

improvements, especially in reducing work-related fatalities, accident-reduction gains have been harder to achieve in coalmining, construction, transport and fire-related incidents, according to Gao. Not surprisingly, the fatality quota system also reflected many of the characteristic problems – forms of data manipulation by local elites, coverups and other forms of cheating – found in other areas where TRS is employed.

In her final chapter, Gao describes changes introduced during the Xi Jinping era. In 2016, the fatality quota system was abandoned at the national level without explanation, perhaps to better account for the complexities of workplace safety issues not captured by quantitative approaches alone. The Xi government has brought the diverse agencies with workplace safety responsibility under the new Ministry of Emergency Management and, in keeping with Xi's thinking about the role of the Party in governance, Party officials at various levels are now expected to share additional responsibility with local state cadres and enterprise managers for creating safe workplace environments. With the development of China's "platform economy," Gao notes several new and ongoing challenges, including problems of work-related diseases, road deaths occasioned by e-commerce and the rapid growth of small delivery vehicles, and the growing problems of "death by overwork." The 2021 revision of the Work Safety Law (first introduced in 2002) reflects awareness of the changing workplace safety issues.

Gao's study is a useful contribution to understanding the practice of public administration in China and, more generally, the party-state's response to governance challenges. She concludes with reflections on how the case of work safety pertains to current debates about the resilience of China's political arrangements. But the study also contributes to our broader understanding of the significance of the Chinese case for the comparative study of worker safety and risk management. While China has increased its reliance on worker safety law and accident insurance in its repertoire of safety risk management, the dominant approach has been the development of a safety regime through administrative mechanisms backed by ideological appeals. These approaches have clearly produced results but, as noted, they are not without bureaucratic abuses. Notably absent in the Chinese case is a more complex ecosystem contributing to safety, including a vigorous investigative free press, greater respect for technical expertise in characterizing problems, genuinely autonomous labour organizations, a greater measure of political accountability and robust insurance schemes forcing more responsible economic management. One suspects that the creation of such a complex ecosystem will be necessary for future resilience. Whether the party-state can create it remains an open question.

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City on the Edge: Hong Kong under Chinese Rule

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Hong Kong's protest movement of 2019 was a landmark event. It involved the demise of liberalism without democracy at China's offshore, the playbook of contemporary social movements, and geopolitical tensions in Asia-Pacific. Many articles and books have been written on the event, and more will come. Ho-fung Hung's *City on the Edge* provides a solid framework and vivid analysis that uncovers the upheaval across time and space. Yet Hung's book goes beyond merely explaining



how the protests occurred and unfolded. It situates Hong Kong's momentous changes through the lens of the *longue durée* and the evolving phenomenon of Global China.

Citing Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Hung adopts a perspective from which structural and eventual analysis of social protests are regarded as not isolated, but congruent. He contends that "the ebbs and flows of autonomy and fortunes of the [autonomous] regions are not determined by local forces alone, but also by global economic and geopolitical shifts" (p. 15). The changes within and beyond the "city on the edge" are analysed from three aspects, forming the major pillars of his book: capital, empire and resistance.

In the section "Capital," Hung examines the economic structure under which Hong Kong, Chinese and foreign capital interact. Although Hong Kong's special status has brought fortunes to various state powers and capitalist classes for decades, the win-win playing field began to shift following the 2008 global financial crisis, China's perception of the West's decline, and intensifying US–China rivalry. When Chinese capital flooded in, the partnership between the party-state and local capitalist class, which had succeeded in keeping democracy at bay in the post-1997 era, became strained.

For Hung, the diminishing role of Hong Kong's mediatory position was not only preordained by the shift in the global political economy. It is also deeply rooted in the modern Chinese regime. In the section "Empire," Hung suggests that China has an ideational tendency to tighten its grip on its peripheral regions. The parallel developments in Tibet, Macau and Hong Kong confirm this tendency. While internal fragmentation among the central elite and the symbolic and materialistic functions of the autonomous entities often existed, they were circumscribed by this ideational path. Hence, although the party-state maintained self-restraint in the early post-handover years and at times offered tactical concessions in the face of strong pushback from the local business elite and civil society after the mass rallies in 2003 and 2012, its grand strategy of state-building and nation-building has only intensified in the long run.

Yet, the central state's intensified harmonization of the "edge city" has unintended consequences. Hung argues that it aroused "Resistance" – the radicalization of the democratic movement and the surge of identity politics since the 2010s. Unlike the veteran democrats, who had been committed to observing the boundaries of contention and resorted to an electoral playbook, the emerging localists were fatigued about authoritarian advancement, structural inequalities and delayed universal suffrage. While inter-group conflicts had disrupted the coordinated leadership of the opposition, "each protest created a network of activists, many of whom continued their activism and helped fuel the next movements, drawing in more and younger activists along the way" (p. 171). The youth actors' commitment further generated emotional resonance with the older generations, and among the working and middle classes. The prevalence of affective bonding sustained the protest movements in the 2010s and often translated into electoral gains. Through this account, Hung traces the repeated, spontaneous outbreak of Hong Kong's "uprisings" despite increased state coercion and the organizational weakness of the pro-democracy force.

Save for the path-altering efforts of intellectuals and activists, *City on the Edge* largely prioritizes the influences of structural forces. While Hung convincingly argues how and why Beijing's cultural-political harmonization of Hong Kong was inevitable, it is less clear what shapes its extent and pace. Chapter four indicates that the mainland and local elite lobbied the Hong Kong government to halt the extradition bill. Does this suggest differences between the Chinese state and private capital and the party-state's cost–benefit calculation of the residual utility of Hong Kong? Fung's analysis of the political economy and regime nature can well incorporate these new developments, yet in less deterministic ways. Similarly, the optimistic forecast regarding Hong Kong's exceptionalism in chapter ten drives one to infer that it was not merely the scale of the protest, but its ability to disrupt the power equilibrium in the special administrative region, that provoked Beijing to revamp the city's socio-political system. Had the Hong Kong government's attrition strategy in 2019 played out as in the 2014 Umbrella Movement, or had the pro-democracy force not doubled down on their efforts to seek control of the legislature, would the Beijing-imposed institutional overhaul be less dramatic?

Overall, *City on the Edge* presents a solid and powerful analysis of the forces and events behind one of the most defining moments in Hong Kong, China and global history. Engagingly written and theoretically informed, it caters to the needs of the scholarly community and general audience. Its attention to historical facts and methodological diversity also underlines how historians and social scientists can learn from each other in studying social movements.

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Two Systems, Two Countries: A Nationalist Guide to Hong Kong

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Two Systems, Two Countries: A Nationalist Guide to Hong Kong by Kevin Carrico is one of the most important English-language books written on post-handover Hong Kong. Over the past decade, the rise of Hong Kong nationalism has transformed Hong Kong and its relationship with China. Carrico offers a genuinely novel approach to understanding these dramatic changes by engaging seriously with ideas of Hong Kong independence, usually simply dismissed as an impossibility. Instead, he seeks to appreciate the appeal of such impossibility arguing it “demands a complete reassessment of our understanding of Hong Kong’s political reality” (p. 3).

Hong Kong’s new political reality and consequences for research after the promulgation of the national security law become chillingly apparent in the introduction. Notes on the author’s anthropological and textual methods are accompanied by the assurance to local contacts that all data reported are in the public record and cannot be mined by authorities for politicized prosecution. In the first chapter, “Hong Kong ethnogenesis,” Carrico examines the reasons for the post-1997 emergence of a Hong Kong nation through four theoretical frameworks. He points out the Sino-centric nature of a psychological approach, popular in the academic literature on Hong Kong nationalism, that believes in the pathological nature of Hong Kong identity. Instead, Carrico finds the idea of noncompliance cycles, originally used to analyse state–society relations in Maoist China, more useful to understand the rise of an ethnic identity due to state pressure. He is however clear that Hong Kong nationalism is more than just provocation; instead, “it is an awakening to the repressed reality of the impossibility of autonomy, democracy and freedom under Beijing’s rule” (p. 31). He subsequently turns to the writings of former academic Chin Wan, who challenges the potential role of the city in China’s democratization. This is complemented by the critique of the existing opposition by political commentator Lewis Loud. Both argue that Hong Kong is trapped in the unrealistic hopes of pan-democrats about democratizing China which deprioritizes Hong Kong and reinforces the hierarchical status quo. Hong Kong independence is thus “Hong Kong’s political enlightenment, casting aside the burdensome mythologies of the past to image a new path forward” (p. 33).

Carrico’s greatest service to the scholarly community is the in-depth and critical assessment of Hong Kong nationalism’s main schools of thought, treating the abundance of innovative ideas with the academic rigour and respect they deserve. In the second chapter, he meticulously outlines the evolution of Hong Kong nationalism from Chin Wan’s city-state theory to ideas of Hong Kong