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Title: Failing Better: Developing community engagement, resilience and resistance in the face of regime power, a structured dialogue session on Hongkongers’ anti-extradition protests through the lenses of action learning.

==== Abstract ====

"The people of Hong Kong made history recently when two millions of them gathered to peacefully protest against a legislative bill that would allow for extraditions to China for anyone residing in or visiting the city. If passed, this would destroy the legislative safeguard that allowed the city to function using the One Country, Two Systems formula.

For this structured dialogue session I plan to share what I have observed as well as participated in the grassroots resistance efforts, protests initiated by local Hongkongers in the backdrop of tightening control by China over the territory, and increasingly unrepresentational and unresponsive local government. As an overseas Hongkonger, I occupied an insider-outsider role vis-a-vis those who participated in the protests locally. Despite being disconnected in space, we feel strongly connected in feeling that this is Hong Kong's last stand.

In the session, I would draw attention to the growth of the "Hongkonger" identity, and how it functions as a community of practice that fosters the transnational and swift collaboration amongst local and overseas Hongkongers to instigate change in the run-up to the protests, and to keep people's morale up in the aftermath of the brutal police crackdown on 12th June.

There are parallels with AR processes in how the Hong Kong community has responded to governmental challenges. I will explore how the community have dealt with overt regime aggression as well as covert efforts to demoralise and disenfranchise Hongkongers from civic and political engagement, to reflect on what we have learnt as a people regarding communal resilience and resistance, using a number of AR lenses such as inter-level dynamics and the power of juxtaposition and of narratives. I will share some of the creative motifs from Hongkong that hold meaning and inspiration for local citizens, and discuss how bodily assertion in space helps support personal and collective autonomy when representational politics increasingly become a dead-end for a citizenry.

Through collaborative dialogue, I hope the session will create an opportunity to engage with international AR practitioners to critically reflect on Hongkongers' experiences above, and to identify possible courses as we continue to learn in action and create our own next steps as a protest community and as a people.

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