy, as indicated by the 15% of votes that went to localist candidate Edward Leung (梁天琦) in the 2016 LegCo by-election, although public support of radical action remained low on a broader scale.[2]

In order to supress nascent radicalism, the regime adopted a hard-line approach to delegitimise the localist camp as well as to hamper the pro-democracy movement (Yuen and Chung 2018; Cheng 2020). Targeted repression via legal and political measures was illustrated by the fact that many arrested in the Mongkok clashes were charged for rioting, assaulting police officers, and other associated crimes. Between April 2018 and June 2019, 23 of them were found guilty of rioting and sentenced to the maximum term of imprisonment. In late 2018, nine leading figures of the UM were charged with incitement to commit public nuisance, incitement to incite public nuisance and other related crimes.[3] The oath-taking controversy in late 2016 (Yuen and Chung 2018) was followed by disqualification of elected lawmakers and prohibition of electoral participation by proponents of Hong Kong independence and self-determination.[4] What followed between late 2016 and early 2019 was a period of abeyance for the Hong Kong pro-democracy movement, with a decline in people's perceived collective efficacy in influencing political process and the absence of large-scale mobilisation (Lee, Yuen, Tang, and Cheng 2019).

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the conditions and resources for mass mobilisation remained in place because of dissatisfaction towards unimproved governance and social inequality remained unrelieved, coupled with the sustaining of movement networks at the grassroots level (Chung 2019; Lee *et al*. 2019).

Dynamics of contention in the Anti-ELAB movement

As shown in the previous discussion, incremental change in the contentious repertoire in post-handover Hong Kong was primarily driven by the cumulative experience of social movement and regime intervention (Tilly and Tarrow 2015: 19-20). Before explaining the underlying dynamics of change in repertoire, it is helpful to recap how the momentum of the Anti-ELAB movement was built up.

The extradition bill definitely aroused immense concern from the public following the release of the amendment proposal in February because of local citizens' deep distrust toward the mainland legal system. However, as the Hong Kong government failed to lessen people's worries, the 28 April demonstration initiated by Civil Human Rights Front (CHRF) unexpectedly attracted the largest turnout for a rally since the aftermath of the UM.[5] Inside the LegCo, intense debates took place in May 2019, while more than 270,000 signatures of Hong Kong citizens were collected through various online petitions against the amendment proposal before one million citizens protested in the streets on 9 June.[6] The first use of tear gas by police three days later during the clashes in Admiralty and Central was a critical moment. Protesters arrested on 12 June were charged with rioting for the first time during the Anti-ELAB movement. Regarding this unexpected repression, CHRF called for another demonstration on 16 June during which "five demands" (*ng daai soukau* 五大訴求) were officially presented. From then on, the "five demands" became a collective action frame that gave legitimacy to various movement activities in the subsequent months (Benford and Snow 2000). Coined by localist leader Edward Leung in his election campaign in 2016, the prevailing slogan "liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times" (*Gwongfuk Hoenggong, sidoi gaakming* 光復香港, 時代革命) in the meantime began to gain more popularity among movement supporters, representing people's "vivid revolutionary imagination unthought of before" (Ku 2020). What made this extraordinary uprising "revolutionary" can be understood in three interrelated aspects.

2. According to a public opinion survey during March 2016, around 70% of Hong Kong citizens agreed that people should always follow peaceful and non-violent means when struggling with the authorities and striving for their own demands. See "Survey Findings on Views on Social Conflict in Hong Kong Released by Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies at CUHK," Communications and Public Relations Office, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 6 April 2016, https://www.cpr.cuhk.edu.hk/en/press_detail.php?1=1&1=1&id=2230&t=survey-findings-on-views-on-social-conflict-in-hong-kong-released-by-hong-kong-institute-of-asia-pacific-studies-at-cuhk (accessed on 24 February 2020).

3. Holmes Chan, "Leading Hong Kong Umbrella Movement activists found guilty of public nuisance," *Hong Kong Free Press*, 9 April 2019, https://hongkongfp.com/2019/04/09/breaking-hong-kong-umbrella-movement-activists-handed-verdicts-public-nuisance-trial/ (accessed on 24 February 2020).

4. "衆志倡民主自決, 周庭被DQ 選舉主任指沒有真心真誠擁護基本法" (*Zungzi coeng manzyuzikyut, Zau Ting bei DQ syungeoizyujam zi mutjau zansam zansing jungwu geibunfaat*, Demosisto advocates democratic self-determination, Agnes Chow is disqualified by returning officer for her insincerity toward the Basic Law),*Ming Pao*, 28 January 2018, https://news.mingpao.com/pns/%e8%a6%81%e8%81%9e/article/20180128/s00001/1517077081428 (accessed on 30 June 2020).

5. "影像: 反逃犯條例修訂大遊行, 民陣指人數高達13萬" (*Jingzoeng: faantoufaantiulaisaudeng daai jauhang manzan zi jansou goudaat 13 maan*, Image: CHRF claims more than 130,000 people joining anti-extradition bill amendment protest), *Initium Media*, 28 April 2019, https://theinitium.com/article/20190428-photo-extradition-law-protest/ (accessed on 24 February 2020).

6. "反引渡修例聯署合集" (*Faanjandou saulai lyuncyu hapzaap*, The collection of Anti-ELAB petitions," *Citizen News*, 9 June 2019, https://www.hkcnews.com/FOO-petitions/ (accessed on 24 February 2020).

Figure 1. A poster with the slogans "Liberate Hong Kong, Revolution of our Times" and "Hongkongers, resist!" Credit: ANTIELAB Research Data Archive.

Solidarity with diversity

Within the movement, a high and persistent degree of solidarity within diversity provided a normative ground for tactical radicalisation and innovation of parallel repertoires beyond street politics. Codified by action protocols such as "no splitting and no severing of ties" (*bat fanfaa, bat gotzik* 不分化, 不割席) and "brothers climbing a mountain together, each one with their own effort" (*hingdai paasaan, gokzi noulik* 兄弟爬山, 各自努力), this norm of solidarity first redressed the cleavage between pacifism and militancy during and after the UM. It also united supporters from different biographical availabilities and action orientations, giving impetus to a popular movement with diverse social bases.

Figure 2. Graffiti stating "Disband Hong Kong Police" during the protest on 1st October 2019. Credit: Dorothy Wong.

On the one hand, solidarity is essentially affective. Social movement scholars have highlighted the importance of emotion in motivating collective actions and constructing collective identity (Jasper 2011). By calling their counterparts "hands-and-feet" (*sauzuk* 手足), protesters showed strong emotional attachment to each other, regardless of whether they had actual personal connections. As the movement went on, accumulated grievance towards police brutality and unresponsive government reinforced the affective solidarity within the movement. According to the onsite survey conducted on 18 August, an exceptionally large number of protesters surveyed felt anger towards the HKSAR government (92.2%) and police

officers (93.5%).[7] When the emergency bill was announced in October 2019, the movement slogan "Hongkongers, add oil (keep it up)!" (*Hoenggongjan, gaajau!* 香港人, 加油!) shifted to "Hongkongers, resist!" (*Hoenggongjan, faankong!* 香港人,反抗!), reframing and repositioning the city-wide contention towards an open battle against government repression (Ting 2020). After the tragic death of a 22-year-old university student in November 2019,[8] the new slogan of "Hongkongers, revenge!" (*Hoenggongjan, bousau!* 香港人, 報仇!) represented even stronger resentment towards the regime. Among the protesters surveyed during the Human Rights Day march on 8 December, 80.4% strongly agreed that the militant protesters had sacrificed themselves for the peaceful protesters, and 68.7% felt guilty when seeing them arrested. The combination of guilt and anger is often a powerful driver of social movements in solidarity with powerless others (Rodgers 2010).

Moreover, this sense of affective solidarity incorporates a pragmatic consideration alongside the impulse for movement escalation. According to most onsite surveys conducted between June and August 2019, more than 90% of the protesters surveyed believed the protests should continue if the government did not make any concession beyond suspending the bill, while around half supported further protest escalation.[9] Within the same period, the percentage of participants who agreed that combining peaceful and confrontation actions had the most effect increased from 79.6% on 17 June to nearly 90% on 25 August, and the figure remained constant over the next four months (Table 1).

Figure 3. Protesters occupying Harcourt Road in Admiralty on 1st July 2019. Credit: Dorothy Wong.

Diffusion of escalated contention

Diffusion refers to a process of spreading forms of contention, an issue or particular framing from one site of struggle to another (Tilly and Tarrow 2015: 31). Stepping towards July 2019, street politics went beyond the standard locations and familiar routes in previous mass mobilisations. An array of small-scale protests emerged across residential communities (*sekeoi* 社區). Different professional groups, such as journalists, lawyers, flight attendants, creative workers, and civil servants, organised their own

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7. The sample size of the 18 August survey was 806.
8. Hillary Leung, "Hong Kong Student Who Fell from Height During a Protest Dies," *Time*, 8 November 2019, https://time.com/5721979/hong-kong-student-brain-injury-death/ (accessed on 24 February 2020).
9. Hiu-Fung Chung 鍾曉烽, "不斷抗爭, 持續 '升級': 反修例運動參與者的民意走向" (*Bat tyun kongzang, cizuk 'sing kap': faan saulai wandung samjyuze dik manji zauhoeng*, Anti-ELAB protesters' opinion on movement escalation), *Stand News*, 13 August 2019, https://www.thestandnews.com/politics/不斷抗爭-持續-升級-反修例運動參與者的民意走向/ (accessed on 24 February 2020).

Table 1. Protesters' views on tactical radicalisation (from June to December 2019)

	Jun 17	Jul 1	Jul 21	Aug 18	Aug 25	Sep 15	Oct 14	Oct 20	Dec 8
Radical protests can force the government to listen to the people.	53.2	40.5	54.3	48.9	55.4	62.2	66.1	62.4	65.2
Radical protests will alienate the general public	61.2	54.9	33.1	37.4	24.5	27.6	35.8	30	26.8
Only when peaceful assembly and confrontational actions are used together can the impact of protest be maximised	79.6	71.0	81.6	86.1	89.8	89.1	90.3	90.6	90.2
When the government fails to listen, the use of radical tactics by protesters is understandable	/	83.5	94.7	94.2	94.6	91.9	98.2	97.5	97.5
N =	717	1169	680	806	395	911	662	921	902

Note: Respondents were required to indicate to what extent they agree with these statements. The figures show the percentage of respondents who chose "agree" and "strongly agree." Other choices include "so-so," "disagree," "strongly disagree," and "don't know".

demonstrations, and even joined political strikes in a rare move for Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement (Chan and Pun 2020).

Similar to many networked protests, the rapid diffusion of contention in the Anti-ELAB movement was highly related to the decentralised, horizontal organisation afforded by the extensive use of social media and mobile technology. In particular, the online forum LIHKG (*Lindang touleonkeoi* 連登討論區) and a bundle of Telegram groups functioned together as central communication platforms for immediate onsite tactics and deliberation over long-term strategies. As a Reddit-like platform, LIHKG facilitates the crowdsourcing of leadership connected to robust feedback loops (Ting 2020). Compared to other popular platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram is considered by protesters to be a more reliable encrypted messaging tool that can provide higher security and protection. For street confrontation, platformised coordination enacted the motto of "be water" (*jyuseoi* 如水) in stark contrast to the static occupying strategy during UM. As many commentators have already pointed out, conflictual interactions between Anti-ELAB protesters and the police force added fuel to the escalation of violence from both sides (Lee 2019b; Ku 2020; Ting 2020). While police-protester clashes had diffused to residential areas, it increased the chance for movement bystanders to perceive police use of indiscriminate and excessive violence. According to a public opinion survey carried out in mid-November, 83% and 73% agreed that the HKSAR government and the police force, respectively, were overwhelmingly responsible for the escalation of violence, but only around 40% blamed the protesters.[10] The public receptiveness of radical tactics was also supported by strong public approval of the movement goals, unresponsive authorities, and police brutality (Lee 2019a). In response to police misconduct and the desire for truth-seeking over contested events,[11] protesters launched a series of Citizens' Press Conference (*Mangaan geizewui* 民間記者會) as platforms for protesters, victims of police abuse, and experts to speak out.

At the same time, moderate protesters "escalated" their engagement by creating a wide range of peaceful activities throughout the movement, ranging from collective singing of the movement anthem "Glory to Hong Kong" (*Jyunwing gwonggwai Hoenggong* 願榮光歸香港) to forming "human chains" along metro lines. These will be elaborated in the next section. Indeed, diffusion went beyond local society. The extensive global outreach of the Anti-ELAB movement represents a watershed in Hong Kong movement history (Ku 2020), ranging from media campaigns and thematic demonstrations in different foreign cities to non-governmental public diplomacy.[12]

Figure 4. A poster promoting the yellow economic circle. Credit: ANTIELAB Research Data Archive.

10. "民調: 逾八成受訪者稱政府警方需為暴力升溫負很大責任" (*Mandiu: jyu baatsing saufongze cing zingfu gingfong seoi wai boulik singwan fu handaai zaakjam*, Public opinion survey: more than 80% of interviewees believe government and police are largely responsible for violence escalation," *Radio Television Hong Kong*, 15 November 2019, https://news.rthk.hk/rthk/ch/component/k2/1492480-20191115.htm? (accessed on 24 February 2020).

11. The 21 July Yuen Long attack and 31 August Prince Edward metro station protest were two prominent cases.

12. Further elaboration on movement internalisation would be helpful, but it is beyond the limited scope of this short article.

Table 2. Individual means of participation (from September 2019 to January 2020)

	Sep 15	Sep 28	Oct 1	Oct 14	Oct 20	Dec 8	Jan 1
Frontline protest							
Pass on resources to the frontline	46	50.6	34.8	52.3	39.4	53.5	48.4
Stop police advances	9	9.1	3.1	12.7	6.5	13.5	13.1
Protest outside police station	/	/	/	/	17.5	/	/
Resource donations							
Donate money to protest-related groups	42.2	59.3	53.1	42.1	44.2	44.5	49.2
Donate money online	46.7	51.9	47.2	54.5	48.2	41.7	43.6
Donate resources other than money	43.7	46.2	38.6	47.3	41	47.3	46.1
Community activism							
Sing "Glory to Hong Kong" publicly	78.2	80.5	77	86.1	79.4	78.9	77.6
Express opinion on "Lennon Wall"	67.6	69.1	61.6	67.2	56.6	60.7	60.4
Shout protest slogan from window at home	55.3	53.6	48.6	52.6	47	53.7	55.6
Lunchtime flash-mob	/	/	/	/	/	33.9	31.4
Join "human chain"	64	64.9	61.4	64	57.8	61.3	56.5
Economic resistance							
Participate in any form of strike	/	/	/	/	/	57.7	52.8
Buycott pro-movement business	/	69.9	68.4	86.4	81.3	98.8	98.9
Boycott pro-government business	/	86.2	83.4	89.7	88.5	98.5	98.1
Online and connective action							
Share pro-movement messages and information	78.2	82.7	74.5	83.7	78.4	75.4	76.4
Express pro-movement opinions online	74.4	74.1	67.3	79.3	72.4	71.2	72
Sign online petition	79.6	89.6	81.7	90.3	86.3	79.1	81.6
None of the above	0.7	0	0.6	0.2	0.4	1.6	0.5
N =	911	405	640	662	921	902	1306

Note: The figures are the percentage of respondents who have participated in that kind of protest activity.

Deepening everyday politicisation

Also noteworthy was a development towards everyday politicisation, referring to the process of inventing alternative ways and practices of performing and enacting politics in ordinary and "normal" settings (Roussos 2019). The politicisation of everyday life in the Anti-ELAB movement was characterised by widespread connective action, community activism, and economic resistance, especially in the latter months of protest. Table 2 captures the general pattern of Anti-ELAB protesters' individual participation between September 2019 and January 2020.

Moving towards July, many urban public spaces were filled with "Lennon Walls" (*Linnung coeng* 連儂牆).[13] Hong Kong pro-democracy supporters started to create a Hong Kong Lennon Wall using Post-it sticky notes and other creative displays outside the headquarters of the HKSAR government in Admiralty during the UM. From that time on, the colourful mosaic has become a spatial practice and expressive channel for citizens to voice their dissent. Other new community-based expressive actions such as "human chains" and belting out slogans at home were gradually routinised, sustaining a sense of involvement for movement supporters.

The most remarkable everyday resistance was political consumerism. From September 2019 to January 2020, the protesters surveyed who had *buycotted* pro-movement businesses ("yellow" shops, *wongdim* 黃店) increased significantly from 69.9% to 98.9%, while boycotting pro-

government or pro-police businesses ("blue" shops, *laamdim* 藍店) also showed a steady rise over those months (Table 2). For the first time, the Hong Kong pro-democracy movement employed economic means of action to create "alternative political resources in an acute imbalanced bargaining structure between protesters and the government" (Chan and Pun 2020). Although it is still too early to judge whether or not this economic leverage could bring substantial political rewards as long as the economic structure does not change (*ibid*.), these habitual practices actually resulted in revenue drops for some protester-targeted "blue" businesses such as Best Mart 360 and Maxim's Group.[14] Facilitated by mobile apps that list the locations and information of "yellow" shops, the pro-movement "yellow economic circle" (*wongsik ginzaihyun* 黃色經濟圈) was formed and enacted in an attempt to counter the influence of Chinese capital and to achieve a sustainable and autonomous local economy in the long term.

13. This practice refers to the Prague Lennon Wall, a monument to John Lennon's peace ideals created after his death and representing the pursuit of free speech and non-violent rebellion by young Czech people against the communist regime during the 1980s.
14. "優品 360 盈利急挫八成 稱社會運動打壓營商環境" (*Jauban 360 jinglei gapco baatsing cing sewuiwandung daangaat jingsoengwaanging*, Drastic decrease in profit Mart 360 claims social movement impeding business environment), *StandNews*, 24 June 2020 (accessed on 30 June 2020); Jinshan Hong and Yvonne Man, "Chain Hated by Hong Kong Protesters Sees Double Digit Drop," *Bloomberg*, 19 November 2019, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-18/chain-store-hated-by-hong-kong-protesters-sees-double-digit-drop (accessed on 24 February 2020).

Concluding remarks

This short essay attempts to contextualise the evolution of the contentious repertoire throughout Anti-ELAB movement and analyses its underlying dynamics. At the time of writing, the unceasing waves of protest still had no end in sight. On 24 November 2019, the pro-democracy camp won 85% of the seats in District Council elections. This unexpected landslide victory has critical implications for the LegCo elections in late 2020, as well as for the 2021 Chief Executive election. It is foreseeable that, under the new governing principle of "total governance" (*quanmian guanzhi* 全面管治) since 2014, the Beijing government will adopt a more repressive approach to Hong Kong in handling dissents in the future.

Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Anti-ELAB movement entered a period of "enforced abeyance" (*beibik jauzi* 被迫休止) in early February 2020, yet contentious campaigns have not totally died down.[15] As sociologist Ching-kwan Lee pointed out, the Anti-ELAB Movement itself is a "permanent revolution" (*winggau gaakming* 永久革命), and is in the process of constructing a "Hong Kong community" (*Hoenggong gungtungtai* 香港共同體) based on affective solidarity and flexible forms of resistance rooted in people's everyday lives.[16] With the enactment of the Hong Kong National Security Law (*Gongkeoi gwokngonfaat* 港區國安法) on 30 June 2020, Hong Kong pro-democracy protesters now face a higher risk of punishment, and whether citizens' political freedoms can be protected remains unclear. Furthermore, many people also fear the erosion of Hong Kong's judicial independence because its unique common law jurisdiction does not align with China's judicial system (Chan 2018). Nevertheless, after a summer of freedom and a traumatic autumn in 2019, this popular movement has already become a "long revolution" against authoritarian encroachment.

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15. Francis Lee Lap-fung 李立峰, "社會運動下的抗疫和抗疫下的社會運動" (*Sewuiwandung haa dik kongjik wo kongjik haa dik sewuiwandung*, Anti-pandemic during social movement and social movement in the anti-pandemic era), *Ming Pao*, 20 February 2020, https://news.mingpao.com/ins/%E6%96%87%E6%91%98/article/20200220/s00022/1582098559971 (accessed on 30 June 2020).
16. Ching-kwan Lee 李靜君, "'觸動靈魂深處的反送中革命' 社會學解析" ('*Zukdung lingwan samcyu dik faansungzung gaakming' sewuihok gaaisik*, A sociological analysis of the "soul-touching" Anti-ELAB movement), *The Storm Media*, 1st December 2019, https://www.storm.mg/article/2010112 (accessed on 24 February 2020).

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