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Declaration

I declare that this assignment is my own work and does not involve plagiarism or collusion. The sources of other people's work have been appropriately referenced, failing which I am willing to accept the necessary disciplinary action(s) to be taken against me.

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Date of Submission:

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter 4: Discussion, Interpretation and analysis

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Chapter 6: References

Abstract

This research paper aims to uncover reasons for the protests happening in Hong Kong between 2019-2020, and to decide if the Hong Kong citizens, by protesting, are helping their country be free of the Chinese rule, or making matters worse for Hong Kong. This paper also seeks to find out if the reasons for protesting in Hong Kong are real and are of actual concern or are they due to populism.

1. Introduction

1.1 General Background

The First Opium War ended with the Treaty of Nanjing, where the Qing Dynasty ceded Hong Kong to the British empire in 1842. Hong Kong then became a British colony. In 1984, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang negotiated the underlying plan for the lease to end, such that Hong Kong would remain a semi-autonomous region for a 50-year period after the lease ended.

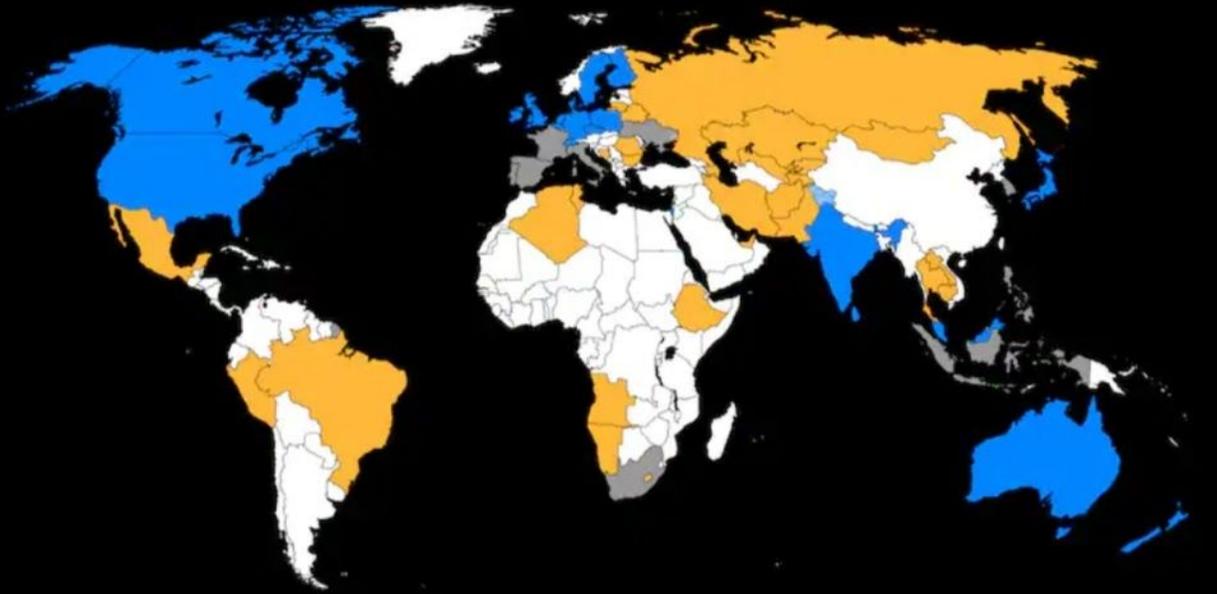
Great Britain returned Hong Kong back to mainland China after 156 years. Hong Kong therefore became part of mainland China in 1997, however it did not have to follow the Chinese way of ruling, the “one country two systems” is a constitutional principle describing the governance of Hong Kong formulated by Deng XiaoPing, the paramount leader of China during the negotiations with the United Kingdom over Hong Kong. Hong Kong was allowed to have its own government but its government was financially dependent on the Government of the People’s Republic of China. The Chinese Government was also responsible for Hong Kong’s defence and foreign policy. The “Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2019” was proposed by Hong Kong’s government in February. It covers mainland China and other jurisdictions that don’t have an extradition agreement with Hong Kong. The bill was sparked by the case of a Hong Kong man accused of murdering his girlfriend in Taiwan. He was arrested in Hong Kong and convicted of money laundering but couldn’t be sent back to Taiwan for trial there because there’s no legal framework to do so. The Hong Kong government says the new law will ensure the city doesn’t become a haven for suspected criminals. However, many Hong Kong citizens are against this framework because it allows many Hong Kong citizens to be taken back to mainland China without trial. The U.S. has suggested that the continued erosion of autonomy could jeopardize Hong Kong’s special status, under which the Americans agree to treat Hong Kong as distinct from China for trade and economic matters.

This extradition bill has therefore caused much alarm in Hong Kong, leading to protests against the Government in 2019-2020.

Hong Kong and Mainland China Extradition Pacts

Only nine countries and jurisdictions have agreements with both

■ Pact with Hong Kong ■ Pact with mainland China ■ Pact with both



Sources: Hong Kong SAR Department of Justice, State Council

Bloomberg

1.2 Rationale

This research seeks to find out:

- How Hong Kong can benefit from being free of Chinese rule.
- To what extent of the protest is caused by populism

1.3 Research Questions

- 1) Objectives that Hong Kong protesters hope to achieve from the protests.
- 2) Reasons for which the Hong Kong protesters started protesting.

1.4 Thesis Statement

Protesters in Hong Kong are protesting due to real concerns and are not populist.

The Hong Kong protests is something that is happening currently as of January 2020 and therefore, there may not be many literature reviews that can be referred. Much of the news in Hong Kong is also in Cantonese and has to be transcribed to be placed in this research paper.

1.6 Significance of research, Usefulness

This research paper seeks to understand the reasons behind the protests in Hong Kong and evaluate these reasons, determining if they are actual concerns of the people.

1.7 Limitations

- 1) This paper is analysing the reasons and rationale for the Hong Kong protests which includes the reasons of why there are protests in Hong Kong. However, since there are still protests ongoing in Hong Kong, therefore the reasons why these protests are still going on may change as the protest drags on.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Theory of Populism

Populism is a political approach that strives to appeal to ordinary people who feel that their concerns are disregarded by established elite groups. Populism may also mean that the people are joining forces against a political party in an attempt to discredit that political party or overthrow it.

Table 1: Three Main Lines of Research on Populism

	<i>Definition of Populism</i>	<i>Analysis Unit</i>	<i>Relevant Methods</i>	<i>References</i>
<i>Political Views</i>	Set of interrelated ideas on socio-political nature	Party and party leaders	Party literature. Qualitative analysis of texts	Mudde (2004, 2007) Mudde and Kaltwasser (2012)
<i>Political Style</i>	Speech with specific characteristics and political proclamations	Texts Speeches	Interpretive analysis of texts	Kazin (1995) Laclau (2005) Panizza (2005)
<i>Political Strategy</i>	A form of organisation and mobilisation	Parties (with a focus on structures), leaders and social movements	Comparative historical analysis and case studies	Roberts (2006) Weyland (2001) Jansen (2011)

Source: Based on Gidron and Bonikowski, 2013: 17

2.2 Chinese interests in Hong Kong

While China still has extensive capital controls and often intervenes in its financial markets and banking system, Hong Kong is one of the most open economies in the world and one of the biggest markets for equity and debt financing, resulting in China wanting to be in charge of Hong Kong. Under the 'one country, two systems' formula agreed as part of Britain's handover of the territory to China, Hong Kong is guaranteed liberties which are unavailable on the mainland such as freedom of expression and an independent judiciary. (Reuters, Noah Sim 2019) These freedoms give Hong Kong a special status internationally, allowing it to negotiate trade and investment agreements independently from Beijing — for instance, it does not have to pay the tariffs that the United States is imposing on Chinese imports. Foreign countries are also more interested in trading with Hong Kong as they will not have to be accountable to the Communist Party if they were to trade with China. In 1993, Hong Kong contributed \$120 billion into the Chinese industry of \$445 billion, around 27% of China's finances, showing its great importance.

2.3 China's control over Hong Kong

Although Hong Kong remains highly autonomous, she is not fully independent of China. The Hong Kong government still answers to the central Chinese Government and any changes to the political system requires China's approval. China currently controls Hong Kong's finances and foreign policies. Many Hong Kongers fear that China can use the extradition policy to extradite people out of Hong Kong to China to face the Chinese law.

2.4 The Extradition Bill 2019

The proposal came after a 19-year-old Hong Kong man allegedly murdered his 20-year-old pregnant girlfriend while holidaying in Taiwan together in February 2018. The man fled Taiwan and returned to Hong Kong last year. Taiwanese officials sought help from Hong Kong authorities to extradite the man, but Hong Kong officials said they could not comply because of a lack of extradition agreement with Taiwan. This meant that Hong Kong was a safe haven for criminals who have been wanted internationally due to the fact that the people in Hong Kong were not answerable to the law of foreign countries. The existing extradition law specifically states that it does not apply to "the Central People's Government or the government of any other part of the People's Republic of China". But the proposed changes would have allowed for the Hong Kong government to consider requests from any country for extradition of criminal suspects, even countries with which it doesn't have an extradition treaty and including mainland China, Taiwan and Macau. So people wanted for crimes in those territories could potentially be sent there to face trial.

2.5 British Influence on Hong Kong

Hong Kong was ceded to the British after the First Opium War. The British government introduced to Hong Kong, among other things, the common law system and a free capitalist economy. By the end of the last century, Hong Kong enjoyed a legal, social, political and economic system and lifestyle that were quite different from that on the mainland.

2.6 The Joint Declaration

According to the Sino-British Joint Declaration, it states that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) will be directly under the authority of the Central People's Government and will enjoy a high degree of autonomy except in foreign and defence affairs which are the responsibilities of the Central People's Government; and that the HKSAR will be vested with executive, legislative and independent judicial power including that of final adjudication. The laws in force before the resumption of the exercise of sovereignty by China will remain basically unchanged. These establishments were made when the British handed Hong Kong back to the Chinese.

2.8 The Housing Problem (Social Problem)

According to Channel News Asia (Simon Lee)(7 Sept 2019), the protests seemed like it was due to the establishment of the Extradition Bill, however it soon evolved from being a protest about the Extradition Bill to one showing the dissatisfaction over the administrative failures of the Hong Kong government in meeting its people's needs.

2.7 The Umbrella Movement

Students led a protest against the government for transparent elections; Since the handover, Hong Kong residents have accused Beijing of overstepping its authority. The Umbrella Movement was a series of protests in 2014 that called for more transparent elections for the city's chief executive. In early 2016, Hong Kong booksellers disappeared and later showed up in police custody in China. The 2019 Hong Kong protests were built on this protest because the country was supposed to have a government based on elections and not by appointment of the PRC Government. With a government that was appointed, the Government of Hong Kong was no longer representative of the Hongkongers but had China's interests first.

2.8 Hong Kong's National Security Bill 2020

China's parliament on Thursday (May 28 2020) approved Hong Kong's National Security Bill (NSB) that has caused uproar in the city about concerns over freedoms in the financial hub. The security legislation could pave the way for Chinese security agencies to open up branches in Hong Kong. It targets secession, subversion, terrorism and foreign interference - terms that are increasingly used by authorities to describe previous protests. According to Carrie Lam, the NSB is only targeted at "a handful of lawbreakers" and "Hong Kong's freedoms will be preserved and Hong Kong's vibrancy and the core values in terms of the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, the various rights and freedoms enjoyed by people, will continue to be there". However, this is contradicted by what Trump said to the news on 27 May 2020. He warned that Hong Kong might no longer be considered a financial hub if China were to take over Hong Kong. The NSB had resulted in the biggest drop on the city's stock exchange in five years on Friday. This could be potentially dangerous for Hong Kong if stock exchange continues to drop for Hong Kong is very dependent on international trade.

2.9 Hong Kongers' view

According to the South China Morning Post (A Hong Kong based English Newspaper), many Hong Kongers expressed that in 23 years, Hong Kong authorities were unable to implement reforms that the people wanted to see, and many Hong Kongers saw the bill "as an opportunity (for China) to impose a greater degree of control over Hong Kong". With regards to the international trade sanctions imposed by foreign countries, mainly the USA, Chief Executive Carrie Lam claimed that "We will not be intimidated(by the sanctions)". Despite this claim, the reasons for the protests were due to the Bills (Extradition Bill and New Security Bill), and the

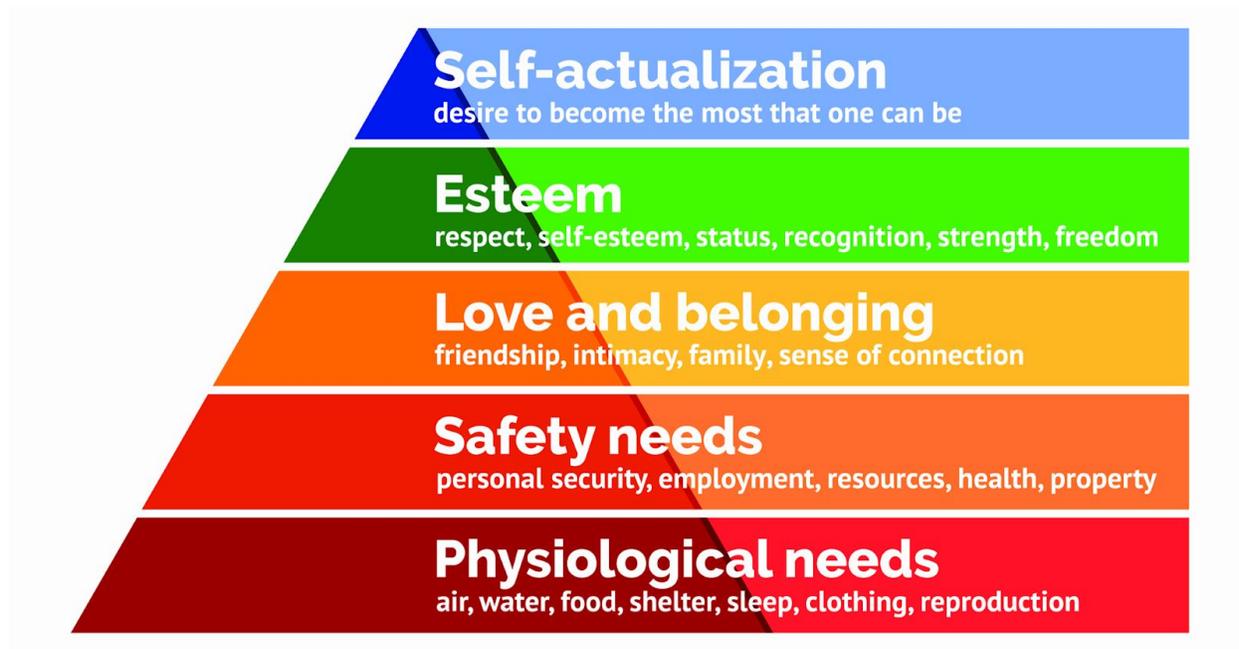
impact that they have on individuals. This can be seen when Hong Kong's commerce minister made the new requirement for Hong Kong businesses to label their products as "Made in China", instead of "Made in Hong Kong", this would result in the USA imposing tariffs on all products from Mainland China due to the ongoing tradewar. Business profits will be compromised which will trickle-down to the workers themselves, where workers would earn less for the same amount of effort put into their work.

3 Methodology

Newspaper Articles, documentaries and Journals will be used to analyze the Hong Kong Protests. Some of these articles and journals include:

- Hong Kong under the “One country - Two systems” legislation
- Electoral Reforms in Hong Kong
- Scholarly articles from the National Library Board
- Governors, Politics and the Colonial Office (Gavin Ure)(Public Policy in Hong Kong 1919-1958)
- Democracy and Populism (John Lukacs)
- Communism, Fascism and Democracy (Carl Cohen)

Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs will also be used to evaluate the Hongkongers' concerns.



- Bottom tiers of the pyramid have to be met in order for any individual to move up the tiers.
- The Extradition Bill may be compromising the second bottom tier of safety and security.

Since their safety and security may be compromised, the Hongkongers that are protesting may have a legitimate reason to protest.

4 Discussion and Analysis

To decide whether the protestors have legitimate reasons for protesting, we have to evaluate the impacts of the NSB and the Extradition Bill on the common Hong Kong citizen.

4.1 International Pressure

British First Secretary of State and Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Dominic Raab expressed the United Kingdom's concern over the New Security Bill passed in Hong Kong, stating that, "the proposed national security law, as its been described, raises the prospect in terms of the substance and the detail, of prosecution in Hong Kong for political crimes, which would undermine the existing commitments to protect the rights and the freedoms of the people of Hong Kong as set out in the joint declaration." This New Security Bill passed in Hong Kong, has raised many concerns among Hong Kong's trading partners, mainly of the clause that "Collusion with foreign ministries are punishable by a maximum sentence of life in prison". The ambiguity of this statement poses a direct threat to Hong Kong citizens and businessmen as China has now legislated laws to punish businesses or individuals based on this vague law. This also threatens foreign trade relations as local companies in Hong Kong are afraid of trading with other countries because of the law. This directly affects Hong Kongers employment and security which is the second bottom tier in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Therefore, since this directly poses a threat to the Hong Kongers wellbeing, the Hong Kongers have a valid reason to protest against the New Security Bill.

4.1.1 USA's response

The United States of America had warned that if the NSB was passed in Hong Kong, there would be implications for its warrant as a free financial hub. Trump's top economic adviser Larry Kudlow warned that Hong Kong, which has enjoyed special privileges under US law based on its high degree of autonomy from Beijing, may now need to be treated like China on trade and other financial matters, due to the arbitrary law that has been passed. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo stated that "No reasonable person can assert today that Hong Kong maintains a high degree of autonomy from China, given facts on the ground". This would have a significant impact on Hong Kong businessmen where most of their businesses are from trading with the USA. According to the American Chamber of Commerce(Amcham) Survey conducted byAs such the Hong Kong protestors may have a legitimate reason to protest as they are protesting due to real concerns.

4.2 Responses from the Chinese government.

Chinese authorities and Hong Kong's Beijing-backed government stated that the legislation poses no threat to the city's autonomy and the interests of foreign investors would be preserved. Many Hong Kong residents feel their city is on the cusp of historic change, however. Chinese government has been emphasising repeatedly that the NSB would only tackle secession, subversion, terrorism and foreign interference. However, the scope of these measures implemented by the government has been extended to involved individuals and businesses.

These measures implemented by the Chinese government pose a threat to the autonomous legislation in Hong Kong, bring significant impacts to the Hong Kong protesters in terms of safety and financial security

4.3 Housing Crisis in Hong Kong

Hong Kong suffers from chronic overcrowding and housing shortages – a situation made worse by the 150 residence permits a day that have been issued to mainland Chinese citizens since 1997. Additionally, 62% of land is “locked up” or “semi-locked up” by law or regulatory constraints due to environmental reasons in terms of land development. Hong Kong’s government has said that Hong Kong’s geography makes it difficult for the government to do any widespread development across the city. The exorbitant property prices in Hong Kong due to their land shortage deprive Hong Kong citizens of home ownership. According to Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs, Hong Kong citizens’ shelter is being compromised; this basic need that is not being met may give Hong Kong protesters a valid reason to protest.

4.4 Competitiveness within the society

Hong Kong has continued to rank second globally in the latest World Competitiveness Yearbook (WCY) 2019 as published by the International Institute for Management Development (IMD). A Government spokesperson said today (May 29), “The Government is committed to enhancing the competitiveness and vibrancy of our economy. The WCY once again recognised Hong Kong as one of the most competitive economies in the world.” Analysed by the WCY’s four competitiveness factors, Hong Kong maintained the top rank in “Government efficiency”, and was ranked second in “Business efficiency” and 10th in “Economic performance”. Benefiting from the Government’s increased investment in areas such as infrastructure and innovation and technology, as well as education, Hong Kong’s ranking edged up to 22nd in “Infrastructure”. The spokesperson further commented, “Amid the keen competition among global economies, we must keep up the effort in consolidating our prevailing competitive advantages, including an open and free market, an efficient public sector and a favourable business environment with a level playing field.” The spokesperson added, “The Government will continue to assume the role of a ‘facilitator’ and ‘promoter’, and strive to enhance government-to-government co-operation, so as to explore more opportunities for Hong Kong. At the same time, the Government will also step up investment in infrastructure, innovation and technology, nurturing talents and increasing land supply, in order to provide a favourable environment for Hong Kong’s long-term economic development.” The WCY 2019 released by the IMD in Switzerland yesterday (May 28, Switzerland time) assessed 63 economies worldwide. Singapore was ranked first and Hong Kong second, followed by the US, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates. Hong Kongers may result in riots as an outlet for all the pressure that has built up by the competitive society. Hong Kongers also express their displeasure with the government for allowing such a stressful society to exist.

4.5 Difference in statuses

In 2013, the Hong Kong government drew its first official poverty line at half the city's median household income. Those who fall below it are considered poor. Based on the 2016 Hong Kong Poverty Situation report, Hong Kong has a poverty rate of almost 20 per cent, with 1.35 million of the city's 7.35 million residents living below the official poverty line. Another study also shows that more than 40 per cent of low-income Hong Kong households or around 71,000 people spend an average of less than HK\$15 (US\$1.92) on each meal, in order to cope with the city's astronomical rents. Financial security of Hong Kongers are hence compromised, where poorer Hong Kongers are constantly facing financial stress and are dissatisfied with the government for not taking proper care of their basic needs.

4.6 Populist Protest Campaigns

The aforementioned factors do play a significant role in the Hong Kong protests 2019-2020. However, it is rather crucial to note that certain protesters are populist and are not protesting because of threats to their personal well-being. A number of younger activists stated that they believe populism is essential to sustain the protests against the Extradition Bill and the New Security Bill. There are several explanations as to why Hong Kong youth do not have the same reservations toward populism as the previous generations. First, they consider populism's ability to mobilize people to outweigh its problematic aspects, believing that inciting popular hatred against the SAR and CCP governments helps motivate and sustain protesters. Secondly, youth in the city only inherited faint memories of the Cultural Revolution, which they see as an example of a flawed top-down populist movement directed by the state, different from the current grassroots populist movements in Hong Kong. Lastly, the leftist inclinations in the political consciousness of current youth are derived not from CCP ideologies, but from observing the progressive movements against socio political injustices that have manifested across the world (such as the global Occupy movement). Several persuasion techniques were used in achieving this populist movement, of which some are Glittering Generalities with strong assertion, convincing the public to hop on the bandwagon to seek political justice. This is clearly seen in the protest slogan "Five demands, not one less" (1)The complete withdrawal of the proposed extradition bill. 2)The government to withdraw the use of the word "riot" in relation to protests. 3)The unconditional release of arrested protesters and charges against them dropped. 4)An independent inquiry into police behaviour. 5)Implementation of genuine universal suffrage). Individual words in each of these demands have different positive meaning for individual subjects and purposes, but they are linked to highly valued concepts (Example: The unconditional release of arrested protesters and charges against them dropped.) When words like "unconditional" are used, they demand approval without thinking, simply because such an important concept is used, where the whole concept of democracy has a positive connotation to the Hong Kongers as an ideology that they value. Furthermore, the fact that Chief Executive Carrie Lam refused to formally withdraw the bill angered the Hong Kongers even more, that tensions had gotten to such a point between the authorities and the protesters that, in some

ways, by September, the extradition bill was beside the point. As such, it is possible that the Hong Kong protests are to a certain extent populist.

4.7 Hong Kong's political landscape

Parliamentary elections were held in 2017. Mrs. Lam, a former No. 2 official in the city, received 777 out of 1,163 votes cast to become the next chief executive, as Hong Kong's leader is called. She defeated John Tsang, a former finance secretary who polls indicated was more popular with the public. The leader of this semiautonomous Chinese city of 7.3 million is chosen by just 1,194 electors, most of them business and political figures who have close ties to Beijing. This has been greatly opposed by the general public who demanded universal suffrage, claiming that "China promised that Hong Kong people would run Hong Kong. Today, only 1,200 people are representing us in electing the chief executive. Is it fair?". Carrie Lam is seen as a Pro-Beijing executive for Hong Kong, which undermines the autonomy Hong Kong has from Beijing. In 2007, Beijing said that it would grant universal suffrage for the election that would be held in 2017, however in 2014, it claimed that only 1,200 Chinese (Pro-Beijing) officials would be allowed to vote.

4.8 Hong Kong Students

American Political Science Association announced it would relocate an upcoming workshop, themed "Contentious Politics and its Repercussions in Asia", to Seoul, South Korea, due to concerns Hong Kong's new national security law would "limit free academic inquiry and exchange". The moves reflect unease and concern over the national security law, which some academics fear could spell the end of the city as a regional hub of quality higher education, scholarship and academic exchange. This jeopardises the future of many Hong Kong students, as a result of the New Security Bill, where foreign exchanges and international collaboration are suspended in fear of In interviews with *This Week in Asia*, more than two dozen university academics in Hong Kong and overseas expressed serious concerns about the impact of the law on the city's status as a welcoming and open environment for research and scholarship involving scholars from around the world. Students therefore have a justified reason to join in the protests against the New Security Bill.

5 Conclusion

Hong Kong was handed back to China in 1997, but maintains its own judiciary and a separate legal system from mainland China. Those rights include freedom of assembly and freedom of speech. This allows Hong Kongers to protest. Violent protesting started on 15 March 2019 after the passing of the Extradition Bill and subsequently the New Security Bill. The protests were built on the foundation of maintaining the freedom of speech in Hong Kong and her autonomy from Mainland China.

The NSB has posed a threat to Hong Kongers personal security as seen when Hong Kong police have arrested more than 300 people as of 1 July 2020, proving that the second and third bottom layers of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Safety, Belonging). Furthermore, Hong Kong has been long plagued with housing shortages and a great rich-poor divide, increasing dissatisfaction with the Hong Kong government. With actual threats to personal security posed by the Extradition Bill and the New Security Bill, concerns regarding the autonomous jurisdiction of Hong Kong outweigh that of populist beliefs. The Extradition Bill and the New Security Bill threaten not only the livelihoods of Hong Kong businessmen, but also that of students, where collaboration with international partners are restricted.

The issue with the Hong Kong protests is the long term dissatisfaction with the government which causes Hong Kongers to protest. The Extradition Bill and the New Security Bill can therefore be seen as trigger factors where street protests serve as an outlet for the long-term dissatisfaction built up in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong protests were often targeted at a common enemy, that of a Pro-Beijing government establishment in Hong Kong, which is against the Joint-Declaration that China had made with Britain to grant Hong Kong autonomy from its Mainland Communist jurisdiction.

In conclusion, the reasons for the Hong Kong protests are valid and the Hong Kongers are presented with actual concerns which pose threat to their personal well-being as seen in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Hong Kongers therefore, have resulted in protests to express their dissatisfaction with the Hong Kong government, although they did not directly stipulate the type of changes they wanted the government to make. Being free of Chinese rule would allow the Hong Kongers to collaborate with foreign partners, in terms of trade and education, positively improving their livelihoods.

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