

# X's and O's: One of Many Playbooks for Socio-Political Movements

A Comparative Analysis of the Tactics and Success of the Black Panther Party in the decade 1964 to 1974 and the Hong Kong Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill (Anti-ELAB) Movement

By

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# Abstract

What makes or breaks a socio-political movement? This paper seeks to better understand the answer to the question via a comparative analysis of two cases studies: the Black Panther Party from the decade 1964-1974 and the Anti Extradition Law Amendment Bill (Anti-ELAB) movement in Hong Kong today. Separated by five decades and close to 8,000 miles, these movements are vastly different, but this analysis seeks to both identify, compare and contrast, as well as evaluate aspects of movements including: structure, goals, philosophy, and success in (or lack thereof) advancing their causes' mission. Conducting interviews and analyzing existing literature and documents — this project is meant to provide ideas and guidance, not normative measures, for up and coming organizers on what to be vigilant of and how their cause can make the change that they want to see. Though both case studies are more so on the left side of the political spectrum, these findings can be applied to most all socio-political movements if organizers so wish.

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# Introduction

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The world is never stagnant. The Earth hurtles around the Sun at thousands of miles an hour while spinning on its axis just so. Seasons come and go, and just as surely as the inhabitants of this planet live and die. Humans are never stagnant either. Great societies rise and fall and new social norms are established. What causes this continual change? The planets have gravity and centrifugal force that keeps everything more or less in its proper place after a period of chaos caused by the Big Bang. I would argue that the small scale, human version of the Law of Gravity is Socio-political movements, in that they are forces to shape the world to what a body of people believe is right. While morality is ever more elusive and subjective than the laws of physics, the purpose is the same — to bring order to a space in crises (Nicholas 1973, 63).

Socio-political movements are also similar to the Law of Gravity because they are not equal throughout space and time. The gravitational pull on Earth is not the same as the gravitational pull of Venus, just as a Socio-political movement of 1820 is not the same as one in 2020. The principles of the modern socio-political movements are the same, but the tactics are different, just as the principles of Gravity remain the same, but the force itself varies.

This paper seeks to analyze the efficacy of different tactics used within socio-political movements to offer recommendations and guidance, or simply ideas for future organizers to consider when forming a movement that puts forward the world that they want to see. I've chosen to research this because socio-political movements are invaluable to the way we live, as they shape societal norms and provide an outlet for the expression of individual will for the perceived betterment of the collective. We will always have socio-political movements, and I believe that it is prudent to learn from those who came before us, but be able to adapt to the situation of what we are presented. This paper looks to be a sort of archive of what has worked

and what has not for the life and success of a socio-political movement by identifying the commonalities amongst them. To achieve this, this paper is set up as a comparative case study of two socio-political movements: the Black Panther Party and their activity in the years ranging from 1964 to 1974 (from here on abbreviated as [the] BPP), and the Hong Kong Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill protests (from here on abbreviated as [Hong Kong] Anti-ELAB). I have chosen these two cases because of the disparate eras and locations in which these movements take place — having ~50 years and ~8,000 miles separating them.

This comparative case study is partly based on data gathered from interviews with former members of the BPP and Anti-ELAB protesters both in the United States and in Hong Kong, as well as close readings of personal narratives, zines (small circulation, self published, mini-magazines), declassified FBI documents, and social theory. A large part of the data collected on the Anti-ELAB protests comes from talks hosted by activists in the Chicago area, as well as personal narratives posted to independently run blogs. This culminates in a qualitative analysis of themes represented in each socio-political movement, crystalizing what each of these themes means to the individual movement by underlining the goals, and the tactics used in the work to achieve the identified goals of the movement. This paper does not seek to make any normative claims.

This project uses case studies that skew towards the socio-political left, however, the conclusion that I arrive at and the recommendations that I present at the end of this paper can be used at every end of the political spectrum if organizers so choose.

# Background

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## Key Terms

The most important aspect of this paper is understanding what exactly a socio-political movement is. During an in class lecture for a class titled Race and Politics by Professor Cathy Cohen on November 27, 2019; Professor Cohen put reminded everyone present that there is a difference between a socio-political movement and contentious politics. Socio-political movements may engage in contentious politics, which are defined by Charles Tilly (2008) as the “interactions in which actors make claims bearing on someone else's interest, in which governments appear either as targets, initiators of claims, or third parties” (5). The two parts of a socio-political movement are claims making and mobilization — which I surmise as a call and response to action to actualize the claims made via the contribution of resources such as time, money, and man power.

The secondary definition that must be given parameters is the term ‘success’. ‘Success’ is a relative term based on what each movement sets out to do. In this paper, success is described as the achievement of goals set forward by the participants of the movement. In the case of the BPP, success is defined by the achievement of the goals set forward by the 10 Point Program. For the Anti-ELAB movement, success is defined by achievement of the Five Demands (and not One Less).

## Historical Context: Black Panther Party

Established in 1966 by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton in Oakland, California; the BPP officially chartered 13 chapters in major cities across the United States and with the largest chapters located in Oakland, Los Angeles, Chicago, Seattle, Philadelphia, and New York. This



paper will mostly focus on the Chicago chapter of the BPP, established in 1968 after the merge of two unofficial chapters located on the South and West sides of the city (Hermida 2015).

At the very beginning of the PBS documentary titled *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution* (2015), Sister Ericka Huggins likens the experience of being involved with the BPP to the fable of the blind men and the elephant, stating in the first thirty seconds of the movie:

*“There's an old story, and it's used in various cultures, where a group of blind men approach an elephant and try to describe him. The first man approaches the elephant, touches its side, and says, it feels like a wall. The next man touches a tusk and says, the elephant must be like a spear. Another blind man touches the trunk and says, it feels like a snake. And that is quite often what happens with our descriptions of the Black Panther Party. We know the party we were in and not the entire thing. We were making history and it wasn't nice and clean.”*

The BPP was a facet of the Civil Rights Movement; an era that spanned nearly two decades with the many distinct groups doing their part in the fight for Civil Rights for Black Americans and coincided with a number of other marginalized groups fighting for the same rights with pushes for inter-community coalitions (ie: Latinx, LGBTQIA, Poor).

Commonly described as one of the more ‘radical’, ‘militant’, and ‘violent’ factions of the Civil Rights Movement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation categorized the BPP as a Black Nationalist Hate Group (FBI). FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover once stated that the Black Panther Party represented “the greatest risk to the security of [our] country” and followed this in a May 15, 1969 memo that claimed, “The Breakfast for Children Program (BCP) has been instituted by the BPP in several cities to provide a stable breakfast for ghetto children. ... Consequently, the BCP represents the best and most influential activity going for the BPP and, as such, is potentially the greatest threat to efforts by authorities ... to neutralize the BPP and destroy what it stands for” (FBI 1966).

With this in mind, the FBI had a program known as the CounterIntelligence Program (CoIntelPro) was established to covertly disrupt domestic socio-political movements that Noam Chomsky (1999) labels ‘The New Left’. Known for the wiretaps in Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King’s Home, CoIntelPro sought to destroy the Civil Rights Movement from the inside. The FBI believed if one could cut off the head, the entire movement dies, and acted with this notion in mind as they targeted the heads of Civil Rights Organizations and leaders in the Black community with harassment via letters and phone calls, and assassination. The harassment and violence did not stay within the higher ranks, the FBI inserted agent provocateurs in the midst of Civil Rights organizers with the hope of sowing discord and violence that would destabilize the Black community and the Civil Rights Movement. Additionally, the FBI did not step in to protect protesters when they were beaten and harassed by counter-protesters, as seen in the events of the Selma to Montgomery Protests of March 1965 (Chomsky 1999).

### Goals: Black Panther Party

The 10 Point Platform of the BPP read as follows:

“

1. *We Want Freedom. We Want Power To Determine The Destiny Of Our Black Community.*  
We believe that Black people will not be free until we are able to determine our destiny.
2. *We Want Full Employment For Our People.*  
We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every man employment or a guaranteed income. We believe that if the White American businessmen will not give full employment, then the means of production should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all of its people and give a high standard of living.
3. *We Want An End To The Robbery By The Capitalists Of Our Black Community.*  
We believe that this racist government has robbed us, and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules were promised 100 years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of Black people. We will accept the payment in currency which will be distributed to our many communities. The Germans are now aiding the Jews in Israel for the genocide of the Jewish people. The Germans murdered six million Jews. The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over fifty million Black people; therefore, we feel that this is a modest demand that we make.
4. *We Want Decent Housing Fit For The Shelter Of Human Beings.*  
We believe that if the White Landlords will not give decent housing to our Black community, then the housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that our community, with government aid, can build and make decent housing for its people.

5. *We Want Education For Our People That Exposes The True Nature Of This Decadent American Society. We Want Education That Teaches Us Our True History And Our Role In The Present-Day Society.*  
We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a knowledge of self. If a man does not have knowledge of himself and his position in society and the world, then he has little chance to relate to anything else.
6. *We Want All Black Men To Be Exempt From Military Service.*  
We believe that Black people should not be forced to fight in the military service to defend a racist government that does not protect us. We will not fight and kill other people of color in the world who, like Black people, are being victimized by the White racist government of America. We will protect ourselves from the force and violence of the racist police and the racist military, by whatever means necessary.
7. *We Want An Immediate End To Police Brutality And Murder Of Black People.*  
We believe we can end police brutality in our Black community by organizing Black self-defense groups that are dedicated to defending our Black community from racist police oppression and brutality. The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States gives a right to bear arms. We therefore believe that all Black people should arm themselves for self- defense.
8. *We Want Freedom For All Black Men Held In Federal, State, County And City Prisons And Jails.*  
We believe that all Black people should be released from the many jails and prisons because they have not received a fair and impartial trial.
9. *We Want All Black People When Brought To Trial To Be Tried In Court By A Jury Of Their Peer Group Or People From Their Black Communities, As Defined By The Constitution Of The United States.*  
We believe that the courts should follow the United States Constitution so that Black people will receive fair trials. The Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution gives a man a right to be tried by his peer group. A peer is a person from a similar economic, social, religious, geographical, environmental, historical and racial background. To do this the court will be forced to select a jury from the Black community from which the Black defendant came. We have been, and are being, tried by all-White juries that have no understanding of the "average reasoning man" of the Black community.
10. *We Want Land, Bread, Housing, Education, Clothing, Justice And Peace.*  
When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect of the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But, when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.”

— Foner 1995 [Newton & Seales 1966], 2-4

## *Historical Context: Hong Kong*

At midnight on 1 July 1997, Hong Kong's sovereignty was transferred from the hands of the United Kingdom back to China after the 99 year lease established the Convention for the Extension of Hong Kong Territory after it expired. Acquired by the British after the Qing Dynasty ceded the area after the Opium War of 1842 (History of Hong Kong). The "One Country, Two Systems" — in which Special Administrative regions operate under a high level of autonomy in having their own economic, judicial, legislative, and executive systems (HK Basic Law 2017, Article 2 & Article 5)— was created by then Paramount Leader, Deng Xiaoping, during the negotiations, known colloquially as "The Handover" and codified by Hong Kong's Basic Law (Vogel 2011, 511). Hong Kong Basic Law, however, was not meant to be a permanent solution; Article 5 of the Basic Law states, "the socialist system and policies shall not be practiced in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), and the previous capitalist system and way of life shall remain unchanged for 50 years" (HK Basic Law; Ghai 1999).

This wording has caused many controversies and conflicts over the years, some stating that (Mainland) China's actions have infringed upon Hong Kong's autonomy under the established law, including the current civil unrest caused by the Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill introduced by Hong Kong's Head of State or CEO, Carrie Lam. The Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill (Anti-ELAB) protests came to the forefront of the global stage in June 2019 when Hong Kongers protested and participated in strikes in response to the bill's reading. The bill was suspended 15 June 2019 and formally withdrawn from voting on 23 October 2019, yet the protests have ferociously continued due to all Five Demands having not been met (Lee 2019, 10-14).

The issue that most Hong Kongers have with the bill isn't the language itself, but the gaping loopholes that allow for Mainland Chinese government to extradite individuals with

impunity and retroactively, which many see as further encroachment of the Mainland Chinese government on Hong Kong's sovereignty as a SAR.

### Goals: *Anti-ELAB*

The goals that the Anti-ELAB movement are looking to accomplish through their actions are titled: Five Demands (and not One less), which have been translated as follows:

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1. Complete withdrawal of the extradition bill from the legislative process
2. Retraction of the "riot" characterisation
3. Release and exoneration of arrested protesters
4. Establishment of an independent commission of inquiry into police conduct and use of force during the protests
5. Resignation of Carrie Lam and the implementation of universal suffrage for Legislative Council elections and for the election of the Chief Executive

— PanAsia 2019, 5

# Literature and Theory

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## *Rise of Socio-Political Movements*

The modern social-political movement was born in the wake of the industrial revolution, as “group responses to social and cultural crises produced by the conditions of factory labor and urban life” (Nicholas 1973, 63). In and of itself, a socio-political movement is an attempt to course correct or avert further trauma from being incurred by the individual or a collective, and occur in the wake of a destabilizing moment in governance or social norms. Destabilization facilitates mobilization due to the idea of linked fate — in which individuals explicitly link self-interest with [racial] group interest (Dawson 1994, 76).

Self-interest plays a large role in the existential school of thought, in which individual being and the freedom to make your own choices. However, there is a caveat of understanding and genuinely interacting with others, or what is commonly called ‘the crowd’, or the term that I prefer, the collective. Many existentialists appear derisive towards the collective, with Neitschze using the term ‘herd’ to invoke base and animalistic imagery when discussing group wellbeing and collective action — as in “wake up sheeple!” I, however, subscribe more to the Heidigger and Sartre school of thought, in which we are utterly responsible for ourselves, however, there to be circumspect, we must take into account the positionality of ourselves and other in space and time (Burnham & Papandreopoulos).

Modern socio-political movements are often rooted in rhetoric best surmised as ‘by any means necessary’. It is a phrase that crops up again and again on both the right and the left when discussing achieving the named goal of the movement, and has somewhat of an ominous ring to it. I believe that this is intentional, as it reinforces the existentialist view of action initiated and

supported by the self or individual — as it stakes a claim in what an individual is willing to fight for (Sartre 1948 [2014]). In the BPP and in the Anti-ELAB movement, ‘by any means necessary’ is a phrase meant to spark continued mobilization and attract all sorts to further their goals (Foner 1995, [Webster-Fabio May 18, 1968] 20-21).

In the case of the BPP, armed self defense via the second amendment was viewed as a means to an end and a means that was just as necessary as the BCP and community health programs (Foner 1995, xxiii). For the Anti-ELAB movement, participants are encouraged to give what they can and participate to whatever degree/capacity they feel in, as well as call upon each other to not criticize the manner in which others participate (PanAsia 2019, 20).

## *Tactical Decisions in Socio-Political Movements*

### **1. Violence v. Nonviolence**

Due to the evidence of institutional violence leveled against their community, the BPP was known to have an antagonistic relationship with the police forces, referring to officers as ‘pigs’, which the a May 1967 edition of *The Black Panther* defines as an, “Ill-natured beast who has no respect for law and order, a foul troducer often masquerading as a victim of an unprovoked attack” (Foner 1995, 14). While degrading and hostile, the BPP’s message is evident in the last handful of words: *masquerading* as a victim of an *unprovoked attack*. Originally dubbed the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, the Panthers took up arms as a way of combating what they believed to be an unjust system, following police officers and stopping within a lawful distance to watch police interactions with the community.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Fred Hampton”, *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*, directed by S. Nelson (PBS, 2015) Streaming

The Black Panther Party was most well known for the BCP, which supplied close to 20,000 meals a week to children nationwide which FBI Director Hoover claimed it was the most influential program out on by the BPP as it inured the youth to their cause and covered the violent tendencies of the organization. The violence that Hoover references are the lawful observations of police interactions and open carry of firearms within state laws, which the second amendment allows for.<sup>2</sup>

Protesters in the Anti-ELAB movement range in engagement with violence. Those at the front of the protests have agreed to put their safety on the line should there be a clash with police while those towards the back wish to participate in a peaceful manner that allows them to walk amongst their compatriots (*We Choose...*, (Hong Kong, 2019)). The dichotomy between violent and non-violent protest is a false one, I believe. Socio-political movements call for all sorts of mobilization and one cannot be successful without the other. In her book, *Why Civil Resistance Works : The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*, Erica Chenoweth discusses the use of violent and non-violent protest/revolution and claims that non-violent protest succeeds twice as often than violent protests and revolutions based on data of 323 campaigns from 1900 to 2006, and therefore are the preferred method of implementing change. This stands in direct opposition to Peter Gelderloos's (2010) belief that non-violence protects the state and that "freedom cannot be given; it must be taken" (8), which falls in line with the belief that reform instituted by the state is the minimum to avoid it's upheaval — a process called preservation through transformation (Seigel 1997, 1113).

Despite several disparate understandings of the role of violence in socio-political movements, Chenoweth uses the four cases included in her book to bolster her argument in favor

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<sup>2</sup> ^ Nelson (PBS, 2015)



of non-violent resistance and campaign. However, two of the protests that Chenoweth includes in the non-violent side had violent elements, which she claimed failed. I would assert that these attempts do not exist in a vacuum and that each method had an effect as to whether a movement succeeded in reaching the goals that they have set forward.

## **2. Structure**

The Black Panther Party and the Hong Kong Anti-ELAB have incredibly disparate structures: The Black Panther Party has a paramilitary, extremely rigid structure meant to reflect the state back at itself.<sup>3</sup> The idea was that this structure would allow for the rapid development of discipline amongst the party and allow for each member to be an exemplar and representative of the party everywhere they went. Members of the party were called upon to be courteous, responsible, and upstanding members of society, especially while doing work for the Party and to live by these rules with the consequence of expulsion from the party should any rule be violated (Foner 1995 [Newton & Seales 1966], 5-6).

The Anti-ELAB movement is completely flat with decisions being made by general consensus. There are very few rules that protesters are asked to follow, but they are based in the growth of people power, in that they are rules of inclusivity versus the exclusivity of the panthers. Anti-ELAB is leaderless, fluid, steadfast and unified through this flat structure in which everyone has a voice and each individual is valuable in their contribution to the movement, no matter how large or small, as long as they are present (*Participation*, (Hong Kong, 2019)).

### **a. Accountability**

The structure of a movement is one tool to enforce accountability amongst participants. Whether it be a set list of tasks with hard deadlines that must be met or turning out for an action,

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<sup>3</sup> Nelson (PBS, 2015)

accountability is what keeps socio-political movements active and viable. Hierarchical structures such as the BPP have a more clear cut strategy to hold members accountable for their work and/or misdeeds. There is a stringent code of ethics that each member must follow or they would face expulsion from the party. Membership to the party and participation in the movement hinged on these accountability measures (Foner 1995 [Newton & Seales 1966], 5-8).

On the other hand, the Anti-ELAB movement calls on participants to come as they are and to be accountable to one another for their own actions based on their own code of ethics. The 4 Principles that have been collectively accepted as the creed of the movement are as follows:

1. The Movement is Leaderless
2. “Be Water”<sup>4</sup>
3. Five Demands, Not One Less
4. Do Not Part Ways

(Panasia 2019, 20)

In short, the movement seeks to be situationally adaptable, consistent in their fight for the fulfillment of their demands, and people-centric in their tactics.

### **3. Communication**

The BPP put out a biweekly newspaper called *The Black Panther* that updated the community of the happenings within the party as well as national and international news. They produced 300,000 copies each print for distribution in Black communities across the country

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<sup>4</sup> This comes from Hong Kong martial arts legend Bruce Lee (he even has an entire section dedicated to him at the Hong Kong Heritage Museum!). Lee is viewed as a cultural icon and one of Hong Kong’s greatest scions. The use of this term is to stoke Hong Kong nationalism and to easily surmise Black Bloc tactics used in the movement: be unidentifiable as individuals in the mass, don’t stay to be arrested, help your comrades, and subvert state surveillance (Anti Racist Action et al. 2001).

according to Mr. John Preston who started out selling papers for the Party in Hyde Park's very own Kimbark Plaza. Additionally, each branch was required to document all the work that they did each day and report the activity to the chapter weekly. The Anti-ELAB movement uses the internet to spread their message through the use of message boards such as LIHKG, social media, the encrypted messaging program Telegram, and mass air drops to promote actions and spread news of upcoming actions, recent events, and to generally stay connected (PanAsia 2019, 20). Both focus on consistent flow of information and regular communication within the movement and to the public at large, both of which are critical for generating and maintaining people power by creating networks instead of borders (Gelderloos 2010, 258-260).

# Methods

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## Research Design

In order to gain a better understanding of socio-political movements and the tactics they employ, I have chosen to focus most of my research on qualitative data and analysis via interviews and close readings of essential texts.

I identified my interview subjects via in person recruitment and snowball sampling. I interviewed four out of six subjects in person at a time under the conditions that the single interview would take approximately one hour while audio-recording to ensure that the narratives provided by subjects were reported accurately. These recordings were stored on an encrypted device and only accessible to me and then deleted once the completed transcriptions were transferred to a secure University of Chicago server. I also took into account that some people preferred not to be recorded and noted that should an interviewee wished to not be recorded, I would take notes instead. I also informed interviewees that this participation was completely voluntary and noted that should any question make them uncomfortable, they wished to stop the interview at any time for any reason, or if they rescinded permission for me to use the data gathered from the interview; I would immediately stop and delete any data collected at their request. The last two interviews were email exchanges in which I sent the interview questions that I asked the other participants and asked that respondents send their answers at their earliest convenience. I retained the communication logs to ensure accuracy of information on a University of Chicago Secure server and deleted the originals.

All data/narratives were de-identified and coded to protect the interviewee's identity unless they requested otherwise, keeping in mind that the Anti-ELAB protests are ongoing and

that some participants could reveal their involvement with illegal activities. If interviewees chose not to be identified, I only refer to the interviewee's affiliation to the movement they are/were involved in either by a general description of their position/length of affiliation, such as "organizer of x years" or by a pseudonym.

In addition to the interviews, I conducted archival research at the Woodson Regional Chicago Public Library in the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection and the FBI CoIntelPro Vaults (which are fully digitized and available to the public online), the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Housing and Urban Development website to gain a better situated understanding of the socio-economic standing of the Black Community before during and after the decade of interest, using the years 1960-1980 as bookends to see the comparative effect of the height of the BPP's activity.

The FBI's CoIntelPro took great pains to detail the lives of the Black Panther Party members that they have marked and all actions taken against them. Additionally, the Vivian G Harsh Research Collection holds the largest African American history and literature collection in the Midwest which documents the Black experience with a strong focus on Chicago. The collection includes interviews from party members, Fred Hampton's speeches, anthropological observations of BPP members.

The Hong Kong Anti-ELAB protests are ongoing and not even a year old at the time of submitting this project, so there has not been a lot of scholarly research to draw from. Therefore, it is essential to generate primary sources via conducting interviews and collecting anthropologic data to give context to and bolster claims made by interview subjects. Admittedly, the anthropologic time period for this event is short; however, it will be easier to draw contrasts to a differing reality that is not temporally far removed from the current Hong Kong.

In order to distill the commonalities between the BPP of 1964-1974 and the Hong Kong Anti-ELAB protests, I coded interviews, anthropological observations, photos, propaganda, and other primary sources using the software MaxQDA to discover common messaging, themes, and beliefs between the two socio-political movements in regards to attitudes towards government and mobilized response to put forward some ideas to as a history and to offer guidance to generations of participants of socio-political movements to come.

### Limitations

The largest limitation of the research design is the limited data provided by such a small sampling of both the number of interviews conducted and the number of case studies presented. Many projects endeavor to distill best practices from research such as this, however, it is just not possible in this case where comparative analysis is based on  $n=2$  and the number of interviews per case study amounts to  $n=3$ . Beyond the issue of sample size, I was left wondering whether I asked the correct questions that would give enough information to draw some form of conclusion with a sound methodological basis. My individual lack of expertise in these disparate socio-political movements, specifically in the Hong Kong Anti-ELAB movement as I am an outsider looking in and reflecting upon what I have learned from select texts and conversations makes trying to find the right questions to ask rather difficult.

Additionally, it was more or less impossible for me to conduct actual ethnographic research in regards to Hong Kong as that would require my presence in the country — to be acquainted with the everyday rhythm and flow of life in Hong Kong and make my own observations of the broader world around me instead of trying to interpret this through a lens that someone else has already applied.

The lens on Hong Kong is very polarized between those who support the protest and those who do not. The main sources of information on the protests come from the South China Morning Post, which is decidedly pro-Beijing and against the Anti-ELAB movement; and Hong Kong Free Press, which feverently supports the Anti-ELAB movement. Fairly balanced information that is not purely propaganda by either side is difficult to come by, however, this is not a question of which side is right and which side is wrong. It is a question of which side is achieving their prescribed goals.

Additionally, the scale of the case studies is dramatically different. While the Civil Rights Movement on the whole had millions of people involved, the Black Panther Party represents a small proportion of the movement due to their distinct cultural differences from organizations like SNCC, Southern Christian Leadership Council, and the Nation of Islam. The Anti-ELAB movement is more homogenous in terms of tactics and movement culture and tactics, making it easier to assess holistically.

# Discussion

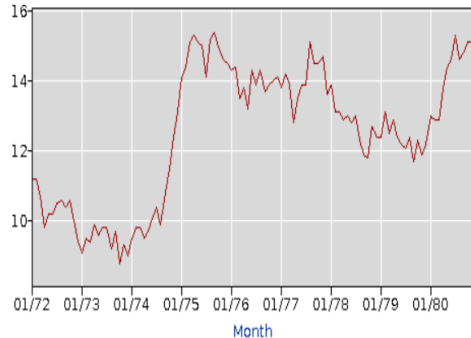
## Assessment

### Black Panther Party & Partial Fleeting Success

#### 1. Economic Cushion

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics did not keep specific records of Black unemployment until 1972, towards the end of the time period analyzed for the purpose of this paper. However, Black unemployment was on average about double the national unemployment from the years 1972 - 1974 as seen in the data sets and graphs below.

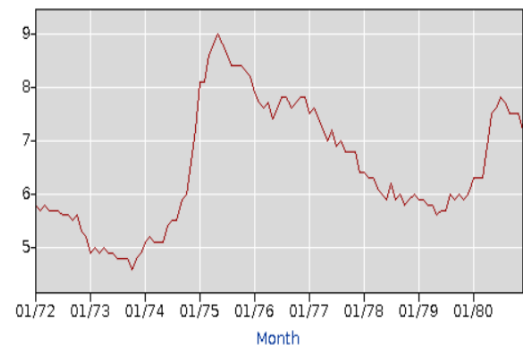
Seasonally Adjusted  
**Series title:** (Seas) Unemployment Rate - Black or African American  
**Labor force status:** Unemployment rate  
**Type of data:** Percent or rate  
**Age:** 16 years and over  
**Race:** Black or African American



Download: [xlsx](#)

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
1972	11.2	11.2	10.7	9.8	10.2	10.2	10.5	10.6	10.4	10.6	10.0	9.4	
1973	9.1	9.5	9.4	9.9	9.6	9.8	9.8	9.2	9.7	8.8	9.3	9.0	
1974	9.5	9.8	9.8	9.5	9.7	10.1	10.4	9.9	10.8	11.5	12.4	13.1	
1975	14.1	14.4	15.1	15.3	15.1	15.0	14.1	15.2	15.4	14.9	14.6	14.5	
1976	14.3	14.4	13.5	13.8	13.2	14.3	13.9	14.3	13.7	13.9	14.0	14.1	
1977	13.8	14.2	13.9	12.8	13.5	13.9	13.9	15.1	14.5	14.5	14.7	13.6	
1978	13.9	13.1	13.1	12.9	13.0	12.8	13.0	12.3	11.9	11.8	12.7	12.4	
1979	12.4	13.1	12.5	12.9	12.4	12.2	12.1	12.4	11.7	12.3	11.9	12.2	
1980	13.0	12.9	12.9	13.8	14.4	14.6	15.3	14.6	14.8	15.1	15.1	15.0	

Seasonally Adjusted  
**Series title:** (Seas) Unemployment Rate  
**Labor force status:** Unemployment rate  
**Type of data:** Percent or rate  
**Age:** 16 years and over



Download: [xlsx](#)

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
1972	5.8	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.6	5.3	5.2	
1973	4.9	5.0	4.9	5.0	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.6	4.8	4.9	
1974	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.4	5.5	5.5	5.9	6.0	6.6	7.2	
1975	8.1	8.1	8.6	8.8	9.0	8.8	8.6	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.3	8.2	
1976	7.9	7.7	7.6	7.7	7.4	7.6	7.8	7.8	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.8	
1977	7.5	7.6	7.4	7.2	7.0	7.2	6.9	7.0	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.4	
1978	6.4	6.3	6.3	6.1	6.0	5.9	6.2	5.9	6.0	5.8	5.9	6.0	
1979	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.8	5.6	5.7	5.7	6.0	5.9	6.0	5.9	6.0	
1980	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.9	7.5	7.6	7.8	7.7	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.2	

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Unemployment Calculator



Housing and Urban Development notes the Black homeownership also increased during this time, but these figures include mortgaged homes towards rates of homeownership (Devaney 1994, 27-28). What does this mean for the homes bought on contract? In his iconic essay, “A Case for Reparations,” Ta-Nehisi Coates discusses the effects of redlining and the predatory practice of “selling on contract” to Black buyers (Coates 2014). Coates addresses the actions of one coalition of Black homeowners who bought “on contract” called the Contract Buyers League that organized actions such as door knocking campaigns, refusal to pay their monthly installments — instead holding them in escrow accounts, and building a legal case against the predatory speculators that could take everything that’s been paid and evict the contract buyer if only one payment is missed as in this deal, the seller holds on to the deed until all payments have been completed.

These actions began around 1968, the early peak of BPP activity. The former Panthers that I spoke to in my interviews expressed their general support for actions similar to these, Ms. K — former secretary of the Chicago Chapter of the BPP — stating, “These were our community elders. We wanted to lift them out of their despair and not repeat their mistakes. This is where we brought in cooperative living, and honed in on buying space outright.”

The BPP also devoted numerous resources to community building in Black inner city communities by providing BCP, free winter clothes, and free healthcare. These community welfare programs brought Mr. Preston into the fold by way of some friends who were introduced to the party through these programs and encouraged him to join because they knew he had an interest in “black liberation and doing the work,” as he said in our interview

All of this being said, the BPP does not exist in a bubble — and saying that any of these programs caused the downtrend in unemployment amongst Black Americans and a small uptick

in the percentage of Black homeowners would be absurd. Additionally, White property owners still owned and rented out property in Black communities, the unemployment rate for Black Americans was still twice the national average (which doesn't even touch on the percentage of people under-employed), and the government housing projects that were built in the city of Chicago were designed to divide communities and shut them away (ie: Robert Taylor Homes along the Dan Ryan) (Moore 2017).

## 2. *Social Flop*

If it was not clear already, the socio-political aspects of the 10 Point Platform completely and utterly failed. The Vietnam Conflict spanned from 1964-1975, roughly the same time period that I have chosen to study the BPP in. Whether it was by choice or the draft, countless Black men fought and died in Vietnam, at one point 60% of troops on the frontlines were Black American (King 1989, 4). Protests against the war were not uncommon, such as the burning of draft cards as an action, however, the BPP focused more on the domestic social programs. Ms. K elaborated on this fact, saying, "As an organization, we really focused on what we could do to have the most immediate impact for the most people. We were building [our base of support] with programs like the Breakfast for Children Program and the health clinic so we'd have some power for the bigger things."

With this in mind, the BPP also did not see the end of police brutality against Black people, the release of Black men imprisoned on what were perceived as false charges, Black history as a federally mandated unit for schools, or provisions to change the composition of juries to reflect what the BPP believed what a jury of peers would look like. If one were to step back and assess what the BPP is asking for — the issue isn't the system of justice in and of itself, but the power of discretion given to the people that are part of it. The BPP did not call for prison

abolition, but reform that they believed would benefit the Black community. While at this point, the War on Drugs hadn't started and the '94 Crime Bill hadn't been passed, there wasn't much forethought to what the next transformation of slavery and Jim Crow laws would be — especially for an organization that was meant to be informed of their histories and current events (Cullen 2018; Ferron et al. 2018; Alexander 2010, 47; Foner 1995 [Newton & Seales 1966], 5-6).

The former Panthers that were interviewed for this project admitted, upon some reflection, devising concrete and plausible plans of action in regards to legislation that would fulfill their demands was not of the top priority. Mr. Bradley Greene — founder of an unofficial branch of the BPP during his university years in Tucson, AZ and an official member of the party for 8 years — said, “We were young, as young as you are. We were angry at everything; the war, the assassination of Dr. King, that little fascist J. Edgar Hoover. We thought about the now and we would get to the later, later.” When asked about whether they believed they could achieve the goals set forth by the party in the 10 Point Platform, each interviewee had a similar answer. Mr. Greene bluntly remarked, “It didn't matter if I thought it was possible, I just wanted them to be true so I worked my hardest with what they gave me to make it happen.” This sentiment was echoed by Mr. Preston, who was only 15 years-old when he joined the Chicago Chapter of the BPP,

*“It wasn't so much the end prospects for me, that I knew was far off and likely not to happen in my lifetime. I wanted to do something to help my community and the BPP gave me an outlet to do it. I learned a lot about the people in my community and what not to do when it comes to organizing people. The [BPP] were our aspirations, but to me, the focus was what we could do to make it better in the meantime and help everyone get to the point where they agreed with us.”*

## Anti-ELAB Flows Forth

### *1. Disruption to Recede*

CEO Carrie Lam announced a formal withdrawal of the Extradition Law Amendment Bill from the Legislative Council of Hong Kong (from here forward abbreviated as LegCo) on September 4, 2019 and completed the action on October 23, 2019 — around 3 ½ months since the first protests in June when the bill was first introduced. Protests of some scale were occurring everyday during the summer months, from mass demonstrations that shut down the streets on the weekend to storming LegCo to stop the reading of the bill on July 1, 2019 (Lee et al. 2019, 10).

“We keep coming out to make them listen,” a student organizer said during our interview, “The 2014 [Umbrella Movement] Protests failed because we didn’t keep pushing. People have been out here everyday to show the Mainland Chinese government and Carrie Lam that we will not be silenced, we will not just fade away.” This sentiment was echoed by another student activist,

*“We learned from 2014 and we won’t make the same mistakes. We’re much more aggressive and consistent in our demands. I don’t think we’d be this firm if we didn’t already have the taste of failure only five years ago ... I honestly feel like Hong Kong has been a pressure cooker for a long time and [CEO Carrie] Lam thought she was decreasing the pressure by withdrawing the bill. I’m thankful that she did that because that showed people that our demands can be met if we just keep going. She unintentionally stoked the fire when she was trying to douse it.”*

When asked about the difference in tactics that makes the Anti-ELAB movement successful as opposed to the Umbrella Movement, the same student activist supposed,

*“I always saw the 2014 protests more as an occupation more than anything. Occupy as a movement was huge at that time and I think people were more optimistic at that time. 2014 was just about democracy really. Like, I think people thought things could change if they just could occupy this place long enough, and the government would just follow along if they could follow the theoretical structure of how democracy works: legally protest the appropriate political actors do something about it because people believed in the system would work for them. Now, we know better. Sometimes there’s violence, which is super different from the 2014 protests, but it serves its purpose. It makes people watch and pay attention. It reminds them that we’re not done yet and we won’t be done until all five of our demands are met.”*

The fact that the first demand, the legislation that sparked the protests, has been met has not slowed down the movement at all.

## 2. Surging Forward

The trust of the people of Hong Kong has been broken. Approval ratings of the government are at record lows that haven't been seen since the Handover of 1997. Simply put, Hong Kongers aren't protesting the ELAB bill itself, but what it represents to them and the actions taken by the government and police force since then. One student activist explained his position on the bill and why he became involved in the protest as follows:

*"The text itself, I don't really have much of an issue with. It seems relatively standard. On a deeper level though I think in context with the rest of the mainland China's policies, is a sentiment I think many others in the city share which is negative of worrying about this being just a legal cover for Mainland China to kind of kidnap people across the border. There's been a history of booksellers or certain politically active figures that mean they try to just not agree with that they will pluck from Hong Kong, and then just kind of reappear in mainland China without any reason, and so many people are worried that this bill would kind of be used as a cover for that. And as such, I am an opposition to the bill for what it could be used for ... [The bill has] negatively affected my perception [of Carrie Lam and the Hong Kong Government], because it was never really a priority for Hong Kong people that this bill be taken up. I mean of course, any kind of politics means that there's a limited amount of air in the room but they're focusing on this? It feels like 'Why aren't you helping to alleviate something else?' ... Additionally, the bill was meant to be retroactive and applied to anybody in Hong Kong who has committed a perceived crime to the Mainland Government, which really is the concern. And so it made the entire city as well as myself feel like the government is not trying to work for the citizens. It's just trying to work towards cracking down against dissenting opinions and being the Mainland's lapdog. So it's made me feel like this government isn't really trying to make this city better but just trying to tighten its grip on it."*

This sentiment is echoed by the data gathered by Francis Lee and his team of researchers that conducted surveys at 19 at almost all of the major protests from June 7, 2019 - August 31, 2019 and a number of smaller ones. The researchers found that "calling for the withdrawal of the extradition bill" was ranked as the highest motivator of the protesters in the early stages of the Anti-ELAB movement, despite the fact the bill was suspended on June 15. A range of 85.1% to 94.8% of the 12,231 respondents thought the withdrawal of the bill was "very important" in June and August.

Another key reason participants expressed for joining the protest was, "Expressing dissatisfaction with the police's handling of the protesters". On 1 July, 84.6% of respondents chose it as a "very important" reason for them to join the protest. In mid-July, it replaced "calling

for the withdrawal of the extradition bill” to have the highest rate of respondent consider it to be “very important”. At certain protests, the survey also included options related to specific actions by police. At the June 16 protest, 98.3% of survey participants rated “protesting against arbitrary arrest by the police” as “very important”. The July 14 survey saw 96.2% of respondents rate “demanding the government to retract its characterization of the June 12 protest as a riot” as “very important”. Finally, the August 4 survey found that 98.3% of respondents chose “expressing the dissatisfaction with the riot charges imposed by the police against the July 28 protesters” as “very important”(Lee et al. 2019, 16).

Prior to the protests, the Hong Kong Police Force were called ‘Asia’s Finest’ and regarded as ‘the Kind Uncle’ that most citizens trusted. That image has shattered as citizens have clashed with riot police due the use of tear gas in densely populated areas and non-lethal projectiles such as rubber bullets and bean bags, as well as water cannons to break up protests (PanAsia 2019, 11). The protests have shifted to be more about the police’s abuse of power and seeking to establish an independent inquiry of police action during this time — Demand #4. This shift in focus can offer an explanation as to why the movement has lasted so long. The demand for withdrawal of the ELAB is a past concern; the dissatisfaction towards the police is an ongoing issue between the police force and the citizens. Another observation that Lee and his team made is that every time when there was a perceived abuse of power on the part of the police, the movement was galvanized.

CEO Carrie Lam’s approval rating took a sharp dive in June 2019, falling from 43.4% during the June 3-6 polling period to 32.8% just two weeks later in the June 17-20 polling period based on data collected by the Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute. Since the protests kicked off, Lam’s approval rating hasn’t cracked 30% according to the same sources, even

dipping down as low as 9% in February 2020 due to her administration's handling of the initial COVID-19 cases (Lung 2020). Lam's refusal to concede to any of the other Five Demands has gravely affected the public's opinion of her, and trust in the HKSAR government, with the rate of distrust increasing to 60.3% in the same time period of the June polls (PORI).

## ***Commonalities***

Despite the disparate realities of the BPP and the Anti-ELAB movement, I identified several recurrences in my qualitative coding. This is not to say that these are the end all be all of what drives every movement, but this is what I have discerned from the data that I have collected.

## ***Themes***

### ***Freedom***

'Fight for Freedom. Stand with Hong Kong' is one of the unofficial slogans of the Anti-ELAB movement. The first sentence of the BPP 10 Point Platform is "We want freedom" (Foner 1995 [Newton & Seales 1966], 2). Freedom looks different to each of these socio-political movements in terms of governance and radicalism, but the premise is the same. Freedom to participants in each of these movements entails the right to self determination.

Hong Kongers have been fighting for their right to democracy since 2014 during the Umbrella Protests. In the Anti-ELAB movement, the issue is not the bill in and of itself but the further possibilities it opens up to the Mainland Chinese government to encroach on Hong Kong's sovereignty. The first student activist I spoke to stated, "They were supposed to give us fifty years, but Hong Kong can already feel the Mainland breathing down our neck. They're trying to forcefully integrate us with big white elephant infrastructure like a bridge, a high speed

rail link. The Extradition Bill was just another in.” As previously stated, Hong Kong’s status as a SAR gives them a high amount of sovereignty until 2047 when the British Joint Declaration and Hong Kong Basic Law — both established during the Handover — are set to expire.

“Most protesters aren’t even that politically radical, I think,” an activist based in the UK added, “Most protesters would frown at anarchists, that’s not what these protests were about. We want the Hong Kong way of life, which we are guaranteed by law.” The second student activist I spoke to was rather conflicted about the politics of the movement, “I identify as a leftist, so I am somewhat hesitant to condemn Mainland China’s for their system of governance. Are the human rights practices up to par in China? No. But are they in the US either? They aren’t. However, I am more inclined to condemn the Mainland Chinese government’s imperialist attitude towards Hong Kong, Macau, and Tibet.”

What about the BPP? The 10 Point Platform includes language that may lead some to believe that they are calling for a separate state if one examines the second line of the first point: “We Want Power To Determine The Destiny Of Our Black Community” (Foner 1995 [Newton & Seales 1966], 2). This however, is not the case. The BPP was looking for parity through representation and reparations. All of the 10 Points presented in the platform required government action to repair harms done to the Black community. The Panthers called upon the US government to provide safe housing, change the curriculum of school, and provide reparations for the harms of slavery as were promised by 1865 (Gates Jr. 2013).

The Panthers too, were not looking to tear everything down, even though the rhetoric about capitalism may appear scary to some. The Panthers take aim at white capitalists — the same predators that Ta-Nehisi Coates identifies in his essay, “A Case for Reparations” — and their exploitation of the Black community. The BPP looked to Mao and Che because they saw

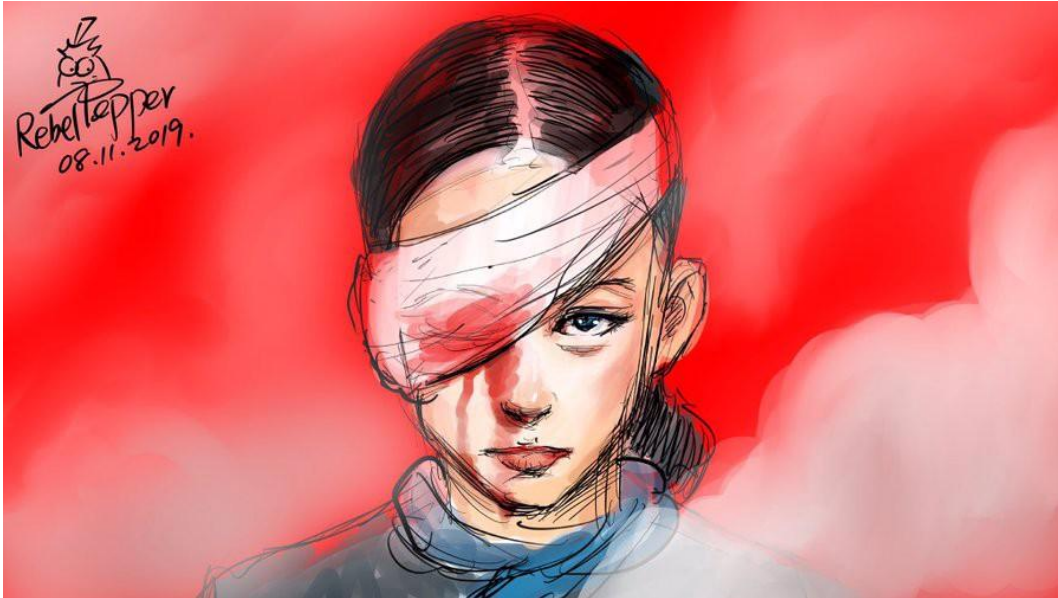


better opportunities for financially uplifting the Black community and achieving equality than they did under a capitalist system. After World War II, the GI Bill saw the development of the white middle class post due to social benefits offered to service members such as college tuition payment and low interest loans on homes. However, in practice, many Black veterans had difficulty securing these benefits due to racial prejudices and the wealth gap grew to be insurmountable — the opportunity gap with it (Katznelson 2013, 121-123). The Panthers sought to close this gap by working within the community through community based aid programs like BCP.

### *Institutional Violence*

Both socio-political movements explicitly state that they would see the end of police brutality and misconduct, as well as revision of the judicial process levied against the people they stand for. Each movement has gone as far to advocate for self defense — the BPP advocating for members to carry firearms and the frontline Anti-ELAB protestors going throwing bricks at riot police when fired upon.

“The police have done nothing but harass and hurt the citizens of Hong Kong,” stated the second student activist interviewed, “They’ve been arresting and beating people with impunity and indiscriminately firing into crowds. That’s state terrorism.” As mentioned earlier, police conduct has been a hot button issue that has continued to sustain the Anti-ELAB movement, with images of protesters injured by police action becoming iconic such as a young woman working as a medic for protesters who was blinded after allegedly being shot in the eye with a bean bag by police. Calls for ‘an eye for an eye’ galvanized the movement after the August 11, 2019 incident (Chia 2019) and inspired a lot of protest art, such as the image below.



*Source: Rebel Pepper (Wang Liming): Twitter*

State violence has become the norm for Anti-ELAB protesters, so much so that they have adopted Black Bloc Anarchist practices to help people participate in the protests more safely. The biggest aspect of safety for protesters is subverting state surveillance. “The last time I went to Hong Kong, it was crazy!” the activist based in London said, “There’s surveillance everywhere. They’ve disguised surveillance cameras as street lights and they have this super advanced facial recognition software that’s out of the Mainland that can identify all kinds of things about you and can be used to track your movements.” While this sounds like something straight out of 1984, this software is real and in use in Mainland China in large cities like Beijing.<sup>5</sup>

Due to the level of surveillance, protestors have gone through great lengths to protect their identities, especially those on the front line. Protestors conceal their faces with a variety of different coverings, ranging from surgical masks to motorcycle helmets. They wear black to create a mass of indiscernible bodies and leave their electronics at home because they can be

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<sup>5</sup> Emily Feng, “How China Is Using Facial Recognition Technology,” recorded December 16, 2019, NPR, on *All Things Considered*. Digital Streaming.

used to track their location. Once known as one of the best transit networks in the world, people have stopped using their Octopus cards (the equivalent is a Ventra card in Chicago) because of the meta-data that can be traced back to them if they have used a credit card or debit card to reload the card. Instead protestors are buying single use tickets with money left by supporters on the turnstiles or jumping the turnstiles instead, especially when evading the police (Anti Racist Action et al. 2001; PanAsia 2019).

Additionally, protestors have adopted the phrase “Be Water” from Hong Kong legend Bruce Lee, as a description of their pop-up protests. Lee is quoted as saying, “You must be shapeless, formless, like water. When you pour water in a cup, it becomes the cup. When you pour water in a bottle, it becomes the bottle. When you pour water in a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Water can drip and it can crash. Become water my friend”(PanAsia 2019). Lee’s philosophy as applied to the Anti-ELAB movement calls for participants to be adaptable and ever-moving, sweeping past opposition and carrying the people with them. This has led to more varied styles of protests that are accepted by the movement for the sake of producing results. People have come out as frontline fighters and vandals to physically confront the state, medics who treat those affected by tear gas and other injuries afflicted, artists that create zines and circulate them in classrooms and demonstrations to raise awareness for the cause, and sheerly to help generate people power and provide cover.

On another note, the BPP advocated for members to carry firearms as a means of self defense. This appears to be a tactic that could only fly in the United States as only 3 countries protect the right to bear arms in their constitution and the United States is the only one without any constitutional restrictions (Weiss & Pasley 2019). Mr. Greene addressed armed self-defense during our discussion, “The guns played two roles for us: intimidation and a reminder.

Obviously, seeing a Black man walking around with a rifle, looking the way we did was meant to scare the White folks, but it was also a way for us to say ‘We’re Americans too. So we’re going to exercise our constitutional right to bear arms.’”

Self-defense is crucial to both of these socio-political movements for their identity and survival. “Even with the threat of violence looming, a lot of us didn’t make it home. If we were asking for these things without it, do you think any of us would still be standing?” asked Ms. K when I questioned her about the efficacy of carrying guns as a scare tactic.

### Resilience

Both socio-political movements emphasized the importance of continued action to maintain momentum. Members of the movements also spoke at length about continuing despite adverse circumstances that they faced. “If we don’t stand up for ourselves, then who’s going to do it for us? We have to show up,” stated the Anti-ELAB protester based in Hong Kong. Time Magazine put out a piece that wove together the narratives of 15 youth that depicted their resolve and dedication to the movement. A 15 year old identified by the pseudonym Yannus in the article carries a handwritten will in his pocket, stating, “Maybe I’ll die for this movement. I’m ready.” Another, identified as Calvin, aged 21, stated, “I’d rather die than be arrested. If I die at least the fury would sustain the movement” (Barron 2020). These statements seem fatalistic, but it is the reality of the Anti-ELAB movement. As of October 2019, 9 people are known to have committed suicide in relation to the Anti-ELAB movement, leaving notes with words of encouragement to other protesters to keep fighting (Perper 2019; Kuo 2019).

The BPP also focused on messages of resilience — harkening to Sartre’s iconic quote, “by any means necessary,” in Point #6 of the 10 Point Platform, “We will protect ourselves from the force and violence of the racist police and the racist military, by whatever means necessary”

(Foner 1995 [Newton & Seales 1966], 3). On December 3, 1969 — the day before he died — Chairman of the Chicago Chapter of the BPP, Fred Hampton gave a speech at a rally at the People's Church, "I don't believe I'm going to die in a car wreck. I don't believe I'm going to die from slipping on a piece of ice. I don't believe that I'm going to die because I've got a bad heart. Why don't you heal for the people? Why don't you struggle for the people? Why don't you die for the people?" Not even 12 hours later, he was assassinated by the Chicago Police Department in collaboration with the FBI while he was asleep in his bed, the soon to be mother of his child in the bed beside him. He was 21 (Haas 2010, 76-77).<sup>6</sup>

The tragic fate of Fred Hampton was not uncommon amongst leaders of the Civil Rights Movement both within and outside of the Black Panther Party; other notable leaders being Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. Leaders were constantly arrested and imprisoned for petty charges by police in efforts to disrupt the movement. Additionally, agent provocateurs were introduced to the movement by the FBI in an effort to induce inter and intra organizations schisms and factionalism to bring the work to a halt (FBI 1967).

The BPP fell to factionalism after Huey Newton was released from prison in 1970, wanting to return the BPP's focus to community aid while Eldridge Cleaver — who was in exile in Algeria — called for action to overthrow the United States government with blood. The Panther 21 was the flash point that the FBI used to further the rift that had developed in the Party; to the point that everything fell apart with some members staying in the party with Newton, others following Cleaver in his denouncement of the party, and a faction that walked away from the party completely due to the feeling of betrayed by the party leadership.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Nelson (PBS 2015)

<sup>7</sup> Nelson (PBS 2015)

This insidious CounterIntelligence operation executed by the FBI is the best case scenario for any state attempting to dismantle a movement. A disinformation campaign to encourage strife and letting the enemy tear itself apart from the inside. Participants in the Hong Kong Anti-ELAB protests know this and have made a concerted effort to preserve their movement by employing the principle, ‘Do Not Part Ways’ — which reminds protestors not to splinter and to not criticize the actions of other protestors because these fracture are points the Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese government can hone in on and effectively destroy the movement through divisive media strategies (PanAsia 2019, 20 & 30).

## ***Pitfalls***

### *Structure*

The structure of a movement can make or break a movement, as seen with the implosion of the BPP after leaders were picked off via assassination of imprisoned. Additionally, the strict hierarchy did not allow for much autonomy or diversity in tactics and ideas for each chapter of the BPP. Granted, the hierarchy implemented a standard that all chapters had to meet and you knew exactly what you were getting each time you approached a Black Panther Party Member, specifically in the beginning, but there was not much room for growth. “I would like to think we handled the hierarchy thing better than other chapters,” started Ms. K, “but there was only so much we could do. We got orders from the national council and we did what they told us. For a lot of chapters though, you were either on the inside or you weren’t. Basically, if you weren’t a founding member or one of the younger ones, you were a soldier.” This distinction between the leadership and the members left many individuals out in the cold and disenchanted with the party, especially around the time of the split. Many people walked away because of the discord and the fact that nothing of substance was being done in the meantime. “I left the party during

the split because you couldn't tell up from down. We weren't getting orders. We weren't helping the community. Panthers were killing Panthers because of a damn power struggle. It was foolish," Mr. Greene when I asked him about his choice to leave the party in 1972. The BPP structure as a hierarchy reflected the system of the United States, and because of this, the structure reflected the flaws as well.

In comparison, the Anti-ELAB movement is completely flat and, in all honesty, unstructured. The lack of leadership is in response to the lessons learned in the 2014 Umbrella Movement, where leaders of student activists groups like Nathan Law, Joshua Wong, and Alex Chow were arrested and charged with unlawful assembly and then sentenced to prison even though they were initially sentenced to community service and a suspended sentence respectively. After 4 years of legal struggles, Joshua Wong was sentenced to 2 months in prison and was released after 1 ½ months — only to be arrested again in relation to the Anti-ELAB protests (PEN America 2019). Leaders and figureheads are highly visible targets to strike at and have the potential to completely cripple a movement if it relies on their charisma (Weber 1978, 286).

The goals and the principles of the Anti-ELAB movement developed organically through conversation on LIHKG and through telegram until there was a general language that was popularly agreed upon. To achieve these goals, Hong Kongers are free to do as they like as individuals or as collectives — creating art, organizing actions, and deciding what role they want to take on their own. A 16 year-old individual known only as Rita told a Barron for January 2020 Time Magazine article, "I've tasted tear gas. I've been hit by a rubber bullet. I set roadblocks. No one taught me, I just saw people do it and I tried to help. I feel nervous. I can't be scared, though, because I stand in the front lines and people stand behind me. I need to protect them." Anti-

ELAB have chosen to ‘Not Part Ways’ and protect each other as a collective — as “the crowd”, in order to assert their individual wills keeping in mind the position of the others around them.

### Accountability

The BPP had numerous accountability measures in place to ensure that the branches and chapters were working towards the established goals of the 10 Point Platform such as individuals recording daily reports of actions, branches submitting weekly reports of chapter activity, and adhering to a strict code of conduct under threat that any violation of the code was grounds for expulsion from the party. However, the break in the party in the early 1970s was in part due to issues of individual accountability and transparency within the party as represented by the situation with the Panther 21. The leadership of the New York BPP were arrested on charges of conspiracy to commit terrorist acts on April 2, 1969 which led to hundreds of thousands of dollars of legal fees that the accused could not pay themselves. The Party held fundraisers to help build a defense fund, but there were questions of whether the money raised was actually going towards the aid of the Panther 21. Upon his release from prison, Huey Newton kicked all of the members of the Panther 21 out of the Black Panther Party, only for the fact that their legal issues were causing too much financial stress on the organization.<sup>8</sup>

Through no fault of their own, the Panther 21 were punished twice over by working with the BPP. “I was shaken,” Mr. Preston said in regards to the Panther 21, “Here are these people who have given their lives to the struggle and the party turned its back on them in their time of need. They were leaders and they did that to them.” This choice by Newton sent a clear message to many in the party: you’re expendable. This facilitated the breakdown of the BPP in the loss of membership and the loss of discipline amongst remain members with the fifth rule, “No party

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<sup>8</sup> Nelson (PBS 2015)



member will USE, POINT, or FIRE a weapon of any kind unnecessarily or accidentally at anyone (Foner 1995 [Newton & Seales 1966], 3) with the killings that occurred between Newton and Cleaver's factions of the BPP. The removal of the Panther 21 was arbitrary and through no fault of their own, which reflected poorly on the accountability of the BPP itself.

Due to the loose structure of the Anti-ELAB movement, there aren't many accountability measures in place, except for an individual's moral compass. The first student organizer I spoke to said,

“Anti-ELAB protestors learned from the 2014 protests that where factionalism broke apart the pro-democracy push. So, people said from now on, no criticizing one another, we just stand by one another, whether you're peaceful or not, you have to support one another. I think that this culture [in the movement] has enabled a very radical set of protestors without holding them accountable, or without having any deliberative process. For example, throwing bricks at the married policeman's quarters was not something broadly agreed upon by protestors. But you're not supposed to criticize them so I would hold the culture liable.”

This sentiment seems to be rather uncommon amongst the most vocal protestors, with 90.9% of respondents surveyed at 19 demonstrations either agreed or strongly agreed that confrontational actions could be justified when the government does not listen to the people. Additionally, 85.2% believed that peaceful and confrontational actions should be combined to have a higher impact (Lee et al. 2019, 18).

### Resources

A socio-political movement backed by the people against the state, regime, or large system will always have less resources than their adversary. More often than not, activists are unpaid and working with the movement of their choice as a passion project; while the state, regime, etc. has people in their employ whose only job is to subvert and foil these socio-political movements. In the cases of the BPP and the Anti-ELAB protestors, state actors dedicated to subverting their activity are CoIntelPro and Riot Police respectively.

The question is how does one defeat an enemy that has more time, money, institutional backing, and possibly man power — through mutual aid. Mutual aid is, “Mutual aid is a form of political participation in which people take responsibility for caring for one another and changing political conditions, not just through symbolic acts or putting pressure on their representatives in government but by actually building new social relations that are more survivable” (Spade 2020, 136). The BPP and the Anti-ELAB both practice mutual aid in their work; the BPP’s BCP is an iconic mutual aid project in modern US history and the Anti-ELAB protesters provide each other first-aid, allowing for diverse methods of resistance within bounds of individual comfort and ability within the movement, and offering support to one another when needed. One of the more high profile cases of mutual aid in Hong Kong during the protests was the outpouring of support after the Hong Kong Police defaced a mosque due to the blue dye added to the water cannons in clean up efforts as a show of solidarity with the Muslim community in Hong Kong (Yip 2019). This being said, solidarity that would facilitate mutual aid is often disincentivized because it rejects that hierarchies that we are familiar with in an effort to build genuine, deep connections that sustain as individuals and grow power for the collective (Spade 2020, 137-138).

# Recommendations

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## *I. Leaderless Movements*

As previously examined and explained, the Civil Rights Era, figures of Black Power and revolutionaries were targeted without scruples by the FBI. Whether it be through assassinations or psychological warfare, CoIntelPro actively sought to dismantle socio-political movements by eliminating the figureheads and mouth pieces by any means necessary (FBI 1968; Chomsky 1999). In declassified FBI CoIntelPro files, an entire operation to destabilize Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. from his position at the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement is explained in great detail. The FBI placed anonymous calls to Dr. King, telling him to kill himself while his wife was repeatedly told that he was having an extra-marital affair (FBI 1964). Brother Fred Hampton of the Black Panther Party was assassinated by the FBI by way of the Chicago Police Department on December 4, 1969 while he was asleep in the early hours of the morning<sup>9</sup> (Haas 2010, 121-126; Williams 2013, 167). This is also seen in the 2014 Umbrella Protests (Pen America, 2019).

A movement with leaders is inherently bureaucratic and emulates the established system of the oppressor, therefore reinforcing the norm of hierarchy and oppression (Ferron et al. 2018); which runs contrary to many of the points and platforms of revolutionaries of the civil rights era such as the Young Lords Party and the Black Panther Party. These movements imploded with the loss of their figureheads, in addition to the structures adapted to reflect the governments they

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<sup>9</sup> Nelson (PBS, 2015)

were resisting causing tension and discomfort amongst members to the point where any momentum built was lost.<sup>10</sup>

If we were to cautiously apply what was revealed in FBI CoIntelPro as the blueprint for how to terminate socio-political movements and activism, we would find that the goal is to destabilize movements such that they collapse. In order to subvert these tactics, dissidents and activists can look to Bruce Lee, much like the current Hong Kong Anti-ELAB Protesters have: and “be water”.

This principle leaves no one is to be arrested and made a martyr for the cause. Protesters are firmly against the law in eluding arrest and subverting the surveillance state. To do this, many protesters leave their electronics at home, use Black Bloc [Anarchist Methods], and have removed surveillance cameras from the street in order to move as one and mitigate individual risk. The protesters have put together a united front that has sustained the Anti-ELAB movement for 10 months so far, including through the global COVID-19 pandemic.

## *II. Advocate for Self Defense*

Violent or non-violent, dissenting groups have historically been persecuted and treated with extreme prejudice by the state. This being said, I will not advocate for one specific method for making change. Self defense goes beyond the physical self, it has been evidenced that the psychological well being of dissenters has been attacked as well (threatening phone calls to individuals and loved ones, physical intimidation, etc). Individual psychological well-being is the soul of a movement (*Self Care* (Hong Kong, 2019)). Without people power, there is no movement -- no one to advocate for the cause. To gain and sustain momentum, the people must

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<sup>10</sup> Nelson (PBS 2015)

be invested in the change. To state it plainly, socio-political movements must be sure that participants are taking care of themselves such that everyone is liberated.

The Hong Kong Anti-ELAB protesters produce zines on self care, calling for people to contribute what they can, but to be mindful of their individual circumstances to make sure that people are stable and doing well, mentally and emotionally. On the outwardly evident side, some protesters are on the front line in protective gear clashing with police, some protesters walk closer to the back of the protest, singing and talking to neighbors, and others simply leave money on the MTR turnstiles and ticket machines so protesters can move quickly and freely throughout the city. All positions bring people power to the movement and everyone has a place where they feel comfortable in their participation.

### *III. Collectively Catalog and Stories & Share them Widely*

Hong Kongers have created a forum in which people are able to document and post abuses by police during the protest. It is open access and available in 6 languages -- Cantonese, English, Japanese, Korean, French, and Dutch.<sup>11</sup> This kind of file sharing ensures that there is documentation of each event archived, even if the original document no longer exists -- there is always evidence.

Sharing stories and images of the struggle for liberation is often used to raise political consciousness and generate more people power for the movement. The Black Panther Party exercised similar methods in their weekly newspaper that distributed 300,000 copies a week across the United States. Seeing is believing, and this allows for socio-political movements to create something that helps people contextualize the climate, empathize with those involved in dissent, and become energized for liberation. The Hong Kong Police Misconduct forum,

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<sup>11</sup> <https://tl.hkrev.info/en/police-timeline/>

however, is moderated and this allows for possible gatekeeping and a stranglehold on certain information if the site were to ever be compromised. This is juxtaposed by what we know about the state to disrupt and destabilize these spaces for dissent and how they will infiltrate socio-political movements in order to sow discord to disjoint the collective as seen again in the assassination of Fred Hampton with William O'Neal working as an FBI informant and the head of security for the Chicago Chapter of the Black Panther Party.<sup>12</sup> Liberation should be accessible to everyone, so this conundrum of keeping people safe and the movement stable and creating power differentials versus the high probability of misinformation and organizational sabotage must be weighed carefully and the decision will vary movement to movement based on need. While not as effective as a portfolio such as a website, social media is another powerful tool that should be used liberally and evaluated with a discerning eye.

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<sup>12</sup> Nelson (PBS 2015)

# Conclusion

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Each socio-political movement is different; the situatedness in time, physical location, and the goals of the movement determine how participants should choose and implement various tactics for success. The BPP had limited and fleeting success through their survival programs, but there is no national data (or local for that matter) that clearly delineates the effects of the BPP's programming in regards to socio-economic welfare of the Black community. The Anti-ELAB movement has had one concrete success with the withdrawal of the ELAB from LegCo, however, there has not been much progress on the other four demands since October 2019.

Both movements have heavy emphasis on structure, though at opposite ends of the structure; the BPP's structure being rigid and para-militaristic and while the Anti-ELAB movement is completely flat and fluid. Through this project, I have concluded that a model similar to the Anti-ELAB movement with more balanced accountability measures could be beneficial for socio-political movements, especially those of a smaller scale than the Anti-ELAB movement. My reasoning as to why includes but is not limited to the following:

1. The old adage that two heads is better than one. Good ideas come from everywhere, and with a flat structure, everyone's ideas — good and bad — can be heard and assessed for viability.
2. This structure promotes Heidegger and Sartre brand of existentialism. People are asked to take “the crowd” and individuals within the crowds’ positionality into account with their decision making, as well as making choices for themselves based on their comfort and ability.

3. It reflects whatever reality that a movement needs. A flat structure can be seen as democratic or anarchic depending on what school of thought an individual subscribes to.

### *Further Research*

This being said, I believe that there is future research to be done not only on the long term effects of the Anti-ELAB movement on the transitional politics of Hong Kong and Mainland China leading up to the 2047 expiration of Hong Kong Basic Law, as well as the overall life of the Anti-ELAB movement. I'd also be interested to see the effects the COVID-19 pandemic has on the Anti-ELAB protests. What do the mass rallies and protests look like in a post pandemic world? Are less people showing up? Why or why not? Finally, I am interested to study what a movement with long term success looks like. What tactics were used and what are the similarities and differences between these success stories and case studies used in this project.



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