

## **RCCL Conference on “The Occupy Central Movement and Its Aftermath: An Interdisciplinary Study”, 18-19 September 2015**

— Pinky Choy

Universal suffrage of the Chief Executive in 2017 is a significant milestone in the constitutional development of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). However, the way to implement it has led to great controversies and an unprecedentedly serious political and social cleavage in the Hong Kong society. Worse still, the HKSAR Government’s first round of consultation and the NPCSC’s “8.31 Decision” even led to the emergence of the largest scale civil disobedience movement ever in the history of Hong Kong.

Commencing on 28 September 2014, the 79-days’ Occupy Central Movement (OCM), or the subsequently called “Umbrella Movement” not only aroused great concerns from people in Hong Kong, but also people from mainland China, as well as the international society. It is not only a local civil disobedience movement for Hong Kong, but also forms part of the citizens’ movement and democratization movement that have been happening all over the world in recent years.

While demanding for genuine universal suffrage was its original cause of initiation and its ultimate goal, the actual implications of the OCM, especially events happened during the course, go far beyond this, and extend to the legal, political, social and international spheres.

While the one year anniversary of the OCM is approaching, the Centre for Chinese and Comparative Law (RCCL) and the Asia Pacific Law Review (APLR) of the School of Law of City University of Hong Kong held a conference on 18-19 September 2015 to provide a platform of reflection on the implications of the OCM in different aspects.

This one and a half days’ conference was kicked off by the opening speeches of the Dean of the School of Law Prof. Geraint Howells and the Director of RCCL and one of the Co-Editors of APLR Prof. Lin Feng.

The whole conference was divided into five sessions, with each session discussing one particular issue relating to the OCM. Twelve speakers coming from Hong Kong, mainland China, Taiwan, Turkey and USA made their thought-provoking presentations at the conference, addressing the various implications of the OCM, including: its impacts on the

central-local relations, Hong Kong’s local politics, Hong Kong economy and policing, as well as the future democratic development of Hong Kong. The last session of the conference put the OCM in international and comparative context, discussing the OCM in Hong Kong, the Sunflower Movement in Taiwan, the “Occupy Gezi Park Movement” in Turkey and other civil disobedience movements that happened in other parts of the world in recent years and their implications on global democratic development.



Opening Speech delivered by Dean of School of Law, Prof. Geraint Howells.



Session 1 (left to right): Dr. CHEN Chia-Ming; Dr. Mark KIELSGARD; Mr. Benny Y.T. TAI



Session 2: (left to right): Prof. LIN Feng; Prof. ZHU Guobin; Dr. Stephan ORTMANN



Session 3 (left to right): Dr. Jeffrey MARTIN; Mr. Shubhankar DAM; Prof. HO Lok Sang



Session 4 (left to right): Mr. WANG Li-wan; Dr. WANG Shucheng; Prof. Jean-Pierre CABESTAN; Prof. Sonny LO



Session 5 (left to right): Prof. Thomas B. GOLD; Mr. PY LO; Dr. Fozia Nazir LONE; Dr. Resat Volkan GUNEL

Members of the School of Law showed strong support to this conference. In addition to Prof. Lin Feng who was the coordinator and one of the presenters of the conference, Dr. Fozia Nazir Lone and Dr. Peter Wang Shucheng also presented at the conference. Moreover, Mr. Shubhankar Dam, Dr. Mark Kielsgard and Prof. Zhu Guobin were invited to be the moderators of the conference.

One of the major issues that aroused heated debates among the speakers and participants was how to define civil disobedience and how to justify it under the rule of law, especially in the context of Hong Kong. This actually is also the most controversial issue surrounding the OCM in Hong Kong society. While no consensus could be reached over this issue, the constructive and rational academic debate among the conference participants laid the foundation for future study on the same topic.

The conference was closed with a closing speech by Prof. Lin Feng who thanked all the conference participants for their support of the conference, especially the overseas speakers who spared the time out of their already busy schedule to travel a long way to Hong Kong to share their insightful views at the conference.

While the OCM has ended, it marked the beginning of the development of civil consciousness among the Hong Kong people and a new era of civil disobedience for Hong Kong.

