April 2024

Hong Kong's Political Landscape from The Media Coverage in The Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement

Kexin Sun
New York University, ks5586@nyu.edu

Hong Kong's Political Landscape from The Media Coverage in The Anti-Extradition Law

Amendment Bill Movement

Presented at the 2022 NYSCA conference on October 15, 2022.

As mainland China expands economically and gains international attention, Hong Kong experiences an unprecedented time to rebuild its relationship with mainland China. The recent rise of nativism in Hong Kong illustrates the undeniable differences between Hong Kong and mainland China, despite the fact that they share a common cultural origin. It is the One Country, Two System policy that Hong Kong people pay the most attention to among all the cultural and political differences, which is believed to be responsible for the democratic and judiciary dilemma. The Extradition Law Amendment Bill, which proposed a mechanism to transfer fugitives, triggered months of anti-government protests in 2019, which is The Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement, in short, The Anti-ELAB Movement. The protests caused a stir throughout Hong Kong and mainland China. Nevertheless, there is a significant difference in how audiences from the two regions perceive the Anti-ELAB movement, respectively. Thus, my research aims to explore the difference in media agenda-setting between Hong Kong and mainland China, as well as to take a glance at the political landscape under the political dispute regarding democracy and jurisdiction.

Research Background

In recent years, Hong Kong has seen a frequent occurrence of social movements, which gradually evolved from conservationist movements to localist movements, such as the Umbrella Protests of 2014. They also gradually transformed radicalism from applying it as an auxiliary to applying it as a principal (W. Lin, 2017, p. 13). More than 800,000 people participated in "Occupy Central" (also known as The Umbrella Movement), which was inspired by the Occupy Wall Street movement, to demand the right for Hong Kong residents to nominate and elect the Chief Executive. The Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill (ELAB) Movement, the successor to The Umbrella Movement, is expected to be the largest protest movement in Hong Kong since 1997.

Hong Kong residents' demands in civic movements reflect how they perceive their

identity. The Hong Kong scholars commented, "Whenever they encounter national events, such as 'Diaoyutai incident', '1980s incident 'and 'bid for hosting Olympic Games', they consider themselves Chinese, because Hong Kong is a part of China, naturally Chinese; but when it comes to other situations, such as capitalism, democracy and human rights, they feel different from the mainland and recognize themselves as Hong Kong people" (Zheng & Wong, 2002, p. 73). As can also be seen in the survey of national identity in Hong Kong, which shows that the overall percentage of self-identification as Chinese fluctuated in the first few years following 1997. According to the same survey conducted in 2019, the percentage of residents who identify as Chinese has dropped to its lowest level ever, while the percentage of people who distrust the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and the central government (mostly refer to Beijing) has reached its highest level ever (Public Opinion Programme, 2019).

To examine the perception of The Anti-ELAB Movement, I focused on five print media outlets in Hong Kong and mainland China, taking their coverage of The Anti-ELAB Movement as my research object, and attempting to answer the following questions:

Q1: Do both regions' media present different perspectives?

Q2: What elements do the media portray differently?

Q3: What political landscape does agenda-setting indicate?

Research Methodology

The study examines the differences in how the two regions' media portray The Anti-ELAB Movement and analyzes agenda-setting by examining the specific features of the news stories. In this context, I selected five print media with differing viewpoints as the main research objects. South China Morning Post, The Standard, and Initium Media are based in Hong Kong. Global Times and Southern Metropolis Daily are from mainland China.

South China Morning Post (SCMP) is an English news outlet in Hong Kong. There is

a comment in the Hong Kong press that SCMP's English coverage is independent. In 2018, SCMP was elected by the public as one of the top ten media outlets (in Hong Kong), demonstrating the high level of popularity SCMP enjoys among Hong Kong residents (Hong Kong Association of Interactive Marketing, 2018). In addition to its popularity, SCMP also ranks highly in terms of credibility, as revealed by a tracking study conducted by the Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Survey (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2019).

The Standard is an English newspaper published in Hong Kong that is considered to be pro-establishment. Even though its standpoint is perceived to be more pro-Beijing, The Standard achieved the highest level of public trust in 2016 according to the Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Survey.

Initium Media is a Hong Kong-based digital media start-up founded in August 2015. With President Xi in power, Initium Media aims "to respond to the entire nexus of China-Hong Kong-Taiwan relations" (Speelman, 2016), publishes Chinese coverage, and focuses on investigation reports, features, and commentaries. Despite its claims to be independent, Initium Media often criticizes Beijing, thus setting a tone as anti-Beijing.

Global Times is a state-run Chinese news outlet under People's Daily, Beijing's official mouthpiece. A reporter from Global Times was insulted and attacked by violent protesters during the protests on August 14. Hu Xijin, the chief editor of Global Times at that time, supported and spoke for him on Weibo condemning violence in the protests (Global Times, 2019). In addition, Global Times has published a series of news stories and commentaries regarding the incident. With the crime gaining a great deal of attention in mainland China, Global Times' coverage attracted a large number of new readers and increased its reputation significantly.

Southern Metropolis Daily is a Chinese news outlet based in Guangzhou, near Hong

Kong. Early in the 2000s, Southern Metropolis Daily published dozens of investigative reports that were highly influential at home and abroad, attracting a large number of readers who appreciated its openness and outspokenness. It was once praised by commentators for challenging the limits of journalism in China. While Southern Metropolis Daily has shifted its focus from politics to neoliberalism and professionalism in recent years, it has a long history of supporting neoliberalism and professionalism.

Research Design

The research was conducted applying content analysis and historical analysis.

Content Analysis

NLPIR-ICTCLAS is a system developed by Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) to provide features including word segmentation (for both Chinese and English), part of speech tagging, named entity recognition, and so forth. With the aid of NLPIR-ICTCLAS system, the content analysis of full texts is carried out by analyzing word frequency, word class (noun, verb, objective etc.), keywords in context (KWIC), cluster analysis and sentiment analysis of full texts.

Constructed Week Sampling

To obtain a fair comparison between the five media outlets, news stories should be selected via a constructed week sampling method, since the reliability and validity of a seven-day constructed week are high (Riffe et al., 1993, p. 163). The constructed week sampling technique is considered to be an effective method of analyzing the content of a newspaper. Additionally, it has a lower level of deviation than simple random sampling, especially when it comes to the cyclical variations in newspaper publications and broadcasting (Zhou, 2010, p. 89).

The Sampling Frame

The sampling unit is one day. The first requirement is that news stories contain at

least one key phrase including "Hong Kong protests" or "extradition bill". As a second consideration, only news stories published in the print version of SCMP, Global Times, and Southern Metropolis Daily are considered in the sampling frame, as all three media have a greater volume of online archives than The Standard and Initium Media. It would reduce the amount of duplicate and redundant information that is released on different platforms. Lastly, there is a requirement regarding the publication date of news stories collected. Seven dates are sampled from June 6 to November 2, 2019, as a large-scale protest took place on June 6, which is widely regarded as a symbol of The Anti-ELAB movement in its entirety.

The Sampling Processes

Throughout the 21 weeks, there are seven groups, each consisting of three consecutive weeks. Each day of the constructed week is taken from each group of weeks in order. A Sunday is selected randomly from three Sundays in the first group of three weeks (June 9, June 16 and June 23); a Monday is selected randomly from three Mondays in the second group. As a result, samples of news stories are distributed evenly throughout the timeline (Ren, 1999, p. 29). I collected news stories which are in the sampling frame and published on the seven sampled days. The following is the seven-day constructed week (see table 1).

Table 1

Dates of The Constructed Week

Date	Weekday	Week Code
6/16/2019	Sunday	2
7/15/2019	Monday	6
7/30/2019	Tuesday	8
8/14/2019	Wednesday	10
9/5/2019	Thursday	13
10/11/2019	Friday	18
10/19/2019	Saturday	19

Historical Analysis

Hong Kong's history serves as a context and previous civic movements serve as a

comparison. There is a complex relationship between Hong Kong and mainland China in terms of culture and politics. The Anti-ELAB Movement, which seems to be a reaction to the ELAB, is an echo of prior demonstrations and failed protests behind which lies the long-standing concern of Hong Kong citizens regarding political systems and jurisdiction.

Additionally, it is possible to assess whether media's attitudes have changed regarding how they portray local demonstrations and construct "reality" by emphasizing particular aspects of the Movement by comparing it with previous demonstrations. Generally, anti-Beijing media often reported on the Umbrella Movement in inflammatory language, while the establishment camp tended to remain distant but prudent (Tian & Huang, 2015, p. 69).

Media Coverage Analysis

In total, 99 news stories were collected from the sampling frame, on average 19.8 per media, 14.1 per day (see table 2).

Table 2

Number of Sampling News Stories by Media

Date	SCMP	The Standard	Initium Media	Global Times	Southern Metropolis Daily
6/16/2019	4	2	3	0	4
7/15/2019	1	9	0	1	0
7/30/2019	3	6	1	1	1
8/14/2019	3	9	0	5	2
9/5/2019	5	1	3	3	3
10/11/2019	14	4	2	3	0
10/19/2019	4	0	1	1	0
Total	**34**	**31**	**10**	**14**	**10**

Keyword in Context (KWIC)

In terms of keyword frequency, Hong Kong and police are at the top of the list. As a matter of fact, "police" appears in the top five for four media outlets, with the exception of Global Times where "police" appears at sixth. A great deal of controversy surrounds the police (see table 3). The Extradition Bill becomes a thing only for SCMP and is forgotten by the rest, indicating that the argument during the protests is no longer about the Extradition

Bill. The agenda has shifted from the ELAB to the political landscape in Hong Kong. It is noteworthy that "Hong Kong" occupies a top position in all Chinese-language media, while "protests" occupies a high position in the English-language media. In contrast to the English-speaking audience, which tends to focus on the details of the protests, the Chinese-speaking audience strives to understand the impact of the protests on Hong Kong.

Table 3

Top 5 Key Word by Frequency

Media	Top 1	Top 2	Top 3	Top 4	Top 5
SCMP	Police	Protests	China	Students	Extradition Bill
The Standard	Protesters	(Police) Officers	Hong Kong	Airport	Force
Initium Media	Hong Kong	Taiwan	Protesters	Police	Government
Global Times	Hong Kong	US	Violence	Society	Journalists
Southern Metropolis Daily	Hong Kong	Society	Violence	Government	Police

Overall Sentiment

In the NLPIR-ICTCLAS system, sentiment is assessed through gradable lexicon-based methods. The higher the score, the greater the intensity of favor, whereas the lower the score, the greater the amount of dislike.

The overall sentiment is discussed in order to gain a better understanding of how the media views the Anti-ELAB Movement. As part of an in-depth analysis, sentiment is discussed on keywords such as "police" and "Hong Kong", since these two words are ranked highest on the KWIC.

Table 4 shows that The Standard presents the calmest sentiment, while the rest present more intense sentiments to varying degrees. In terms of coverage, The Standard does not exhibit a strong emotional response. There are only a few concerns about the protests. As representatives of the anti- and pro-Beijing camps, respectively, Initium Media and Global Times exhibit strong opinions, with Initium Media exhibiting the greatest levels of both positive and negative sentiment. Generally speaking, Initium Media and Global Times

publish commentaries and opinions more frequently. SCMP appears to score the lowest for protests. It should be noted, however, that sentiment scores do not provide a definitive conclusion due to the elements and stories chosen by the media. In Southern Metropolis Daily, the sentiment scores appear unexpectedly supportive of the protesters. Rather, it was due to a piece that featured a police officer who was moved to tears by citizens' gestures of support. However, the sentiment scores suggest that SCMP is more concerned with protest issues, which will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

Table 4

Overall Sentiment

Media	Sentiment Scores	Positive Scores	Negative Scores
SCMP	-346	535	-881
The Standard	-251	133	-384
Initium Media	146	2640	-2494
Global Times	-150	942	-1092
Southern Metropolis Daily	100	656	-556

Language differences are more likely to affect sentiment scores for certain keywords. As a result, the sentiment analysis on the following two keywords has been categorized according to language.

Sentiment on "Hong Kong"

How does the Anti-ELAB movement affect Hong Kong? No one has a clear answer to this question, but the media makes an assessment.

Table 5

Sentiment on "Hong Kong"

Language	Media	Sentiment Scores	Positive Scores	Negative Scores
English	SCMP	-150	163	-313
English	The Standard	-47	29	-76
Chinese	Initium Media	146	697	-551
Chinese	Global Times	-19	656	-675
Chinese	Southern Metropolis Daily	118	475	-357

In light of the ongoing protests in Hong Kong, it seems that English-speaking media have a more negative perception of the city. SCMP, the media outlet with the least hope for

Hong Kong under the pressure of the protests, publishes a series of news stories about the unstable stock market, real estate market, and tourism market and emphasizes how the upheaval is driving companies and investors away from the downbeat outlook for Hong Kong. Despite the pickup in home sales, SCMP's story warns that the recovery would not last. Furthermore, SCMP emphasizes that some citizens are considering quitting Hong Kong as a direct result of the protests.

There is an interesting finding in that Chinese-speaking media show a more positive attitude through strong sentiment scores, despite various stance. According to the cluster analysis, their assessments are influenced by their ideologies. Generally speaking, Initium Media focuses on politics, whereas those two media from mainland China tend to focus more on economic issues. Initium Media insists that the movement should result in political freedom (or democracy) in Hong Kong and praises the protesters' courage. Specifically, Initium Media uses the headline "Freedom is not a gift, but a task" as a way of demonstrating its support for the protesters. On the other hand, media from mainland China are required to adhere to state diplomatese, let alone Global Times in its capacity as a state mouthpiece. For Southern Metropolis Daily, seven out of ten sampled publications are directly republished from Xinhua Agency and People's Daily. As the frontier of China's financial openness, Hong Kong continues to play a significant role in foreign financing and the listing of mainland-based companies. These samples highlight the need for the government to stabilize the market and continue to boost the economy.

Sentiment on "Police"

As mentioned above, the protests have raised significant controversies concerning the police.

Table 6

Sentiment on "Police"

Language	Media	Sentiment Scores	Positive Scores	Negative Scores
English	SCMP	-122	53	-175
English	The Standard	-69	36	-105
Chinese	Initium Media	-47	111	-158
Chinese	Global Times	-19	57	-76
Chinese	Southern Metropolis Daily	19	91	-72

SCMP exhibits a disapproval of the police, without using specific language to describe such an attitude. All 34 SCMP samples include police as a critical topic. As a response to the allegations of police brutality, SCMP has paid particular attention to the conflicts between student protesters and police officers. To present a different perspective, SCMP emphasizes police in the headlines and at the beginning of the news stories, as well as how the protesters retaliate and how the universities respond to the student protesters' demands.

The Standard shows less disapproval of the police by presenting fewer allegations against them. When describing controversies surrounding the police, the term "investigation" is used more frequently than "allegation." The Standard's headlines also exhibit less disapproval. There is a tendency among SCMP to place universities and student protesters who have accused police of abuse in the lead role, such as "Chinese University head willing to condemn Hong Kong police for 'any proven case' of brutality, under student pressure." By contrast, The Standard places the police in the lead by publishing headlines such as "Unity call by embattled police chief" (July 30, 2019), "Pretty picture for police morale" (June 16, 2019), and "Police unions denounce 'beasts'" (June 16, 2019).

Initium Media shows the most considerable distrust in the police among Chinese-speaking media, receiving a negative score of -158. Initium Media publishes the most detailed reports on the police tactics used to respond to the protests. As a matter of note, Initium Media published commentaries from other authors that accused the police and pro-government politicians of political corruption and misconduct. As a contrast, Southern Metropolis Daily publishes an article about police officers urging empathy for them. Its

headline goes "Hong Kong residents braved the rain to support the police, 31-year-old police officer burst into tears and buried his face."

Beyond The Agenda-Setting

As noted above, researched media present a stronger sentiment especially when it comes to certain touchy subjects such as police. It provides a glance into public opinions among Hong Kong people. More, however, should be discussed in terms of the probe into the political landscape in Hong Kong in dispute.

The Confusing Political Identity and the "Failure" of the Educational Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA)

Several reports suggest that The Anti-ELAB Movement is an upgrade of The Umbrella Movement. Therefore, the comparison between the Anti-ELAB Movement and the Umbrella Movement may provide insight into how the agenda has changed over the course of the past five years.

The goals of The Anti- ELAB Movement (BBC, 2019):

1.   Full withdrawal of the extradition bill from the legislative process

2.   Retraction of the characterization of the protests as "riots"

3.   Release and exoneration of arrested protesters

4.   Establishment of an independent commission of inquiry into police behavior

5.   Universal suffrage for the Legislative Council and the Chief Executive elections

6.   The resignation of the Chief Executive Carrie Lam

The goals of The Umbrella Movement:

1.   Genuine universal suffrage

2.   Retraction of the decision of the NPCSC (the Standing Committee of the

National People's Congress) candidates for "the chief-executive position must be vetted by an electoral committee of tycoons, oligarchs and pro-Beijing figures" (Iyengar, 2014).

3.   The resignation of the Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying

The shared focus is universal suffrage. Both movements call for full democracy, claiming the right of Hong Kong residents to both nominate and elect the Chief Executive and the Legislative Council of Hong Kong (LegCo) which is called the "Dual Universal Suffrage." While ELAB triggered the movement, Hong Kong protesters never lost sight of Dual Universal Suffrage, which is considered one of the legacy issues of the Umbrella Movement. The question remains, however, how Dual Universal Suffrage could become the most crucial narrative in Hong Kong's civic movement.

Hong Kong is extremely closely connected to mainland China. Over 100 years, local culture in Hong Kong has faced "the dual dilemma" – its local culture has been developing based on Chinese traditional culture; however, Hong Kong's colonial history has caused it to be separated from not only Chinese traditional culture but also the contemporary cultural situation in present mainland China (Lv & Wang, 2001, p. 53). Throughout its history, Hong Kong has evolved into a complex fusion of Chinese and Western cultures. The establishment of the Special Administrative Region in Hong Kong goes beyond symbolizing the return of authority and territory to China. It also results in fissures.

A patriotic poet, Wen Yiduo, wrote a poem in 1925 in which he described the greatest grief Chinese people felt upon witnessing a broken country with Hong Kong departed:

Mother (referring to mainland China) let me hide in your arms!

 Mother! I want to come back, mother! (2013, p. 4).

In the same year, Hong Kong workers also struck in support of the May 30 Movement in Shanghai, an upsurge in the anti-imperialist struggle of the Chinese people. As a result,

Hong Kong's economy was adversely affected (Zhang, 1993, p. 27). The conclusion can be drawn that Hong Kong people recognize themselves as Chinese despite the fact that they have been separated from mainland China by colonizers.

It was after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 that the two regions began to diverge politically and economically. In the 1960s, Hong Kong experienced an economic boom, which led to the confused political identity that hung over Hong Kong for decades (Yan, 2015, p. 79). A sense of achievement and the imagination of the world are the foundations of Hong Kong people's political identity as a result of the colonial history and economic boom (Cheng & Yuen, 2018, p. 56). As the Marxist topography indicates the base is crucial to determining the superstructure (Althusser, 2006, p. 93), Hong Kong's economic situation has been pushing the political identity of Hong Kong people into a new direction when they chose to turn away from the previous one as "Chinese."

It is the transformation of Hong Kong's political identity that has shaped how people respond to changes in the political system. In 1997, Hong Kong was returned to the Chinese central government's sovereignty. However, Hong Kong people were reluctant to be handed over to Beijing as 1997 approached. A compromise was reached by introducing "One Country, Two Systems" policy to assist Hong Kong in navigating the transit period (Cheng & Yuen, 2018, p. 56).

Further, "Their index of effectivity (or determination), …, is thought by the Marxist tradition ...: (1) there is a 'relative autonomy' of the superstructure with respect to the base; …" (Althusser, 2006, p. 93). It is this shift in the political landscape that contributes to Hong Kong people's doubts about the central government and pro-Beijing politics (Yan, 2016, p. 70). The doubts backwards exacerbate the lack of national identity, which undermines the practice of "One Country, Two Systems" policy. Since then, the conflict has shifted from

"pro-Beijing versus pro-democracy" to "pro-government versus anti-government" (Ma, 2007, p. 202). In response to the question posed at the beginning, it is evident that Dual Universal Suffrage is a manifestation of an anti-government attitude. Hong Kong people are calling for Dual Universal Suffrage in order to have a true opportunity to remove the government they disapprove of.

Accordingly, "One Country, Two Systems" served as a compromise to resolve the ambiguity in Hong Kong's political identity when the political system was transformed. This is an indication that Beijing is aware that ideological differences could hinder Hong Kong's full return. Obviously, Beijing, as a government that applies Marxism, has been making efforts to resolve the "problematic" ideology through ideological state apparatuses.

In 2012, during his first year in office, Leung Chun-ying dealt with a protest against the National Education in primary schools. The government-sponsored book was so heavily criticized by parents that street protests were organized. The slogan of the demonstration was "Call for action against brainwashing," since many believed that the book praised the Communist Party and promoted patriotism (VOA, 2012). The National Education was suspended as a result of the protests. However, the National Education was not the last attempt to apply the educational ideological state apparatus (ISA). A few Hong Kong-based universities require undergraduates to pass Mandarin courses or exams in order to graduate, which dissatisfied students of Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) and Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) and led to their appeals to remove Mandarin requirements. Local students are particularly dissatisfied, arguing that the policy violates their right not to learn Mandarin and damages Hong Kong's cultural heritage. HKBU students have occupied the language center to protest that has once again sparked a row between Hong Kong's political camps (Ye, 2018).

The Pursuit of Public Freedom or Personal Happiness

Hannah Arendt asks the essence of revolutions by her book *On Revolution*, and defines revolution where "novelty is present and where novelty is connected with the idea of freedom" starts with violence (1990, 27). According to her theory, I would like to discuss a growing acceptance of violence (and aggressiveness) by analyzing how protesters are highly mobilized in The Anti-ELAB Movement.

"Civilization," derived from the Latin word "civis," refers to a courtesy shown by citizens. Based on such a perspective, aggressiveness and violence should be far removed from citizens' bodies. In addition, order is generally a reflection of the limitations placed on citizens by the rulings of civilization, which requires the oppression of human desire. Then, how could citizens be mobilized in a violent and aggressive manner? The use of violence and aggressiveness is not the immediate and natural response to mobilization (Cheng & Yuen, 2018, p. 208), particularly in a city that prides itself on order. Instead, violence and aggressiveness are introduced into the movements. Through his column entitled "I'm rational, so I'm brave and aggressive", Horace Chin Wan-kan introduced aggressiveness into the public sphere in Hong Kong for the first time in 2011. In addition to peaceful demonstrations, It is his contention that violence and aggressive behavior is a last resort, which should never be deprived from the mass population (Chin, 2011). Therefore, violence as a resolution is a must-do tactic that is both righteous and creative. Citizen bodies must be aggressive enough to create spectacles and to educate others (usually the peaceful ones) in an informative manner. Initium Media depicts a detail of how a young girl named Micky started as a protester:

> Twenty-three-year-old Micky said the critical factor that mobilized her into the movement is a male protester died from the fall amid the protests, "I felt shocked and so sad when hearing the accident." She thought she was always disinterested in politics. But in the face of the government's stubbornness and the grim reality of

protesters' dying, she felt she had to voice the same civic rage at the government as those who had taken part.

As a result, the Umbrella Movement and the Anti-ELAB Movement both make extensive use of bodies. The Umbrella Movement, also known as the Occupy Central with Love and Peace (OCLP), was inspired by a series of "occupy" movements, including Occupy Wall Street. It was clear that "occupation" was throughout all Hong Kong protests in 2014, including sit-ins and hunger strikes. Five years later, protesters develop a new style of "Fighting as Wild Cats" (Z. Lin, 2019). They turn occupations of thoroughfares and sit-ins into spontaneous roadblocks and circling around administrative offices and entrances. News reports have described such styles as "A rally may turn into a march; a march may begin in one direction and abruptly change to another direction; the focus of a particular protest action may only emerge in the course of the march itself" (Lam et al., 2019). Decentralizing the occupations greatly expands the area that the movement can reach.

Jürgen Habermas describes "a sphere which mediates between society and state, in which the public organizes itself as the bearer or public opinion" (1964, p. 50). Therefore, the demonstrations on the streets are a reclaim, re-creation, and rediscovery by the protesters of the public sphere. There is a social scenario portrayed: the use of online communication, including LIHKG forum (local version of Reddit), Telegram and even Airdrop, pushes the online plan into an offline practice, given that protesters were able to vote, chat and organize their protests online. There is a blurring of the boundaries between the physical and virtual spaces as they transition from online to offline. Moreover, the protesters re-create the public sphere by transforming facilities into roadblocks, as the resistance "not only produce a space of appearance" but cut off "the relations between the public space, the public square, and the existing regime" (Butler, 2015, p. 85). It is then necessary to bring up the question again - what are the protesters' ultimate motivations? In other words, what is their question regarding

society to be addressed by/in the movements?

It was Hannah Arendt who pointed out during the French Revolution that the masses in France pointed their social issue to poverty, and sought the revolution as a solution. Hong Kong, one of the wealthiest cities in the world, is experiencing economic imbalance, relying heavily on finance with almost no manufacturing. The financial sector, however, provides only 6.8% of employment opportunities while contributing 18.9% to the local economy (Shan, 2019). It is common for young people to be stuck in low-paying jobs while suffering from the highest levels of living expenses and housing worldwide. In addition, Hong Kong is a frontier for mainland China in terms of financing openness and fundraising. There have been reports that companies, investments, and cash are fleeing to Singapore as investors lose heart as a result of the endless protests. In November 2019, Alibaba relisted on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange (HKEx). It is believed that Beijing is taking this action to boost Hong Kong's economy. However, efforts to restore Hong Kong's economy unintentionally result in a greater reliance on finance.

> Wealth and economic well-being… are the fruits of freedom, while… its cause was natural abundance under "mild government," and neither political freedom or the unchained, unbridled "private initiate" of capitalism, which in the absence of natural wealth has led everywhere to unhappiness and mass poverty (Arendt, 1990, p. 225).

It is for this reason that Hong Kong people, especially the younger generation, are deprived of the opportunity to pursue their personal happiness. A friend of mine in Hong Kong once encountered a group of student protesters and discussed their motivations. It was because they had nothing to lose that those young students were so fearless, declaring, "Hong Kong will be with us if we fall down."

In conclusion, it is the confusion regarding the national identity and actions against the educational ideological state apparatus that contribute to an apparent focus on

public/political freedom through an appeal for dual universal suffrage among the protesters.

Yet, it is the concern with the freedom to pursue personal happiness that truly motivates the

youth.

Reference

Althusser, L. (2006). Ideology and ideological state apparatuses (notes towards an

investigation). *The anthropology of the state: A reader, 9* (1), 86-98.

Arendt, H. (1990). *On Revolution*. Penguin Books.

BBC. (2019, September 4). *Carrie Lam Announced the Withdrawal Of ELAB, Amending The*

"Four Actions" to Respond to "Five Demands." BBC Chinese.

bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/chinese-news-49576610.

Butler, J. (2015). *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Harvard University

Press.

Cheng, W., & Yuen, W. (2018). *The Era of Social Movements: The trajectory of protest*

politics in Hong Kong. The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press.

Chin, W. (2011, May 24). *I'm rational, so I'm brave and aggressive.* Am730.

archive.am730.com.hk/column-57300.

Global Times. (2019, August 14). *Hu Xijin, Editor-in-chief of Global Times: Fu Guohao is*

safe. Global Times.

baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1641806182452521973&wfr=spider&for=pc.

Habermas, J., Lennox, S., & Lennox, F. (1974). The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article

(1964). *New German Critique*, 3, 49–55.

Hong Kong Association of Interactive Marketing. (2018, July 6). *Media Convergence*

Awards 2018 Press Release. Hong Kong Association of Interactive Marketing.

www.hkaim.org/eDM/201804/MCA/The%206th%20MCA%20Press%20Release_Fin

al.pdf.

Iyengar, R. (2014, October 5). *6 Questions You Might Have About Hong Kong's Umbrella*

Revolution. Time. time.com/3471366/hong-kong-umbrella-revolution-occupy-central-

democracy-explainer-6-questions/.

Lam, J., Ng, N., & Su, X. (2019, June 22). *Be water, my friend: Hong Kong protesters take Bruce Lee's wise saying to heart and go with the flow*. SCMP. www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3015627/be-water-my-friend-protesters-take-bruce-lees-wise-saying.

Lin, W. (2017). On the Change of Hong Kong's Youth Movement and the Countermeasures. *Journal of Jianghan University (Social Science Edition), 34* (3), 12-17, 123.

Lin, Z. (2019, September 16). *100 Days in the Anti-ELAB Movement: How to change from a parade to a violent conflict.* BBC Chinese. www.bbc.com/zhongwen/trad/extra/Fy2CQzQkHZ/hong-kong-protests-100-days-on.

Lv, J., & Wang, Z. (2001). Post-returning of Hong Kong: Cultural Rift, Cultural Identification and Cultural Renewal. *Journal of Wuyi University, 3* (3), 53-57.

Ma, N. (2007). *Political development in Hong Kong: State, political society, and civil society* (vol. 1). Hong Kong University Press.

Public Opinion Programme. (2019, June 27). *HKU POP final farewell: Rift widens between Chinese and Hongkong identities, national pride plunges to one in four.* HKU POP SITE. www.hkupop.hku.hk/english/release/release1594.html.

Ren, X. (1999). Three Sampling Methods of Content Analysis in Information Communication. *Documentation, Information & Knowledge, 3*, 29-30.

Riffe, D., Aust, C., & Lacy, S. (1993). The effectiveness of random, consecutive day and constructed week sampling in newspaper content analysis. *Journalism quarterly, 70* (1), 133-139.

Shan, H. (2019, November 9). *After Half a Year of Protests in Hong Kong: Economic Dilemma and The Possible Way Out.* BBC Chinese. www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/chinese-news-50698034.

Speelman, T. (2016, April 6). *Initium's Ambition: A Digital Magazine for All Chinese"*

Foreign Policy. foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/06/a-magazine-for-every-chinese-hong-kong-media-censorship-china-initium/.

The Chinese University of Hong Kong. (2019 July). *Public Evaluation on Media Credibility.* Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Survey. ccpos.com.cuhk.edu.hk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Public-Evaluation-on-Media-Credibility-CHI.pdf.

Tian, L., & Huang, Y. (2015). The Communication Strategy of Hong Kong Newspapers' Public Event Reporting – A Case Study on The Occupy Central Movement. *The Press*, 7, 69-72.

VOA. (2012, August 4). *Anti-Brainwashing in Hong Kong Will Escalate into Larger Protests.* VOA Cantonese. www.voacantonese.com/a/hong-kong-people-against-the-implementation-of-national-education/1455183.html.

Wen, Y. (2013). *Listening to Wen Yiduo.* China Radio & Television Publishing House.

Yan, X. (2016). Wandering And Swaying: The Collective Dilemma of Hong Kong People's National Identity. *Beijing Cultural Review*, 4, 70-76.

Yan, X. (2015). *Hong Kong's Governance and Chaos: The Political Imagination in 2047*. Joint Publishing.

Ye, J. (2018, January 24). *Controversy Around Exemption from the Mandarin Test In HKBU: What Is the Issue.* BBC Chinese. www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/chinese-news-42784690.

Zhang, X. (1993). On the Mediation of Strikes by Chinese Businessmen in Hong Kong. *Collected Papers of History Studies*, 3, 27-32.

Zheng, W., & Wong, S. (2002). The Identity of Hong Kong Chinese: Before and After 1997. *Twenty-First Century, 73* (5), 71-80.

Zhou, X. (2010). The Sampling of Content Analysis in Internet Studies: A Case Study of

Five SSCI Journals (1998-2008). *Chinese Journal of International & Communication,*

8, 86-92.