

# THEORIZING THE DYNAMICS OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

August 21, 2023

## Co-organizers:

The American Political Science Association  
The Southeast Asia Research Centre, City University of Hong Kong  
The Centre for Public Affairs and Law, City University of Hong Kong

**Venue:** LI 5405, Li Dak Sum Yip Yio Chin Academic Building

## Objectives

Much of the collective action literature is built upon a specific time and place. Theories and concepts born out of the American civil rights movement in the 1960s, for example, continue to influence how we think about recruitment, dynamics and outcomes of collective action. The rise of digital information technologies in the 2000s has contributed to developing another strand of literature emphasizing the digital networks connecting seemingly atomized individuals. However, the emergence and development of many socio-political conflicts in contemporary Asia do not always fall into these ideal types. In recent years, the subfields of conflict studies and social movements have also gathered more scholarly interest in the generalist political science journals and the APSA annual meetings.

This workshop seeks to bring together 18 Asia-based social scientists to (1) critically examine whether mainstream theories and concepts developed in a particular time and space apply to cases that we study and (2) explore ways in which we, as Asian scholars, studying East and Southeast Asian politics and society, can make novel contributions to theory development in collective action research. We hope this workshop will provide a venue where scholars think theoretically about their research projects and refine their theoretical contributions to the literature.

This is a closed-door, work-in-progress workshop. Participants are thus free to publish their articles in the venues they see fit. Yet, we can also explore the option of putting together a special issue in *Mobilization*, *Social Movement Studies* or *Government and Opposition* should the papers fall into a coherent theme and the panelists are interested.

## Theme

The workshop theme would be “Theorizing the Dynamics of Collective Action,” with theory development and conceptual innovation as a central goal. The following is a list of tentative questions that this workshop seeks to address:

- How did popular movements evolve in the past two years despite a general trend of democratic backsliding in the region?
- What accounts for the conflict processes that may go beyond the lens of psychological behavior, political processes, and organizational resources?
- How should we distinguish social movements from civic conflicts and insurgencies involving different goals, regime stability threats, and risks among the participants?
- While the Asian regimes remained resilient, did the mass and grassroots collective action bring about new forms of political behaviors and governance models?
- What are the similarities between the Asian movements and waves of digitally-enabled, anti-establishment activism elsewhere?
- What are the methodological tools or new data that can contextualize the phenomena in the region while making engaged dialogue with the mainstream literature?

### **Format**

This is an in-person workshop. We will devote 40 minutes each to each participant’s article-length manuscript, with 10-minute breaks after two sessions. We expect participants to read the papers before the workshop (**manuscript submission deadline: July 22**). Therefore, *there will be no research presentations; all 40 minutes will be spent on giving constructive feedback on the work we have already read.* We suggest both participants and discussants read ***at least two more papers (in addition to the assigned paper)*** and join the discussion, so that we can have a fruitful discussion for each session. Feedback should focus mostly on conceptualization and theory development, although empirical and methodological critique is encouraged.

We will invite 17 political scientists and one sociologists working on collective action in East and Southeast Asia. This will be a panelist-only workshop to foster academic dialogue and research publication.

## Schedule

### August 20 (Sunday)

18:00            **Welcome dinner** (Jasmine at Festival Walk)

### August 21 (Monday)

09:15 - 09:30    **Introduction**

09:30 - 10:10    **Session 1:**

Constructing Autonomy and Reconstructing Community: The Case of the DIY Movement Against Urban Development and the Domination of Large Capital Markets in Japan

Presenter: Kyoko Tominaga

Discussant: Stephan Ortmann

10:10 - 10:50    **Session 2:**

Colonial Redress and the Unintended Consequences of Global Opportunities

Presenter: Claudia Junghyun Kim

Discussant: Jai Kwan Jung

10:50 - 11:10    **Coffee Break**

11:10 - 11:50    **Session 3:**

Divide-and-Rule Backfires: Protest Group, Fragmentation, and Mobilization in China

Presenter: Kai Yang

Discussant: Pierre Landry

12:00 - 14:00    **Lunch** (Faculty Lounge @ CityU)

14:00 - 14:40    **Session 4:**

The Anti-Death Penalty Movement in Singapore: Mobilization, Challenges, and Prospects for Change

Presenter: Stephan Ortmann

Discussant: Elvin Ong

- 14:40 - 15:20    **Session 5:**  
Environmental and Climate Justice Activism in Indonesia  
Presenter: Dirk Tomsa                                 Discussant: Diego Fossati
- 15:20 - 15:40    **Coffee Break**
- 15:40 - 16:30    **Session 6:**  
Framing the Opposition: Why Protests against the Duterte Administration in the Philippines Could not be Sustained  
Presenter: Mark Thompson                                 Discussant: Meredith Weiss
- 16:30 - 17:10    **Session 7:**  
Resource Mobilization and the Emergence of Myanmar’s Anti-Coup Resistance Movement  
Presenter: Renaud Egreteau                                 Discussant: Samson Yuen
- 17:10 - 17:30    **Coffee Break**
- 17:30 - 18:10    **Session 8:**  
OppStruction: Opportunity Structure and its implications on the Pro-Democracy Movement in Thailand  
Presenter: Surachanee Sriyai                                 Discussant: Dongshu Liu
- 19:00 -21:00    **Dinner** (An Nam at Festival Walk)

### **List of Presenters**

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## List of Discussants

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