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Human security and threats associated with the impacts of 2019 Hong Kong social unrest

Bryan Tzu Wei LUK

Program of Peace and Conflict Studies of Basic Law Foundation, Hong Kong, China.

Hong Kong has just experienced unprecedented social unrest that started in 2019. The unrest dragged the city into a chaotic situation that had not been seen in the last 50 years. Violence and crimes occurred across every corner of the territory, affecting every citizen's livelihood. Several studies have been carried out, analyzing its social, economic, and political causes. However, most of them are limited to the political scope, and there is no profound work comprehensively reviewing and organizing the security impacts against citizens in Hong Kong. In that case, this article aims to fill up this missing gap by exploring its impacts on personal and community security that are adhered to the human security concept and framework. The article lists several critical personal and community insecurities and threats, which were respectively (1) group conflicts and increasing crime rate, (2) the legitimacy issue caused by the distrust among citizens and authorities, (3) psychological stresses that endanger public mental health and (4) violent political radicalization that could potentially trigger future hate crime and violent extremism. Thus it argued that the community stakeholders and government shall first mobilize their resources on handling these issues and shall introduce multipronged, peace-oriented and sustainable policies to handle them in a cost-effective and timely manner.

Key words: Human security, anti-bill social unrest, conflict and peace studies, Hong Kong.

INTRODUCTION

Hong Kong has enjoyed a decade of rapid economic development due to the positive reputation of its high degree of economic and social freedom, mature rule of law and justice system, effective criminal law enforcement, and socio-political stability and prosperity. However, the outbreak of 2019 Hong Kong social unrest might pin down a changing point of Hong Kong's future.

It has experienced a series of destructive social unrest and disorders that was directly triggered by the introduction of the Fugitive Offenders Amendment Bill by

the Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). It started as a small-scale anti-bill protest in March 2019 with around 5,200 people and then turned into en masse demonstrations with 280,000 people (Statistic of Hong Kong Police Force) or 1.03 million people (claimed by the organizers) on 9th June 2019. Due to the government's failures of properly and effectively responding and addressing public outcry and concerns, it subsequently evolved from an orderly demonstration into catastrophic leaderless violent-

E-mail bryanluktw@gmail.com or info@basiclawfoundation.org.

oriented unrest challenging against the legitimacy and authority of local and the Chinese central government (Purbrick, 2019). It had deeply affected society's stability and prosperity, as it was marked by a cycle of extreme widespread of serious crimes and damages (such as violent assaults, riots, vandalism, arsons, etc.) across every corner of the territory. As mentioned by the Honorable Mr. Justice Jeremy Poon Shiu-chor, an experienced criminal justice gatekeeper who was serving as the Chief Judge of the High Court and the President of Court of Appeal of HKSAR, he described such social unrest as "*a dire situation that has not been seen in the last 50 years*" while he was sitting in a case of judiciary review relating to the legality of Emergency Regulation Ordinance invoked by the HKSAR Government during the social unrest.

In late-January 2020, the outbreak of COVID-19 had indirectly paused the unstoppable unrest, although there were some related small-scale public disorders afterward. The massive social and political unrest brought a tremendous impact that included socio-economic and political aspects from microscopic to macroscopic level. Scholars, public policy researchers and government officials from both domestic and national sectors are currently studying its antecedents and consequences.

Currently, some notable works had recorded and analyzed the unrest from a legal and political perspective. For example, Lam (2020) had restructured its entire timeline and process; Greenwood-Reeves (2020) evaluated the case in a legal theory approach, studying how the poor constitutional morality damaged the legitimacy of the HKSAR Government and how it triggered corresponding protest action against the government; DeLisle (2019) reviewed how the social unrest was linked to the political paradox among autonomy, democracy and the rule of law under the Chinese sovereignty; Hui (2020) analyzed the political strategies adopted by the Chinese central government and HKSAR government to coercively counter the unrest. These studies had made a comprehensive review relating to the Hong Kong situation, yet they were limited to the scope of politics. Moreover, there is no profound work to comprehensively review and to organize the security impacts on citizens in Hong Kong. This missing puzzle becomes an obstacle for parties to prioritize and formulate effective peacebuilding and conflict resolution policies addressing the socio-political chaos.

In order to examine the impacts of 2019 social unrest thoroughly, it requires a careful examination of its *de facto* impacts on people, so that community stakeholders and government would be able to formulate plans and to introduce effective policies for the purpose of minimizing negative impacts adhered to the unrest and conflict resolutions. Therefore, this article aims to be a pioneer study to provide an organized analysis that could fill up a critical missing gap of the full picture by researching and analyzing its socio-political impacts and consequences with the human security concepts and framework.

HUMAN SECURITY: CONCEPTS AND IMPLICATION

Human security is a new-concept officially introduced and advocated by the United Nation in 1994 with the report named *Human Development Report 1994* (United Nation Development Program, 1994). It was marked with the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, which was a milestone symbolizing the end of the Cold War era between two super U.S-led western entente and USSR-led eastern bloc and the beginning of a contemporary world's peaceful period. During that period, observers started recognizing the neglect of the quality of life and non-military insecurities and threats (like degradation of the living environment, poor governance, and ineffective political system) could erode the foundation of state's and society's security, stability and prosperity (Alkire, 2003; King and Murray, 2002). It thus triggered scholars' attention to expanding the concept of 'security' beyond a traditional security concept that purely emphasized the national military level and realist-oriented approach to a non-traditional security mindset that embraced societal and human-centric level and developmental approach.

In other words, unlike the traditional realist concept of security, human security is not a state-centric nor national security-oriented; also, unlike the liberalism that only emphasizes the system and role of institutions; it is a people-centric concept that pays attention to the non-traditional threats cum people's insecurities, needs, feelings and perspectives (Alkire, 2003; Gomez and Gasper, 2013; King and Murray, 2002; Newman, 2001; Tadjbakhsh, 2005). Despite it had suffered criticisms in its early stage of development because of its underdeveloped theoretical framework and more importantly the international politics (Breslin and Christou, 2015), recent studies argued that it could be a useful practical approach to both analytical and planning works (Human Security Unit, 2016; Muguruza, 2007; Tadjbakhsh, 2015, 2005). In fact, countries like Japan, Canada, and the People's Republic of China had adopted the elements of the human security concept with their definitions, interpretations, and political agendas (Breslin and Christou, 2015; Guan and Guo, 2008). The reason why it is slowly being embraced by nation-states and international communities is that it provides a comprehensive multi-sectoral understanding of insecurities and threats with a framework of 7 aspects that could help researchers to study the case more organically. These aspects are respectively economic (freedom from poverty), food (access to clean food and water), health (access to proper and affordable health care and protection from diseases), environmental (protection from pollution), personal (for instances: physical safety from crime, violence, terrorism and conflicts), community (physical security of the groups),

and political (enjoyment of civil and political rights, freedom from political oppression) (Paris, 2001; United Nation Development Program, 1994).

Its frameworks and concepts do not only cover the narrow spectrum of threat or outbreak of violence, but additionally particularly useful to be a 'cutting edge policy tool' to study conflict studies by providing the means (1) to comprehensively assess the root causes, (2) to study consequences of conflicts in both intra-state or inter-state sectors, and (3) to assist policymaking and evaluation that based on human-centric perspective (Tadjabakhsh, 2015, 2005). In the present case, as studying the consequences of massive socio-political unrest and conflicts involves a tangible of questions and aspect, thus it is a suitable and effective theoretical framework to help the researcher to stay in scope and to develop an analysis for the case study.

This article focuses on personal and community security. Personal security extended across the security to other non-military threats such as crime against life and property, abuse (including self-abuse) and neglect. It refers to the personal protection from physical and psychological violence of the people, the state and other relevant entitles. From a daily life perspective, the critical fear is the victimization of crime and violence (Gasper and Gomez, 2015; Gierszewski, 2017). Community security is defined as protection against the breakdown of communities and social groups (United Nation Development Program, 1994, 2009). It could include discrimination, exclusion, and violence from other groups and threats from the state. During the early stage of concept development, threats to community security mostly refer to inter-ethnic minorities and indigenous group tension (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2009). Subsequently, a document published by UN Development Program's *Community security and social cohesion: Towards a UNDP approach* expanded it to a broader sense, combining the elements of both community and personal security and largely focusing on elements of 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from wants' caused by the state and social issues.

Violent group conflicts and crime rate

Hong Kong was being known as top-six safest cities in the world by Gallup's *2018 Global Law and Order report* and ranked ninth according to the *Safe Cities Index 2017: Security in a rapidly urbanizing world* by the Intelligence Unit of the Economist due to its very low crime rate and high-level personal safety (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2017). However, after the outbreak of unrest in June 2019, it had brought profound impacts against personal and community security and safety.

According to the annual report on Hong Kong's law and order situation prepared by Police Force, the overall crime rate had continued to drop since 2010, from 75,965

cases to 54,225 cases in 2018 (Hong Kong Police Force, 2020b). In fact, in the first half of 2019, before the vital month of June 2019 that marked the beginning of social unrest, the crime rate recorded a 4.7% drop when compared with that of 2018 (Legislative Council of HKSAR, 2019). However, the rapid increase cases of violent crimes and public disorder offenses stemmed from the anti-bill social unrest had offset the decreased record of the first half year; hence, the yearly number of 2019 recorded a sharp rise for the first time since 2007. According to the official statistics of arrestees in public events, as of 30th June 2020, 9,216 persons were arrested directly connecting to anti-bill incidents, with 1,972 persons were under legal prosecution and 653 of them was charged with riot-related serious criminal offenses (Hong Kong Police Force, 2020a).

After the unrest outbreak occurred for a month, the social order and rule of law had fallen into malfunctioning status. The criminal justice system and social constrain system were both ineffective and dysfunctional, hence personal security was no longer well protected and guaranteed. The level of violent conflict extended from '*police to protesters*' then to '*citizens to citizens*' and the violent activities cum hate crimes spread to every corner in the city. The conflicts between Blue and Yellow ribbons played one of the key parts in eroding the foundation of the city's security.

The Blue represents their wish of "law and order" to the city and their supports to the government and law enforcement agencies; Yellow, in contrast, represents their dream for "democracy" and "freedom" through a series of massive civic disobediences and protests (their historical background will be explained in a later section). "One man's freedom fighter is another man's terrorist", the Blue saw themselves as the real '*Rule of law protector*', and stigmatized the Yellow as '*terrorists*' or '*violent extremists*' as they felt their freedom of expression was being physically terrorized and violently suppressed by the Yellow; the Yellow, in opposite, saw themselves as '*freedom fighters*' and treated the Blue as '*Chinese communist lovers*' and the enemy of democracy and liberty. Such '*good-or-evil*' dualism resulted in a series of non-violent and violent confrontations in both the physical and digital fields between these two ideological-driven ribbons.

Statistically speaking, the main category of cases that recorded a significant rise was violent crime (defined as victim harmed by or threatened with violence), a rise of 9.1% compared to the statistic of 2018. Criminal damage increased 2629 cases, arson increased 637 cases, theft from vehicle increased 437 cases and serious assault increased 339 cases. Plus, offenses against public order had recorded 966 cases in 2019, 36 times higher while compared with only 26 cases in 2018. Furthermore, Police Force admitted that they had withdrawn stationed police services in specific public service facilities (the typical one was hospitals) and canceled regular high-

profile anti-crime foot patrol because of manpower deployment on counter-riot units, high risk of potential counter-police hate-crime attacks that were directly associated with the unrest and serious social discontent between the law enforcers and pro-protest citizens (Lo, 2019a). It resulted in a situation where no police patrolling on street for nearly half of the year, hence led to remarkable rise in serious burglary cases (Lo, 2019b). This observation was supported by the Hong Kong's law and order situation report, in which it showed a total of 819 cases increased.

Psychological damages

Apart from physical damages, studies suggested that there is a positive link between exposure to political violence and mental health issues during massive social unrest (Ni et al., 2020; Çelebi et al., 2020). It became an underlying issue relating to human psychological health and its influence on how citizens saw and interpreted their own social networks, authorities as well as the general living environment. Social Enterprise Summit's HKwecare conducted by Lam et al. (2019) had released a research report of happiness index 2019 (a total of 1,077 responses collected from 9th September 2019 to 23rd September 2019). It found out that the general happiness index hit to the 10-year lower, from 6.93 in 2017 to 6.15 in 2019, and the scoring category of (1) social and political environment, (2) government governance, and (3) law and order all suffered a serious drop, being ranked as top 3 lowest. The research team pointed out that these drops were the direct result of violent social unrest and the rapidly deteriorated relations among the public and authorities.

Moreover, Hong Kong Mental Health Index 2020, an annual survey organized by Joyful (Mental Health) Foundation (2019) showed a warning result. The average mental health index of Hong Kong citizens hit to new low, dropped from 46.41 in 2019 to 45.12 in 2020. An *ad hoc* survey that was conducted during the social unrest in January 2020, aiming to understand how the socio-political turmoil affected public mental health, generated an even lower score with only 44.48. Furthermore, the unrest's impact was stronger than the COVID-19 pandemic, where 54.4% of interviewees marked social controversies had a 'very large' or 'relatively large' negative effect on their mental health; only nearly 40% marked their emotions were negatively impacted by COVID-19. More specifically, in public health perspective, Ni et al. (2020) published a research study named "Depression and post-traumatic stress during major social unrest in Hong Kong: a 10-year prospective cohort study" on *The Lancet*, and the result pointed out that 22% adult respondents were suffering from probable depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Probable depression increased more than 5 times higher than before and twice higher since the Occupy Central Movement occurred in 2014; the prevalence of PTSD symptoms rose 6 times higher during the social unrest while compared with data collected since the post-occupy central movement. The result was comparable to those areas and regions experiencing terrorist attacks, serious armed conflicts, and large scale human and natural disasters (Ni et al., 2020).

Legitimacy and public trust issues

Legitimacy is the right and acceptance of authority of the established governing system of rule of law and a regime. The HKSAR Government's agenda of "*stop the violence, curb the chaos*" had put itself onto opposition against Yellow ribbons. It caused the Yellow to see the government as '*enemy of the freedom fighter*', an authoritative, suppressive and illegitimate executive body. They rejected the supremacy of the Hong Kong Basic Law (the legal constitution of HKSAR) and challenged the authority of the Chinese central government. On the other hand, the HKSAR Government was not able to gain trust, confidence, and support from pro-government Blue ribbons as well. As the large scale of disorders, street violence and hate-crimes specifically targeting against Blue created a high magnitude of strains against them. The absence of police patrol and protection and malfunctioned and ineffective government administration, the Blue ribbons felt that Hong Kong, at that moment, was gradually falling into a terrorized and anarchic state, hence raised questions regarding the HKSAR Government's ability to safeguard public security and their right to freedom from fear. Both sides behold the local government had poorly handled the critical social controversy and questioned its legitimacy (Lo, 2020; Marques, 2020).

In fact, the result of public polling named *the popularity of government key officials of the HKSAR Government* and the Popularity of Chief Executive conducted by Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute (2020) showed that all top-ranked official members of the government had suffered a huge drop since the beginning of social unrest. The Chief Executive (the head of the executive branch) enjoyed a relatively high supporting rate at 52.6 scores before the introduction of Amendment Bill in March 2019, but continually dropped to 20.8 in January 2020. Another top 3 political figures in the HKSAR Government all experienced a similar trend of losing popularity in the same period, where Chief Secretary of Hong Kong dropped from 47.65 to 25.95; Financial Secretary from 40.52 to 27.64; and Secretary for Justice from 34.38 to 14.54.

Apart from that, citizen's confidence and trust in the rule of law system suffered a huge drop. Bauhinia Foundation Research Centre, a local independent policy think tank, published a survey named *Public Perception*

toward the Rule of Law in Hong Kong in December 2019, it showed that citizens' general satisfaction and rating on rule of law system had an abrupt change, turned from positive to negative feedback in 2019 which was a remarkable distinctive different from those in the first two rounds conducted in 2017 and 2018. The findings of 2019 showed that only 11.7% of respondents satisfied with the rule of law, but with 52.2% were dissatisfied; hence 46.7% of respondents thought that the public awareness of the rule of law was '*inadequate*', a 10.6% increase compared to 2018. Hence notably, the satisfaction rating of "maintaining law and order and personal safety protection" suffered the most drop and had only received a 4.05 score in 2019, while comparing to 6.83 scores in 2018. The general drop was believed to be the direct result of destructive unrest and the government's failures and policy omissions.

Political violent radicalization

Prior to the 2019 social unrest, Hong Kong had already experienced a rising issue of two-side political confrontation between the pro-establishment and pan-democratic camp, and experienced significant growth of radical right social movement and radical political-oriented groups with anti-mainland ideology adhered to the political manifesto of localism, self-determination and Hong Kong Independence (Kaeding, 2017; Kwong, 2009; Veg, 2017). Some studies also argued that domestic political factors such as the deterioration of governance and increasing Chinese influences and socio-economic factors such as economic hardship and social injustice played a vital part in fueling grievances and in increasing popularity of radical groups and extreme nationalist ideology (*Dieter,* 2019; Kaeding, 2017; Kwong, 2016; Luk 2020b, c; Ma, 2015; Purbrick, 2019; Shek, 2020; Veg, 2017).

The political confrontation first reached its climax in the Occupy Central Movement which occurred in 2014, and the community divided into two oppositions. The conflicting division of moral and political beliefs between two sides placed an underlying socio-political issue in the city (Kennedy, 2015). During the period of 2015 to 2016, some radical right groups spawned after the 2014 Occupy Central Movement (especially the Edward Leung-led Hong Kong Indigenous) organized a series of public disturbances activities named "*Liberate Movements*" that carried political objectives of Hong Kong Independence and anti-mainlander in northern districts of Hong Kong through the means of aggressive actions.

In 2016, an eventful violent clash broke out between law enforcers and independence-supporter resulting in casualties on both sides. Even though the trigger point was originated from a small dispute regarding to law enforcer crackdown on unlawful hawking activities in Hong Kong's Mong Kok district, the pro-independent

groups viewed law enforcement against the hawkers as part of 'cultural cleansing' implemented by the HKSAR Government. Both sides utilized their physical forces to confront the opposite, which was deemed as the first worst outbreak of riot since 1967 Hong Kong riots (The Economist, 2016). The pro-Hong Kong independence radical group – Hong Kong Indigenous – called out the slogan of "*Liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times*" to symbolize their course of violent actions.

Then during the 2019 social unrest, the terminology of '*liberation*' and '*revolution*' again was being used as a sacred catchphrase. Students and teenagers were highly involved in organizing and engaging in violent protests, and being frontline soldiers to battle against law enforcers and Blue ribbon (Purbrick, 2019). Luk (2020a), after reviewed the development of social unrest, suggested that mass radicalization caused by the high magnitude of socio-political strains and grievances rooted with strong political agenda had been taken place during the unrest. The sentiment of grievances among the younger generation was even stronger because of the effect of echo chamber in their social networks. His observation was in line with the latest poll result conducted by the HKU Department of Social Work and Social Administration (2020). It had released a poll result named *Political participation and intentions, values and psychological distress of Hong Kong youth* (data collected from January 2020 to April 2020) by using the "Activism and Radicalism Intention Scale" model developed by Moskalenko and Mccauley (2009). It found out that approximately 8.8% of total youth respondents are categorized as radicalists, and 44.4% of total youth respondents agreed on the use of illegal and violent force for achieving the political purposes.

Their high involvement in illegal activities could be reflected by an extremely high arrest rate against teenagers. According to the *Brief Report on Hong Kong's Law and Order Situation in 2019*, there was among 7,549 persons arrested directly related to the unrest, in which 3,091 were reported to be students (40.9% of the total arrested persons), hence the total number of juveniles (aged 10 - 15) and younger persons (aged 16 - 20) arrested for the crime had increased 22.8% (928 cases to 1140 cases) and 69.9% (1841 cases to 3128 cases), compared with 2018 and 2019.

Notably, extreme violent secret radical groups formed by young radicals emerged and proliferated during the unrest. The noteworthy examples were the Black Bloc, Raptor-slayer unit, V-team and Pink-Team, in which their main objective was to develop a paramilitary group that could directly fight against the government by adopting the modus operandi of the Irish Republican Army. The Organized Crime and Triad Bureau under the Police Force Crime and Security Department subsequently launched a series of anti-crime operations since December 2019, specifically targeting these groups. Police had successfully seized a large number of lethal

weapons (such as incendiary bombs, explosives of TATP, petrol bomb, semi-automatic pistol and assault rifle) that were linked to radical anti-government groups (HKSAR Government, 2020a).

Notably, although the involvement in violent extremism is a relatively low-base rate activity (Fazel et al., 2012), the potential threat of domestic terrorism caused by the high magnitude of strains theoretically is correlated and present. Indeed, recent qualitative, quantitative and systematic review radicalization studies shared a common hypothesis and result that high magnitude of subjective and objective grievances and strains played a key role of motivating highly strained person or group of people to engage in violent extremist activities (Agnew, 2010; Al-Badayneh et al., 2017; Lynch et al., 2015; Borum, 2011; Campelo et al., 2018). It is because stress could become a source or catalyst to reduce the effect of constraints regulating a personal behavior by removing a persons' positively valued stimuli and presenting negatively valued stimuli (Agnew, 2010). Delinquent behaviors and criminal acts were one of possible reactive and corrective actions to reduce the feeling of strain and alleviate negative emotions (Agnew, 2002). Campelo et al. (2018) further explained that highly stressed persons in common cases would likely choose the path of delinquency if not associated with a strong ideology; in contrast, they have a higher possibility to take the path of violent radicalization if they contact with any kind of appealing strong ideology that encourages and embraces the use of violence to achieve goals.

These situations have raised a serious alert to the government and public of Hong Kong, as unsolved and continued radicalization could potentially lead to domestic terrorism in the worst-case scenario. Indeed, the Secretary for Security, Mr. John Lee Ka-Chiu, publicly mentioned that Hong Kong was at risk of domestic terrorism (HKSAR Government, 2020b). He made this warning based on the total number of explosive cases in 2019 increased significantly along with the escalation of violent unrest, from 116 cases in 2018 up to 187 cases in 2019, a nearly 60% increase compared with 2018. Hence, in the first quarter of 2020, Hong Kong suffered from a series of bombing campaign that *prima facie* linked to the aforementioned radical anti-bill secret groups that were operating in Telegram platform; hence, the Police Force seized more than two tons of explosive chemicals (including TATP, ANFO, HMTD, DNT and black powder), and arrested 17 people (Han, 2020; HKSAR Government, 2020).

DISCUSSION

It must be noted that (1) the sharp rise in crime figures and delinquencies would result a high amount of cost of crime that could negatively affected economic development and placed financial pressure on criminal justice system (Heeks et al., 2018; Wickramasekera, 2015), the average cost of crime of every single criminal case was USD $ 31,000.00 in Hong Kong (Fung, 2018); (2) the mental health issues (especially among younger generation) would generate extra burden on social and public medical cost in both personal and societal level (Busch and Barry, 2007; Kuhlthau et al., 2005). Ni et al. (2020) suggested that it will add up extra 12% public service requirement in Hong Kong); (3) continuing discontent and distrust between government and citizens might indirectly affect the effectiveness of crime preventions that could result in higher crime rate and juvenile delinquency; (4) and political radicalization that might potentially lead to further socio-political polarization, extremism and increasing number of political oriented hate-crime.

Furthermore, the article argues that radicalization and violent political extremism are the utmost critical human and regional security threat and the biggest obstacles for peace development and conflict resolutions in Hong Kong. Firstly, although radical extreme groups were being cracked down, yet it is still unclear whether these groups' members were still highly active or not. Especially, previous studies showed that they often adopted leaderless resistances cum lone-wolf model, theorized by a well-known U.S. far-right leader named Louis Ray Beam Jr., in order to organize hate crime attacks under government surveillance. Since it could secretly recruit like-minded individuals and increase the difficulties of legal prosecution and intelligence detection (Chermak et al., 2011). Secondly, unsolved radicalization could increase the likelihood of future hate crime and terrorism, as they shared a high similarity in nature and statistically correlated (Weilnböck, 2012; Mills et al., 2015); hence thirdly, the possibility of inmate radicalization would be the upcoming major issue. Previous studies had proved that the prison conditions and culture (overcrowding, sub-culture inside prison) can easily create an environment filled with high level of stress against vulnerable inmates, so that extremist ideologies can easily flourish in prison (Hamm, 2008; Mulcahy et al., 2013; Silke and Veldhuis, 2017). All these issues posed a potential threat against the human security; especially Hong Kong has never faced that kind of issues before.

Solving radicalization proliferated by socio-political chaos is not a simple and straightforward work. Even though government of different countries had implemented many resources combating against problem of radicalization and violent extremism, none of them had successfully eliminated its root because of its sophisticated nature that mixes with multi-disciplinary subjects (such as criminology, psychology, sociology, security studies, etc). Indeed, society shall expect it will continue to be rooted in the city for years and have a possibility to advance as political violent extremism, potentially posing serious threat against personal and community security.

These social problems cannot be treated independently and isolated from socio-political context, therefore local community stakeholders and government shall prioritize these issues, as they posed a more direct threat to human security and are deemed as the main obstacle against the city to move beyond the dark shadow of the socio-political saga. Apart from reforming the greater socio-political and economic context, it is suggested that they should formulate multipronged, peace-oriented and sustainable policies that could serve several purposes at once, for the sake of addressing issues step-by-step and time-by-time in a cost-effective manner. For instances, they could focus on community policing enhancement as it is remarkably useful in increasing the level of homeland security through enhancing the effectiveness of crime prevention (solving the increasing crime rate), improving the public relationship between authorities and citizens (regain public trust and relations and governing legitimacy) and even embracing de-radicalization purpose (counter violent radicalization and extremism) (Bayley, 1994; Chappell and Gibson, 2009; Carter and Cater, 2012; Stevanm et al., 2017).

In the nutshell, this article has limitations. It only specifically focused on the personal and community aspects, hence not intended to cover the remaining 5 aspects (environmental, political, economic, food and health). Yet, every element of human security is inter-related and correlated. The unrest did also bring tremendous impacts on political and economic security, for illustration: Gamer et al. (2020) studied how the unrest impacted the local tourism industry before the emergence of COVID-19, and found out that the tourism growth rate dropped to 43.72%, a near-total collapse before the century COVID-19 pandemic; Delisle (2019) explored how the social unrest exposed previous structural political and legal problems between Hong Kong and Mainland China, and explored how it might lead to worsening context of conflicts over local law and politics; Hui (2020) analyzed the hardcore responsive policies used by the Chinese central government and HKSAR Government, and reviewed the political confrontations between the government and protesters and the Blue and Yellow ribbons. It is no doubt that politics did play a huge part in affecting people's security. In order to comprehensively review the human security impacts, future studies should also cover the aspect of political security, studying how the unrest brought dragged Hong Kong into the saga of low (HKSAR and China) and high politics (Sino-US Conflicts) and how these political insecurities affected local people.

CONCLUSION

Mankind history has proved that massive destructive social unrest could bring socio-political problems that eroded the subjective and objective security foundation and confidence for the local people and even threatened the security of a nation-state. The Hong Kong case seems to be echoed with this hypothesis. Previous studies relating to 2019 social unrest from different professional fields had explored and analyzed the underlying issues that resulted in a broad support of unrest and catalyst of radicalization (Dieter, 2019; Delisle, 2019; Luk, 2020b, 2020c; Ni et al., 2020; Purbrick, 2019; Shek, 2020; Yang and Mak, 2020). Most of them came out with a similar conclusion that was related to structural and long-term socio-economic and political insecurities (such as extreme high income and wealth inequalities, sky-high housing price, degrading living quality, weak social security, cultural and political quarrels between Mainland China and Hong Kong). Yet, it should be noted that solving issues from a macroscopic and structural level takes time and resources, so it is not useful for immediate and short-term conflict resolutions and peacebuilding. Thus, the article's analysis provided a more down-to-earth perspective with the human security framework and concept by focusing on critical personal and community insecurities which arise from the unrest.

The article has specifically covered the category of people and community security and threats. It identified several critical personal and community insecurities and threats, where the government and community stakeholders shall first implement *ad hoc* policies and mobilize resources to address them. These issues were:

(1) Group conflicts and increasing crime rate: The anti-bill social unrest resulted in a rapid increase in crime rate. As of 30th June 2020, 9216 persons were arrested directly related to the unrest. The level of violent conflict ranged from '*police to protesters*' then to '*citizens to citizens*'. Violent activities and hate crime spread over the city. The overall statistic of violent crime (which were criminal damage, arson, theft from vehicle and serious assault) had recorded a significant rise with 9.1%.

(2) The legitimacy issue caused by the distrust among citizens and authorities: The HKSAR Government had lost support from Blue and Yellow sides. The public polling of the popularity of government key officials showed all top-ranked official members suffered historically low scores. Also, citizens had lost confidence and trust in the rule of law system. Nearly 52% of citizens were dissatisfied; hence, 46.7% thought that the public awareness of the rule of law was '*inadequate*'. This negative feedback was directly related to the destructive unrest and the government's failure and policy omissions.

(3) Psychological stresses that endanger public mental health: Apart from physicals and tangible damages, the social unrest had deeply affected the psychological health condition of Hong Kong. The average Hong Kong mental health index and happiness index showed a similar result, where all the index suffered a huge drop to a new low. A post-traumatic stress study warned about the prevalence of probable depress and the prevalence

of PTSD symptoms rose at least 5 times higher compared to previously collected data.

(4) Violent political radicalization that could potentially trigger future serious hate crimes and violent extremism: Hong Kong had already experienced a rising issue of radicalization and threat of far-right ideology before the unrest because of the high magnitude of subjective and objective grievances and strains. During the unrest, the extreme violent confrontation between Yellow and Blue resulted a situation of mass political violent radicalization. Students and teenagers were highly involved in organizing and engaging in violent protests. Extreme violent secret radical groups mainly Black Bloc, Raptor-306 slayer unit, V-team and Pink-Team emerged, and they tried to develop as a paramilitary group by taking reference to the Irish Republican Army. As a result, those groups were being cracked down by police operations, police had seized a large number of lethal weapons that were linked to them. This situation had raised a serious alert to the government and public of Hong Kong, as continued unsolved radicalization could potentially lead to domestic terrorism in the worst-case scenario.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests

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