An interdisciplinary area studies literature review, integrating and harnessing insights across disciplines.

**Sociology**

- Social Movement Theory – ‘Grievances’ and the mobilisation of protest movements (Opp., 1988). Tear gas use framed as police brutality, a key mobilising grievance.
- Media representations and the entrainment of the protest movement, the trauma of seeing televised coverage of young protestors subjected to tear gas seen greater involvement and public anger in protest movements (Tzug, 2018).
- Hong Kong’s cultural identity under threat, beset by a “Culture and Politics of Disappearance” (Abbas, 1997) under Chinese sovereignty. Young Hong Kongers rally to defend perceived suppression of Hong Kong’s unique way of life.

**History**

- The genealogy of tear gas, a psychological weapon of war first deployed in WWI to erode soldiers’ sanity and to force a retreat from the trenches (Fischerlin, 2017).
- A colonial weapon deployed by the British empire in Ireland, India, Palestine and Hong Kong, 1967 to repress self-determination protests.
- Colonial policing practices, including the indiscriminate use of tear gas, essential in the parasitary policing approach of the Hong Kong Police Force deployed in 2019, a colonial legacy of the British Royal Hong Kong Police Force approach (Furback, 2019).
- ‘Atomiseum’ (Soeters, 2009) – A colonial weapon developments the air, rendering spaces as unlivable through the toxicity of the atmosphere and the breath. Hong Kong sites of protest made toxic by a poisoning of the air.
- ‘Elastic Geography’ (Weisman, 2007) – Tear gas dissolves spatial constraints on governance, allowing the deployer to discipline the protestors and the bystander indiscriminately as tear gas seeps into public and private spaces. 88% of Hong Kong citizens subjected directly and indirectly to tear gas (Pramo 2019). Hong Kong’s government’s diffused disciplinarity a form of ‘atmospheric governance’ (Niewenhuis, 2018).

**International Relations**

- Interdisciplinary engagement of literatures enables a novel research approach utilising a unique interdisciplinary, holistic conceptual framework that encourages the use of collaborative research methods, including historical and contemporary government document analysis, unstructured interviews and protest literature discourse analysis.

**Impact**

- Working across disciplines inspires creativity in the research design process, embedding the academic pursuit of the depth, and breadth of understanding necessary in recognising Hong Kong’s unique colonial history and geography and its influence on a contemporary protest movement.
- An interdisciplinary approach avoids narrow interpretations. Tear gas not just a ‘tool’ of modern policing in Hong Kong, but a psychological weapon with direct, emotive colonial connection. 2019 deployment evokes further accusations of a colonial Chinese government approach. Therefore, crucial context is lost in a non-interdisciplinary approach.

**An Interdisciplinary Area Studies Research Framework:**

State terrorism in Hong Kong: The use of tear gas inflates and entrenches the 2019-2020 protests.

The Hong Kong Police Force’s deployment of tear gas as a weapon with specific colonial connotations in Hong Kong (genealogy of tear gas in colonial policing), which weapons the air and suppresses protest in public spaces (‘Atomiseum’), served as an immediate grievance for protesters (Social Movement Theory) mobilising further public contention against police-brutality by state actors perceived as deploying terror-inducing violence (Colonial Terrorism Studies and State terrorism) in pursuit of political objectives on behalf of the Chinese government.

**Bibliography**

- A new analysis of the Hong Kong Protest Movement 2019-2020. Mass protests emerge in opposition to a line that would enable extradition to mainland China, a protest-police adversarial dynamic emerges after clashes in June 2019, running through to June 2020 and the introduction of a sweeping National Security Law that criminalises ‘suspicion, subversion, terrorism and collusion’ in Hong Kong.
- An area studies approach: Emphasis on building a deep, holistic understanding (Bromberg and Cloesens, 2016) of the Hong Kong protests 2019-2020, recognising the specificity of Hong Kong’s history, geography, politics and culture, working across numerous disciplinary literatures to develop an informed, specific conceptual framework to explore the role of tear gas in the entrenchment of the protests.
- Addressing the literature gap: Existing scholarship has comparing the 2019-2020 Hong Kong protest movement with similar regional and historical protest movements and focused on specific elements of the protests. However, there has been little scholarly engagement exploring the role of tear gas as a police tactic and its influence on the development of the 2019-2020 protest movement or any sustained theoretical applications exploring the impact of its use.