

**EMOTIONAL POLITICS: THE EXPLORATION OF AN OCCUPY  
MOVEMENT IN HONG KONG**

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## **Abstract**

King-sau Ng, “Emotional Politics: The exploration of an Occupy movement in Hong Kong”

This thesis aims to explore the scale, duration, and intensity of the Umbrella Movement, which emerged in Hong Kong in 2014. Drawing from 60 in-depth interviews and related documentary analysis, this qualitative study examines why the participants decided to join a social movement that was defined by the government as illegal and how the movement maintained participants’ commitment so as to make it the longest-running and most intensive pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong history.

The thesis demonstrates that collective identity functioned as a precondition explaining the large scale of participation. The study also showed that the occupied zone acted as a free space in constructing a new protest identity, which explained the participants’ intensive and long-lasting commitment in joining the movement. As a free space with culture and values opposed to the dominant ideology, the occupied zones generated emotional and relational transformative impacts on the participants, which led to the creation of a new protest identity. Their newly created collective identity transcended their diverse backgrounds, and they perceived the engagement as a pleasurable experience. This emotional benefit, together with the intensive interaction within the occupied zone, led to the formation of strong affective ties among the participants, which became an asset of the movement.

My study demonstrates how the collective identity formed captured the emotional and spatial dimensions. It also enriches the analysis of the Occupy movements. This thesis argues that historical and cultural understanding of the occupied zones is undermined in most Occupy movement studies. Though the Umbrella Movement chose a financial hub as an occupied area, the reason was not to express opposition to economic inequality. Instead, it showed resistance to the policy of economic unification brought by decolonization. This thesis offers a new lens in understanding the symbolic meaning of free space created during the Occupy movement.

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## Foreword

Hong Kong has been under a wave of protests against the proposed extradition law since June 2019 when I had nearly completed this thesis. The Hong Kong government claimed that the proposal would ensure that the city would not be a haven for criminals. However, the proposal aroused public concern and opposition, for it may lead to the erosion of Hong Kong's judicial independence. In light of that, protests were carried out on many weekends, and the Chief Executive finally withdrew the proposal. The anti-extradition bill movement is a continuation of the Umbrella Movement. As Professor Benny Tai, one of the organizers of the Umbrella Movement, mentioned, though the Umbrella Movement failed to achieve political reform, it sowed the seeds for the emergence of the recent protests. The Umbrella Movement awakened the public's political consciousness, which contributed to the much broader participation in the recent protests (Wong, 2019). The Lennon Wall, one of the symbols created during the Umbrella Movement in the occupied zones, has been created in many city districts during the anti-extradition movement. Protesters made use of the Lennon Wall to express their message to the government and the public during the Umbrella Movement in order to maintain morale in the occupied zones, and this practice reappeared in 2019. The Lennon Wall has reappeared across different districts since millions of protesters demonstrated against the extradition law on 6 June 2019. Though the Umbrella Movement has ended, its impact continues to affect the democratic movement in present-day Hong Kong society.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Prologue: A Historic Moment

A large number of protestors gathered at Central, paralyzing the traffic in Hong Kong Island, and another round of firing of tear gas was started at 9 p.m. The police, who were protected by wearing helmets and shields, formed a chain and shot many rounds of tear gas to disperse the crowds when the protestors clashed with the police cordon line in Connaught Road. ... Though the police kept firing the tear gas, the protestors dispersed and gathered again. The police had started to use violence to disperse the crowds since the afternoon. At least 26 protestors were hurt and sent to hospital for treatment from 4 p.m. to 9:45 p.m. on 28 September. (Chen, 2014)

The above news excerpt showed that 5:58 p.m. on 28 September 2014 was a historic moment in Hong Kong as it was when the police started firing tear gas towards the protestors and eventually kicked off “the largest anti-government insurgency the city has seen” (Ng, 2016, p.11). Professor Benny Tai of the Occupy Trio<sup>1</sup> announced the launch of the campaign “Occupy Central with Love and Peace” at 1:40 a.m. outside the

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<sup>1</sup> Professor Benny Tai is a middle-aged law professor at the University of Hong Kong. In addition to his teaching duties, he focuses on human rights campaigns. He served as legal counsel to the Democratic Party when he was young (Ng, 2016). He was joined by Professor Chan Kin Man, an associate professor in the Department of Sociology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and the Reverend Mr. Chu Yiu-ming, the minister of the Baptist Church in Hong Kong. They formed the Occupy Trio and led a coalition called “Occupy Central with Love and Peace” to fight for universal suffrage in Hong Kong.

Tamar Government Headquarters,<sup>2</sup> and then crowds of supporters gathered at Admiralty<sup>3</sup> subway station to show their support for the movement after dawn. The police fired the first shot of tear gas to disperse the protestors at 5:58 p.m. There were eighty-seven canisters of tear gas fired at Admiralty within two hours, many of them near the protestors. Since the unarmed protestors used umbrellas to shield themselves from the potential pain of tear gas and pepper spray, the umbrella became the symbol of the movement, and the public named the movement the Umbrella Movement.

Protests turned heated after the police used pepper spray and tear gas to disperse the crowds. The brutal suppression by the police pushed a greater number of citizens to come to the streets. The firing of tear gas pushed tens of thousands of citizens to rush to Admiralty to support the protestors (Ng, 2016). The occupation soon spread from Admiralty to another two districts, Mongkok<sup>4</sup> and Causeway Bay.<sup>5</sup> The seventy-nine-day occupation started then. Around one thousand protestors were arrested

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<sup>2</sup> Tamar refers to an area in Admiralty located in Hong Kong Island. It is where Hong Kong's Legislative Council and Central Government Offices and the Office of the Chief Executive of Hong Kong are located.

<sup>3</sup> Admiralty (Harcourt Road): "the area stretched along Harcourt Road and Connaught Road, bordered by Pedder Street to the west, Arsenal Street to the east, Queensway to the south and Lung Wo Road to the north" (Ng, 2016, p.160).

<sup>4</sup> Mongkok (Nathan Road): "took the shao of a cross formed by the intersecting Nathan Road and Argyle Street. It took up a half dozen city blocks on Nathan Road between Mongkok Road to the north and Shantung Street to south, and four blocks of Argyle Street between Shanghai Street to the west and Tung Choi Street to the east" (Ng, 2016, p.161).

<sup>5</sup> Causeway Bay (Yee Wo Street): "took up a small section of Hennessy Road and Yee Wo Street in Causeway Bay, between Percival Street to the west and Sugar Street to the east" (Ng, 2016, p.164).

during the occupation. It was estimated that more than 1,200,000<sup>6</sup> citizens joined the movement. The Umbrella Movement received intensive media attention both locally and internationally, which had not been seen since the Handover in 1997. International leaders, including the then US President Barack Obama, British Prime Minister David Cameron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, also showed personal support for the movement because the movement concerned the democratization of leadership elections. The Umbrella Movement drew public attention because it “belonged to a rare subset of social movements characterized by unanticipated emergence, large-scale and intensive participation, and deep and far-reaching consequences” (He, 2019, p.3). In a nutshell, the Umbrella Movement was unprecedented in Hong Kong society in terms of its scale, intensity, and duration, which led to the main focus of the present study, i.e. to explore and explain the scale, intensity, and duration of the movement.

The Umbrella Movement can also be regarded as part of the Occupy movements that have happened around the world since 2011 as they shared certain similarities. Most of the literature has focused mainly on those that emerged in Western and Middle Eastern countries. As such, the present study is worthwhile as studying an Occupy movement in Chinese society can help us better understand the wave of Occupy movements globally.

## **1.2 Research Question**

My study aims to explain the scale, duration, and intensity of the Umbrella Movement. The Umbrella Movement was a unique social movement in Hong Kong in terms of its scale, duration, and intensity. Scale refers to the number of participants;

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<sup>6</sup> The survey was conducted by the Public Opinion Programme, The University of Hong Kong, and published on Ming Pao (posted on 10 November 2014).

<http://hkupop.hku.hk/chinese/report/mpCEnOCCw7/index.html>.

intensity refers to the level of commitment; duration refers to the length of time that participants engaged in collective action. The Umbrella Movement demonstrated a unique feature in the above three dimensions compared to past protests in Hong Kong. The Umbrella Movement was the largest-scale protest in Hong Kong history, with participants from all parts of life, including different age groups, classes, genders, occupations, and religious backgrounds, while previous collective actions mostly comprised university students and politicians. In terms of intensity, the participation was much more committed than past protests. The past protests usually took the form of one-day marches, and participants usually took a passive role during the demonstration. The level of commitment in the Umbrella Movement was much more intensive as the participants took an active role in constructing the protest culture. The duration of the Umbrella Movement was seventy-nine days, which was the longest-running movement in Hong Kong history, and it then transformed into another form of resistance. In conclusion, the Occupy movement was a significant social upheaval in Hong Kong.

The explanation of the scale, duration, and intensity of this unique social movement is the main focus of this research. Many observers expected the movement to fail. Several reasons can be mentioned. First, illegality was one of the key features of this movement. As Professor Benny Tai mentioned in the press conference announcing the details of the campaign, “the participants should resolve to accept going to jail” and “there will be a price to pay” (But, 2013). The then Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying claimed that the Occupy movement was “an unlawful action” and “the government was resolutely opposed to the Occupy Central movement” (Cheung, Zhao & Wan, 2014). The Beijing

government also denounced the movement as illegal.<sup>7</sup> The aspect of illegality raised the cost of participation, which was reflected in the organizers' statements. The Occupy Trio had already made it clear that the participants would be charged with "obstructing, inconveniencing or endangering a person or vehicle in a public place" (OCLP, 2013). In blocking the road, the protestors may be guilty of "unlawful assembly" or "unauthorized assembly" under the Public Order Ordinance. This is the spirit of the Occupy movement, as breaking the law is the crucial element of a civil disobedience movement. In light of the above, the spirit of self-sacrifice was needed in participating in the campaign as the occupiers had to face the risk of going into jail. As such, it could hinder the citizens' motivation for joining the movement, as "a criminal record was far too high a price to pay for political ideals, considering that it would almost certainly bar them from applying for student visas to study abroad or landing a government job at home" (Ng, 2016, p.62). The possibility of arrest can be regarded as a kind of repression<sup>8</sup> by the authorities that may hinder people from joining the movement, which was well documented in the literature (e.g. Earl, 2003, 2004, 2011; Stockdill, 1996). The legal consequences may increase the cost of participation and hence discourage people from social engagement. Repression by

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<sup>7</sup> The State Council's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office claimed that "the central government firmly opposed all illegal activities that could undermine the rule of law and jeopardise social order" (Cheung, Zhao & Wan, 2014). A *People's Daily* front-page editorial argued that the occupy movements "were illegal and hurting Hong Kong's rule of law, warning of 'unimaginable consequences' if the protests continued" (Yuen, 2015, p.50).

<sup>8</sup> Generally, repression refers to "repressive actions directed at individuals and groups based on their current or potential participation in noninstitutional efforts for social, cultural, or political change" (Earl, 2011, p.262). It takes different forms, including harassing and intimidating activists, physical assault, arrest, and imprisonment of movement participants (Stockdill, 1996).

countermovement forces may also hinder the development of social movements (Earl, 2004).

In the Umbrella Movement, the participants encountered repression from the anti-Occupy forces, which had formed to confront the Umbrella Movement since its outbreak. They applied blue ribbons as their symbol in opposition to the yellow ribbons adopted by the Umbrella Movement.<sup>9</sup> The anti-Occupy movement forces were composed of several organizations, including the Alliance for Peace and Democracy, the Voice of Loving Hong Kong, Caring Hong Kong Power, the Police Support Association, and the Justice League. These organizations supported the authorities. The anti-Occupy movement forces created pressures on participants who joined the movement. For instance, they set up a hotline for the public to report schools to parent-teacher associations and the Education Bureau for follow-up and would also publicize the names of schools that joined the class boycotts, which were regarded as part of the Umbrella Movement (*Global Times*, 2014). The organizers of the Umbrella Movement therefore estimated that the number of people joining the movement would be limited under the attack of such repressive force.

Second, it has been argued that people tend to join a protest if they can anticipate success, i.e. having a sense of cognitive liberation (McAdam, 1982). There is a greater chance to recruit more members if protest organizers can give the hope or belief that something can be changed through the protest (Jasper, 1997). However, for the Umbrella Movement, the chance of success was limited due to the national context, as the Beijing government had already interpreted the Basic Law to deny the right of universal suffrage

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<sup>9</sup> “Hong Kong is Bracing Itself for More Anti-occupy Violence” 2014 *Time*. Posted on 4 October.



in the 8/31 Framework about the election of the Chief Executive in 2017.<sup>10</sup> Under such background, Hong Kong people could expect that the chance for success was minimal, which should have further drawn people away from joining the movement. In facing such a situation, Professor Benny Tai showed his lack of confidence in the eventual turnout and claimed that “the campaign had less than a 50% chance of success and that he would be lucky to attract a few thousand participants.” Professor Chan Kin-man, another movement organizer, even expected a lower than 5% chance of success (Ng, 2016, p.63). In light of that, the movement was expected to fail in gaining public support. However, unexpectedly, the movement became a very significant social upheaval in Hong Kong. The present study focuses on how we explain the scale, intensity, and duration of the Umbrella Movement in facing the risk of legal consequences as well as having a minimal chance of success. I analyze these questions using a cultural approach because of its suitability for dealing with this research question, especially through discussion of the concepts of collective identities, framing, emotion, and space.

### **1.3 Research Significance**

First, I hope that the present thesis can contribute to the understanding of the global wave of the Occupy movement and its specificities in Asia. A series of Occupy movements have emerged around the world since 2011, inspired by the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia in late 2010. The uprising exploded when a twenty-six-year-old street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi immolated himself on 17 December 2010 in protest against the deteriorating socio-economic situation and rampant police corruption in Tunisia. The uprising was soon followed by a series of social upheavals in various Middle

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<sup>10</sup> The 8/31 Framework refers to the Chinese government’s framework announced on 31 August 2014 regarding the Hong Kong Chief Executive Election in 2017.

Eastern countries (Ali & Macharia, 2013; Flesher Fominaya, 2015; Gonzalez-Bailon, Borge-Holthoefer & Moreno, 2013). The uprising not only emerged in the Middle East but also exploded in Europe, North America, and Asia since 2011, namely the 15M movements in Spain, the Occupy Wall Street Movement in the United States, the Sunflower Movement in Taiwan, and the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong (Aldas & Murphy, 2013; Brissette, 2013). The emergence of this global wave of protest attracted academic attention, and the study of these protests was well documented in the literature. However, most research focused on those in Western and Middle Eastern countries and less on those in Asian regions (Dufour, Nez & Ancelovici, 2016).

The Occupy movements emerging across the globe are argued as a symbol for a paradigm shift voicing the need to bring political economy back into movement analysis (Tejerina et al., 2013). Numerous Western studies echo the above idea that the legitimization crisis of the global economy played a crucial role in arousing the agitation that led to the breakout of a series of Occupy movements (Breau, 2014; Costanza-Chock, 2012; Dellacioppa, 2013; Flesher Fominaya, 2015; Hamed Hosseini, 2013; Masquelier, 2013; van der Veen, 2013; Widmaier, 2014). Occupy movements were regarded as an opposition force against the economic injustice caused by the global financial policy based on the principle of neoliberalism (Brissette, 2013; Tremayne, 2014). For instance, Foran claims that there is an increasing awareness of the “glaring contradictions of neoliberal capitalist globalization” as the problem of social inequality caused by global economic development is becoming much more serious (cited in Flesher Fominaya, 2014, p.186). Kellner (2013) believed that the breakout of Arab Uprisings and other Occupy movements in the US, Spain, Greece, and other European societies in 2011 “witnessed a series of challenges to neoliberalism on a global scale” (p.251). The Occupy movement in the US “put a spotlight on income inequality in the US and the world” as there is a “skewed wealth distribution, with the top 1% owning 35% of the wealth in the USA and

top 20% controlling 85%” (Domhoff, 2006, p.122). The same explanation also applies to the 15M demonstration in Spain, which Anduiza, Cristancho and Sabucedo (2014) argued was “clearly shaped by the worldwide economic crisis, which had dramatic social and economic implications in Spain” (p.751).

It is widely believed that Occupy is an “anti-system” movement that “questions and problematizes structures and relationships of inequality and power” (Aldas & Murphy, 2013, p.33). This is why most Occupy movements chose to occupy the key financial and commercial centres in main cities (Anduiza, Cristancho & Sabucedo, 2014). However, the above studies on Occupy movements are not comprehensive as they missed the cases in Chinese society, such as the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong. Therefore, I hope that the present dissertation on the Umbrella Movement can enrich the studies on Occupy movements.

Second, the present study aims to contribute to the wider literature on social movement theories, especially the role of collective identity in social movement studies. It is found that identity has played a crucial role in social movements in the past twenty-five years (Klandermans, Toorn & Stekelenburg, 2008; Reger, Myers, & Einwohner, 2008; Breines, 1989; Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Cohen, 1985; Connolly, 1991; Berezin, 2001; Somers, 1992; Melucci, 1989; Taylor & Whitter, 1992; Klandermans & de Weerd 2000). Scholars such as Melucci (1989), Taylor and Whitter (1992), Klandermans (1997), and Gamson (1999) have contributed to the exploration of the role of collective identity in protest behaviour since the 1990s. Studies also showed that biography is crucial in understanding protest engagement for it acted as a filter influencing how a person unconsciously perceives his or her identity, point of view, judgment, or feelings (Auyero, 2015). There is also a tendency in most social movement studies to focus on the life histories of movement leaders; as Jasper (1997) claimed, “we usually stop with those views and decisions that are most influential, those who are

leaders in some formal and informal way, and we only make inferences about the biographical makeup of other participants” (p.55). As such, the present study will analyze the participation of ordinary people in order to enrich the discussion of collective identity in social movement studies.

Finally, the present study contributes to the development of social movement studies, especially to the understanding of Occupy movements. A series of Occupy movements have emerged in different countries since 2011 and have attracted academic attention. Though the study of these social movements is well documented in the literature, it has mainly focused on studies in Western and Middle Eastern countries and less on those in Asian regions. Therefore, I hope that the present study will contribute to the understanding of the global wave of Occupy movements by focusing on the one that emerged in Hong Kong.

#### **1.4 Layout of the Thesis**

Following the introductory chapter, Chapter 2 outlines the literature review and theoretical framework of this study. It starts with the introduction to the theoretical traditions of social movement studies, including discussion of key structural perspectives in the explanation of social movements, such as resource mobilization theory and the political opportunity approach. It then explores the cultural explanation of this area. A literature review on Occupy movement studies then follows. The chapter concludes with an introduction to the theoretical framework of this study, which includes the adoption of collective identity for explanation of the scale, duration, and intensity of the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong.

Chapter 3 lays out the methodological design of this study. Qualitative research methods (including in-depth interview and documentary analysis) are adopted for this thesis in order to have in-depth exploration of the Umbrella Movement. This chapter will

introduce the background profiles of the interviewees, the interview guidelines, and the documentaries adopted for analysis.

Chapters 4 to 7 present the research findings. In contrast to arguments in the literature that stress structural and rationalistic factors (Gamson, 1975; McCarthy & Zald, 1973; McAdam, 1982; Tarrow, 1989) to explain the scale, intensity, and duration of critical social movements events, this thesis contends that these explanations are insufficient to understand the emergence, intensity, and sustainability of the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong. Collective identity was crucial in three key ways: 1) it functioned as the precondition in attracting people to join the movement; 2) it generated positive emotion in intensifying the movement; and 3) it became a by-product of the movement that accounted for the prolonged participation. Of particular importance was the role of affective connections and shared practices in communal space, which led to the development of a movement culture based on resistance to the authority. The collective identity constructed by the movement was a “resistant” collective identity. This not only enriches our understanding of the global wave of Occupy movements by contributing an in-depth empirical case study on one of the influential movements in East Asia, which are understudied in the literature, but more broadly contributes to the field of social movement studies by highlighting the role of emotionally and spatially based collective identity in explaining the duration, intensity, and scale of the Occupy movement.

Chapter 4 will outline the history and socio-cultural context of Hong Kong where the Umbrella Movement was situated. The colonial and decolonization process of Hong Kong before and after the handover from Britain to Mainland China will be discussed in the chapter. The history of social movements that aimed to fight for democracy in Hong Kong will also be introduced. The Occupy movements around the globe and the background of the Occupy movement in Hong Kong will then be provided.

Chapter 5 will explain why the movement attracted so many participants. It mainly discusses how the movement was framed as a campaign to fight for justice, which impacted the public's cognitive understanding of the movement. It will then explore how the framing aroused people's moral outrage and led them to join the movement. The chapter will also discuss how critical events triggered activating emotions among the participants. The relationship between biography and moral outrage will be the key focus in this section.

Chapter 6 focuses on the explanation of the intensity of the movement. It discusses how the protest identity was built in the occupied zones. It first discusses the formation of free spaces during the occupation and then explains how this free space contributed to the construction of collective identity in different ways. It will also discuss how the free space led to transformative emotional and relational impacts among the participants. Following that will be a discussion of the close relationship between collective identity formation and the space. This chapter mainly focuses on explaining how the collective identity led to the creation of emotional benefits that maintained the high-level commitment of the participants.

Chapter 7 explains how the movement maintained sustainability. The chapter discusses how the specific interactional culture created among participants generated strong affective bonding. It then further explores how the affective bonding generated instrumental benefits and led to the transformation of the movement.

Chapter 8 is the concluding chapter of this study. It will first summarize the findings of the study and then discuss the contribution of this thesis to the literature on social movement studies. A section reflecting on the study will also be included.

## **Chapter 2      Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the literature review and theoretical framework of this study. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the present study aims to explore the scale, duration, and intensity of the Umbrella Movement through the analysis of several cultural elements, including collective identity, emotions, frame alignment, and space, and therefore this chapter will introduce the literature review on social movement studies, especially those related to the above concepts. It first starts with an introduction to the theoretical traditions of social movement studies, especially discussion of key structural perspectives (mainly resource mobilization theory and the political opportunity approach). Limitations of the structural approach in explaining the scale, duration, and intensity of the Umbrella Movement will be identified. It will then turn to the discussion of the cultural approach for explanation. A literature review on Occupy movement studies will also be included. At the end of this chapter, the theoretical framework of this study will be introduced.

### **2.2 Collective Identities: Framing, Emotion and Space**

Sociologists have focused on the study of social movements since the 1930s in which collective behaviour was regarded as irrational and explanations of collective behaviour hence were reduced to abnormal psychology (Travaglino, 2014).<sup>11</sup> Some scholars, such as Harold Blumer and Olson Mancur, started to question in the 1960s whether collective behaviour was really coming from aberrant behaviour. Blumer's (1971) study argued that collective action should be understood as purposive,

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<sup>11</sup> Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, and Herbert Blumer were the key founders of this school.

Under this school, collective behaviour was treated as spontaneous eruption coming from mob-like behaviour (Chesters & Welsh, 2011).

meaningful, and potentially creative action capable of introducing new norms, behaviours, and skills among participants. Olson's (1971) study also challenged the argument that collective behaviour is spontaneous and irrational action because its participation involves risk and cost (e.g. investment of time and resources). He proposed that collective behaviour is a rational action with calculation of cost and benefits. Olson's argument provided great insight into the study of social movements as it forced academia to consider the benefit and cost calculation in which people engaged before joining a protest.

Therefore, the analysis of organizational structure that enables the mobilization of resources and encourages participation in collective actions gained attention in subsequent studies (Travaglino, 2014). This led to the development of two influential schools of social movement studies focusing on the organizational and societal levels of analysis, namely resource mobilization theory<sup>12</sup> and the political opportunity approach. The former stressed the discussion of organizational elements that led to a social movement while the latter emphasized the study of the broader political context of social protests (Travaglino, 2014). Resource mobilization theory puts focus on the importance of the social movement's formal institution, the calculation of costs and expected benefits,

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<sup>12</sup> Resource mobilization theory originated in the United States and regards collective movements as an extension of the conventional form of political action while putting emphasis on the importance of rational and strategic components of seemingly irrational phenomena (Della Porta & Diani, 1999). John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, Anthony Oberschall, and Charles Tilly were the key founders of this approach.



the ability to consolidate networks,<sup>13</sup> and the presence of resources<sup>14</sup> (Crossley, 2002; Krinsky & Crossley, 2014; Anduiza, Cristancho & Sabucedo, 2014). More specifically, the establishment of formal organization capacity is one of the crucial factors in successful mobilization, and organization with formal structure tends to be more effective in mobilization management, which eventually increases the success rate of the movement in terms of mobilization and visibility. Also, more people will join the movement if the cost of participation is lower than the expected benefit (McCarthy & Zald, 1977).<sup>15</sup> The political opportunity model<sup>16</sup> emphasizes the relationship between the emergence of a social movement and the political opportunity structure.<sup>17</sup> More specially, the emergence of a social movement depends on the degree of openness (or

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<sup>13</sup> Some argued that networks played an influential role in bringing out social movements according to this approach (Krinsky & Crossley, 2014; Anduiza, Cristancho & Sabucedo, 2014). For instance, Oberschall observed that many movements grew out of pre-established networks, communities and organizations, and that movement formation will be exceptionally popular among tightly networked groups (Chesters & Welsh, 2011).

<sup>14</sup> It is divided into two forms, namely material resources (e.g. money, services and work) and non-material resources (e.g. faith, friendship, culture, ideology, and moral engagement).

<sup>15</sup> It is assumed that the agents of collective action have full information about the circumstances and hence can make the calculation of cost and benefits before taking action (Crossley, 2002).

<sup>16</sup> The political opportunity model also originated in the United States. Its key founders include Doug McDam, Dirk Eisinger, and Sidney Tarrow.

<sup>17</sup> Tarrow (1998) conceptualized political structures in two dimensions: opportunities and constraints. Political opportunities refer to the political chance of encouraging people to engage in contentious politics while political constraint refers to authorities' capacity to exert repression that discourages contention (Crossley, 2002).

closed-ness) of a local political system, including the degree of openness or closed-ness of formal political access, the degree of stability or instability of political alignments, the availability and strategic posture of potential allies, and political conflicts between and within elites (Della Porta & Diani, 1999).<sup>18</sup> In this approach, strong organization leadership is one of the key factors in the success of mobilization in order to challenge the existing authority. The success of a movement also depends on the conduciveness of the political system: whether the political system is open to the claims of social movements and whether it offers opportunities for mobilization (Della Porta & Diani, 1999; Crossley, 2002; Klandermans, Kriesi & Tarrow, 1998; Travaglino, 2014).

Though the above two perspectives were well established, they may not be adequate to explain the significance of the Umbrella Movement. Both perspectives emphasize the structural factors in explaining the success of the movement, i.e. organizational structure and leadership as well as the structure of the political system. With strong leadership and formalized organization and also a favourable political context, mobilization tends to be successful. However, the Umbrella Movement was mainly directed by rank-and-file participants with weak leadership. Despite the fact that the Occupy movement was initiated by the Occupy Trio and then led by the student leaders, the leadership role started to decline after the formation of the Occupy zone. In addition, the political system was unfavourable for the occupiers to make any social change due to the national context, as the Beijing government had already interpreted the Basic Law to deny the right of universal suffrage in the 8/31 Framework. Under such background, Hong Kong people can expect that the chance for success is minimal which should further draw them back from joining the movement. The significance of the Umbrella Movement should be

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<sup>18</sup> These approaches became the hegemonic paradigm among social movement analysts until the 1990s (Goodwin & Jasper, 2004; Klandermans, 1984; Kriesi, 1989).

therefore limited under the weak leadership and unfavourable political contexts. The resource mobilization theory argued that a movement tends to be successful if the opportunity cost of participation is much lower than the expected benefit. In the case of the Umbrella Movement, it is an illegal civil disobedience movement in which participants will be regarded as joining illegal activity and may be put into jail. The legal consequences of joining the movement were clearly stated in the webpage of Occupy Central with Love and Peace:

Those participating in civil disobedience are going to challenge the injustices in the law or the system by means of a restricted scope of unlawful conducts and will bear the legal consequences of their unlawful conducts. This is to demonstrate the commitment of Hong Kong citizens to fight for universal suffrage even in the face of bearing legal liabilities, as well as to galvanize the rest of the society. (OCLP, 2013)

As such, the cost of participation was high, which should have discouraged people from joining the protest. However, it turned out that the result was the opposite. Therefore, resource mobilization theory and the political opportunity approach may not be able to account for the significance of this social upheaval.

Since the above structural approaches may not be adequate to explain the significance of the Umbrella Movement, the present study turns to the cultural approach for explanation. The cultural approach has been ignored since the dominance of the resource mobilization and political opportunity perspectives. The resource mobilization and political opportunity approaches “have privileged the political, organizational, and network/structural aspects of social movements while giving the more cultural or ideational dimensions of collective action short shrift” (McAdam, 1997, p.473). This privileging leads to ignorance of the cultural approach as the ideas stressed by the cultural

approach (e.g. emotion, identities, shared beliefs, and ideologies) were regarded as irrational and pathological (Lang & Lang, 1961; Smelser, 1962; McAdam, 1997). However, we have witnessed an important “cultural turn” in recent social movement studies, which has emerged as an alternative perspective to explain the emergence of social movements in the past twenty years with the rise of the European new social movement perspective<sup>19</sup> (Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2001b; Johnston & Klandermans, 1995; Jasper 1997; Eyerman & Jamison, 1991; Melucci, 1989, 1996; McAdam, 1997). Jasper (1997) suggested the importance of the cultural turn in social movement studies by arguing:

Students of social movements have rediscovered the importance of culture. They have begun to write about the social construction of grievances and worldviews. They have described the social-psychological identity formation of activists, often through critiques of rationalist and mobilization approaches. They have refocused their attention on the role of ideas and ideologies in political action. And they have pushed the idea of culture beyond static cognitive grids and into modes of action. European theorists of post-industrial movements, as their works were translated into English in the 1980s, helped to inspire American researchers to

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<sup>19</sup> This approach used to study a cluster of social movements that emerged after the 1970s, for instance, the peace movement, environmentalist movement, feminist movement, animal rights movement, ethnic minority movement, anti-psychiatry movement, anti-nuclear movement, and gay and lesbian movement. Movements that emerged before the 1970s related to struggles raised by workers and the issues were around the debate brought by capitalism, such as the labour movement. For new social movements, the actors involved and the issues being politicized were different. (della Porta & Diani, 1999, p.13).

rethink their commitments to mobilization and process approaches by rediscovering culture. (p.69)

It is argued that the grievances functioned as a common emotional linkage among potential participants that motivated them to join the protest to fight for the common interest in the Occupy movement in Hong Kong.

The rise of new social movements implied a paradigm shift from working-class mobilization to mobilization concerned with ideological and value consensus, such as the peace, environmentalist, feminist, animal rights, ethnic minority, anti-psychiatry, anti-nuclear, and gay and lesbian movements. These movements were no longer rooted in the class structure, but rather in other statuses, e.g. race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, or citizenship (Crossley, 2002; Buechler, 1995; Eder, 1993; Kriesi, 1989; Offe, 1985; Hunt, Benford & Snow, 1994; Johnston & Gusfield, 1994; Klandermans, 1997; Melucci, 1989, 1996; Stoecker, 1995; Chester & Welsh, 2011; Cohen, 1985; Klandermans, Kriesi & Tarrow, 1988). It is widely believed that the new middle class has predominantly replaced the old class (working class) to be the main activists (Offe, 1985; della Porta & Diani, 1999). Thus, some argued that the centrality of postmaterialism is their defining hallmark in distinguishing them from “old” social movements because they concern culture, power and identity rather than material conditions (Inglehart, 1990). Rather than seeking power, control, or economic gain, postmaterialist movements are more inclined to seek autonomy and democratization (Rucht, 1988; Johnston & Gusfield, 1994; Whittier, 1995).

The key focus of new social movements is on humanistic, cultural and social concerns rather than material concerns. These movements were not seeking material gain but “reclaiming the individual’s identity, and the right to determine his or her private and affective life” as well as resisting “the expansion of political-administrative intervention

in daily life and defend personal autonomy” (della Porta & Diani, 1999, p.13). As a result, new social movement theorists tend to look to other sources of identity as agents of collective action, which include ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, instead of relations of production as the definers of collective identity (Buechler, 1995). The activists of new social movements tend to fight for “recognition for new identities and lifestyles” instead of seeking political and economic concessions from institutions (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p.286).

Since then, collective identity has been used to fill the gaps in the resource mobilization and political opportunity approaches to explain the emergence and tactical choices of social movements (Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Travaglino, 2014). Polletta and Jasper (2001) pinpointed that the contribution of collective identity lies in tackling questions which may not be answered by structural approaches. First, collective identity explained the formation of collective interest through situating the formation of collective identity under the macrohistorical context where the movement emerged. Second, it accounted for why people are motivated to act through capturing the pleasures and obligations of movement participation. Third, it explained the selection of movement tactics. Fourth, collective identity is better at capturing the cultural effects of movement impacts. In short, collective identity played an important role in four phases of mobilization, which include the creation of collective claim, recruitment into social movements, strategic and tactical decision-making, and movement outcomes.

Studies have shown that shared collective identity is significant in attracting people to join a movement. For instance, Bernstein (1997) suggested that collective identity offers a sense of empowerment for participants to enable them to believe that the action is feasible. She argued that a certain kind of collective identity is needed to transform individual interest to group interest and individual action to group action. In drawing people to a common identity, framing is required. Social movement groups bring

disparate individuals together through frames, which effectively distinguish who belongs (and who does not belong) to the community. Collective identity also embeds emotional dimensions. As Polletta and Jasper (2001) said, collective identity embeds positive feelings for other members of the group. This affective bonding may explain why people's commitment to social movement engagement as "collective identity" is "shorthand for the affective connections one has to members of a group that oblige one to protest along with or on behalf of them" (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p.209). Jasper (1998) stressed the importance of emotion in forming identity:

Emotions do not merely accompany our deepest desires and satisfactions, they constitute them, permeating our ideas, identities, and interests. They are, in Collins' words (1990, p.28), the "glue" of solidarity—and what mobilizes conflicts. (p.176)

Emotions play a key role in forming participant identity and are also an important element in mobilizing activists (Melucci, 1995; Tejerina et al., 2013; Stein, 2001; Morgen, 1995). According to social identity theory, people acquire part of their identity from belonging to different groups, together with the value and emotional significance attached to those memberships (Likki, 2014; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The discussion of emotions and identity formed a subfield in sociology called the "politics of feelings" (Melucci, 1995; Taylor, 1996; Taylor & Whittier, 1995; Tejerina et al., 2013; Jasper, 1998; Calhoun, 2001). Within the cultural approach, scholars have emphasized the importance of "emotion" in social movement studies since the 1990s (e.g. Jasper, 1997, 1998; Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2000, 2001b; Taylor & Rupp, 2002; Bosco, 2006; Flesher Fominaya, 2007). The analysis of emotion was overlooked or devalued under the resource mobilization theory and the political opportunity perspective. One of the reasons for the devaluation of "emotionality" is because emotion is always associated with

irrationality that reflects an individual's psychological problems (Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Milburn & Conrad, 1996; Abelson et al., 1982; Ottati & Wyer, 1993; Groves 2001, Lamont & Fournier, 1992; Crane, 1994; Zerubavel, 1998; Smelser, 1962). Numerous sociologists took up the struggle to bring emotion back in order to have a better analysis of social movements at the end of the twentieth century as a challenge to or amendment of the conventional structural approaches (Collins, 1990; Kemper, 1978; Goodwin & Pfaff, 2001). With the efforts of a number of scholars, such as Barbalet (1998), Ekman (1999), Flam (2005), Flesher Fominaya (2007), Jasper (1997, 1998, 2011), Lakoff (2008), Polletta (2006), and Westen (2007) since the late 1990s, the study of emotion in the field of social movement has gained attention. For instance, Flesher Fominaya's study (2007) demonstrated the importance of a sense of humour in sustaining a movement. She suggested that emotion could be presented as a movement strategy, which is especially important to autonomous social groups that lack resources and a strong identity. As she mentioned,

Paying attention to humour and to emotions in general can help explain the emergence and trajectories of social movement groups, particularly those not easily explained using structural or cognitive theoretical approaches. (Flesher Fominaya, 2007, p.257)

Besides, emotion is claimed to be changeable and is significant to the growth and unfolding of social movements (Kane, 2001; Flam, 1990a, 1990b; Hirschman, 1982). For instance, Woods et al. (2012) suggested the concept of a "ladder of emotions" in order to explain how emotions are transformed into different types and exert influence on the different stages of mobilization. Thus, it has been argued that emotion not merely contributes to the explanation of the origin and spread of a social movement, but also to



the continuation or decline of the movement (Goodwin, 1997; Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2001b; Eyerman, 2005; Lofland, 1996). For example, Gould (2003) argued

that attention to emotions generates a new landscape for social movement research that attends to causal mechanisms inclusive of, but also distinct from, political opportunities. A focus on emotions proliferates questions about emergence and decline but also about other movement processes that are currently understudied. Such a focus also encourages investigations of human behavior that are not bound by rational actor assumptions, providing greater insight into people's motivations for participating in movements. (p.157)

Based on the above arguments, emotions can be used to explain movement cycles, including emergence and decline

To Woods et al. (2012), emotions are not merely “an alternative explanation for protest mobilization, but they are inseparably a part of the politics of protest” (p.582). It should come as no surprise that emotions, both positive and negative, are inseparable from social interactions (Elster, 1989; Bosco, 2006; Brown & Pickerill, 2009; Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2001a; Gruszczynska, 2009; Jasper, 1998; Taylor & Rupp, 2002; Wilkinson, 2009; Aminzade & McAdam, 2002; de Volo, 2006; Flam & King, 2005; Herzog & Golden, 2009; Norgaard, 2006; Wright, 2009). As such, emotion is crucial in social movement studies.

Space is also crucial in analyzing the significance of social mobilization. As Cattan and Vanolo (2013) suggested, the source of emotions comes from somewhere outside of the body, such as settings, contexts, and places where relations occur. Casey (2001) argued, “there is no place without self and no self without place” (p.684). Woods et al. (2012) hold a similar belief that “studies started to pay attention to ‘document how the emotionality of protest movements is entwined with their spatiality’” (p.568). To Lofland

(1995), “places have symbolic meanings. Some places are more permeated with historical and emotional memories than others and therefore may better ‘express’ the movement than others” (p.203). As such, it is widely believed that activists are strategic in deciding the place to stage actions. Most of the time, collective action emerges in places that are rich in symbolic meaning so that it is easier to “build the proper kind of emotions among participants and the public” (Flam, 2005, p.84). The analysis of space is especially significant to the Occupy movement that emerged recently because the occupation of space is a common practice for Occupy movements, e.g. the 15M Occupy Movement (Spanish Indignados) and the occupation of Madres de Plaza de Mayo Movement in Argentina (Perugorria & Tejerina, 2013; Bosco, 2006).

The above literature review showed that the cultural elements, including collective identity, framing, emotion, and space, are important in analyzing social movement mobilization; therefore, these concepts will be adopted to tackle the research question of the present study. The theoretical framework of this thesis developed from the above literature review will be demonstrated in the following sections.

## **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.3.1 *Collective identity as a precondition of mobilization***

Scholars have tended to investigate the explanatory power of cultural components in order have a more comprehensive understanding of why people engage in social movements, which includes the collection of ideas, values, symbols, meanings, identity, emotions, beliefs, space, and so on (Williams & Alexander, 1994). The present study will also adopt cultural approaches, especially the concept of collective identity, to explain the scale, duration, and intensity of the Umbrella Movement. Luhtakallio and Tavory (2018) pinpointed that “collective identity has become one of the key concepts in analyzing

social movements” (p.152). It has become commonplace in the sociology of mobilization and social movements to note that “identity” is an important aspect of the construction of movements: why people join them, how they find meaning within them, and why they do not leave (Melucci, 1989, 1995; Stryker, Owens & White, 2000; Polletta & Jasper, 2001; della Porta & Diani, 2006). I will briefly introduce the definition of collective identity and then elaborate on the framework I am going to use to explain the scale, duration, and intensity of the movement.

Sociology regards identity as a social construction process (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Moscovici, 1981). Polletta and Jasper (2001) define collective identity as an “individual’s cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution.” It is a “perception of a shared status or relation, which may be imagined rather than experienced directly, ... collective identity carries with it positive feelings for other members of the group” (p.285). The above definition implies that the concept of collective identity includes three dimensions: cognitive, emotional, and relational. More specifically, identity does not refer to an autonomous object but rather to a process in which the person is aware of, and recognizes themselves as part of wider social groups and then develops an emotional attachment to them (Melucci, 1989, 1996; Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2001b; della Porta & Diani 2006). The grouping may not be based on particular social traits, such as gender, class, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, but on common values, lifestyles, attitudes, worldviews, and experiences (della Porta & Diani, 2006).

I propose that the connections of the cognitive, emotional, and relational dimensions of collective identity contributed to explaining the significance of the Umbrella Movement. I will first make use of the concept of collective identity and related concepts to account for the scale of the movement, i.e. why the Umbrella Movement attracted so many participants. It is widely believed that collective identity is a key facilitator of

participation motivations and as such, a sense of collective identity is treated as a condition for collective action (Friedman & McAdam, 1992, Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Zhou & Wang, 2018; della Porta, 2008). Discussion of collective identity in a social movement mainly focuses on the networks of active relationships between the activists who interact, communicate and influence each other in order to share the same cognitive definition concerning ends, means, and field of actions (MacKinnon & Langford, 1994; Aminzade & McAdam, 2002; Bosco, 2006; de Volo, 2006; Flam & King, 2005; Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2001b; Herzog & Golden, 2009; Jasper, 1998; Norgaard, 2006; Wright, 2009). To put it differently, collective identity “refers to the (often implicitly) agreed upon definition of membership, boundaries, and activities for the group” (Johnston, Larana & Gusfield, 1997, p.282). With the process of interaction and negotiation, a group of people cultivate a shared concern with the orientations of the action and the field of opportunities and constraints when the action is live. “By this process of interaction, negotiation and conflict over the definition of the situation, and the movement’s reference frame, members construct the collective ‘we’” (Johnston, Larana & Gusfield, 1997, p.282). In order to generate a shared cognitive understanding of the movement, framing is required. The following section demonstrates my proposed framework on how framing created a shared cognitive understanding of the movement that attracted people’s engagement.

Collective identity helps to explain why people join a social movement by producing a common frame between the activists and the public concerning the orientations of their actions (Melucci, 1995, 1996). Studies have demonstrated that activists can adopt framing as an effective strategy in social movement mobilization (Snow et al., 1986; Snow & Benford, 1988; Tarrow, 1992). It is argued that frames are more likely to be accepted if they fit well with the beliefs of potential recruits, involve empirically credible claims, and are compatible with the life experiences of the audience (Snow et al., 1986). Through frame alignment (i.e. the process of drawing a link between individual interests,

values, and beliefs on the one hand and social movement activities, goals, and ideology on the other hand), protests group, organizers, and potential participants can share the same definition of a social problem and have the same prescription to solve the problem (Snow et al., 1986, p.464). Snow and Benford (1988) distinguished three successive types of framing necessary for successful recruitment: (1) diagnostic framing, which identifies a problem to be addressed and attributes blame and causality; (2) prognostic framing, which offers a solution to the problem and proposes a target, strategic, tactics for action as well as targets of change; and (3) motivational framing, which provides a rationale for action through convincing people that change is possible and that their participation will make a difference.

Through framing, two types of mobilization may be encouraged, namely consensus mobilization and action mobilization. Consensus mobilization refers to efforts on drawing support for a movement's viewpoint, while action mobilization is aimed at motivating people to actually participate (Klandermans, 1984). Past literature on framing studies pointed out that the creation of an injustice frame is efficient in social mobilization, for it may lead to the generation of moral outrages that push people to join a social action. It refers to a way of viewing a situation or condition that expresses indignation or outrage over a perceived injustice, as well as finding some human agency to blame for the transgression (Jasper, 1998; Gamson, 1992; Gruszczynska 2009; Wilkinson 2009; Bosco 2006). Under such situations, the passion for justice is fuelled by anger over existing injustice and hence may help accelerate mobilization. For instance, Allahyari's (2001) study found that the volunteers framed participation in charity organizations as a moral serving, i.e. the creation of oneself as more virtuous and more spiritual. Also, such personal virtue was extended beyond the everyday work of caring for the homeless and into the realm of political action, which may have motivated participation in civic associations (Jasper, 1998). Berker (1963) coined such participants

(or volunteers) as “moral entrepreneurs” who crusaded for the creation and enforcement of organizational structure and rules consistent with their vision of how to best help the poor: “moral crusaders typically want to help those beneath them to achieve a better status” (cited in Franzese, 2014, p.96). The above studies showed how the creation of an injustice frame contributed to social movement mobilization (Gruszczyńska, 2009; Wilkinson, 2009; Bosco, 2006). Similarly, I will investigate how the Umbrella Movement activists framed the movement to fit well with the beliefs of potential recruits.

### ***2.3.2 Cognitive and emotional liberation***

In addition to framing, emotion will be adopted in explaining the scale of the Umbrella Movement, as collective identity also refers to “affective connections one has to members of a group that oblige one to protest along with or on behalf of them (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p.290). Melucci (1995) stressed that “a certain degree of emotional investment, which enables individuals to feel like part of a community unity, is required in the definition of a collective identity” (p.45) and Tejerina et al. (2013) mentioned that “gaining an identity, individually or collectively, is an interpersonal process that involves emotions” (p.386). Collective identity in a social movement is a process of networks of active relationships between the activists who share the same cognitive definition of the ends, means, and field of action (MacKinnon & Langford, 1994; Aminzade & McAdam, 2002; Bosco, 2006; de Volo, 2006; Flam & King, 2005; Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2001a; Herzog & Golden, 2009; Jasper, 1998; Norgaard, 2006; Wright, 2009).

A person’s reaction to a piece of information regarding whether it is an important issue that needs immediate response may be connected with one’s emotional attachment to the group. This is what Smith (1996) refers to as “subjective engageability” (p.167). For instance, Christians and Jews were particularly subjectively engageable for social movements due to their religious identity. Through religious training, they tend to

emphasize peace, justice, and political engagement as essential expressions of religious commitment. These traditions gave the religious community a greater sense that a response to the situation in Central America was compelling. Studies showed that people tend to join a protest on behalf of a group if they have a greater degree of identification with that group (Van Zomeren et al., 2004; Cobbina et al., 2019).

Past literature also demonstrated that the development of strong cementing emotion with movement leaders or organizations could enhance the motivation to join a social protest (Smith-Lovin, 1989; MacKinnon & Langford, 1994; Lively & Heise, 2004). Cementing emotions refer to emotions that help bind people and social relations, such as gratitude and loyalty (Flam, 2005; Hirschman, 1982; Hochschild, 1993). More specifically, it refers to

more permanent feelings of the type normally labelled affect or sentiment: love for one's family and other selected individuals; a sense of identification with a group and loyalty to its members; fondness for places and objects, perhaps based on memories; positive responses to symbols of various kinds; and negative versions of each of these. (Jasper, 2009, p.178)

For instance, trust and respect as “affective loyalties” (i.e. tending to have faith in someone) that serve as cementing emotions affect political action. If a person has affective loyalties towards the government, he or she will then believe that the government will solve a problem for the people. As a result, social protest may not emerge (Berezin, 2001). In other words, people will then tend to be “immunized” from social movements. Therefore, motivating a collective action means “pulling people out of their routine trust in the authorities and out of their assumption that the authorities work for public good and hence deserve their loyalties” (Kearl, 1995, p.11). To put it differently, cementing emotion attached to movement organizations or leaders can serve

as a strategy for mobilization, as studies showed that the more one identifies with a group involved in protest activity, the more likely one is to take part in that activity on behalf of that group (Jasper, 1998; Simon, 1999; Simon et al., 1998; Van Zomeren et al., 2004; Likki, 2014).

Some studies found that certain emotions can serve as cementing emotions that bind the participants and movement organization and attract them to join the movement. For example, a feeling of hope (i.e. an expectation of a better status in the future) is believed to be a positive emotion that motivates collective action (Jasper, 1998). A feeling of compassion or sympathy (i.e. a sense of feeling that one can understand the suffering of others and will be willing to help) can also function as a glue that binds movement activists together despite geographical and cultural divides (Bosco, 2006; Routledge, Cumbers & Nativel, 2007; Pieck, 2013). In other words, if a person experiences a cementing emotion (e.g. gratitude) with the movement organization, it will shape the commitment between the participant and activists, which can encourage protest mobilization (Hochschild, 1993; Clark, 1997). Some people may join a social action not because of feeling hopeful towards the movement organization but rather because they feel hopeful about a single person. Certain persons take up the role of leader as a result of their ability to link people who were previously unconnected, and such leaders are called symbolic leaders. In other words, they are effective brokers and have more influence over others. Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela are examples of symbolic leaders who embodied aspirations and could inspire others, which is the source of charisma (Goodwin & Jasper, 2009). The presence of symbolic leaders can help kick off a movement, as they tend to bring hope (i.e. an expectation of a better status in the future) for social change. In connection with the above discussion, the presence of cementing emotion will affect the scale of the movement. Therefore, as I will show, cementing



emotions existed between the participants and the movement organization or the authorities and affected the significance of the Umbrella Movement.

Apart from the cultivation of cementing emotion between participants and movement leaders, the generation of emotional liberation can also enhance the scale of participation (McAdam, 1982; Touraine, 1995; Benski & Langman, 2013). As Flam (2005) puts it, emotional liberation refers to the process of detaching the loyalties and other positive emotions from the authorities or institutions to which they were hitherto attached. In order to accelerate mobilization, the individual should be able to problematize reality and recognize the opportunities for social change (Touraine, 1995; Benski & Langman, 2013; Flam, 2005; Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2001b; Flam & King, 2005). Framing the situation as a problem is a precondition for recruiting potential members to get involved in a social protest, as it may lead to a crisis of legitimacy over the government (Vanderford, 1989). Crisis of legitimacy (such as the government failing to provide conditions for economic growth or security and social services to the citizens) is also one of the key factors in triggering the loss of trust in the authorities, which in turn motivates people to join social movements that aim for social change and the transformation of society (Jasper, 1997).

Many studies have demonstrated that the breakout of critical emotional events may accelerate the generation of emotional liberation (Yang, 2005; Abrams, 1982). Critical emotional events refer to events that morally shock or emotionally move people to action; such an event is also regarded as an emotionally intense event (Zolberg, 1972). For instance, the student movement in China in 1989 demonstrated the changing patterns of emotion over fifty days in which three emotional events were critical in shaping the changes. The first event was the Xinhua incident, which was a bloody student-police confrontation; the second was the student demonstration on 27 April that drew public support; the last was the hunger strike initiated by students that posed as a self-sacrificing

gesture in the hope of arousing compassion and sympathy among the public. Each of the above events changed the dynamics of the movement (Yang, 2005). Understanding the cultural and political backgrounds may be needed in order to understand how critical emotional events led to social mobilization. For example, an understanding of Chinese political culture is required in order to understand why people were emotionally moved in the Xinhua incident (Flam & King, 2005). Based on Chinese political culture, ordinary citizens are expected to show courage and heroism by changing how the authorities act; however, students were rejected by the authorities when they requested a meeting to express their opinion, which in turn made them feel shamed (Odgen et al., 1992). The government's failure to respond to the public's outpourings of emotion provoked widespread indignation and hence caused a higher level of protest, which spread to all major cities in China. In a nutshell, the three critical emotional events brought challengers, opponents, and audience into heightened relationships that intensified the movement.

Moreover, a critical emotional event serves an important role in explaining the scale, duration, and intensity of a movement because it usually generates moral outrage, which serves as an initiating emotion to encourage people to take part in social action. Literature suggests that certain kinds of emotions such as moral outrage, fear, sympathy, guilt and anger serve as initiating emotions, which help generate a group's awareness of a shared focus. I will show that similar critical emotional events happened in the Umbrella Movement that may have affected its scale, duration, and intensity. Among different kinds of initiating emotion, moral outrage received the most attention (Mackie, Devos & Smith, 2000; Montada & Schneider, 1989; Van Zomeren et al., 2004; Likki, 2014). Moral outrage refers to the indignation generated when there is a perception that the moral standard has been violated or challenged (especially the standard of fairness or justice) (Batson et al., 2007; Likki, 2014). Past literature demonstrated that moral outrage played

key roles especially in accelerating high-risk mobilization, such as motivating participants to travel to the war zones of Nicaragua to deter violence in the Central American peace movement in the 1980s (Nepstad & Smith, 2001), to illegally harbour Central American refugees within the US (Crittenden, 1988; Lorentzen, 1991), and to join mass campaigns of civil disobedience (Hannon, 1991; Smith, 1996). Since these actions may incur prison sentences, injury, and even death, a passionate commitment to the goals of the movement is needed to motivate participants to join the actions (Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2001a).

In order to arouse moral outrage, a moral shock is needed (Jasper, 1997, 2011; Jasper & Poulsen, 1995). Jasper (1998) defines a moral shock as “an unexpected event or piece of information [that] arises such a sense of outrage in a person that she becomes inclined toward political action for such information or event helps a person think about his or her basic values and how the world diverges from them in some important way” (p.409). Most of the time, activists use visual media to arouse moral shock (Jasper, 1998). As moral shock usually occurs when there is perceived infraction of moral values, investigation of the details of the local moral order or local systems of rights and obligations and values is important in the study of emotion (Harre, 1986; Jasper, 1998). Past literature showed that moral shock tended to motivate people to pay attention or even join a social protest. Such a strategy is common for animal rights, peace, anti-abolitionist, and anti-racist movements in recruiting new members (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995; Jasper, 2011).

Moral shock and moral outrage may generate a powerful motivation for action if there is someone to blame for the injustice because it generates villains (Gamson, 1992; Jasper, 1998). For instance, the study of pro-choice and anti-abortion movements found that identifying concrete and specific adversaries as well as characterizing the enemy in an entirely negative light could enhance protesters’ outrage and sense of threat

(Vanderford, 1989). Anger will come afterwards if someone is blamed for causing the threat (Gamson, 1992; Jasper, 1998). While anger is another important stimulant of protest participation (Likki, 2014; Van Zomeren et al., 2004; Klandermans, van der Toorn & van Stekelenburg, 2008), Flam (2005) argued that “anger at the opponent is to replace the hitherto felt self-destructive, immobilizing feelings of vulnerability, guilt and shame” (p.26). Therefore, as I will argue, moral shock or outrage played a key role in prompting people to join the Umbrella Movement.

In short, I will argue that collective identity functioned as a precondition for attracting so many people to join the movement. The organizers cultivated shared cognitive framing about the nature of the movement among the participants in which the social action was regarded as a movement to fight for justice. This framing also leads to a sense of emotional bonding between the participants and movement leaders. Besides, framing the movement as an action to fight for justice also leads to the generation of moral outrage among the participants regarding the suppression of the movement by the authorities.

After the kicking off of the movement, the formation of occupied zones played a significant role in explaining the intensity and duration of the movement. Della Porta (2008) suggested that protest itself could lead to cognitive, affective, and relational transformative impacts on participants:

Through protest events, new tactics are experimented with, signals about possibility of collective action are sent, feelings of solidarity are created, organizational networks are consolidated, and sometimes public outrage at repression is developed. (della Porta, 2008, p.27)

She used the concept of the degree of eventfulness to describe the different levels of transformative impacts of protest on participants. She stressed that the collective

experience developed during the interaction with different individuals during protests may lead to different levels of transformative impacts. She called these impacts the “byproduct” of protest itself (della Porta, 2008, p.4). I propose that the occupied zones formed in the Umbrella Movement may have functioned as a free space that generated specific kinds of transformative impacts for participants regarding their protest identity, which may have intensified and prolonged their engagement in the movement. As mentioned, collective identity is a dynamic and open-ended process and “the content of collective identity comprises not only statements about what the group is about, but also its common practices,” and this nature “particularly can be seen in the case for prefigurative movements which are more focused on building alternative communities and for whom their way of doing things is instrumental to their sense of who they are” (Kavada, 2015, pp.874-875). As part of broader Occupy movements around the globe, the Umbrella Movement also demonstrated the feature of occupation of public space along with building an alternative community within the space (Juris, 2012). Past literature showed the dynamic relationship between collective identity construction and creation of public space:

collective identity develops within a figured world ... a realm of interpretation and action generated by the participants of a movement through their shared activities and commitments that imagines the terrain of struggle, the powers of opponents, and the possibilities of a changed world. (Jonason, 2019, p.693)

For the Occupy movement, the occupied area functioned as a prefigurative politics where the participants made use of the area to construct an alternative community, as has been well documented. Breines (1989) calls “prefigurative politics” an attempt “to create and sustain within the live practice of the movement, relationships and political forms

that ‘prefigure’ and embody the desired society” (p.6). For instance, Flack (1988) described the impact on participants through the creation of prefigurative politics:

that the people are capable of and ought to be making their own history, that the making of history ought to be integrated with everyday life, that all social arrangements that perpetuate separation of history making from daily life can and must be replaced by frameworks that permit routine access and participation by all in the decisions that affect their lives.” (p.7)

Gamson (1999) also showed that a sense of agency and empowerment was generated, for the vision of democratic participation offered a chance for participants to challenge the practices that failed. Participants became agents of change through the creation of an alternative community. The free space with prefigurative politics not only leads to emotional transformation but also to relational transformation because, as Gamson (1999) pinpointed, “the relationships and forms are egalitarian, nonhierarchical, and mutually supportive” (p.48). Therefore, I propose that the free space created during the Umbrella Movement may function as an arena where new protest identity may be constructed through the specific interaction between the participants during the occupation, which may explain the intensity and duration of the movement.

### ***2.3.3 Identity work: Creation of protest identity***

Gamson (1999) emphasized the importance of collective identity construction in maintaining the commitment of participation when he stated: “any movement that hopes to sustain commitment over a period of time must make the construction of a collective identity one of its most central tasks” (p.28). Identity work is crucial to sustaining solidarity and commitment. Taylor and Whittier (1992) discussed how boundary-setting rituals and institutions that separate challengers from the authorities can strengthen

collective identity, which helps strengthen solidarity. The occupied zone of the Occupy movement may function as public space or free space, which enables the creation of or strengthens internal movement identities through the establishment of specific movement culture. The free space refers to an arena where people can construct and develop counterhegemonic ideas and oppositional identities. The arena can perform such functions because it is away from physical coercion and ideological control by those in power (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). Identity work takes different forms.

Cultivation of group pride among the participants is also a form of identity work that strengthens participants' commitment towards the movement (Lichterman, 1996; Breines, 1989; Epstein, 1991). For instance, a sense of empowerment or agency will be created through the upholding of a vision of democratic participation among the participants during the social movement engagement (Flacks, 1988). Breines (1989) called the vision of the activists to create their own internal operations "prefigurative politics" (p.6). She describes it as an attempt "to create and sustain within the live practice of the movement, relationships and political forms that 'prefigure' and embody the desired society" (Breines, 1989, p.6). This experience of empowerment helps produce a sense of agency and long-term commitment (Gamson, 1999). As I will argue, free space was formed in the movement and a new protest identity was constructed that in turn intensified the movement.

Previous studies also demonstrated that positive emotion helps transform passive citizens into defiant demonstrators (Woods et al., 2012). For example, Wood (2001) explored Salvadoran peasant movements and found that the participants experienced a deepening pride and pleasure, which motivated them to commit themselves to the high-risk movement. The peasants joined a series of social movements against long-standing patterns of political and economic exclusion despite brutal repression by state security forces. They were motivated by the assertion of pride, dignity, pleasure, and

defiance, which were the emotional benefits they gained throughout the movement. Pride can replace demobilizing feelings (e.g. shame or guilt) in order to mobilize people to join a movement, and such feelings can help overcome fear as well (Flam, 2005). Jasper (2009) stressed how emotion contributed to the movement mobilization:

Some of the emotions generated within a social movement—called reciprocal—concern participants’ ongoing feelings toward each other. These are the close, affective ties of friendship, love, solidarity, and loyalty, and the more specific emotions they give rise to. Together they create what Goodwin (1997) calls the “libidinal economy” of a movement, yielding many of the pleasures of protest, including erotic pleasures. (p.182)

Consequently, the present study will explore whether similar positive emotional benefits contribute to the significance of the Umbrella movement.

Besides, past literature showed that rituals can lead to the creation of emotional energy which makes a person feels stronger and pumped up with enthusiasm and confidence, in turn intensifying the movement (Durkheim, 1912; Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2001). Collins (2001, 2004) stressed that shared emotional energy would be created when a group of people gather and develop a common focus and are also aware of their mutual focus. Collins’ idea of emotion was developed from Durkheim’s (2008) discussion of collective effervescence or emotional energy, which emphasized that emotions are created through interactions that lead to a common focus on certain issues and stronger social connection (Latif et al., 2018). Thus, ritual played an important role in formulating identity toward a social group and generation of positive emotions (Young, 2001).

It has been proved that rituals (together with symbols) are collective means of emotional communication which help in formalizing shared feelings, enhancing



solidarity, and binding participants more closely to the shared purpose (Barker, 2001; Durkheim, 1912; Kane, 2001). Emotions are one of the products of collective action, especially internal rituals (Jasper, 1998). Ritual can be presented as a form of embodiment with sensuous, aesthetic qualities, drawing people into collective performances where bodies are meaningfully active together (Strathern & Stewart, 1998). Thus, rituals are social processes that create symbolic meaning in order to establish the routines, social conventions, and moral order that make for social integration (Buechler, 2011; Bellah, 2005). To Bellah (2005), “ritual pulls us out of our egoistic pursuit of our own interests and creates the possibility of a social world” (p.194). Bell (1992) claimed the richer a movement’s culture—with more rituals, songs, folktales, heroes, denunciation of enemies, and so on—the greater these pleasures. Singing and dancing are two activities often found in rituals, providing the requisite emotional charge through music, coordinated physical activity, and bodily contact (McNeill, 1995). Singing was especially important to the civil rights movement (Morris, 1984). Lyrics such as “We shall overcome” lent biblical authority to the campaign with specific references to fundamental beliefs and narratives (Watters, 1971). Therefore, the present study will also pay attention to the rites developed within the free space and investigate how these rites explain the intensity of the movement.

#### ***2.3.4 Relational transformation and sustainability of movement***

Collective identity also contributes to the explanation of social movement. As Flesher Fominaya (2010) suggested, “collective identity formation is important because it plays a crucial role in sustaining movements over time” (p.377). Past literature showed that a new collective identity might be invented during a protest, which may prolong the mobilization (Fantasia, 1988; Polletta & Jasper, 2001). The formation process can be created through social interaction during the mobilization in a top-down manner as well

as from the bottom up (Postmes, Haslam & Swaab, 2005; McGarty et al., 2014). Studies showed that identity would be formed when value consensualization occurs between a group of people through on-going sharing and communication of their personal values or points of view (Postmes, Haslam & Swaab, 2005; Reicher, 1984; Gamson, 1999). The newly invented collective identity may lead to relational changes based on trust, loyalty, and affection (Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2000). Melucci (1996) called this interactive process a “network of active relationships” (p.71).

I propose that the invention of a new identity may have happened in the Umbrella Movement because a free space was created during the occupation, offering an arena for the communication and sharing of values and views and even for building on their desired social relations. Past studies have already demonstrated the above relationships. For instance, della Porta (2008) claimed some protest events have the capacity to produce relations by facilitating communication as well as affective ties. Gamson’s (1999) study also demonstrated how identity building and social relationships practised during the movement fostered long-term commitment among the participants. The relational transformation also implied emotional transformation. For instance, Breines (1989) showed how the New Left movement of the 1960s generated desired relationships that were embodied in the concept of beloved community with a sort of relationship that was “more direct, more total and more personal than the formal, abstract and instrumental relationships characterizing stage and society” (pp.6-7). Gamson (1999) also demonstrated how social relationships that “express ideas of empowerment and community help produce a sense of agency and long-term commitment (p.49).

The above echoes the idea that emotion is not static as it can transform into different types during different stages of a movement in order to accelerate mobilization, and hence it leads to a distinction of starting and reciprocal emotion. Social movements are affected by transitory and context-specific emotions in which some are starting emotions,

which are formed before joining the movement, while some emotions may be created or reinforced in collective action itself, which are called reciprocal emotions (Jasper, 1998; Klandermans, van der Toorn & van Stekelenburg, 2008; Woods et al., 2012; Lively & Heise, 2004; Scheff, 1999; Romanos, 2014). Both starting and reciprocal emotions are crucial in social movement studies:

As an integral part of all social action, affective and reactive emotions enter into protest activities at every stage. Some help explain why individuals join protest events or groups, ranging from emotional responses they can have as individuals to those that recruiters can stir in them. Others are generated during protest activities, including both affective ties among fellow members and feelings towards institutions, people, and practices outside the movement and its constituent groups. These affect whether a movement continues or declines, and when. In all stages, there are both pre-existing affects and shorter-term emotional responses to events, discoveries, and decisions. (Jasper, 2009, p.180)

The outrage triggered by critical emotional events is one of the common initiating emotions that push people to join a movement. When a person starts to join a movement, new forms of emotions can be generated, i.e. the reciprocal emotions. Eyerman (2005) argues that “emotional responses can move individuals to protest and to contend and, once in motion, social movements can create, organize, direct and channel collective emotion in particular directions, at particular targets” (p.42). Woods et al. (2012) created the term “ladder of emotion” to describe the different emotions generated at different stages of a movement (p.567).

The creation of emotion during a movement is supported by many studies. Past literature demonstrated that different kinds of emotions would be generated at different stages of a movement, which helps explain the movement’s duration and intensity (Jasper,

1998; Klandermans, van der Toorn & van Stekelenburg, 2008; Woods et al., 2012; Lively & Heise, 2004; Scheff, 1999; Romanos, 2014). For instance, Kemper (2001) argued that a sense of grievance could act as the starting step for mobilizing a protest, while shame can be transformed from an avoidance-oriented emotion to an approach-oriented emotion. As argued by Lewis (1971), shame can be understood as a sense of hostility against the self that causes individuals to feel vulnerable; however, shame can also be transformed into outrage through articulation by movement leaders. As such, activists may re-appropriate this sense of shame and re-direct it against their opponents, and then people who are shamed may turn to shaming and expressing contempt for the enemy (Flam, 2005; Berger, 1997; Kemper, 1981; Scott, 1990).

Such starting and reciprocal emotions are crucial to the Occupy movements across the world. For instance, outrage or indignation formed a stepping stone for mobilization at the beginning of the 15M Occupy movement (Spanish Indignados) in which collective identity was formed then outrage was replaced by collective enthusiasm and joy generated by the copresence of the activists when the movement was in motion, as people felt empowered. They moved from powerlessness to being powerful, from isolation and competition to being together, to discovering the other as an accomplice, and from cynicism to “we can change things.” The above process generates a very strong emotion, which further accelerates mobilization (Perugorria & Tejerina, 2013, p.433). Pleasure will be generated when people are with others who share the same emotion. If emotional benefit can be generated, participants will insist on participation in a movement or even have more intensive participation.

This study will also discuss space because there is a strong relationship between emotion and space in social movement studies. The relationship between emotion and space is particularly important to the Occupy movement, as “encampment” (i.e. occupation of the public sphere) is the key feature of the movement (Brissette, 2013,

p.224). This wave of global protest in many countries involved a common feature of protesters occupying public squares that were strategically chosen to show the movement's core grievances about the global financial system (Donovan, 2019; Tejerina et al., 2013). The activists tended to respond to the global economic crisis by using encampment to "visualize who they are and what they stand for" (Brissette, 2013, p.224). As such, the analysis of the space occupied by the activists during the Umbrella Movement will be included to account for the significance of the movement.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

In contrast to arguments in the literature that stress the structural and rationalistic factors (Gamson, 1975; McCarthy & Zald, 1973; McAdam, 1982; Tarrow, 1989) in explaining the scale, duration, and intensity of critical social movement events, this thesis contends that these explanations are insufficient to understand the success of the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong. The resource mobilization theory argued that a movement tends to be successful if the opportunity cost of participation is much lower than the expected benefit. In the case of the Umbrella Movement, the movement was an illegal civil disobedience movement in which participants would be regarded as joining illegal activity and could be put in jail. As such, the cost of participation was high, which should have discouraged people from joining the protest. The political opportunity approach also may not be able to account for the success of this social upheaval. The Umbrella Movement was directed by rank-and-file participants with weak leadership, and the political system was unfavourable for the occupiers to make any social change due to the national context. Under such a background, Hong Kong people could expect that the chance for success was minimal, which should have further drawn them back from joining the movement. This shows that the structural approach is inadequate to explain the success of the Umbrella Movement.

The above literature review showed how collective identity explained the significance of social movement participation in terms of scale, duration, and intensity. It also showed the close relationship between collective identity, framing, emotion, and space (Turner et al., 1987; Flesher Fominaya, 2007, 2010; Livingstone & Haslam, 2008; Melucci, 1995; Langman, 2013; Stein, 2001; Morgen, 1995; Perugorria & Tejerina, 2013; Klandermans, van der Toorn & van Stekelenburg, 2008).

As mentioned above, collective identity refers to cognitive, emotional, and relational connections among a group of people, which in turn form an imagined community. I propose that the construction of cognitive and emotional connection through framing was the precondition for participant recruitment for the Umbrella Movement. Friendship networks also played an important role in the framing process. Participants demonstrated that they tended to accept the framework introduced by the movement leaders because they trusted them. So, in the case of the Umbrella Movement, the friendship network and framing are interrelated. This also accounts for the scale of the movement. The creation of a collective identity is prior to the emergence of the movement as it is argued that frames are more likely to be accepted if they fit well with the beliefs of potential recruits, involve empirically credible claims, and are compatible with the life experiences of the audience (Snow et al., 1986). Collective identity formed before the emergence of the movement helped the activists to adopt a common frame between the activists and the public concerning the orientations of their actions (Melucci, 1995, 1996).

By constructing the movement as an action to fight against injustice, moral outrages were created, which pushed people to join the protest. The above dimension will be explained through participants' biographies, as a person's sense of self, which functions as a filter, leads to the formation of a certain point of view, identity, emotion, feelings or

motivation, or judging unconsciously. After the movement broke out, occupied zones, which acted as a free space, were formed and to the emotional and relationship transformation among the participants through the construction of a new protest identity. I propose that the occupied zone itself acted as a free space where participants got the chance to build their desired community, which may have led to emotional and relational transformation that intensified and prolonged their participation. The next chapter will introduce the research method for this study.

## **Chapter 3      Methodology**

### **3.1 Overview**

The present chapter introduces the methodology of this study. The design of research method is always closely associated with the choice of research philosophy as the selection of research philosophy plays an influential role in the whole research process, starting from research question framing, literature review, design of research method, research data analysis and final report writing (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Research philosophy includes the concerns of ontology and epistemology. The former focuses on the assumption of the social world while the latter stresses the question of what should be regarded as acceptable knowledge in the discipline (i.e. epistemological concerns) (Bryman, 1988; Henn, 2006). After taking the standpoint on ontology and epistemology into consideration, one has to choose the methodology by which social researchers acquire knowledge of the world (Hollis, 1994; Willis, Jost & Nilakanta, 2007; Babbie, 2013). It is generally argued that these research philosophies can be categorized as three main paradigms, namely positivism, interpretivism, and critical theory (Greene, Benjamin & Goodyear, 2001; Guba, 1990).

Since my research question focuses on explaining the scale, duration, and intensity of the movement through looking into the participants' collective identity formation and how they perceive their feelings and collective identity subjectively, the interpretivist approach will be adopted as my research philosophy. Interpretivism concerns the theory and method of interpretation of human action (Von Wright, 1971; Bryman, 1988; Hollis, 1994; Gadamer, 1989). It draws on humanist concerns with language, translation, and understanding meaning. As Schiller (1969) claimed, reality and truth could not be "out there" but should be made up by human beings. It is assumed that people build or construct their understandings of the world. As such, human beings are living in a web of



meanings, and the aim of research is to understand these meanings (Bernard, 2000). Therefore, I have to get into a person's mind and look at his or her actions through his or her eyes if I am to understand the subjective meaning an individual attaches to his or her behaviour (Weber, 1947). In order to get into the target group's mind and analyze how they perceive their collective identity, cognitive understanding, and emotions, the qualitative research method will be adopted. The key strength of qualitative research is its "comprehensiveness" (Babbie, 2013, p.238). Though it is not able "to arrive at statistical descriptions of a large population," it is able to "tap a depth meaning" and "detailed illustrations" of the social phenomenon the researcher is going to study (Babbie, 2013, p.304). The qualitative research methods of the present study include in-depth interviews and documentary analysis. The details of these two data collection methods will be introduced in the following sections.

## **3.2 In-depth Interview**

### **3.2.1 *Acquiring in-depth information***

In-depth interview is a common data collection method for qualitative research (Blee & Taylor, 2002) and will be adopted as the main research method for the present study. In contrast to the rigidity of structured interview, in-depth interview offers researchers a greater degree of flexibility to adjust the questions based on the interactions during the interviews. Moreover, in-depth interviews also allow interviewees to propose, elaborate, clarify, and recontextualize their understandings of the phenomenon that the study is going to explore (Blee & Taylor, 2002). As such, in-depth interviews can help obtain deeper and richer information, which is particularly important for studies that need to acquire participants' feelings, emotions, thoughts, and memories in their own words (Blee & Taylor, 2002).

The understanding of an individual's life experiences is crucial in capturing their movement experience (Perez, 2018). It is believed that biographies are crucial in understanding people's social actions (Desmond, 2007; Shapira, 2013; Perez, 2018). A person's biography may function as a filter or lens that affects how a person unconsciously perceives a certain point of view, judgement, emotions, feelings, or identity. For example, Auyero (2015) explored the lives of the lower or bottom classes (e.g. house cleaners, roofers, office-machine repairers, cab drivers, exotic dancers, restaurant cooks and dishwashers) in Texas from their point of view in contrast to the perception of the main population. By investigating the American city through this lens, the gap and dynamic between the poor and the rich became visible. It reflected "the ways in which inequality and exclusion are intertwined with individual lives and embedded in the intricate seams of biographical issues" (p.5).

Biography not only affects how a person perceives the world but also impacts a person's protest experience. For example, Perez's (2018) study on the past life experience of the activists in the unemployed workers' movement in Argentina led to a conclusion that their life experience helped to sustain their participation because participation offered them a sense of empowerment and recognition from others, which filled the "deficits in their lives," namely "a scarcity of groups to belong to," "a feeling of being unable to affect one's condition," and "the lack of public appreciation" (p.90). Through participation, they regarded the engagement in a movement as an end in itself and consequently enhanced their inclination to commit to the movement (Perez, 2018).

The study of collective identity also related to life experience. As Jasper (1997) mentioned, "in constructing their own identity, individuals attribute coherence and meaning to the various phases of their own public and private life histories." This is often reflected in their life histories and biographies, i.e. the "individual constellations of cultural meanings, personalities, sense of self, derived from biographical experiences"

(p.44). For instance, many studies demonstrated that people tend to be more active in social movement participation if they have had protest experience in the past (McAdam, 1988; Whittier, 1995; Klandermans, 1997; Passerini, 1992; della Porta & Diani, 2006).

Since the study of biography is crucial to understanding participants' emotions and identities, a qualitative approach is adopted in the present study as it offers rich and in-depth description of individuals' personal experience in their own words, context, and meaning (Greene & Caracelli, 1997). In-depth interviews are particularly suitable for identity and emotion investigation in social movement research as it requires researchers to probe deeply into respondents' self-understandings, listening carefully to how social movement participants describe themselves and their movement feelings and experiences (Melucci, 1989; Taylor, 1996; Whittier, 1995; Passerini, 1992; Taylor & Whittier, 1992; Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2000; Blee & Taylor, 2002; Nepstad & Smith, 2001; Stein, 2001; Wood, 2001; Jasper, 2007). Interviews can also enable the researchers to understand how movement participants make sense of and justify their actions (Taylor & Whittier, 1992; Jenness & Broad, 1997; Blee & Taylor, 2002). As argued by Blee and Taylor (2002), "researchers can gain insight into the individual and collective visions, imaginings, hopes, expectations, critiques of the present, and projections of the future on which the possibility of collective action rests and through which social movements form, endure, or disband" through in-depth or semi-structured interviews (p.95). Blee and Taylor (2002) also argued that "intensive interviews are the best method for probing deep emotional issues" (p.96). In-depth or semi-structured interviews are especially suitable for studying identity. Through semi-structured or in-depth interviews, interviewees can tell stories about their life and how their movement participation experience fit with what happened in their life. The interviewer will not intervene the interviewee's life story narration but will make comments to encourage the interviewee to provide more

information so as to complete expositions of events (Connell, 1995; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Blee & Taylor, 2002).

In addition, in-depth and semi-structured interviews are particularly useful in studying movements that are “loosely organized,” “short-lived or thinly documented” as well as hard to document through other research methods, such as structured interviews, field observation or documentary analysis (Blee & Taylor, 2002). For the present study, the Umbrella Movement that I am going to study is loosely organized and there is not much data about this movement yet, therefore in-depth interview or semi-structured interviews may be a suitable strategy to explore it. The interviews will situate the participants’ biographies in a wider socio-cultural context, as it is widely believed that life history is intertwined with socio-historical backgrounds. For example, Auyero’s study (2015) demonstrated how personal life was intertwined with history. The exploration of the life histories of twelve people who belonged to marginal groups reflected that their lived experiences of inequality and social marginalization are closely related to individual lives and linked to structural inequality. It showed that their life experience could be explained by structural inequality, which includes a lack of affordable housing, poverty caused by a highly polarized labour market, and the shortage of a safety net. Consequently, the present study will situate the life histories of participants in socio-historical context in order to have a more thorough understanding of their participation experiences.

### ***3.2.2 Supplementing and scrutinizing documentary analysis***

Moreover, semi-structured or in-depth interviews can provide information that supplements the data acquired through documentary analysis (McAdam, 1988; Morris, 1984; Rupp & Taylor, 1987; Staggenborg, 1991; Blee & Taylor, 2002). Documentary analysis was adopted in the present study (please refer to pp. 55-56); however, documents

that are accessible for analysis are usually derived from certain groups, especially those who are prominent, influential in society or with high social status, such as movement leaders or spokespersons in the field of the social movement. The voices of these groups tend to be recorded and preserved over time. Interviewing may be regarded as a means to counteract such “biased availability of documentary materials about social movements” and enable researchers to access the participants or members of a movement whose voices or activities are not recorded or even filtered by others, as this behind-the-scenes leadership is also influential to a movement (Blee & Taylor, 2002, p.94). Thus, conducting semi-structured or in-depth interviews of those whose voices tend to be hidden can provide a much more comprehensive understanding of the movement (Connell, 1995; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Blee & Taylor, 2002).

As Portelli (1997) claimed, the aim of a semi-structured or in-depth interview is to scrutinize “[t]he relationship between private and public histories, experiences, and narratives” (p.ix). The Umbrella Movement captured the attention of the mass media, but most of the news reports focused on the opinions of the leaders or spokespersons, which may not be comprehensive enough to reflect the details of the movement. Thus, in-depth interviews or semi-structured interviews can supplement the documentary analysis. Moreover, interviewing may also help in scrutinizing the texts (such as speeches) produced by movement leaders or participants as it enables the researcher to understand the texts in the wider social context or background through assessing how audiences interpret them (Potter & Wetherell, 1988; Gamson, 1999; Blee & Taylor, 2002).

### **3.3 Selection of Participants**

Participants of the Umbrella Movement were selected for interviews. Since the present study is going to explain why the Umbrella Movement became so significant, it is important to explore why people were willing to join the protest. Therefore, ordinary

participants were the study targets of the present study. The non-probability form of purposive and snowball sampling was adopted. The findings of the study cannot be generalized to a wider population, which is one of the key limitations of the snowball sampling method, but it is still justifiable for circumstances when there is not a readily available list of the population for study (Harlow & Harp, 2012; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Warren, Sulaiman & Jaafar, 2014; Baek, 2018).

Another reason for using the non-probability form of purposive snowball sampling is striving for a more diversified cluster of participation experience. The interviewee selection attempts to match the results of a demographic background study of participants during the movement in late 2014 (Cheng & Yuen, 2014). The demographic study was based on an onsite survey from 20 to 26 October 2014 during the Umbrella Movement. The interviewees include participants from three occupied zones, and there were 1562 respondents. For the present study, the total number of respondents is sixty. The number of male and female respondents is the same (see Table 1), which reflects the same proportions as the demographic study (Cheng & Yuen, 2014). According to Cheng and Yuen (2014), participants can be divided into seven groups based on age, namely under 17, from 18 to 24, from 25 to 29, from 30 to 39, from 40 to 49, from 50 to 64, and 65 and above. The selection of interviewees for the present study is based on the same age ranges, which is shown in Table 2. Since the study was conducted three years after the movement, the age of respondents ranges from 20 to above 68 (five respondents are under 20, sixteen respondents are from 21 to 27, thirteen respondents are from 28 to 32, fifteen respondents are from 33 to 42, three respondents are from 40 to 49, four respondents are from 50 to 64, and four respondents are 65 or older).

**Table 1. Sex of Participants**

Male	Female
30	30

**Table 2. Age of Participants**

<b>Age during interview (age during participation)</b>	<b>Number of interviewees</b>	<b>Demographic backgrounds of participants reflected by an on-site survey during the movement</b>
21 and under (17 and under)	5 (8.3%)	7.5%
21-27 (18-24)	16 (26.7%)	29.5%
28-32 (25-29)	13 (21.7%)	23.7%
33-42 (30-39)	15 (25%)	24.1%
43-52 (40-49)	3 (5%)	6.8%
53-67 (50-64)	4 (6.7%)	6.8%
68 or above (>65)	4 (6.7%)	1.7%

In the on-site survey conducted during the movement, most of the interviewees were in the 18 to 24 age group (Cheng & Yuen, 2014); therefore, the interviewees for the present study also mainly come from this age group. Most of the participants were white-collar workers and self-employed (58%) according to the on-site demographic study (Cheng & Yuen, 2014), and hence the interviewees of the present study are also mainly composed of such categories. More specifically, they include public relations officer, surveyor, teachers, administrative officer, research assistants, manager, teacher assistant, legislative officer, customs officer, lecturers, doctors, program officers, designer, IT manager, flight attendant, librarian, executive officer, paralegal, banker, freelance photographer, and freelance handicraft teacher. Others include construction worker, driver, handyman, shopper, chef, housewives, and retirees. Table 3 shows the proportion of participants from the three main categories of occupational background.

**Table 3. Participants' Occupations**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Number of interviewees</b>	<b>Demographic background of participants reflected by an on-site survey during the movement</b>

Students	16 (26.7%)	26%
White-collar workers and self-employed	34 (56.7%)	58%
Blue-collar workers	10 (16.7%)	16%

Based on the on-site survey conducted during the movement (Cheng & Yuen, 2014), around 55% of participants have at least one degree. More than 50% of the interviewees of the present study also have at least one degree (see Table 4).

**Table 4. Participants' Educational Background**

<b>Educational background</b>	<b>Number of interviewees</b>	<b>Demographic background of participants reflected by an on-site survey during the movement</b>
Degree holder or above	33 (55%)	55%
Below degree level	27 (45%)	45%

Details of each participant's biographical background can be found in Appendix I.

### **3.4 Research Ethics**

Though the Umbrella Movement has been labelled an illegal activity by the government, the interview will not have any legal implications due to the following reasons:

- 1) Two groups of participants were arrested during or after the occupation. The first group was the leaders or prominent figures of the movement. Nine activists were arrested the day after the election of our Chief Executive (27 March 2017). All of them were either the leaders of the movement or prominent figures of the movement. The three leaders—two professors and a reverend—faced three charges, including 1) conspiracy to commit public nuisance, 2) inciting others to commit public nuisance, and 3) inciting others to incite public nuisance. The other six prominent activists



faced one to two of the above three charges. In these circumstances, my interview should not have any legal implications if I only interview ordinary participants, i.e. no leaders or key prominent figures of the movement. The second group of participants who were arrested were those who committed violence, such as assaulting a police officer, criminal damage, and possession of imitation firearms. No ordinary participants were arrested if they stayed in the occupied zone without committing any violent behaviour and left the zone before the police evacuated the site. Therefore, the interview will not lead to the discussion of the legal or illegal nature of participants' activity, as the interview questions did not focus on any discussion of violent behaviour during the occupation. Moreover, the social protest examined in this study was a peaceful movement and hence it does not lead to questions that may reveal serious and imminent risk of harm to either the individual concerned or others.

- 2) I guaranteed the confidentiality and privacy of participants through the following procedures. First of all, I maintained the anonymity and confidentiality of participants by assigning each participant a pseudonym in any discussion of the interview data. Also, any information that may reveal the identity of the participants has been excluded from any public discussion. All the interviews were recorded as sound files. I was the only one to transcribe the sound files and all the transcriptions were anonymized. Lastly, I kept the transcripts but all the sound files were stored on a password-protected computer at my office and the sound files were deleted once they had been transcribed. I was the only one who could log into the computer to access the sound files. Also, after transcription, I made a printed copy of the transcripts and keep them in a secure cabinet in my office (in case the files disappear from my computer). The data collection process is strictly following the Data Protection Act and the University's process of ethical approval

(<http://www2.le.ac.uk/services/research-data/create-data/dp-ethics>). All the data will be destroyed one year after the completion of the study.

The University Ethics Sub-Committee of Sociology; Politics and IR; Lifelong Learning; Criminology; Economics and the School of Education granted ethics approval on 28 April 2017 (see Appendix C), and I started my first interview in May 2017. All the respondents signed the informed consent statement to ensure that they understood my research purpose and the guarantee of the confidentiality and privacy of the data collection procedure.

### **3.5 Design of Data Collection Method**

The present study is going to explain the scale, duration, and intensity of the Umbrella Movement by adopting the cultural approaches, including the discussion of collective identity, emotion, framing, and space. Several data collection methods were used to tackle the research questions. First of all, in-depth interviews were adopted to analyze how the participants perceive their collective identity, which includes their cognitive understanding of the movement and their emotional and relational experience during participation. I conducted sixty open-ended interviews with ordinary participants of the Umbrella Movement from mid-May 2017 to the end of January 2018. Each interview was conducted face-to-face and lasted from around one and a half hours to four hours. The interview questions are included in Appendix B. The interviewees shared their life histories before joining the Umbrella Movement, their reasons for joining the movement, and their emotional and relational changes before and after getting involved in the movement, as well as their self-transformation, especially in terms of identity, before and after joining the movement.

The interview questions are based on the literature review and include four dimensions. The first dimension covers basic biographical and the interviewee's

perception of the movement, including age, educational background, career, level of political consciousness, past protest experience, what they thought about why the movement started, and the reason for staying in the occupied zone etc. It aims to explore their political awareness before the movement to determine whether their cognitive understanding had changed and motivated them to join the movement. The second dimension covers their emotional changes before and after joining the movement as well as during their participation. If there were emotional changes, I asked the participant to explain and describe the reason or mechanism for the changes. This section aimed to explore whether and how the emotional dimension led the participants to join the movement and also contributed to explaining why they prolonged their social engagement. Also, it hoped to explain their commitment to the movement. The third dimension covers the relational connections with other participants before, during, and after joining the movement, which includes the frequency of contact and relationship with other participants. The last dimension focused on their collective identity exploration, including their self-perception of their collective identity before joining the movement, their protest identity during participation in the movement, and changes in self-perception of their collective identity after participation. Each interview is recorded and transcribed into Chinese for analysis.

### **3.6 Coding and Data Analysis**

The data analysis approach involved thematic coding. After completing all transcriptions, I read each transcript in detail and carefully so that a list of specific codes was generated. All the transcripts with coding were then studied manually and repeatedly to look for common themes for analysis. Several clusters of common themes were highlighted after moving back and forth across each individual transcript, and hence

common understandings between the participants were identified and analyzed. Variations between different transcripts were also identified for further analysis.

### **3.7 Documentary Analysis**

On top of the in-depth interviews, documentary analysis was carried out as background research. It also helps to investigate how the activists or organizers frame the movement. The organizer, Occupy Central with Love, created a website to show the public some basic information about the movement, including a statement from the organizer, the mission of the movement, and details regarding the recruitment of participants. It delineated the details of the operations of the movement. Therefore, the study of the website was adopted as background research for the present study. News reports were also studied to have more information about the movement, especially from the organizers' point of view. Since the Umbrella Movement was a very significant upheaval in Hong Kong history, it drew public attention throughout the entire occupation period. There was a significant number of news reports and interviews of the movement leaders, which provides a rich information database for analysis. For example, there are many interviews conducted by mass media with the main leaders of the movement about the operation of the movement, including explanation of the spirit of the movement, principles of participation, and movement strategy and culture. For instance, they explained why they termed the movement "love and peace," the objectives of the campaign, the movement strategy they adopted, and so on.

In addition, a few books or articles, including those by Professor Benny Tai, were analyzed to explain the idea and operation of the civil disobedience movement. For example, an article written by him in 2013 and published in a newspaper was the first to raise the idea of Occupy Central. The background of the movement and the idea of how to use civil disobedience as a movement strategy were introduced in this article. Two books

by Professor Tai were also adopted for background research. The first, called *Occupy Central*, was written in 2013. The book elaborated on the idea of civil disobedience in a more detailed way; for instance, it explained why Central was chosen as the occupied site. It also explained the plan for organizing the movement, i.e. how to work out the movement based on the spirit of civil disobedience. Another book called *Occupy X Conversation* was co-authored with a journalist, Miss Tam Wai-wan. Miss Tam is a lecturer from the School of Journalism and Communication at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The book was a collection of conversations between Professor Benny Tai and several parties regarding Occupy Central, which were originally published in a local newspaper, *Mingpao*. Miss Tam acted as a journalist and reporter to coordinate and record the interviews. The first interview was conducted in February 2013 and the last in April 2013. It was Benny Tai's idea to make the series of interviews into a book as a record of history. The interviews with different parties were conducted a few months before the Deliberation Day. As such, the interviews can be regarded as a planning process for the movement; for instance, they include discussion of the legal responsibility of participants. The book can be regarded as the prequel to the Occupy movement.

In addition to news articles and books, speeches from the leaders and activists, slogans, songs, posters, photographs, and pamphlets were also adopted as background research. I could access these materials through the movement organization website as well as media reports. As based on literature review, movement organizations may identify someone or institutions to be blamed in order to arouse certain emotions among the public to trigger movement participation. Analysis of the above documents can help study this aspect.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

The above section outlined and explained the research method for the present study. Since the study of emotion and identities through biographical analysis is the main focus of this study, in-depth interviews were adopted so that I could understand the participants' emotions and identities from their point of view. The fieldwork was started in May 2017 and completed by the end of January 2018. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed for further analysis. The following chapter will explain the findings of the present study based on the interviews. Some basic background research was conducting through analyzing the website created by the organizers, media reports and interviews with movement leaders, and books written by movement leaders.



## **Chapter 4      Umbrella Movement as a Democratic Movement after the Decolonization of Hong Kong**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The history and socio-cultural background of Hong Kong will be presented in this chapter to provide a more thorough investigation of participants' identity experience during their engagement in the Umbrella Movement. The Umbrella Movement was a campaign to fight for democratization leadership. The dispute over the universal suffrage demanded by the protestors can be traced to the negotiation between Britain and China over the handover of Hong Kong since the 1980s. The history of the handover will be introduced in the following section in order to provide a deeper background on the contention over universal suffrage between campaigners and the Beijing government. The remainder of the chapter will introduce the basic and special features of the Umbrella Movement. Since similar Occupy movements have happened around the globe since 2011 and the Umbrella Movement may be regarded as one of the cases of this wave of global protest, the chapter will briefly explain how the Umbrella Movement was similar to and different from other Occupy movements so as to provide a more thorough understanding of the specificities of this movement.

### **4.2 The History of Hong Kong: The Road to Democracy**

To understanding Hong Kong's road to universal suffrage, we have to investigate the dispute in the wider historical context, especially before and after the handover from Britain to China on 1 July 1997. As part of China, Hong Kong covers three main areas, which are Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the New Territories. The history of how Hong Kong became a British colony can be traced back to the treaties signed between Britain and China in the nineteenth century. Hong Kong became a British colony in 1842



with the signing of Treaty of Nanking as a result of the First Opium War in 1839. The war was caused by conflict over the contraband trade in opium, and China lost in the battle, which led to the cession of Hong Kong Island. Another round of Sino-British conflicts emerged in the 1850s as Britain hoped to further open China to foreign trade, which led to the outbreak of the Second Opium War. China lost again and signed the Treaty of Tientsin with Britain, which led to the cession of the Kowloon Peninsula along with Hong Kong Island. The New Territories together with 235 islands were leased to Britain for ninety-nine years from 1 July 1898 to 30 June 1997 after the signing of the Convention of Peking in 1898 (Carroll, 2007).

The gaining back of Hong Kong sovereignty became an important issue to China with the imminent expiration of the New Territories lease. The negotiation between Britain and China started when the then Hong Kong governor Murray MacLehose raised the issue with the then Chinese Leader Deng Xiaoping during his official visit to China in 1979. The Chinese government insisted that the treaties were invalid and Hong Kong citizens would not be able to live without access to the natural resources in the New Territories (Carroll, Feng & Kuilman, 2014). This uncertainty damaged the Hong Kong economy, which pushed the British government to sign the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984 stating that Hong Kong would return to China from Britain on 1 July 1997 after the lease expired on 30 June 1997 (Singh, 2016). The Declaration stated that Hong Kong would become a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China without British intervention (Lam, 2004). Officials from both Britain and Mainland China formed a working group to work for the transfer of sovereignty from Britain to China following the Joint Declaration (Carroll, Feng & Kuilman, 2014).

In facing the uncertainties brought by the change of sovereignty, hundreds of thousands of business owners and professionals emigrated from Hong Kong to English-speaking countries including Canada, New Zealand, Britain, Australia, and the

United States during the 1980s and 1990s. The trend of emigration was caused by the fear of facing two different political and cultural ideologies between Britain and China. Hong Kong had become an international city with a longstanding capitalist system supported by the British legal system during the colonial period. However, China is a socialist state with a different legal system and hence many Hong Kong citizens felt uncertainty about the handover (Carroll, Feng & Kuilman, 2014). In light of this, Deng Xiaoping promised in the Declaration to guarantee Hong Kong citizens high autonomy for at least fifty years after the handover, saying “horses will continue to race, and dancers will continue to dance” after the change of sovereignty (Ng, 2016).

The autonomy promised by Deng covers all aspects other than national defence and foreign affairs, including ways of life, freedom of expression, and an independent judiciary. This is the so-called “one country, two system” framework (Lam, 2004, p.231). Hong Kong’s autonomous status under the framework aimed to maintain the city’s liberal capitalist system and way of life within socialist China (Ghai, 2013; Henders, 2010, cited in Fong, 2017, p.526). A committee was established in 1985 under the principle of One Country Two Systems to draft the Basic Law,<sup>20</sup> which provides a mini-constitution for Hong Kong after the handover to ensure the smooth transition of sovereignty from Britain to China and to maintain the Hong Kong economy (Lam, 2004). The Basic Law promised in Article 5 that “the Socialist system and policies shall not be practised in the Hong Kong Special administrative Region, and the previous capitalist system and way of life shall remain unchanged for 50 years” (Carroll, Feng & Kuilman, 2014, p.366). The law resolved the legal governance concerning various aspects, including defence, rights, currency, and so on. The first draft of the Basic Law was completed in April 1988 and the

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<sup>20</sup> Basic Law refers to “Hong Kong’s mini-constitution, a document heavily negotiated between China and Britain which became effective on July 1<sup>st</sup> 1997” (Ng, 2016, p.336).

final version was promulgated by the Beijing government in April 1999, taking effect at the time of the handover (Carroll, Feng & Kuilman, 2014). However, Hong Kong has experienced reversal in democratization after the handover, which was not aligning with the promise of the Basic Law.

According to He's (2019) analysis, the reversal of democratic movement after the handover can be regarded as a result of the strategy of economic united front. This strategy "meant the creation of internal divides within the enemy camp to isolate and defeat the main rival by making friends with the rest (p.42). With the coming of the new era, Economic Reform in the 1980s, the Chinese government made use of economic incentives to deploy Hong Kong since the Sino-British negotiation (He, 2019). The economic reform released market opportunities, which were utilized by the government as incentives for cooptation among the business community. He (2019) argued that the government secured a number of mainland business deals exclusively for Hong Kong capitalists in order to form a pro-Beijing alliance. This strategy makes "patriotism rewarding." The government formed a group of loyal capitalists for political purposes. "An 'unholy alliance' between Chinese communists and Hong Konger capitalists emerged with a shared antidemocracy agenda" since the 1980s (So, 1999, pp.119-122). In addition to securing business deals, the Chinese government tended to nominate this loyal business for various titles, such as deputies of the National People's Congress and members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, in order to provided privileged access to mainland cadres—a convenient tool for taking care of their investment (He, 2019, p.46).

The Umbrella Movement was a campaign aimed at fighting for universal suffrage promised by the Basic Law. The Law promised a "gradual and orderly progress towards

full democracy” (Wong & Wan, 2007, p.128).<sup>21</sup> According to the Basic Law, the method for selecting the Chief Executive of Hong Kong shall be ultimately by “universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedure.”<sup>22</sup> Based on Article 45 of the Basic Law,

The method for selecting the Chief Executive shall be specified in the light of the actual situation in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and in accordance with the principle of gradual and orderly progress. The ultimate aim is the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures. (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, 2015, p.45)

With the principle outlined above, the Beijing government promised to direct elections for the Chief Executive by 2017 according to the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress<sup>23</sup> resolution in 2007 in response to the continuous calls for the implementation of universal suffrage by Hong Kong citizens since 1997. This is known as the “2007 Decision.” Since then, the nomination process became the concern of the public and also an area of controversy. There was a widespread concern that the nomination process “will act as safety valve to screen out candidates regarded unfavourably by Beijing” (Yuen, 2015, p.49). With such consideration, the pro-democratic parties stressed the importance of “civic nomination,” which highlighted

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<sup>21</sup> See Articles 45 and 68 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic.

<sup>22</sup> The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of The People’s Republic of China, 2007. Available at <1. [https://www.facebook.com/OCLPHK/info?tab=page\\_info](https://www.facebook.com/OCLPHK/info?tab=page_info)> assessed 21 November 2014.

<sup>23</sup> The Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress refers to the central legislative body of the Chinese government.

the right to be nominated. Professor Benny Tai's concern was the same as the other pro-democratic parties. He therefore proposed the idea of using Occupy Central, a key financial district, as a last resort to pressure the Chinese government to implement universal suffrage regarding the election of the Hong Kong Chief Executive in 2017. In addition to situating the Occupy movement in Hong Kong within the Hong Kong local context, the movement can be investigated within its wider socio-political context. A wave of global upheavals emerged around the globe in fifteen countries under the "branding" of Occupy movements, including in Australia, Europe, the Middle East, the United States, and Asia (Smith, Gavin & Sharp, 2015, p.819). The Occupy movement in Hong Kong can be treated as part of this wave. We may have a more thorough understanding of the Hong Kong Occupy movement if we present the key features of the Occupy movement in other countries.

### **4.3 Waves of Occupy Movements around the Globe**

#### **4.3.1 *Reclamation of financial centres***

The Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong shared certain similarities with the global uprising of Occupy movements since 2011. Following the December 2010 self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi, a street vendor fighting against the deteriorating socio-economic situation and rampant police corruption in Tunisia, a wave of protest emerged in other Middle Eastern countries, including Yemen, Egypt, Iraq, Libya and Syria, finally attacking the foundations of several other authoritarian regimes. This was known as the Arab Spring. By early 2011, these upheavals swelled into Europe and the United States, including the Spanish M15, the Greek, Portuguese and Israeli summer mobilizations, and the Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States (Aldas & Murphy, 2013; Ali & Macharia, 2013; Brissette, 2013; Flesher Fominaya, 2015;

Gonzalez-Bailon, Holthoefer & Moreno, 2013). It is widely believed that “the most common form of action amid the 2011–2012 mobilizations entailed reclaiming the public space” (Tejerina et al., 2013, p.382). This strategy was reflected in the word “occupy” as occupy refers to “the desire to regain control over something through active, grassroots participation” (Ancelovici, 2016, p.183).

The reclamation of public spaces with tents or other facilities was common in Occupy movements. As Brissette (2013) pinpointed, participants in the waves of Occupy movements tended to occupy public space “marked by now-iconic tents, communal meals, children’s villages, libraries, all manner of artistic expression, and recurrent dance parties” (p.224). The occupiers use tents or other newly built facilities to “visualize who they are and what they stand for.” The protestors made use of the encampment to construct their way of life and “lived day-to-day, and living in that newly constituted community was the heart of the movement” (Brissette, 2013, p.224). This tactic is commonly found in various Occupy movements that emerged since 2011, such as the Indignados in Spain (also known as M15) which started on 15 May and was followed by a demonstration coordinated by various collective parties aimed at expressing anger towards the government’s management of the economic crisis as well as their indignation towards the representative political system (Nez, 2016). The demonstration first took place in Madrid and was supported by two hundred social organizations and unions and called “Real Democracy Now.” It attracted hundreds of thousands of participants who took to the streets in around fifty Spanish cities. “Real Democracy Now” turned into the “Occupy the Square” Movement and occupied the Puerta del Sol in Madrid (a symbolic square of the city), triggered by the police suppression on 15 May. The occupation lasted for twenty-eight days as a “self-managed encampment” with organized public assemblies. The movement then branched out to local neighbours of Madrid due to the fear of repression and eviction after mid-June 2011 (Nez, 2016, p.121).

The Indignados in Spain inspired other Occupy movements around the globe, including Occupy Wall Street. The Occupy Wall Street Movement started on 17 September 2011 when more than two thousand protestors occupied Zuccotti Park, two blocks from Wall Street in the centre of Manhattan's financial district (Schneider, 2013, Gillham et al., 2019, p.433). The movement was mainly against economic inequality. Within the two-month occupation period, the movement spread to over three hundred cities and towns in the United States (Ganesh & Stohl, 2013; Piven, 2013). The movement lasted for fifty-nine days until the police evicted the occupiers of Zuccotti Park.

In another example, Occupy Gezi in Turkey also demonstrated the strategy of encampment. The movement was a national protest in which a group of activists occupied Gezi Park to protest the government's urban politics. The occupation started on 27 May 2013 and lasted for three weeks. The activists stayed at Gezi Park to protest against the Beyoglu urban transformation plan, which was part of a government urban project to radically transform Taksim Square, one of the most iconic centres in Turkey. The movement expanded across the country and the park was turned into a community built by the protestors, which was called "Taksim Commune." The commune operated as a "form of self-government" in which the "basic needs were covered through a donation and solidarity economy" (Karakas, 2018, p.44). Within the commune, the participants constructed their own facilities, including a kitchen, health care service, library, resources distribution centre, garden, and a stage for opinion sharing and expression and also for performances. It is believed that "the life constituted in the Gezi Park was an enacted reaction against the damage done to the ecology of cities by the government's urban transformation projects" (Karakas, 2018, p.44).

### 4.3.2 *Construction of prefigurative politics*

The role of leader was downplayed or even eliminated in most of the Occupy movements. They are “breaking from traditional organizing practices in previous eras” (Ganesh & Stohl, 2013, p.425). Williams (2012) claimed that “the most immediate inspiration for Occupy is anarchism,” as the role of leadership is weak. He used the term “multi-headed hydra” to describe the leaders of the Occupy movement because when the leaders (certain individuals) are arrested, others will take their place (pp.19-20). The organizational structure tended to be non-hierarchical (or called horizontalism), and direct democracy, which emphasized consensus in decision-making process, was found in most Occupy movements (Aldas & Murphy, 2013). This practice is also called “prefigurative politics,” which “aims to foreshadow a democratic social practice inside the movement itself” (Milkman, 2012, p.14). Piven (2013) argued that this recent development involves “alternative forms of organizations” which can be called “anarchist, emphasizing internal direct democracy” (p.191). They are “suspicious of parties and organizations in the traditional sense, as well as of leaders” (Bamyeh, 2012, p.18). For example, Occupy Gainesville “shows that a horizontal, leaderless strategy is paramount as these processes rest on elevating personal freedom and equality.”

The occupation demonstrated a “platform of consensus decision-making” in which participants could communicate and express their opinions in the regular general assemblies organized in the occupied areas (Sbicca & Perdue, 2013, p.322). Joining and taking part in lengthy general assemblies was the key feature of Occupy movements (Brissette, 2013). The campsites in the occupied areas served as social movement communities in which every decision (from hand gestures to organizational structure) was decided in consultation within a few days over the daily General Assemblies (Brissette, 2013). Within the direct democracy system, everyone could make decisions (Williams, 2012). This practice of direct democracy can be seen in many Occupy movements, such



as Occupy Wall Street in the United States. Protestors gathered in Zuccotti Park and created their own “microcosm of democracy by prefiguring the society they advocated.” Participants had active participation and deliberation before making any decision, and “no decisions were made at general assemblies until either consensus or ‘modified consensus’ (90% majority) had been reached” (Swan & Husted, 2017, p.203). In the Occupy Wall Street movement, the “people’s microphone” was invented so that people’s speeches could be spread easily (Barber, 2012, p.15). In addition, a “general assembly” was adopted in which multiple working groups were formed to meet regularly to discuss daily issues happening in the zone. These general assemblies were anarchistic in nature as they rejected government endorsement and political parties, and speakers within the general assembly were given equal status (Williams, 2012, p.20). Participants were able to “reimagine representative democracy through public assemblies.” Participants experienced “participatory democracy” through joining these public meetings or popular assemblies (Donovan, 2019, p.482). Interactive communication and debate in the tent camps as well as discussion in the study groups and workshops in the occupied areas encouraged protesters to develop movement frames, ideologies, rituals, political action, and plans more efficiently and hence generate a shared identity. Tejerina et al. (2013) pinpointed this feature seen in the Occupy movements since 2011:

The 2011–2012 cycle of protest gave democracy a new meaning, turning it into a horizontal, deliberative, transparent, and participatory dialogue between “common persons”—not only activists, or militants—concerned with the “common good.” In doing this, it demonstrated that another way of engaging with the public sphere was possible, and it helped initiate or re-engage vast numbers of citizens previously disenchanted with, or disbelievers of politics as a key mechanism for the transformation of social reality. (Tejerina et al., 2013, p.382)

The above features of Occupy movements around the globe can also be seen in the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong. Encampment was one of the key features of the Umbrella Movement, as the participants occupied the key financial districts to construct a community to demonstrate the living style that they sought. Deliberative democracy was also encouraged. On the other hand, the movement demonstrated certain differences from the Occupy movements in Western and Middle Eastern countries, which will be briefly introduced in the last section of this chapter. The origins and details of the Umbrella Movement that demonstrate the above features are explained in the following section.

#### **4.4 Umbrella Movement as an Occupy Movement**

##### **4.4.1 *Claims and strategy of the movement***

The idea of using Occupy Central as a civil disobedience movement to fight for universal suffrage appeared in a newspaper article in January 2013 (Tai, 2013a). The idea was regarded as a “a pre-emptive move to pressure Beijing to make good on the 2007 Decision” and therefore it was treated as a last resort to persuade the Chinese government to keep the promise stated in the Basic Law for granting Hong Kong universal suffrage in 2017 (Tai, 2013, p.60). Based on Tai’s idea, the civil disobedience movement was expressed as an occupying action in which participants would block the traffic of a key financial district to appeal for universal suffrage that followed the international standards. Professor Tai proposed to rally at least ten thousand participants to stage a peaceful sit-in in a major road of Central, a key financial district, for two to three days until the police came to arrest them. They would not clash with the police and would not resist arrest to demonstrate the spirit of non-violence (Yuen, 2015). The organizers explained the spirit of non-violence:

Civil disobedience refers to acts of opposing injustice through refusing to comply with a law, decree or order. The participants will not resort to violence. Rather, they will proactively accept the due legal consequences. The acts have to display not only civility but also a disobedient attitude in refusing to cooperate with the unjust authorities, and to strive for societal changes through continuous protest. Genuine pacifism does not mean not to resist against evils, but to fight against evils squarely with non-violent means. (OCLP, 2013)

Based on the above background and spirit, the movement was named “Occupy Central with Love and Peace.” To proceed with the plan, Professor Tai invited two like-minded friends, Professor Chan Kin-man<sup>24</sup> and the Reverend Mr. Chu Yiu-ming,<sup>25</sup> to lead and work out the details of the movement. Professor Chan was an Associate Professor of the Department of Sociology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong who focused on civil society and social movement studies. He has contributed to the development of civil society and democracy in both Hong Kong and Mainland China in

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<sup>24</sup> According to the Department of Sociology (The Chinese University of Hong Kong) website, Professor Chan Kin-man is active in social movement studies and serves on the editorial boards of *Journal of Civil Society* (US), *China Non-Profit Review* (Beijing) and *Third Sector Review* (Taiwan). He is the co-author of a number of books related to democracy, including *Stories and Theories of Democracy*, *Contentious Views: Nine Debates that Changed Hong Kong*, *One Country Two Systems*, and *Trade Association and Social Capital* and the author of *Towards Civil Society and Civil Society Perspective: Towards Good Governance*. [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/soc/CHAN\\_Kin-man.html](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/soc/CHAN_Kin-man.html).

<sup>25</sup> Chu was 73 and was actively involved in democratic development. He was the Chairman of the Hong Kong Democratic Development Network established in 2011. He has been suffering from various health problems involving his eyes and digestive system.

addition to his teaching and researching duties for many years. Mr. Chu Yiu-ming is a Baptist Church minister and a human rights veteran. He also has been actively fighting for Hong Kong democratic development. Together with Professor Benny Tai, they were called the “Occupy Trio” and formed a coalition to raise a campaign called “Occupy Central with Love and Peace” to fight for universal suffrage in Hong Kong. The Occupy Trio held a press conference at a church to announce the layout of the campaign in March 2013. They stressed that people who joined the campaign would have to uphold the following three fundamental convictions:

- (1) The electoral system of Hong Kong must satisfy the international standards in relation to universal suffrage. They consist of the political rights to equal number of vote, equal weight for each vote and no unreasonable restrictions on the right to stand for election.
- (2) The concrete proposal of the electoral system of Hong Kong should be decided by means of a democratic process, which should consist of deliberation and authorization by citizens.
- (3) Any act of the civil disobedience, which aims to fight for realizing a democratic universal and equal suffrage in Hong Kong though illegal, has to be absolutely non-violent. (OCLP, 2013)

To the Occupy Trio, civic awakening was the crucial factor that would determine the success of the movement. As such, the campaign was composed of several elements including dialogue, deliberation, citizen authorization, and civil disobedience so that they would have the chance to communicate with different parties to promote the universal values (including democracy, universal and equal suffrage, justice and righteousness). They hoped that citizens would be willing to pay a price in joining the movement after realizing the above values. To implement the campaign, four steps would be carried out: signing a covenant, deliberation day, citizen authorization, and civil disobedience (OCLP,

2013).<sup>26</sup> The first step was signing a covenant. They communicated with different parties to promote the idea of the campaign and wished to have at least ten thousand people support the movement to perform acts of civil disobedience and bear the risk of being arrested and agreeing to plead no contest at trial (But, 2013).

The second step was deliberation: three sections of communication and discussion under the title of Deliberation Day were carried out from June 2013 to May 2014. The goal of the deliberations was to “build a new platform for the opposition parties and civil society organizations to work together to tackle the most important constitutional reform in Hong Kong’s history” (Chan, 2015, p.1). The discussions covered a variety of topics, such as setting the agenda of the movement, discussing the components of the movement, movement strategy, and reform proposal. It was planned that a civil referendum would be carried out after the deliberations to vote for the reform proposal adopted by the campaign. There were seven hundred people in the first round of deliberation,<sup>27</sup> six hundred of them invited guests<sup>28</sup> and one hundred randomly selected citizens.<sup>29</sup>

The deliberation was held on 6 June 2013 and included two main sessions. The first was an open discussion. It began with the introduction of the idea of the movement by the organizers followed by a half-hour open discussion in which participants were free to express their views. After that, participants were divided into forty-one groups of around a dozen or more participants. The discussion was led by moderators to maintain the

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<sup>26</sup> The idea of deliberation day is borrowed from the title of a book by James Fishkin (Stanford University) as explained by Professor Benny Tai at <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1244408/democracy-d-day-fall-june-9>.

<sup>27</sup> The first round of deliberation was held at The University of Hong Kong.

<sup>28</sup> Most were from opposition parties and civil society organizations.

<sup>29</sup> The participants were diverse and included people from different social classes and backgrounds.

discussion procedure. All participants were given an equal chance to express their views. A list of seven main points was produced for discussion at the next round of deliberation. One of the ideas raised during the first round was “to bridge the idea of democracy with the concerns of different sectors of civil society” (Chan, 2015), and hence the second round of deliberation was arranged as a series of discussions with different community groups, held from October 2013 to January 2014. The community groups included people from diverse backgrounds, such as church members, social workers, university students, women, labourers and social workers (Chan, 2015). Around three thousand participants joined the second round of deliberation. The last deliberation day was on 6 May 2014 and aimed to select three reform proposals out of fifteen that complied with international standards for the civil referendum held on 22 June 2014. More than 2,500 participants joined the deliberation.

After the selection of three reform proposals through the deliberation process, a civil referendum was held on 22 June to let the public vote for the one to be proposed to the Hong Kong government. As explained by the organizer, the referendum<sup>30</sup> is described as “civil” because “it was purely a civil society initiative without official status. OCLP (Occupy Central with Love and Peace) commissioned the HKU Public Opinion

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<sup>30</sup> Three proposed electoral reforms voted by the participants were finally suggested by three parties, namely “The Alliance for True Democracy Proposal” (Proposal 1), the “People Power Proposal” (Proposal 2), and the “Student Proposal” (Proposal 3). Proposal 1 includes three channels for nomination: civil nomination, political party nomination, and nomination by the nominating committee. Proposal 2 suggested that the Nominating Committee shall comprise all popularly elected District Councillors and Legislative Councillors at present. Proposal 3 includes civil nomination and nomination by directly elected legislators, synchronized legislation on election method for the Chief Executive in 2017, and the abolition of Functional Constituencies in the Legislative Council.

Programme<sup>31</sup> to administer the referendum” (Chan, 2015, p.4). Every Hong Kong citizen aged 18 or above had the right to vote through an electronic platform or at one of the physical polling stations set up in local communities. Nearly eight hundred thousand<sup>32</sup> people took part in the voting. The winning proposal was the one proposed by the Alliance for True Democracy, which is a coalition formed by pan-democrats. The proposal “allows candidates to be nominated by 35000 registered voters, or by any political party which secured at least 5% of the vote in the last election for Hong Kong’s Legislative Council. The proposal also allows a nominating committee to name candidates, and the formation of this committee should be ‘as democratic as it can be’” (BBC News, 2014). The result of the referendum reflected strong citizen support (87.8%)<sup>33</sup> for proposals with civil nomination. The survey conducted by the HKU Public Opinion Programme also showed that the public would like the Legislative Council to veto the government’s proposal, which had failed to meet the international standard allowing genuine choices by electors. The reform proposal, which had gone through the process of deliberation among citizens and citizen authorization through the referendum, would be put forward to the central government for consideration. If the authorities ignored the citizens’ democratic demand and proposed a reform that violated the

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<sup>31</sup> The Public Opinion Programme (POP) was established in June 1991 to collect and study public opinion on topics of potential interest to academics, journalists, policy-makers, and the general public.

<sup>32</sup> Equivalent to a fifth of the registered electorate of overall population in Hong Kong (JKUPOP webpage) <https://www.hkupop.hku.hk/chinese/columns/columns156.html>.

<sup>33</sup> The question for vote: “If the government proposal cannot satisfy international standards allowing a genuine choices by electors, LegCo should veto it.” The options for vote include: LegCo should veto; LegCo should not veto; Abstention. The results were 87.8%, 7.6%, and 3.9% respectively. (JKUPOP webpage) <https://www.hkupop.hku.hk/chinese/columns/columns156.html>.

international standard of universal suffrage, the last step, acts of civil disobedience (i.e. the so-called “Occupy Central”), would be held (OCLP, 2013). The above section demonstrated the spirit and process for carrying out the Occupy movement.

Professor Benny Tai stressed that the Occupy movement was the last resort, and it would only happen if the Chinese government did not offer universal suffrage for selecting the Hong Kong Chief Executive that complied with international standards. The new framework finally outlined by the Chinese government announced on 31 August 2014 failed to reach international standards for a truly democratic and open election, which implied that the Occupy Central would happen afterwards. The framework, known as the 8/31 Framework, stated:

When the selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is implemented by the method of universal suffrage:

- (1) A broadly representative Nominating Committee shall be formed. The provisions for the number of members, composition and formation method of the Nominating Committee shall be made in accordance with the number of members, compositions and formation method of the Election Committee ...
- (2) The Nominating Committee shall nominate two to three candidates for the office of Chief Executive in accordance with democratic procedures. Each candidate must have the endorsement of more than half of all the members of the Nominating Committee. (Ng, 2016, p.66)

Based upon this 8/31 Framework, an ad-hoc committee will be formed to limit the nomination of candidates before election. More specifically, the nominated candidates will be pre-selected by the Chinese government in order to screen out any opposition parties before they are put forward to the Hong Kong public for direct election. This selection process received severe criticism from the public for eroding Hong Kong's high



level of autonomy agreed in the Sino-British Joint Declaration. Professor Benny Tai of the Occupy Trio expressed his disappointment on the announcement of the 8/31 Framework, saying, “today is not only the darkest day in the history of Hong Kong’s democratic development, today is also the darkest day of one country, two systems.” He also stressed that the Framework implied that the dialogue between the Occupy Trio and the central government had come to an end; “all chances of dialogue have been exhausted and the occupation of Central will definitely happen” (Martina & Pomfret, 2014).

Before the kicking off the Occupy Central movement, the first group to take action to express their outrage regarding the 8/31 Framework was the students. Scholarism, an association formed by secondary school students, organized a mass demonstration outside the Tamar Government Headquarters on 13 September 2014. Most of the participants in this demonstration were secondary school students in their mid-teens. The Hong Kong Federation of Students, formed by university students, also took action to show their anger and disappointment about the 8/31 Framework by organizing a weeklong class boycott starting on 22 September 2014. Thirteen thousand university students joined the boycott.<sup>34</sup>

Scholarism extended the class boycott to secondary schools on 26 September. Students requested to have a dialogue with the then Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying in a rational and peaceful way, but Leung showed no response. The sit-in was then finally developed into a protest when the government restricted access to the Civic Square.<sup>43</sup> The Civic Square is located at Admiralty and has become a popular protest spot since the government located its offices to Admiralty in 2011. This square was well known to the

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<sup>34</sup> They stressed that the students who joined the boycott would “boycott classes, continue learning.”

They arranged talks and seminars to deliver speeches to students who participated in the sit-in outside the government headquarters in Admiralty during the class boycott.

public since the Anti-moral and National Education Movement in 2012. A hunger strike was held there by these two student organizations against the national and moral education. The movement gained success as the government announced that schools would no longer be required to teach this subject. Since then, the Civic Square has become well known to the public (Siu & Sum, 2018). However, the government restricted access to the square by constructing a three-metre high fence in front of the square as well as prohibiting citizens from entering the square at night for security reasons from September 2014. The government further argued that “the Civic Square was not a public space, and the government as a landowner had a right to exclude the public from it” (Chan, 2018). The Hong Kong Federation of Students and Scholarism then staged the “Reclaim our Civic Square” action on 26 September to fight for the exercise of people’s freedom of assembly at the place that belongs to the people (i.e. the Square).<sup>35</sup> Key leaders of both organizations were arrested when they led a group of students that broke into the Civic

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<sup>35</sup> The government partially opened the square to the public in December 2017 but maintained the policy that prior approval must be obtained before any action (Siu and Sum 2018). Later, a press photographer, Cheung Tak-wing, took legal action to change the policy limiting the public activities at the square to 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Sundays and public holidays only. Government stressed that this policy was necessary to ensure that government operations would not be disturbed by public activities on weekdays and Saturdays. Cheung claimed that this was against his freedom of speech and rights of assembly and involvement in public affairs. The High Court judgment was on Cheung’s side in determining that the government’s policy was unconstitutional. The judge stated that “this was disproportionate and contrary to established human rights law—which requires the government to justify restrictions on freedoms according to the specifics of each case.” The judge further pinpointed that the government “could not say it had an unlimited right to bar the public from government property” (Chan, 2018).

Square. When the police took away the students who were trapped in the Civic Square on 27 September, Professor Benny Tai took to the stage set up outside the Lego building and announced the “activation” of Occupy Central on 28 September (Ng, 2016).<sup>36</sup> The Occupy Central activists called on citizens to participate in a massive act of civil disobedience.

#### **4.4.2 *Repression of the movement***

In response to the Occupy Central movement, the police fired eighty-seven rounds of tear gas on the same day at the thousands of unarmed protesters gathered at Admiralty and Central. The police’s brutal suppression of the protest irritated the public and triggered further occupation in other districts, including Mongkok and Causeway Bay, which are very popular shopping destinations for the Mainland Chinese tourists. Hundreds of thousands of people flooded into the three occupied zones to support the movement and voice their anger about the brutal police suppression of the protesters. Because the unarmed protesters used umbrellas to shield themselves from the potential pain of tear gas and pepper spray, the umbrella became the name and symbol of the movement after 28 September 2014. The Hong Kong Professional Teachers’ Union called for a citywide class boycott in response to the government and police suppression of the unarmed protesters. Schools in Wan Chai, Central, and Western districts were closed for nearly a week as a result of the Occupy Central movement.

The brutal police suppression not only led to the class boycott but also ignited a large-scale mass movement in the coming two months. The police adopted a non-confrontation approach towards the occupation after receiving severe condemnation

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<sup>36</sup> Three of the student activists, Joshua Wong Chi-fung, Nathan Law Kwun-chung and Alex Chow Yong-kang were arrested and jailed due to the incident but later freed by the Court of Final Appeal.

from the public on using a violent approach in suppressing the peaceful protest. Encampment occurred in the three occupied zones (Details of the encampment will be elaborated and discussed in Chapter 6). The government cleared the three occupied zones based on legal procedure from mid-November through mid-December, at which point the movement ended.

Around one thousand people were arrested during the Umbrella Movement, and most of them were charged with the offences of “unlawful assembly”<sup>37</sup> or “unauthorized assembly.”<sup>38</sup> Three of the student organization leaders, Joshua Wong Chi-fung, Nathan Law Kwun-chung, and Alex Chow Yong-kan, were arrested on 26 September 2014

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<sup>37</sup> According to the Cap 245 Public Order Ordinance, unlawful assembly is defined as “when 3 or more persons, assembled together, conduct themselves in a disorderly, intimidating, insulting or provocative manner intended or likely to cause any person reasonably to fear that the persons so assembled will commit a breach of the peace, or will by such conduct provoke other persons to commit a breach of the peace, they are an unlawful assembly” <https://www.elegislation.gov.hk/hk/cap245>.

<sup>38</sup> According to the Cap 245 Public Order Ordinance, unauthorized assembly refers to the following situation: “if it is a meeting of more than 50 persons, which has not been granted a Letter of No Objection from the Commissioner of Police.” Even if the protest “had received permission from the police, participants could still be charged with ‘unlawful assembly’ if three or more people assemble ‘in a disorderly, intimidating, insulting or provocative manner’ or provoke other people to ‘commit a breach of the peace’—or if police judge that a breach of the peace is likely to occur” (Yuen, 2015, p.51).

because of the breaking into the Civic Square<sup>39</sup> and causing violence two days before the announcement kicking off the Occupy Central movement. They were charged at a local court one year later (Cohen, 2013). In August 2016, Wong and Chow were found guilty of unlawful assembly while Law was found guilty of inciting others to take part in an unlawful assembly. A total of ten security guards were injured when they were stopping the activists from entering the Civic Square. Most of them suffered slight injuries, for example, bruises, tenderness, and swelling (Siu, 2017).

The magistrate of the court sentenced Wong and Law to 80 hours and 120 hours of community service<sup>40</sup> respectively while Chow received a three-week jail sentence, which was suspended for one year. The judge had taken several factors into consideration, including the level of violence of the action, their good academic backgrounds and family support, that they had no previous criminal records, understood what they were doing, and were passionate in their political ideals, and that there was no self-interest behind the

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<sup>39</sup> There was a rally led by the student leaders on 26 September 2014 with a notice of no objection from police at the government headquarters, and the notice was valid until 10 p.m. The gates of the area were closed for security reasons on the same day. Joshua Wong took the first action to run to the podium and call on other protestors to get into the area at around 10:20. Nathan Law took Wong's place when Wong ran into the fenced area. Law called on people to enter the area. Finally, hundreds of participants climbed over the fence and clashed with the security guards who were trying to prevent them entering. Finally, dozens of participants entered the area, including Chow, who also shouted slogans (Siu, 2017).

<sup>40</sup> Community service refers to an "alternative to imprisonment whereby the offender is required to perform unpaid work in the community. The work is administered by the probation service. The maximum length of such a sentence is 240 hours" (cited in Law and Technology Centre, The University of Hong Kong).

<http://youth.clic.org.hk/en/usefulInfo/Punishment-and-sentencing-options/Community-Service-Order/>.

action (Cohen, 2013). Based on the above considerations, the magistrate “took a more tolerant and understanding attitude to the respondents’ motives” (Siu, 2017). However, the then Secretary for Justice, Rimsy Yuen, “felt these sentences were inadequate” and granted leave to appeal (Cohen, 2013). The Department of Justice said, “the community service and suspended sentence imposed would send a wrong message to the public, and pushed for a deterrent sentence” (Lau, 2017). On 17 August 2017, the Court of Appeal turned down the original sentences, claiming that “their earlier punishments [were] insufficient” (Siu, 2017). The Court of Appeal sent Wong, Law, and Chow to prison for six to eight months. The judge pointed out that the “magistrate had given too much weight to the defendants’ motives” and “overlooked the fact that the incident involved unlawful assembly on a large scale with a serious risk of violence and had failed to consider that the sentences should have had a deterrent element” (Cohen, 2013). The judge stressed that several security guards were injured and the demonstration was planned (Ng, 2016). In short, the Court of Appeal judged that “the magistrate made a principle error by granting a community service order for the respondents, which was clearly too light and therefore the Court of Appeal had to intervene in the judgment” (Siu, 2017). Finally, they were given immediate custodial sentences and were sent to jail on 17 August 2017.<sup>41</sup>

In addition to the three student leaders, nine key leaders of the Umbrella Movement had been arrested and charged, including the Occupy Trio, Professor Benny Tai, Professor Chan Kin-man and the Reverend Chu Yiu-ming, two legislative Councillors,

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<sup>41</sup> They applied for appeal to the Court of Final Appeal, and the final judge pointed out that the “Court of Appeal had exceeded its power” and “the Court of Appeal should not even have allowed the Secretary for Justice’s application for the sentences to be reviewed. Once it had done so, it was wrong to apply its tougher sentencing guidelines retrospectively.” It concluded that the “magistrate had not erred.” It also concluded that the original sentences were sufficient (Cohen, 2017).

Tanya Chan and Shiu Ka-chun, two former student leaders, Tommy Cheung and Eason Chung, one activist, Wong Ho-ming, and the former Chair of the Democratic Party, Lee Wing-tat. They were charged with different levels of public nuisance and incitement and the judgment was delivered on 9 April 2019. They were all found guilty (Chan, 2019), and the sentences were delivered on 24 April 2019. The Occupy Trio, Professor Benny Chan, Professor Chan Kin-man, and the Reverend Chu Yiu-ming, were jailed for up to sixteen months. Professor Benny Chan and Professor Chan Kin-man were sent to prison immediately while the Reverend Chu Yiu-ming's sentence was suspended for two years due to his health problems and his contributions to society for the preceding thirty years. Legislative Councillor Shiu Ka-chun and the activist Wong Ho-ming were jailed for eight months. Former student leader Tommy Cheung was sentenced to two hundred hours of community service while Eason Chung was sentenced to an eight-month jail term suspended for two years. Their judges took their age into consideration. The former Chairman of the Democratic Party, Lee Wing Tat, was sentenced to an eight-month jail term suspended for two years.

**Table 5. Charges and Verdicts**

	<b>Conspiracy to commit public nuisance</b>	<b>Incitement to commit public nuisance</b>	<b>Incitement to incite public nuisance</b>
Professor Benny Tai, Occupy Trio	Guilty	Guilty	Not guilty
Professor Chan Kin-man, Occupy Trio	Guilty	Guilty	Not guilty
The Reverend Chu Yiu-ming, Occupy Trio	Guilty	Not guilty	Not guilty
Legislative Councillor Tanya Chan		Guilty	Guilty
Legislative Councillor Shiu Ka-chun		Guilty	Guilty
Former student leader Tommy Cheung		Guilty	Guilty
Former student leader Eason Chung		Guilty	Guilty
Activist Wong Ho-ming		Guilty	Guilty
Former Chairman of the Democratic Party Lee Wing-tat		Guilty	

#### 4.5 Specificity of the Umbrella Movement

The above section showed that the Umbrella Movement shared some similarities with the wave of Occupy movements around the globe, including the reclamation of public space as a tactic and the adoption of deliberative democracy in decision making generally.<sup>42</sup> While the Umbrella Movement shared some common features with this global wave of protest, it also demonstrated some unique features shaped by its local and historical socio-cultural context, namely Hong Kong's specific decolonization process.

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<sup>42</sup> The practice of deliberative democracy can also be found in the encampment, and details of the features of encampment and how it operated will be discussed in Chapter 6.



This specificity was reflected by the choice of occupied zone. Past literature emphasized the importance of strategic consideration in the selection of space for staging protest (Flam, 2005; Davidson & Milligan, 2004; Woods et al., 2012; Berezin, 2001; Scheff, 1994; Cass & Walker, 2009; Ahmed, 2004; Cattán & Vanolo, 2013; Bondi, Davidson & Smith, 2007). The reason is that “places have symbolic meanings ... some places are more permeated with historical and emotional memories than others and therefore may better ‘express’ the movement than others” (Lofland, 1995, p.203). This consideration is especially crucial for the Occupy movement as the movement is a kind of encampment in nature (Brissette, 2013). It is believed that activists are strategic in deciding where to stage actions. Most of the time, collective actions emerge in places that are rich in symbolic meaning so that it is easier to “build the proper kind of emotions among participants and the public” (Flam, 2005, p.84). The symbolic meaning embodied by the space of occupation in the Umbrella Movement embraced certain special meanings that differentiated it from other Occupy movements that emerged in Western and Middle Eastern countries.

The recent waves of the Occupy movement around the globe were mainly caused by two factors: political representation and discontent about socioeconomic crisis. The first was reflected in the Occupy movement in countries fighting for democracy, including Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Libya, and Syria. The latter cause can be found in Occupy Wall Street in the United States, the 15M mobilizations in Spain, and the mobilizations in Greece, Britain, Belgium, and Israel. Whichever the reason, “the antecedent conditions for these mobilizations are to be found in the increasing levels of social inequality that have accompanied global capitalism as it became globalized, financialized, and legitimated by neoliberalism” (Tejerina et al., 2013, p.378). As such, many scholars believe that the waves of the Occupy movement in Western and Middle Eastern countries

were against the global economic crisis brought on by the rise of neoliberalism in recent years (Flesher Fominaya, 2014; Brissette, 2013; Tremayne, 2014).

Numerous studies agreed with the above argument. For instance, Foran (forthcoming) claims that there is an increasing awareness of the “‘glaring contradictions of neoliberal capitalist globalization’ as the problem of social inequality caused by the global economic development is becoming much more serious” (cited in Flesher Fominaya 2014, p.186). Kellner (2013) also believed that the breakout of Occupy Wall Street in the United States as well as Occupy movements in Spain, Greece and other European societies in 2011 “witnessed a series of challenges to neoliberalism on a global scale” (p.251). Chau (2017) claimed that the Occupy Wall Street movement was against the “gross economic inequalities ... exposed by the crisis in the global financial system” (p.121). The movement “put a spotlight on income inequality in the USA and the world” as there is a “skewed wealth distribution, with the top 1% owning 35% of the wealth in the USA and top 20% controlling 85%” (Domhoff, 2006). The same explanation also applies to the insurrection of 15M in Spain. Anduiza, Cristancho and Sabucedo (2014) argued that the movement was “clearly shaped by the worldwide economic crisis, which had dramatic social and economic implications in Spain” (p.751). The financial crisis is reflected in the increasing unemployment rates in Spain. Anduiza, Cristancho and Sabucedo’s (2014) study showed that the unemployment rate in Spain was the highest in Europe and well above the EU average (p.751). Therefore, it is widely believed that the global wave of Occupy movements is a kind of “anti-system” movement that “questions and problematizes structures and relationships of inequality and power” (Aldas & Murphy, 2013, p.33). Baek (2018) claimed that “shared identification as victims of capitalism” and “shared grievances toward social and economic inequality” are the features of the Occupy movement (p.1142). This explains why most of the Occupy

movements chose to occupy the key financial and commercial centres in main cities (Anduiza, Cristancho & Sabucedo, 2014).

In the case of the Umbrella Movement, the selection of the occupation zone reflected the dynamics of the decolonization process in Hong Kong since the handover from Britain to China. Hong Kong was a British colony for 150 years until 1997 and then became a special administrative region under the control of the Chinese government. Most post-colonial populations greet their new government with enthusiasm after the end of colonialism. However, the situation in Hong Kong is different. The Hong Kong people showed a lukewarm response to the new government and even challenged it (Choi, 2010). The return of Hong Kong from British rule to that of Mainland China is similar to the situation of moving from one colony to another because Hong Kong and her motherland have different social, political, cultural, and even linguistic development and systems. Hong Kong people showed great anxiety about the handover. Research conducted a year before the handover showed that 44% of respondents had no confidence in Hong Kong's future after handover, and 43.8% of respondents did not trust the Chinese government (Kuah, 1996, p.56). As a result, decolonization was posed as a great challenge to the Chinese government (Choi, 2010). Therefore, discussion of the process of decolonization has occupied a key role in Hong Kong politics since the 1990s.

To tackle the above situation, the Beijing government adopted the approach of economic unification in order to complete decolonization as raised by Choi (2010). He (2010) argued, "to earn public approval, the new Hong Kong Special Administrative Region HKSAR government sought to direct Hong Kong people's desires away from democratization and toward economic concerns" (p.579). The creation of the One Country Two System principle already reflected the perception of the Chinese government that economic prosperity is the key value cherished by Hong Kong people. This strategy of economic unification adopted by the Chinese government included the

setting up of Hong Kong Disneyland promising Hong Kong people economic revitalization and employment in 1999. The HKSAR government made use of the construction of Hong Kong Disneyland to decolonize Hong Kong society and “reshape Hong Kong as a spectacular tourist magnet instead of a citizen-based participatory community” (Choi, 2010, p.588). Through the setting up of Hong Kong Disneyland, the government constructed a “world-city” dream for Hong Kong people to imagine. The newspaper headline “Millennium dream comes true!” celebrated the joint venture between the government and Walt Disney Company in signing a contract to build Disneyland in Hong Kong (Choi, 2010, p.573). More specifically, the “‘world city’ dream not only promised Hong Kong people economic revitalization and employment, but also functioned as an identity marker distinguishing Hong Kong from other Chinese cities” (Choi, 2010, p.588). Under the official discourse, the “importation of Disneyland would enable Hong Kong to become a world city in the twenty-first century” (Choi, 2010, p.579).

In addition to the importation of Disneyland, the Chinese government also committed itself to strengthening trade relations with Hong Kong to further boost Hong Kong’s economy (Varaprasad, 1997, p.396), especially after the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak medical crisis in 2003. For instance, the Mainland Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) was established to enhance the flow of Hong Kong goods and professional services to the Chinese market. The government also relaxed regulations governing tourism in order to allow a larger number of mainland tourists to visit Hong Kong under the Individual Visit Scheme, implemented in 2003. The Scheme has allowed residents of four mainland cities to visit Hong Kong in their individual capacity. The Scheme has kept expanding since the implementation and now covers forty-nine mainland cities. Up to the present, the mainland tourists account for 75% of visitors to Hong Kong. Approximately 40.7 million mainland tourists (more

than five times of Hong Kong's population) visited Hong Kong (Beam, 2015). The above policies demonstrated that the government believed economic prosperity to be the key success factor to explain the "Hong Kong miracle." The Hong Kongers are depicted as practical, as people always define a successful life as making money, finding a good job with a high salary, and having a high living standard. The question of how to become rich is a common question that we have heard since our childhood. Sing's study (2010) supported this impression, as he found that the public prioritized materialistic values.

Based on the above background, economic prosperity can be seen as a value cherished by both Hong Kong and Chinese government. Therefore the financial hub, Central, was selected by the organizers as the zone to be blocked by the Occupy movement to increase the success rate in pushing the government to compromise.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

This chapter aimed to demonstrate the background of the Umbrella Movement through situating the Occupy movement in the historical background of Hong Kong. It showed that the Umbrella Movement can be regarded as one of the Occupy movements in the global wave of protest as they shared certain similarities, including using encampment as a movement tactic and embracing deliberative democracy as the main feature of the movement. On the other hand, the Umbrella Movement reflected certain specificities making it different from the rest of the Occupy movements in Western and Middle Eastern countries. The objective of the movement was the most distinctive difference. While the Occupy movements in Western and Middle Eastern countries embraced the objective of protest against global financial hegemony and the fight for economic equality, the Umbrella Movement did not demonstrate this feature. The Umbrella Movement aimed to fight for universal suffrage and reflected their resistance through the choice of occupied zones. As shown in the above findings, the participants made use of

occupation to develop a community demonstrating a culture that is opposite to the economic-oriented mentality, while this mentality was adopted by the Chinese government as a kind of decolonization strategy. The community constructed within the occupied zones through encampment will be described in Chapter 6.

## **Chapter 5      Against “Injustice” as the Movement Framework: The Rise of Cognitive and Emotional Liberation**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The present chapter aims to investigate why the movement could attract so many people. One of the significances of the Umbrella Movement was its large scale and the diversity of the participants. It attracted many people from different sectors of society to join the movement. As mentioned in my theoretical framework, the present chapter will adopt the cultural approach to answer the research question, especially using the concept of collective identity. Sociologists have argued that collective identity plays an important role in forming collective claims and recruiting new members into a movement (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). Collective identity does not refer to an autonomous object but rather to a process in which the person is aware of, and recognizes themselves as part of wider social groups and then develops an emotional attachment to them (Melucci 1989, 1996; Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2001b; della Porta & Diani 2006). The grouping may not be based on particular social traits, such as gender, class, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, but on common values, lifestyles, attitudes, worldviews, and experiences (della Porta & Diani, 2006). More specifically, identity refers to “the shared definition of a group that derives from its members’ common interests, experiences, and solidarity,” and a sort of imagery of sameness among the members will be then created (Taylor & Whittier, 1992, p.105).

Framing plays a key role in the process of generating common interests and worldviews so that people can be emotionally attached to and fight for the same goal. Framing the situation as a problem is a precondition for recruiting potential members to get involved in a social protest (Vanderford, 1989). As mentioned by Polletta and Jasper (2001), successful frames effectively delineate “us” versus “them,” clearly identifying

antagonists while also making “a compelling case for the ‘injustice’ of the condition and the likely effectiveness of collective ‘agency’ in changing that ‘condition’” (p.291). The present chapter will explain how the activists constructed a frame that enabled the people to arouse a shared cognitive understanding of the emergence of the movement, which further led to cognitive liberation that resonated with important aspects of the Hong Kong cultural context. The present study discovered that consciousness-raising was a crucial step in drawing people out from their readings of social issues and adapting them to the frame constructed by the movement organizers. The framing process enabled people to share the same understanding of the present situation as the activists. They believed that they were fighting for justice, which was a value Hong Kong society had cherished since Hong Kong was under the colonial government.

In connection with that, the creation of an injustice frame is needed.<sup>43</sup> The creation of an injustice frame is not an easy task. Tarrow (1992) pointed out that frame alignment is challenging because it requires movement organizations to compete with other parties, such as other movements, the media, or the state. Also, participants always have their own interpretations of the issues that may differ from those of the movement leaders. A consciousness-raising process was carried out to enable the participants and activists to share the same cognitive understanding of the situation and also to generate a shared emotional connection. Through the consciousness-raising process, the participants not only shifted to the frames promoted by the movement organizers but also detached emotionally from the authorities, which refers to the process of emotional liberation. In addition to emotional liberation, cognitive liberation was found to be significant in

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<sup>43</sup> A frame is defined as “an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the ‘world out there’ by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one’s present or past environment” (Snow & Benford, 1992, p.137).



motivating people to take social action. The belief that there is an opportunity for success, which is an aspect of cognitive liberation, is necessary for a movement to emerge. Success can be interpreted as the possibility to make changes in society or the actors themselves (Jasper, 1997). People tend to take action if they feel that they have the ability to change the status quo as it enables them to “break out of pessimistic and quiescent patterns of thought and begin to do something about their situation” (McAdam, 1982, p.48).

In explaining how the above processes happen, the analysis of biographical traits<sup>44</sup> of the participants is needed, as they are the foundation of the formation of different sensibilities. This echoes Jasper’s (1997) suggestion that idiosyncrasies are important “because they lead some people to see the world—or the data—differently, to feel differently or to act differently” (p.224). The understanding of one’s biography is crucial to understand one’s sense of self and emotional attachment. A person’s appropriation of cultural meanings is distributed among different occupations, religions, educational backgrounds, regions or other practices which lead a person to be predisposed to pay attention to or even care more about some issues more than others (Jasper, 1997).

Consequently, participants’ biographical traits will be examined in the present chapter in order to investigate how these traits function as a filter that leads to the formation of a certain point of view, identity, emotion, feelings or motivation or judging unconsciously. These traits include the participants’ moral values, prior protest experience and network, feelings towards and memories of critical historical events, emotional attachment to the authorities, and so on. Since biography is situated within the broader cultural and historical context, paying attention to the cultural and historical

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<sup>44</sup> Biography is conceptualized as “the individual appropriation of cultural meanings that define one’s personality, sense of self, and emotional attachments” (Jasper, 1997, p.60).

background is also needed in conducting biographical analysis (Auyero, 2015; Denzin, 1994). Based on that, the following sections will explain how the cognitive and emotional liberation created and resonated with important aspects of Hong Kong culture through analyzing the participants' biographical backgrounds.

## **5.2 Framing – The Road to Justice and Fairness**

As mentioned, framing the situation as a problem is a precondition for membership recruitment in social actions, so it is important to investigate how the movement leaders framed the action in this Occupy movement. The Occupy Trio emphasized that the Occupy movement was against an unjust electoral system. They framed the Occupy movement as a way to get through the injustice, which would help solve the roots of unjust social issues in the end. To proceed with the framing process, they first claimed that the movement goal of universal suffrage was reasonable because it was promised by the Basic Law. Tai said:

The reform of the electoral system to a universal suffrage system was already stated in the Basic Law and this is what Hong Kong citizens expect the HKSAR government to have achieved within ten years since the Handover. However, the central government betrayed this solemn commitment twice in 2007 and 2012. The central government always asks the people to wait for a moment. The constantly sheepish Hong Kong citizens may feel helpless when they encounter the first betrayal, but they cannot stop themselves from questioning the sincerity of the central government in keeping the promise when they encounter the second betrayal. The Hong Kong people used to have higher level of trust of the central government than towards the HKSAR government in the past. However, after two betrayals, even the most sheepish and compromising Hong Kong citizens cannot keep silent anymore. They need to step up and take action to urge the central

government to honour the commitment. The central government can regain the trust of the Hong Kong people only if they honour the commitment.<sup>45</sup> (Tai, 2013c)

Tai emphasized the right to universal suffrage was promised by the Basic Law and therefore it was unjust if the central government failed to keep the promise. He also stressed that it was not the first time they had encountered such betrayal. The central government had already denied the right to universal suffrage in 2004 regarding the selection of the chief executive in 2007 in facing the rising continuous outcry of pro-democracy movement. The government made the same decision in 2007 to deny the request for universal suffrage in the selection of the chief executive in 2012 but promised to implement it in 2017. Therefore, Tai emphasized that it was unjust for the central government to betray the promise again (He, 2019).

Reverend Chu Yiu-ming expressed the same idea that they were fighting for something that had been promised by the government. He also stressed that everyone deserved political rights, as a person is a subject and not an object. He said,

Why should we express our opinion towards the political system in the place where we live? We were like objects but not a subject ... I believe people are the subjectivity of society. ... Benny Tai only wants the government to keep its promise ... keeping a promise is what a person should do, so he is asking the government to keep the promise.<sup>46</sup> (Christian Times, 2014)

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<sup>45</sup> Translated by the author.

<sup>46</sup> Translated by the author.

The injustices raised by the movement organizers also referred to the inequality embedded in the existing and proposed electoral systems. For example, Chan explained that people were divided into two groups with unequal levels of political rights under the present electoral system. He said,

Our electoral system is unjust. We all are Hong Kong people, but we are divided into two groups, one is so-called the first-class citizens with the right to vote in the coterie election while most of the rest are excluded from the system and called second-class citizens. Are we equal under the election law? This unequal system not only makes it hard for the people to supervise the government but also makes people unwilling to support the policy.<sup>47</sup> (Chan, 2013a)

Chan further pinpointed that a lack of checks and balances of power against the chief executive is the loophole of the proposed electoral system and leads to the abuse of power and unfair social policy. He said,

there has been a lack of checks and balances on the leadership of HKSAR, and this led to the creation of a group of people who aim at flattering those with power while destroying the public spirit constructed and upheld by public servants for many years. ... There is no supervision over the Chief Executive from the central government, so the Chief Executive can do whatever he wants ... if there is no universal suffrage, how can we supervise these uncontrolled powers? If no universal suffrage, how can we make the government respond to social requests and break the monopoly of consortium and to build a fairer society? ... the coterie election was dominated by the pro-Beijing parties and the consortium to ensure the vote, and even if the chief executive candidate is willing to go to the

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<sup>47</sup> Translated by the author.

community, it would only be a show. He cannot motivate the community to support the government through such an electoral system.<sup>48</sup> (Chan, 2013b)

Benny Tai echoed Professor Chan's statement that the present social injustice was caused by the uncontrolled power of the election of the chief executive and the government:

If we look wider, we can see that many people living in our society are in hard times. Maybe you would say it is none of your business, it is their laziness that makes them live like this, so they cannot blame others. Maybe to someone, it may be true. But to more people, it may be due to the unfairness of the system, which has situated them in such difficult times. They can feel the system was unfair to them but they cannot find the way out. If the grievances keep accumulating and are not vented, the emotion will explode one day ... people were unsatisfied towards the governance because the governance did not respect people's autonomy, freedom, and self-prestige. Only a fair and just governance system, process, and method can solve the governance problem.<sup>49</sup> (Tai, 2013b)

He stressed that the unfair system was the root of many social problems and hence the solution to the problem was to change the election system. He claimed:

The solution to the social problem was to have a fair and just electoral system. We have to let the people have equal rights to vote for the Chief Executive so that the

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<sup>48</sup> Translated by the author.

<sup>49</sup> Translated by the author.

<sup>50</sup> Translated by the author.

trust between the HKSAR government and Hong Kong people can be rebuilt.<sup>50</sup>  
(Tai, 2013c)

To frame the situation as problematic can arouse the attention of the participants because the values for which the movement stands echo the participants' moral values. The fight for justice has been upheld by most Hong Kong citizens, which can be seen from the "declaration of the core values" issued by a group of academics and professionals when the right to universal suffrage was denied by the central government in 2004:

The incessant efforts made by the Hong Kong people have produced a unique local culture that is underpinned by some core values most treasured by them and in line with the global modern civilization. These core values include liberty, democracy, human rights, rule of law, fairness, social justice, peace and compassion, integrity and transparency, plurality, respect for individuals, and upholding professionalism. (Lee & Chan, 2012)

The framing of the movement goal as fighting for social justice and fairness aroused public support because such values are what they cherish based on the cultural context of Hong Kong society, i.e. meritocracy. The interviewees stressed that an unjust decision violated their underlying moral principles or intuitions. This can be explained by the life histories or experiences of the participants. For example, interviewee 42 attributed the upward intergenerational mobility from his parents to him to the fairness and justice upheld by the society. His parents' life histories showed him the importance of such moral values. He elaborated that he and his parents lived in a public house when he was small. His parents worked very hard and then bought a private flat. Though he was poor

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when he was small, the living environment was encouraging as parents had the ability to improve their living standards if they worked hard. He explained that,

as far as you work hard, you should be able to change your life, everyone was equal at that time. ... Though we lived in a public house with low living standard, it's not hard to find a job for more than ten thousand dollars per month. The property price at that time was reasonable, as the policy did not protect the interest of a specific group. Many people can afford private houses if they work hard to save money, just like my parents did. People were satisfied with the governance and did not need to pay much attention to politics as they thought they did not need to do so. However, the 8/31 Framework was protecting certain people's interest. It is unfair and unjust! (Interviewee 42, photographer, male, 33-year-old)

He emphasized that he cherished the values of fairness and justice, which were the cornerstone of the success of Hong Kong. These values enabled his parents to enjoy upward social mobility and therefore he worried about the framework as it seemed to protect the interest of certain groups, especially those in favour of the authorities, who usually come from the business sector, like land developers, which is unjust. The electoral framework may benefit certain groups of people because the Chinese government made use of economic rewards in exchange for loyalty from capitalists (the strategy of the economic united front as mentioned in Chapter 4) (He, 2019), and therefore it is believed that fairness has been eroding since the handover.

Moreover, my study discovered that outrage regarding the 8/31 Framework was strong among the white-collar workers, especially professional groups. White-collar workers constituted a major proportion of the Umbrella Movement participants. Among the white-collars workers I interviewed, a certain number are professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, teachers, bankers, photographers, managers, and surveyors. They

attributed their success to the principles of fairness and openness that they experienced when they were young. Many of them shared that they grew up in families that were not well off, and they experienced upward intergenerational mobility due to the fair and open society in which they lived. To them, the examination system and work opportunities are open to all and the selection criteria are fair, so they cherished the principles of fairness and openness. For example, interviewee 33 mentioned that,

Though my family background is not that good as my parents as new immigrants from China and cannot find a decent job, I can still use my own effort to help improving their living standards. In Hong Kong, our education system is based on merit, and I can get a degree if I study hard and then find a job and improve my family's living standards.

However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the Chinese government made use of economic interest to secure the loyalty of the capitalists, which led to the critique of unfairness. Based upon the 8/31 Framework announced in August 2014, an ad-hoc committee would be formed to limit the nomination of candidates before an election. More specifically, the nominated candidates would be pre-selected by the Chinese government in order to screen out any opposition parties before being put forward to the Hong Kong public for direct election. In other words, the candidates must obtain the support of more than half the members of a pro-Beijing nominating committee to be shortlisted. The interviewees expressed that the framework was unfair as it limited the right to vote and led to a privileged class who were mostly pro-authority. They stressed that it was an unjust decision which violated their underlying moral values. For instance, an interviewee who is a surveyor had also expressed how he cherished fairness and equality. He shared that



There is an idiom shared by many Hong Kongers that “Hong Kong was a place full of opportunities and as such hard work had been an almost-sure recipe for success” and this was also one of the key reasons why the mainlanders fluxed into Hong Kong to earn for a living during the colonial governance. (Interviewee 50, surveyor, male, 50-year-old)

He quoted an example to express the damages brought to society if the policy inclined to protect certain groups’ interest, such as the land developers. He elaborated:

In the past, the low-income groups can earn a living through being a street hawker as a way out of poverty. Though the government started to stop licences for legal street hawkers in the later stage, people can still earn a living continuing the work illegally. The government tended to turn a blind eye to it during the colonial governance. However, the government started to crack down on the illegal street hawkers strictly nowadays. I really can’t see the rationale for not allowing the existence of street hawkers. Some may argue that the crackdown on street hawkers is for reasons of safety and hygiene. I still don’t understand. If this is the real reason, the government can make it an official and legal business so that they can monitor the operation. So, I really feel disappointed about the land use policy. As a surveyor, I believe that land use can be better so that the public or community can have more engagement. (Interviewee 50, surveyor, male, 50-year-old)

The above quotations show that participants believed that the activists were doing the right thing urging the government to take back the 8/31 Framework because they believed the framework was unjust. To them, fairness and equality are important principles and such principles had led them to experience upward social mobility based

on the social context of Hong Kong society. Interviewee 46, a manager, also expressed how these two principles are important to him. He mentioned the spirit of Lion Rock was what he treasured most regarding his living experience in this city. He attributed his upward social mobility to this spirit, and this is why he cherishes the spirit of fairness and equality. The term “Lion Rock Spirit” was created to describe Hong Kong society in the late 1970s. Lion Rock is a mountain shaped like a lion and hence it is called “Lion Rock.” Lion Rock came to represent a spirit of perseverance and hard work after a popular TV show called *Below the Lion Rock* was broadcast in the late 1970s. The TV show demonstrated and promoted perseverance and hard work through exploring the lives of working-class people living in slums around Lion Rock. As such, the Lion Rock Spirit embraced the principle of fairness that if you work hard, you will be rewarded, as everyone has an equal chance. He further elaborated that,

I was lucky to born in the era that full of opportunities. As long as I work hard, I can get a chance to change my life. My parents were working-class. We lived in a wooden house when I was small. I remembered that our living environment was very poor and I need to do part-time jobs for tuition fees when I was a student. Fortunately, the economy was good when I graduated and finally I got a decent job. This is the Lion Rock Spirit! You can find a way to earn a living or even get a successful life if you are willing to make an effort. It was really a good society for us to live in at that time. (Interviewee 46, manager, male, 34-year-old)

Due to his own life experience and also to the specific socio-cultural context to which he is referring, he felt anger and fear towards the 8/31 Framework, as he perceived it as an unfair voting system. After the clearance of the occupied zones, a yellow banner saying, “I want real universal suffrage” was unfurled on the Lion Rock by a group of people called the “Hong Kong Spiders.” The Hong Kong Spiders claimed that people had

shown great perseverance in fighting against the unjust voting system, and they claimed this kind of perseverance as true Lion Rock Spirit. Though the banner was eventually removed by the government, many people put similar banners with the slogan “I want universal suffrage” on other mountains and different buildings, for example on university buildings, to echo the new Lion Rock Spirit raised by the Hong Kong Spiders.

The above findings showed that framing was crucial in motivating people to join the social movement, for it aroused the public’s attention and triggered resonance among the participants. Framing the movement as a campaign to fight an unjust political decision triggered participants’ moral outrage because justice was the moral principle they were upholding. The violation of moral principles can lead to “anger, outrage, hurt and a moral shock,” and “such emotions can propel even unlikely candidates such as engineers into protest” (Jasper, 1997, p.151). It is important to note that the moral principle they cherished has to be situated in the wider socio-political context, within which they experienced the good side brought by social justice. However, people started to regard the electoral system as a strategy for the government to exclude the nomination of democrats, which led to social injustice. Awareness- or consciousness-raising was needed to make the framing effective. My study found that the awareness-raising process that motivated people to join the Umbrella Movement took several channels, including the self-sacrifice of the Occupy Trio, the non-hierarchical setting during the sit-ins, and close relationships with the participants acting as brokers. These channels enabled the public to become aware of the social issues and gradually adopt the frame set by the organizations and problematize their suffering in relation to ineffective governance. The details of the above process will be discussed in the following sections.

### 5.3 Process of Frame Alignment: Arousing Political Consciousness

Studies have shown that raising awareness is crucial in activating movement participants to perceive what they suffered as led by governance crisis, and this process motivated them to join the movement (Snow et al., 1986). This process was especially crucial to those participants who rarely paid attention to politics. They rarely paid much attention to current affairs and therefore a process of consciousness-raising was needed to lead them to frame what they were suffering as a kind of ineffective governance. This process is frame alignment, which refers to a process of drawing a link between individual interests, values, and beliefs on the one hand and social movement activities, goals, and ideology on the other (Snow et al., 1986). Through frame alignment, protest groups, organizers, and potential participants can share the same definition of a social problem and have the same prescription to solve it. It is argued that frames are more likely to be accepted if they fit well with the beliefs of potential recruits (Snow et al., 1986). Frame alignment is hence a crucial movement task that leads to successful mobilization (Buechler, 2011). My findings showed that the consciousness-raising in the Umbrella Movement took various forms, which will be elaborated in the following sections.

#### 5.3.1 *Role of symbolic leader: Occupy Trio acted as “bell toller”*

For the Umbrella Movement, the civil disobedience movement taken up by the movement leaders was a kind of consciousness-raising. The Occupy Trio broke the law to arouse the public to ask why they had to do that and then consider what’s wrong with the society. The nature of this strategy—civil disobedience—was fight against unjust authorities with disobedient attitude and non-violent means (OCLP, 2013). According to the initiator of the movement, Professor Benny Tai, the aim of using non-violence civil disobedience as their strategy was to awaken the conscience of the public (Chan, 2013b). He stressed that the aim of the person who is committing non-violence civil disobedience

is to arouse public concern, and the ultimate aim is to correct the injustice embedded in the law or system (Tai, 2019). Another Occupy Trio member, Professor Chan kin-man, also stressed that the spirit of civil disobedience is self-sacrifice. He admitted that taking up the legal responsibility was a penalty to every person who is waiting for sentence in terms of the physical, mental, and social relations dimensions. However, he was willing to receive the consequences because he wanted to waken the public. Using self-sacrifice to awaken people to realize the injustice of the society made him willing to endure the pains brought by the prison. He said,

I am also an ordinary person, and the legal sentence will also cause impact to my family and financial burden, but I do hope that the society can think why someone is willing to face the risk of getting jail for the value of democracy. When a person is sticking to a label of “prisoner,” the penalty not only refers to the loss of personal freedom, but also led to insult to the family, family members will also feel sad and the prisoner will also be sad ... but I know why I have to do that, we are not for personal interest. ... The reason for breaking the law is for the societal peace and rule of law in long term.<sup>51</sup> (Chan, 2019)

Chan further stressed that he was aware of the legal consequences of the movement, and he understood that he would get arrested or even go to jail for leading the movement. However, he emphasized that this is what a person who conducts a civil disobedience protest should expect. He said,

Within the tradition of civil disobedience, sometimes you have to go through getting into jail to make people think, like me, I also have parents and a daughter,

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<sup>51</sup> Translated by the author.

<sup>52</sup> Translated by the author.

just an ordinary person, but when I am willing to sacrifice my family and career and step on the road that led to prison, we have to think how big the value of democracy is, this is a very important question.<sup>52</sup> (Chan, 2019)

Chan emphasized that the reason why he joined the movement was that he wanted to arouse the consciousness of the public through his self-sacrifice. Another Occupy Trio member, the Reverend Chu Yiu-ming, also stressed that they were making sacrifices not for personal interest, but for the society and the public. He said during the trial,

I resolved to follow with purity, simplicity and sanctity of spirit. No self-interest, no desire for power, no hidden agenda. My last ounce of strength for Hong Kong. We come before You and before the world with reverence, humility and a prayerful heart. There is no hatred. There is love. We are not here to knock down anyone, nor to oppose any political regime. (HK Free Press, 2019)

He described the role he played as “bell toller,” and what he has done was to “ring the bell.” When the bell tolled, it sent a warning to both government and the public that the disastrous was happening:

we uphold the law, and with our body, would deliberately break the law, in order to highlight the injustice of the present political structure. In so doing, and if we hereby suffer the loss of personal freedom and yet manage to secure greater freedom for the next generation, then we would count our loss insignificant and our suffering worthy. ... Our way is to expose the injustice of unjust laws, making it impossible for evil to hide behind legitimate fronts. ... This movement is an awakening of the civil spirit. Citizens offer what they can, with conviction,

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expecting to call the conscience of politicians and bureaucrats to account. (HK Free Press, 2019)

The explanations of the Occupy Trio show that they are using their life histories to do the awakening and to raise the conscience of the public. They have the so-called “successful life” with decent careers and prestigious social status, which enabled their sacrifice to arouse more public attention. The selection of movement leaders was also part of Professor Benny Tai’s plan. He stressed that the movement need to be led by “opinion leaders” including a religious leader (Chan, Y.Y., 2013). He also mentioned that a leader can only have “charisma” to rally public support if he does not belong to any political party but has participated actively in social issues (Lam, 2019). This is why Professor Benny Tai nominated Professor Chan Kin-man and the Reverend Chu Yiu-ming to join him to initiate the movement. The sharing from Chan showed their self-sacrifice did arouse the public’s political consciousness. He encountered one of the participants during the occupation at Admiralty and the participant told Chan that the trio’s sacrifice triggered her to join the movement. Chan said,

I remembered during the occupation, ... when I was walking outside the government headquarters, I ran into a lady who looked elegant, did not look like an occupier. I was talking with her and learnt that she was doing business in Admiralty. I apologized to her immediately and hoped that she would understand the inconvenience caused by the movement. She replied, “Professor, don’t apologize to me! I didn’t care about politics in the past, but I do when I started to understand the movement after the firing of tear gas. I am so thankful for what you are doing for Hong Kong, I am thankful to you for saving my conscience! I

will feel uncomfortable if I do not come here to walk around every night.”<sup>53</sup>

(Chan, 2019)

Other interviewees expressed that they were touched by what the Occupy Trio did and trusted them for their unselfish sacrifice because they did not belong to any political party and already had a “successful life.” The past social movements were usually led by politicians, who did not bring any significant social change. Many reflected that they were disappointed in the politicians and would not join the movement if it were led by a politician. Another reason for not supporting movements led by politicians is that they believed that the politicians are always fighting out of self-interest rather than social interest. Put differently, social movements are only part of the duties or jobs of the politicians to exchange for self-interest. Therefore, they do not see hope in change if the movement is led by politicians. However, they regarded the Occupy Trio as symbolic leaders. Those leaders that “embody aspirations, indignation and other ideals of a movement in a way that can inspire members—or arouse opponents” should be regarded as symbolic leaders (Goodwin & Jasper, 2009, p.94). To many interviewees, what the Occupy Trio had done was very inspiring and triggered not only anger towards the authorities but also a sense of empathy for the sacrifice of the Occupy Trio. For example, interviewee 45 said,

the Occupy Trio already have a successful life. ... As a lawyer, professor and Reverend, ... very high social status ... I do really admire their sacrifice ... not for self-interest, they bear a high risk to fight for social good as they will go to jail and lose all they have now! Their behaviour and spirit do inspire me a lot!

(Interviewee 45, teacher, female, 34-year-old)

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<sup>53</sup> Translated by the author.



Many respondents reflected that the Occupy Trio had already secured a successful and stable life and there was no need for them to step up and lead the movement. Many interviewees, especially the white-collars workers and professionals, claimed that they understood the effort of the Occupy Trio in acquiring such a successful life and therefore they felt empathy for the sacrifice that the three of them made for the public. The inspiration brought by the Occupy Trio's action was demonstrated in their life histories. The Occupy Trio came from not that well-off families, but they obtained high social status through their own effort. The respondents believed that the life histories of two professors represent the successful stories of people born in Hong Kong from lower-class families. The social status of professors is very high in Hong Kong, and they should have a prosperous future according to their career path. To the respondents, what the two professors did was not for self-interest, but for social interest. Therefore, many interviewees were touched by their action and wanted to support them. Interviewee 20 (research officer, female, 23-year-old) also emphasized the importance of the leadership in motivating her to join the movement. She claimed,

The trio as leaders is persuasive ... not like politicians, they will not get any interest for initiating this movement. ... But, reversely, they may lose career, freedom, prestige, .... They are really sacrificing something they have now for the sake of our democratic development. ... It's so touching, which can impel me to be one of them. (Interviewee 20, research officer, female, 23-year-old)

Interviewee 42 (photographer, male, 33-year-old) was a core volunteer of this movement. He worked very closely with the Occupy Trio during the whole occupation period. He mentioned that it was the first time in his life that he had been so devoted to a movement. He stopped working for the whole period to stand by the trio and offer support when needed. He expressed that,

when I heard the Occupy movement the first time, I did not feel that it was really a workable solution to achieve our aim ... our past movement experience showed that we were impotent. However, it's really so rare to see a movement led by two professors and a Reverend, the idea is really so new and fresh, ... they can have a prosperous life even if they do nothing, but they choose to give up what they have in order to stand up and fight for universal suffrage. It's really a calling, a very inspirational calling. So, I thought that it might work this time. ... If led by a politician, I will not join, as I do not have any expectation. (Interviewee 42, photographer, male, 33-year-old)

Interviewee 37 (lawyer, female, 30-year-old) was also a core member of this movement. She also emphasized that the leadership of the Occupy Trio was a crucial factor in her joining the movement devotedly. The three leaders with high social status and prestige were going to sacrifice themselves by going to jail for doing something that was full of love and peace and for the betterment of society, and therefore she was willing to get involved in it. She even quit her job to engage wholeheartedly in the movement. She said,

I love reading the articles written by Professor Tai, especially the idea of civil disobedience of this movement. Though I love reading his article, I did not expect myself to be so committed to the movement in the very beginning. The turning point was the speech delivered by Professor Tai in an activity, as I can feel how determined he is in this movement. They are already prepared to lose what they own now in initiating the movement. It's really so inspirational. So I have a thought in my mind immediately that I have to go and support them. (Interviewee 37, lawyer, female, 30-year-old)

Interviewee 39 (banker, female, 31-year-old) is a banker and always keeps in mind that people usually calculate for self-interest before taking action, which she learned in her job. Therefore, she was really impressed by what the Occupy Trio did. She said,

the Occupy Trio really have no experience in initiating a movement. ... I observed that they are inexperienced and sometimes do things that waste time because they sometimes do things that cannot arouse public attention, but it is also why I admire them. They only do the things that are right! Though sometimes I think their idea may not work or is even stupid, they just insist on pursuing the value that they trust. This is very inspiring to me. Frankly speaking, I would not join the movement if it is held by politicians. What the Occupy Trio does is a kind of calling, they are sacrificing their freedom and social status for the public good. It's really touching! (Interviewee 39, banker, female, 31-year-old)

Many respondents claimed that the images presented by the Occupy Trio were thoughtful with a strong sense of affinity. Their images were aligned with the spirit of the slogan "love and peace" of the movement. Their initiation of the movement as well as their willingness to bear the legal consequences for breaking the law touched many interviewees. For example, interviewee 42 (photographer, male, 34-year-old) claimed that he was thrilled by the slogan and spirit of the movement fighting for universal suffrage by using love and peace. He was so tired with past protest experience not being able to make any change or impact. Earlier movements, no matter whether they acted traditionally or radically, had not made any impact on the authorities. He elaborated:

I joined many demonstrations in the past, such as the July 1 march held every year, but it was just like a ritual without any voice. To government, it's just like a traditional ritual and they would not pay much attention to it. So, it's not working,

no big social changes. On the other hand, some politicians may use radical methods to express their opinion, but still no impact. But this time, using self-sacrifice to fight for democracy, is really new to me. So, why not give a try?

(Interviewee 42, photographer, male, 34-year-old)

Many respondents reflected that they felt gratitude, sympathy, and empathy towards the leaders and therefore wanted to support the movement. These feelings especially can be found among the participants with higher social status, particularly the professionals. They understand the sacrifice made by the Occupy Trio as they share similar life histories. Therefore, they stressed the importance of a sense of empathy towards the Occupy Trio that pushed them to join the movement.

### **5.3.2 *Consciousness-raising through non-hierarchical settings***

In addition to the formal channel planned by the Occupy Central with Love and Peace campaign, there were some channels which took less formal and structured forms. For example, consciousness-raising took place during the week-long sit-in the student leaders organized to arouse public attention one week before the outbreak of the Umbrella Movement. Students who joined the boycott would “boycott classes” but “continue learning,” as talks and seminars were arranged to deliver speeches to students who were holding the sit-in outside the government headquarters in Admiralty during the class boycott.

The class boycott was led by the student associations Hong Kong Federation of Students and Scholarism on 22 and 26 September 2014 respectively to voice their protest against the 831 Framework. Around twenty-four higher education institutions or universities and more than a hundred secondary school students joined the class boycott. The boycott initiated by the Hong Kong Federation of Students lasted for one week as planned by the organizers. Alex Chau, one of the key leaders of the Hong Kong

Federation of Students, said that the aim of the class boycott was to make a moral calling to different generational groups to think about what they could contribute for a better society. Faculty members from fourteen higher education institutions formed a “Class Boycott Committee.” More than a hundred schools supported the boycott and promised to deliver seminars to students and the public, called “Seminar on Democracy.” The class boycott organized by Scholarism was a one-day boycott on 26 September to support that organized by the Hong Kong Federation of Students. In order to let the students and parents understand the meaning of the class boycott, Scholarism organized many talks for parents and encouraged students to communicate with parents before joining it.

The boycott on 22 September 2014 was held at CUHK with around thirteen thousand participants with the presence of Professor Chan Kin-man. It moved to Tamar Park at Admiralty from 23 September to 25 September 2014, and the Seminar of Democracy was held at Tamar Park. Different scholars gave public talks related to their specialties, such as “Reality and dream”; “Karma and power: How to choose your own fate”; “Investigation on two theories of democracy through the Occupy movement”; “How to boycott class but not boycott learning”; “Totalitarianism and George Orwell”; “Talk on freedom”; “If no real universal suffrage, how will Hong Kong be affected in the future?”; “Back of democracy, dialogue with different generations on Hong Kong autonomy”; “Meaning of university education”; “Investigating Hong Kong’s past and tomorrow by a half-Chinese”; “From totalitarianism to post-totalitarianism: Introduction to Havel’s thought”; “Financialization and Hong Kong’s economic inequality”; “My city, why bother with sex?”; and “Spatial imagination in Hong Kong and myths of the geosphere” (*Apple Daily News*, 2014a).

This process of consciousness-raising was especially significant to those who had no prior experience of joining a social movement or had been apolitical. The consciousness-raising continued after the breakout of the movement. Many talks were

arranged for the public during the occupation. Many interviewees expressed that these talks were insightful and made them realize that the problems they suffered were caused by ineffective governance. For example, interviewee 48 (waitress, female, 38-year-old) had never paid attention to politics before the movement. She was curious why so many people had gathered, and her curiosity drove her to walk around the occupied zone where the class boycott was first held. What she saw and heard in the occupied zone was new to her, and she started to know more about the social issues and the controversy about the universal suffrage after reading the pamphlets and exhibition boards and talking to different people during the gathering. She later started to relate what she was suffering to the ineffective governance. She said:

I did not read the news and pay attention to politics before. But I felt so curious to see so many people gathered in the square and therefore I went there and walked around. I attended many talks and started to realize that what Hong Kong people suffered was due to ridiculous policies. For example, our limitation on TV channel selection was caused by the ridiculous policy. I cannot see any point for the rejection of the license application submitted by HKTV in 2009. I really can't see any rationale for rejecting the application! As we all know, the mass media in Hong Kong is now dominated by TVB, which is becoming pro-Beijing media in recent years. So, it's good to have a competitor in order to increase the quality of their production.

However, the government quoted a "gradual and orderly approach" as the reason for the decision to turn down the application which was unacceptable to the public, and that's why the rejection attracted a very strong outcry from the public against its decision! I believed that the rejection of the licence application reflects the narrowing of the freedom of the press, as the Beijing government is

going to control the TV market in Hong Kong. Many public surveys conducted by different institutions showed that the public supported the granting of licences in order to let people have more choices of TV channels. And, many people noticed the production of TVB is deteriorating, so it's good to have one more choice. So, I really felt angry about the decision. Our government is only serving the interest of certain groups of people, especially those pro-government! I had no idea about these social issues before the movement. (Interviewee 48, shop assistant, female, 38-year-old)

Some respondents mentioned that they only came to the zone out of curiosity in the beginning as they wondered why people spent such a long time there in the public interest. Therefore, they sat in the zone to observe what was happening. They mentioned that they got the chance to talk with other participants and also attended various talks. They stressed that they got inspired during this process and later on wanted to join the movement to strengthen its power. Through such a deliberation process, an in-group feeling developed. For example, interviewee 52 (chef, male, 49-year-old) and interviewee 48 (waitress, female, 38-year-old) were previously apolitical, never read the news, and did not understand what was happening at the beginning of the movement. However, both came out to walk around the occupied zones due to curiosity. They sat there and patiently listened to the discussion and started to learn about the aim of the movement. They became willing to join the movement through a process of interaction and communication with different participants. Another respondent, interviewee 56 (maintenance master, male, 52-year-old), shared a similar experience:

I did not care about politics before the Umbrella Movement. The movement did change me a lot. I care about politics so much now and have started to get involved in many social movements. ... I stayed in the occupied zone for the

whole period. I am willing to dedicate myself to the movement. Actually, before the outbreak of the Umbrella Movement, I was apolitical and did not read any news. I only focused on my work and went gambling after work. This was my life before the movement. I spent all money on gambling after fulfilling my family responsibility. When the Umbrella Movement broke out, I wondered why so many people would stay in the street, and I went there for a look. I walked around and listened to different seminars and talks held on the street. I got to know about many political problems that Hong Kong is facing. I started to pay attention to politics after joining the movement because I started to be alerted to political issues after joining the workshops during the movement. For example, I got to know how the Hong Kong government is sacrificing Hong Kong citizens' interests.

These informal social settings played a key role in arousing people's emotional liberation from the government. Hirsch (2009) argued that consciousness-raising is usually channelled through non-hierarchical, loosely structured, and face-to-face settings in which people are more inclined to express their point of view, feelings, and concerns. These consciousness-raising were crucial in directing people to perceive that ineffective governance caused the problems they suffered, which accelerated their emotional detachment from the government and pushed them to join the protest. It echoed Freeman's (2009) idea that that crises "serve to crystallize and focus discontent" because they push people to generate the need for a change while "perception of an immediate need for change is a major factor in predisposing people to accept new ideas" (p.32). As such, Freeman (2009) stressed, "nothing makes desire for change more acute than a crisis" (p.32).



### 5.3.3 *Consciousness-raising by brokers with strong affective ties*

Students constituted a major proportion of the participants in this movement, and the findings showed that the consciousness-raising was started much earlier. Extensive scholarship in recent years aimed to explain the rise of political sensibilities of the secondary school students through analysis of the education reform in Hong Kong since 2009. The Hong Kong education system had been criticized for focusing too much on memorization and examinations. Students have to complete six years of primary education and seven years of secondary schooling before proceeding to a three-year university education. Due to limited vacancies in university education, students have to go through two public examinations during secondary school: the HKCEE (Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination) and the HKALE (Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination). Students were competing for a university degree by taking these two examinations after their four-year and six-year secondary education.

There has been a long debate that the education system based on the above model is too examination-oriented, and a reform was introduced in 2009 to enable students to be more competitive in facing social changes (Chan, 2010). It is called the “334 Scheme” and refers to three years of junior secondary education and three years of senior secondary education, followed by a new public examination system, the “Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education” (HKDSE). Students will be selected to proceed to the four-year university education based on their performance in the HKDSE examination. Both the HKCEE and HKALE were phased out under the new reform.

The HKDSE examination includes four core subjects, namely Chinese, English, Mathematics, and Liberal Studies. Liberal Studies is a new subject to students and includes six modules: Personal Development and Interpersonal Relationships, Hong Kong Today, Modern China, Globalization, Public Health, and Energy Technology and Environment. My findings showed that Liberal Studies raised students’ political

awareness, sensitivities, and civic awareness because the curriculum covered political issues such as democracy, rule of law, social justice, and equity. Nearly all of the student respondents pointed out that Liberal Studies encouraged them to read news and pay attention to current issues and hot topics whereas they rarely read news before then. For example, interviewee 5 (student, female, 16-year-old) mentioned,

before the study of Liberal Studies, I had never thought of who I am or my relationship with the mainlanders. I was apolitical too, never read news. However, I was required to read news and participated in the discussion of Hong Kong and China politics after taking the subject. I was also required to think about who I am, what is my identity? Also, I started to pay attention to political news and I have to answer exam questions.

It seems that the Liberal Studies raised their political consciousness and sensitivities. All of them claimed that they might not have noticed the outbreak of the Occupy movement if they had not been studying this subject. According to my interviewees' responses, however, the most significant factor that led them to participate in the movement was the role played by the Liberal Studies teacher rather than the curriculum itself. The key factor that affected how they perceived the movement and whether it was a righteous action was closely related to how the Liberal Studies teachers delivered the discussion to them. Also, the teacher's level of influence depended on the closeness of their relationship. Their affective ties with the teacher played a significant role in the level of consciousness-raising. The influence of the teacher on the students would be greater if the students had a positive emotional bond with the teacher. If they trusted the teacher and were emotionally attached to them, they tended to regard the teacher as their role model and received their guidance in social movement participation. As Goodwin and Jasper (2009) argued, "social networks are also grounded in the emotional bonds among their

members: we pay attention to people in our networks because we are fond of them or trust them” (p.56). For example, interviewee 1 (student, male, 15-year-old) emphasized that the Liberal Studies curriculum only pushed him to read news and pay attention to politics but not to join the movement. The one who inspired him to step up and try to get involved in a movement was his Liberal Studies teacher. He said,

I have to read news every day as I have to pass the examination required by the subject. The study of Liberal Studies did raise my political sensitivity but did not affect my political standpoint. More specifically, the curriculum enabled me to understand how to present the answer or argument in a way that would be acceptable to the public and authorities, but it is the teacher who enlightened me on how to analyze or perceive the emergency of the Occupy movement. My teacher is active in social movements and he shared a lot of his experience in social movements after the lesson, and it inspired me a lot. I admired him so much and started to think that I can contribute myself and change the society too, like him. Since then, I always keep contact with him and always ask him to share his experience of engagement in social movements. (Interviewee 1, student, male, 15-year-old)

Interviewee 9 (student, male, 18-year-old) shared a similar opinion and claimed that he did not think that the Liberal Studies syllabus would motivate students to join the Umbrella Movement as it is supposed to be neutral. However, he might not be aware of the political issues if he had not been required to bring up the hot topics for discussion in the lessons. Therefore, to him, a sense of political and social consciousness was cultivated through Liberal Studies. But he stressed that the key factor motivated him to join the movement was his teacher’s sharing. He said,

I believe that my school is pro-establishment and that's why the principal did not encourage the discussion of the Umbrella Movement on the campus. However, I always talk to the Liberal Studies teacher after the lesson, as I know that she contributed a lot to Hong Kong social movements. Her stories are interesting and inspiring. In the very beginning, I went to the occupied zone only due to curiosity, as I was excited to hear the stories of social movement participation shared by the teacher. Therefore, I wanted to see what's happening in the zone. I did not explicitly support the movement in the very beginning. However, when I arrived there I was inspired by what the people do. I enjoyed the atmosphere so much and started to support the movement after knowing more through the sharing of participants in the occupied zone. (Interviewee 9, student, male, 18-year-old)

Interviewee 8 (student, male, 18-year-old) also stressed the importance of the role played by the Liberal Studies teacher in affecting his life, as the teacher's life history inspired him to become so active in social movement participation. Moreover, he hopes to study politics in university in order to change the society through getting into politics, which is similar to the academic path of his teacher. He said,

I think that how to deliver the curriculum depends on the political standpoint of the teacher, as I do not believe that history is neutral, right? The teacher I met is very active in social movement participation. His life is very extraordinary, too. He inspired me a lot! Many people regard getting a degree and striving for a good job and successful career as their life goals. But the teacher that I met studied politics but now works as a farmer after quitting his job as a teacher. He does not want to be the "slave of capitalist society" and always works for the betterment of society, such as being involved in the anti-rail protest, etc. I regard him as a role model and therefore I am also active in social movements, such as I join the July 1

march every year and attend the June 4 candlelight vigil every year too. I study very hard now and hope to study politics in university and then strive for a career that can change the society. (Interviewee 8, student, male, 18-year-old)

Based on the above stories, it can be argued that the curriculum encouraged students to pay attention to policies and hence raised their political awareness but did not motivate them to join the movement directly. It was the teacher who played a key role in inspiring the students to take the first step towards social movements. Some interviewees who had a critical awareness and basic knowledge of political issues may have had negative feelings about the Liberal Studies curriculum, as they noticed that it tended to deliver pro-government messages. They felt they had to stand up to voice another point of view which had been shaded by the government in order to avoid Hong Kong from “stepping backward” in the aspect of democratic movement. For example, interviewee 2 (student, female, 16-year-old) shared that,

In fact, I think that the political standpoint embedded in the curriculum of the Liberal Studies is pro-government, and it omitted some controversial discussions, such as it emphasizes the side effect or negative impact of universal suffrage. But, our teacher added new arguments and shared with us the positive side of universal suffrage. In the case of the Umbrella Movement, the teacher explained the need to initiate the movement, which aimed to reclaim our right for universal suffrage. Also, the teacher shared with us the sacrifices of the movement participants in joining that action. Therefore, I started to feel sympathetic towards the movement participants and organizers and also started to think that the movement is a very meaningful, and hence I look forward to join the movement and show support to the attendants.

The role played by the teacher is like that of a broker who brings the networks of the Umbrella Movement and the networks of students together. Past literature also showed the importance of agents in the process of consciousness-raising (Moloi, 2019; Loughlin, 1994; Cammarota, 2011). The teacher aroused a sense of “political awakening” among students and led them to recognize the importance of social injustice and inequality. The students’ responses suggest that most of the teachers who taught them Liberal Studies are active in social movements and they have already built extensive social networks in the field of social movements. In short, the role of teachers is crucial in explaining the participation of secondary school students in the Umbrella Movement.

The above discussions showed that emotional liberation plays a crucial role in motivating people to join a movement in three key ways. First, the movement leader can act as a bell toller and trigger people to pay attention to the movement through their self-sacrifice; second, consciousness-raising may take place through non-hierarchical, loosely structured, and face-to-face settings in which people are more inclined to express their point of view, feelings, and concerns; third, consciousness-raising can also be initiated by people with strong affective ties who act as brokers.

These channels enabled the public to become aware of the social issues and gradually adopt the frame set by the organizations and problematize their suffering in relation to ineffective governance. If a person perceives his or her suffering as a governance crisis, it is easier to generate a feeling of emotional detachment from the authorities. This is the process of emotional liberation, i.e. the process of detaching the positive emotions from authorities to which a person was hitherto attached, problematizing the reality and recognizing the opportunities for social change, and eventually joining a movement to make social change (Touraine, 1995; Benski & Langman, 2013; Flam, 2005). If they lost trust in or loyalty to the authorities, they felt emotionally detached from the government and tended to join an action to change the

situation. When the people were emotionally detaching from the authorities, they developed emotional attachment towards the movement leaders because they offered a solution.

#### **5.4 Emotional Attachment to Movement Leaders**

A feeling of hope or sense of cognitive liberation was important to motivate people to join social action (McAdam, 1982). According to Jasper (1997), the interpretation and judgement of the opportunity of success has to go through cultural and biographical filters. One of the crucial roots of cognitive liberation is credibility of the leaders, which can result from past action performance, institutional affiliations, and group memberships. According to my findings, the credibility of the student leaders led to a sense of cognitive liberation among the participants. Many people did not have much confidence that the movement would succeed, as explained in Chapter 1. However, many participants reflected that they developed positive feelings towards the movement once the student leaders had taken up the leadership role in parallel with the Occupy Trio. The Occupy Trio initiated the movement, but the two students' organizations became actively involved after the class boycott and the reclamation of the civic square. Many participants started to feel hopeful about the movement with the involvement of student leaders, especially from Scholarism. The understanding of this feeling or experience arises from the participants' life experience. Participants' sense of cognitive liberation after the active role taken up by the students' associations can be explained by the success of the Anti-moral and National Education campaign a few years earlier. The emergence of the Anti-moral and National Movement Campaign has to be traced back to the decolonization process.

As mentioned in Chapter 4 about the historical and cultural background of Hong Kong society, the sovereignty of Hong Kong changed from Britain to China in 1997,

which led to the decolonization process. The decolonization process was challenging to the Chinese government, as there are many differences between Mainland China and Hong Kong which are not only political and economic but also cultural. For example, Hong Kongers speak Cantonese, while the official spoken language in Mainland China is Putonghua. In written language, Hong Kongers use traditional Chinese characters while Mainland Chinese use simplified Chinese characters (Fong, 2017). The Chinese government tended to adopt a non-interventionist approach regarding the dynamics caused by the differences between the mainlanders and Hong Kongers. However, the historic July 1 protest in 2003 was a warning to the Chinese government as it showed that the Hong Kong citizens were not satisfied with the governance. July 1 has become an official holiday in Hong Kong since the handover, and people have always made use of the holiday to initiate protests on various topics. The July 1 demonstration in 2003 was historic and significant in Hong Kong history as around five hundred thousand people joined the protest. The 2003 protest triggered the Chinese government to make changes to governance in Hong Kong (Fong, 2017).

One of the most significant changes was the promotion of nationalism (Fong, 2017). For example, the government started to launch a series of projects on reengineering national identity because it perceived the socio-political controversies as a problem of “lack of attachment to the fatherland” (He, 2019, p.51). As Fong (2017) states, “the promotion of a Chinese national identity as part of China’s official ideology has been another crucial element of Beijing’s incorporation strategies vis-à-vis Hong Kong after 2003” (pp.537-538). The project includes the implementation of outside and inside schools. In outside schools, students received increasing government subsidies to visit Mainland China on exchange tours. Also, various pro-Beijing youth organizations were established to strengthen the united front work among youth through organizing Mainland study tours and internships (Cheung, 2012). The inside school national



education started to promote Mandarin language teaching in primary schools and lessons on Chinese history and culture in secondary schools to enhance students' identification with China (Lau, 2013). Different national education elements were included in the formal curriculum through adding China topics to various subjects such as general studies and Chinese language in primary schools and liberal studies in secondary schools (Tse, 2007) so as to bring "both the structure and ideological content of local schooling far more closely into line with mainland practice" (Vickers, 2011, p.100).

The Hong Kong Chief Executive announced in 2010 that "moral and national education" should be taught as an independent subject in every primary and secondary school. The plan was the subject of great controversy when the first draft of the moral and education curriculum was released in May 2011 and proposed for implementation in September 2011 (Wang, 2017, p.128). Since the public expressed the concern that the "curriculum guidelines amounted to 'brainwashing'," a group of secondary school students formed an organization called "Scholarism" to protest the implementation of the plan (Fong, 2017, p.545). Scholarism, together with other traditional and newly founded social groups, including the Hong Kong Federation of Students, the Parents Concern Group and the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union, formed the Anti-moral and National Education Alliance to protest against the implementation through a series of activities. For example, a parade of around ninety thousand participants was held at the end of July. Members of Scholarism staged a hunger strike and Occupy Government Headquarters protest at the end of August. A stage was set up as a civic square in front of the government headquarters "as a venue for civic salons and public lectures to perpetuate and redouble the momentum" (Wang, 2017, p.128). Eventually, the government conceded and suspended the moral and national education.

Many interviewees reflected that they were amazed by the students' leadership during the Anti-moral and National Education Movement, and therefore they felt hopeful

about the Umbrella Movement when the students took up the leadership role. For example, interviewee 31 (technician, male, 28-year-old) commented,

I trust the students. What they have done during the Anti-moral and National Education Movement was selfless. They were pure and without any consideration of personal interest in social engagement. It was proved by their action in that movement.

The leaders of the Anti-moral and National Education Movement were secondary school students in their mid-teens, which had never happened in Hong Kong. Though students had taken part in previous movements as ordinary participants, most of them were university students. Therefore, the participation of secondary school students in the Anti-moral and National Education Movement attracted public attention. Many respondents reflected that they felt gratitude for the students' contribution. They were especially touched by the hunger strikes initiated by the student leaders during that movement. Therefore, they supported the Umbrella Movement when the students took up the leadership again. Wang (2017) pinpointed the powerful image of students taking up a leadership role in a movement: "their fearless and innocent image underscored that they were a new force in society" (p.138). Since the establishment of Scholarism in May 2011 and their presence in the July 1 demonstrations, they were labelled "a fresh generation on the road to democracy" (Ming Pao, 2011, cited in Wang 2017).

The positive emotion built between the respondents and the student leaders formed a cementing emotion that exerted positive influence in membership recruitment when the Umbrella Movement broke out. Cementing emotion refers to positive affective ties that generate a strong bond between two parties (Flam, 2005). Gratitude and loyalty are common examples of cementing emotions that may help bind people and social relations (Flam, 2005; Goldthorpe, 1969; Hochschild, 1993; Bernstein & Jasper, 1996) and are

hence regarded as having a “binding role” (Habermas, 1987, p.320). In that way, the gratitude towards the students for what they had done during the Anti-moral and National Education Movement in 2012 encouraged people to join the Umbrella Movement when it was under the leadership of the student associations. Interviewee 15 (student, female, 21-year-old) shared a similar opinion that the success of the Anti-moral and National Education Movement generated a sense of hope for the success of the present movement. She had been apolitical before and regarded the success of Anti-moral and National Education Movement as a milestone that woke her up to caring about politics and realizing that she could be one of the student activists to change the world. She said,

I was apolitical before and didn't join any movement, but the success of the Anti-moral and National Education Movement woke me up and hence I started to think that students could do something for the society. I have become an activist now and hope I can bring social change. (Interviewee 15, student, female, 21-year-old)

The success of the Anti-moral and National Educational Movement played an important role in the process of consciousness-raising. The movement's success motivated participants to pay attention to current affairs and realize that it was a chance to make change through social movement participation.

A few interviewees also admired the charisma of the leaders, especially those much younger than them. For example, interviewee 9 (student, male, 18-year-old) shared that,

I was touched by the students' performance in the movement! I got opportunities to hear the speech by the students, it was impressive and inspiring. They are only seventeen years old, much younger than me! I had no goal and only spent time hanging out with friends when I was their age! Though they are so young, they

can still do something for our society. As such, why can't I? I am much older than them so I cannot shield all the responsibility to them!

The above findings showed that participants' prior movement experiences exerted an impact on their participation in the Umbrella Movement. Their impression of students' leadership role in the Anti-moral and National Education Movement generated a sense of cognitive liberation in the Umbrella Movement after the students took an active role.

### **5.5 Critical Emotional Events and Collective Memories**

In addition to the above reasons, another crucial factor that motivated people to decide to join the movement was police repression. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the police fired eighty-seven canisters of tear gas to disperse the crowd when Professor Benny Tai announced the kick-off of the Occupy movement. Many participants reflected that they felt shocked when they saw the police raise the banner saying "Disperse or We Fire." They decided that they could not stand back anymore when they witnessed the suppression by the police, especially of students and other participants who expressed themselves peacefully. The public anger was soon channelled into social action, as many people rushed to the civic square to support the students. For example, interviewee 23 (human resources officer, female, 25-year-old) said,

I will never forget what I saw on 26 September! I determined that I have to stay with the students when I saw that students were brutally arrested by the police at the moment they broke into the Civic Square to claim their right. It was the first time in my life to witness such confrontation! I never saw the police act like people's enemy. I saw the police attack the students and it makes me feel so shocked! That's why I can't see any excuse for me not to stand with the students, so I decided to stay there every day till the end of the movement. I remembered

that I sat around at the civic square until 3 or 4 a.m. that night as I must protect the students, I have to make sure that the police won't hurt the students again, though I was also frightened at that time as I had never been in such a situation. It is my first time to be in such a front stage for a social action.

Interviewee 51, who was a freelance handcrafter, described the facial expression of police when they were arresting the students:

I can't believe how the police act. Police look so crazy and ferocious, ... I can't forget their ferocious facial expression, so terrible! (Interviewee 51, handcrafter, female, 45-year-old)

Another interviewee (Interviewee 55, manager, female, 52-year-old) shared similar feelings. She had rarely joined social movements before the Umbrella Movement as she was apolitical when she was young, although she supported the movement objectives. She said that she had to take care of her child when she was younger and therefore did not pay attention to political issues. Also, she was satisfied with the colonial government, so she had no concerns about governance and did not see any urgency to join any movement. In the case of the Umbrella Movement, she felt angry, not only because the police were hurting the students but also because of the cold response from the government towards the students' request. She said,

It is our basic human right to express our opinion at the Civic Square and therefore it is unreasonable for the police to make any repression. Moreover, the government did not give any response to students' request for conversation, which is totally a kind of disrespect! I remembered that the Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying promised that he would take a pen, paper, and a chair to listen to what citizens would like to share during the Chief Executive election in 2012. So, his

rejection of dialogue with the students is betraying what he promised.

(Interviewee 55, manager, female, 52-year-old)

These events generated public discontent and pushed many citizens to join the movement. In this case, repression functioned as an alternative route to cognitive liberation, for it motivated many more people to attend the protest. This also resonates with what Jasper (1997) suggests: they may “channel their fear and anger into righteous indignation and individual or collective political activity ... through complex emotional processes” which formed the basis of mobilization (pp.106-107). Interviewee 55 further shared that she cried when she saw that the students received a cold response from the government and finally were arrested by the police. She expressed that,

When I heard the idea of the Occupy movement in the very beginning proposed by Professor Benny Tai I didn't think of getting involved as I never imagined that it could effectively fight for universal suffrage. But, it was the government that push us to come out. They blocked the children in the Civic Square, not even allowing them to go to toilet, which is a kind of child abuse. Police arrested them for more than forty-eight hours! How can they do that to them! They are just teenagers, how can the government have done such thing to them! It's the government that push us to come out! (Interviewee 55, manager, female, 52-year-old)

She remembered that she was on the bus returning home when she found out that the police had arrested students. She kept crying on the bus and immediately changed direction from going home to going to the Civic Square to support the students.

Despite the fact that the brutal police arrests triggered the respondents' anger, the most critical moment that turned the movement into a massive and historic event was the

firing of tear gas on 28 September. Many respondents reflected on how shocked and angry they were about what they saw on the TV news. They saw people protected with goggles, umbrellas, masks, and handmade paper shields in facing the police suppression. Nearly all of the respondents expressed that they were shocked by the huge contrast between the outfit of the suppressors and the activists. While the police used pepper spray and tear gas to disperse the crowd, the protestors only used simple protection outfits for defence. Later, when they saw the police raise the banner “Disperse or We Fire,” many of them started to cry and rushed to support the activists. For example, one interviewee remembered,

I was at home and watching the news about how the police dispersed the crowd. What I saw on the screen was full of smoke due to the firing of tear gas and the picture was scary. It looked like the police were defending themselves from someone who had dangerous weapons. But, actually, the suppressed ones were only using simple tools to protect themselves! At that moment, I know I have to go and support them. (Interviewee 54, housewife, female, 54-year-old)

Interviewee 51 was one of the interviewees who supported the movement goal but had not planned to join it because of the consideration of legal consequences. She stressed that she cannot be arrested as she lives alone and has to take care of her cats. So, she had never thought of joining this civil disobedience movement. However, she was shocked by what she saw on TV when the news reported the firing of tear gas. She eventually decided to join the movement as she was feeling outrage over the police using tear gas to suppress activists with only simple means of protection. She described that the firing of the tear gas was the most impressive moment during the entire movement. She not only felt angry in that moment but also horrified as she thought that her life was threatened. She described what she saw that night and how she felt when the tear gas dropped around her feet:

I was so horrified and angry at that moment, I felt horrified because I am worrying about my safety. At that moment, I really felt that my life was threatened. I saw that the police like holding the thunder gun when they prepared to fire the tear gas, the image was really terrible. ... Since I totally lost trust in the government, I really worry that the government will shoot us. I don't think the government will be kind to people as they used tear gas, imagine them using real bullets! Many people around me shared similar worries, and we shared our feelings through WhatsApp. As there was a rumour that police would shoot protestors with plastic bullets, therefore, the leaders asked us to leave, because they didn't want us to sacrifice our lives, we really felt our lives were being threatened. The firing of tear gas made me feel much more determined to stay with the people. (Interviewee 51, handcrafter, female, 45-year-old)

She stressed that this experience made her have horrible feelings towards fireworks. She cannot watch fireworks again as they remind her of the terrible memory of the firing of tear gas. She shared with me that the firing of tear gas left a student protestor with a horrible memory. The young protestor was right in the crowd when the government fired the tear gas. Since then, her hands shake whenever she hears fireworks because of the bad memory. This echoes what Harris (2006) says about participants suppressing their memory when they experience political repression.

The concept of the “snap” moment can help us understand why the firing of tear gas may have motivated people to join the Umbrella Movement. The concept of the “snap” moment was initiated by Sara Ahmed (2017), who used it to explain the feminist movement, which can be described as an affective breaking point when the pressure of patriarchy becomes too much to bear. She introduced a conceptual framework that refuses resiliency as a survival strategy. Ahmed (2017) describes the feminist snap as “a



breaking point when one can't take it anymore, a reaction to the pressure of patriarchy" (p.188). The strategy of resilience is problematized as a conservative strategy or technique that encourages one to make the body stronger so it is not defeated by the pressure or even can keep taking it. In contrast, the feminist snap is portrayed as a rejection of the status quo and "a way of breaking off those ties that hold one within the limits of the established social order" (Keller, 2020, p.823). Keller's study (2020) used *Teen Vogue* as an example to demonstrate how the feminist snap "is shaping contemporary media cultures as part of a wider landscape where a range of popular feminisms are visible" (p.820). To Keller (2020), anger may propel the feminist snap and may then necessitate change. Ahmed (2017) described how "a snap sounds like the start of something, a transformation of something, it is how a twig might end up broken in two pieces. A snap might even seem like a violent moment; the unbecoming of something." Feminist media can be a feminist snap as it may disseminate the message and information to the public and make people wake up and move to action, such as in *Teen Vogue* (Keller, 2020). Besides, a feminist snap is not an isolated incident and is "not without history." Snaps "are not a starting point but a reaction to particular circumstances," so "if pressure is an action, snap is a reaction" (Ahmed, 2017, p.189). Ahmed elaborated that feminist snap is a long-standing response to feminist activism that keeps fighting against patriarchy. It has to be understood by locating it within a wider socio-cultural context (Ahmed, 2017).

Many interviewees expressed that the firing of tear gas triggered them to join the movement. As such, the suppression of the movement by using tear gas functioned as a snap. In the Umbrella Movement, people's reaction towards the firing of tear gas has to be understood by locating it within Hong Kong's wider socio-historical context. People had such a strong reaction to the government's response not only because it violated their moral principles but also because the attack reminded some of the Tiananmen Square

Protest in Beijing on June 4, 1989, which was a disaster in Chinese history. The Tiananmen Square protest was a student-led social movement fighting for democracy, which was eventually forcibly suppressed by the government. Some participants mentioned that when they saw police hold rifles and plastic bullets during the Umbrella Movement they worried that they might shoot students as the Beijing government did in 1989. To them, the message shown by the banner “Disperse or We Fire” was too shocking, as they had never thought that police would use bullets to suppress a peaceful protest. For example, interviewee 54 said,

it reminds me of the June 4 democratic movement. I really had a thought come across my mind that maybe the government would use tanks to disperse the crowd, just like what the Beijing government did in 1989. It's not hard to have such imagination, as there are many similarities between the two issues. Both issues involved a large number of students who wanted to do things for the sake of the society, they want democracy! But their opinions were against the government and were regarded as evil by the government and needing to be eradicated.

(Interviewee 54, housewife, female, 50-year-old)

Interviewee 46 (manager, male, 34-year-old) was out of town overnight when the police used tear gas and pepper spray to disperse the crowd. He felt sad that he was not there to be with the students. He also felt angry, afraid, and worried. He was angry because he believed that the government should protect citizens and not use tear gas and pepper spray them, no matter what the situation. He felt afraid and worried because he feared that the June 4 democratic movement would happen again. He was watching the news when that movement happened in 1989. He stressed that the suppression of that movement was shocking to him, and he could not stop his tears when he saw the banner “Disperse or We Fire” raised by the police. He said,

the firing of tear gas was the most impressive moment during the entire movement to me. I was out of town at that time and watched the whole process through online news. I really wanted to rush back to Hong Kong to support the students. The movement was so shocking to me when the police used violence to disperse the crowd. It was really unbelievable to see such a scenario happening in Hong Kong as Hong Kong is such a peaceful society! It reminded me of the June 4 democratic movement! I was watching how the movement ended on the TV news in 1989, but I didn't know the details until I entered university. I participated in students' associations when I entered university, especially those responsible for handling China affairs, and I got the opportunity to read many resources about the June 4 incident. I would use the word sorrowful to describe the incident. I was frightened the June 4 incident would be repeated, my mind has many pictures of the incidents. I unintentionally linked the two movements and really so worry at that time. (Interviewee 46, manager, male, 34-year-old)

Participants drew a link between the June 4 democratic movement and the firing of tear gas because the Reverend Chu Yiu-ming of the Occupy Trio has a close relationship with the June 4 incident. Chu had witnessed the crackdown on the June 4 democratic movement and had also been actively involved in helping the participants to flee from Mainland China after the movement. Chu is also a core member of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China, which is an organization established in 1989. The organization holds an annual June 4 candlelight vigil at Victoria Park, which is the largest Tiananmen vigil in the world. Benny Tai shared the close bond between Chu and the June 4 incident:

Chu, a veteran social activist, was also one of the key organizers of Operation Yellowbird, which had helped many student leaders and other Tiananmen Square

protesters to escape from China to Western countries via Hong Kong. The three of us had seen how the June 4 democratic movement happened. The souls of Tiananmen Square have remained in our hearts, and never far from our thoughts.<sup>54</sup> (Tai, 2019)

Chu expressed his connection with the June 4 movement during the speech before his sentencing:

By 1989, the democratic movement in Beijing ended sadly in brutal massacre. As eye witnesses, our hearts turned cold. Our democratic aspirations burned all the more fierce. During this period, there were cries for British passports for Hong Kong people, and demands for direct elections for the 1991 legislature. After the 1989 democratic uprising, my principal involvement was the ministry of caring for democratic activists in exile, being with them in their suffering. (Hong Kong In-media, 2019)

Chu expressed how worried he was when the government used tear gas to disperse the crowds with long guns on their hands. When the police showed the banner “Disperse or We Fire,” he was reminded of how people were injured during the June 4 movement. He said, “When the government showed the banner ‘Disperse or We Fire’, the faces of victims of the June 4<sup>th</sup> movement suddenly lie in front of me” (Hong Kong In-media, 2019). He recalled that he was in Beijing on 3 June 1989, as he needed to be a wedding official on 3 June, and he left the next day. He was watching the news when the government was suppressing the crowd brutally on 4 June. He stressed that this was a horrible memory to him and therefore he was terrified when the police showed the banner during the Occupy movement. He said,

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<sup>54</sup> Translated by the author.

after the fire on June 4, the picture showing the ambulance and wooden car to carry the injured really made me feel sad, I really cannot tolerate the government shooting the youth who were unarmed. I cried very sadly at that moment ... when the banner [Disperse or We Fire] was shown [in the Umbrella Movement], my mind floated out these pictures. I asked myself at that moment, is this the moment that needs us to make such sacrifice? ... I don't think so, I don't think it's the moment that needs sacrifice. ... I don't think we need to sacrifice in vain for the unreasonable government.<sup>55</sup> (Ng, 2018)

To avoid students and other protestors getting hurt, he proposed they turn themselves in to the police on 3 October. However, the students rejected the suggestion and insisted on staying in the occupied zone. He did not want to leave them and therefore he stayed. After that, he actively facilitated dialogue between the students and the government, as he believed that dialogue could avoid the police fire and start rational communication. Though the dialogue was held on 21 October, the students refused to have more dialogue with the government after the trial, and he couldn't sleep well after that (Hong Kong In-media, 2019). This can explain why Chu kept trying to persuade the participants to dialogue with the government or even retreat in order to avoid getting shot by the police. He said that,

negotiation may not lead to a real or specific result, but negotiation itself can avoid violence, avoid the other side killing people by fire or using tear gas, because they are still in negotiation.<sup>56</sup> (Ng, 2018)

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<sup>55</sup> Translated by the author.

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Chu also shared that, from his own experience, he understands how painful it would be to be separated from family members. He was once separated from his family when he escaped to the United States due to the campaign helping activists to escape from Mainland China to Western countries after the June 4 democratic movement in 1989. As mentioned, he was one of the key organizers of Operation Yellowbird, and a few hundred democratic activists escaped from Mainland China with his help. The campaign lasted for eight years and ended in 1997. Chu was advised to leave Hong Kong before the handover due to political sensitivity in joining the campaign. He stayed in New York for one year as a visiting scholar at Columbia University. He shared the hard feelings during that year of exile and how such feelings made him determined to prevent the students from getting hurt:

During exile, I was living alone, I couldn't suffer the hard feeling of exile anymore. ... I determined to back to Hong Kong ... because I helped these activists and I can share the same hard experience with them, I can feel the sorrow of the parents whose children died in the movement. I don't think we [the participants] have to sacrifice at this moment [the Umbrella Movement], so I wanted to try to avoid that.<sup>57</sup> (Ng, 2018)

Participants shared that they easily associated the police repression with the June 4 movement because of the strong bond of Chu with that movement. For example, interviewee 37 shared that,

We can't stop making such links as we all know the close bond between Chu and the June 4 democratic movement. It's all public. And Chu always expressed to us how he worried about our safety and therefore I will also make such linkage.

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<sup>57</sup> Translated by the author.

Many studies on civil movements have demonstrated that collective memories of past injustices inspired present social movements (Lipsitz, 1988; Couto, 1993). Payne (1995) pointed out that the elder generation's movement experience can impact younger generations. His study of a movement in the Mississippi Delta showed that younger family members tended to join the movement if the elders shared stories of resistance to racial domination with them. "By keeping the story before succeeding generations, narratives of resistance provided a historical framework for activists in their struggle against white supremacy" (Payne, 1995, p.218). Couto (1993) also stressed the close relationship between earlier movement experience or memories and the present mobilization. His study of local community movements demonstrated the shared memories of past indignities in the free spaces of community institutions because these stories offered activists historical references that linked past grievances and present social actions. The memories shared by Chu triggered the participants to draw a link between the two movements, especially younger participants who had not experienced the June 4 movement. Those who had witnessed the June 4 movement shared Chu's fear and outrage.

Participants felt shock and outrage towards the firing of tear gas not only due to their collective memory of the June 4 democratic movement but also because of the huge contrast with the police suppression of protestors against the World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial meeting in Hong Kong in 2005. Thousands of militant Korean farmers erupted on the street and clashed with police officers, using bamboo poles and metal barriers to express their discontent regarding WTO policies. The movement was described as "bloody clashes" as 116 people were taken to hospital (Lee, 2016). Though the actions of the protestors were violent compared to those of the Umbrella Movement protestors, the number of tear gas canisters fired by the police during the anti-WTO movement was much lower (thirty-four rounds) than the number fired during the

Umbrella Movement (eighty-seven rounds). With this prior protest memory, participants had strong outrage towards the firing of tear gas because they did not expect to see such intensive suppression. For example, interviewee 46 (manager, male, 34-year-old) mentioned that,

We couldn't understand why the police had to use such methods to disperse the crowd as the participants were acting so peacefully. They had no weapons in their hands! I remembered that the police also used tear gas to disperse the Korean farmers during the protest against the WTO but the amount of tear gas used was much lower than this time. Also, the Korean farmers were militant with weapons in their hands, they had military training before, ... but this time, protestors mostly are students with no weapons at all. ... So I really feel so shocked when the police have to use such methods.

Interviewee 40 (doctor, female, 32-year-old) was a volunteer of the Occupy movement offering first aid service to the protestors. She felt sad and furious about the brutal suppression as many people were injured due to the tear gas and pepper spray. She did not think that there was an urgency to suppress the movement by using tear gas and pepper spray because the demonstration was so peaceful. She stated:

I was so angry when the government fired tear gas! What had the citizens done? They are just expressing their opinion in a peaceful way! During the WTO conference, the government had not even done that to protestors when the Korean farmers used weapons to hurt citizens! Did the government really have to fire so many rounds of tear gas? I was a volunteer in curing the injured people. I saw how their eyes and skin were hurt by the tear gas and pepper spray. Their eyes couldn't open, skin was red and burnt. Why the government has to do that to



citizens, it's just a peaceful gathering, I really can't understand. If you ever read the news, you can see how peaceful they are compared to other protests over the world! I cried, coz I see so many injured people are teenagers, students and elderly, it's really unacceptable! (Interviewee 40, doctor, female, 32-year-old)

Interviewee 58 (retiree, male, 70-year-old) expressed similar feelings. He also remembered that the protest was much more intensive during the anti-WTO conference as the protestors used violence. However, he did not see any violent action during the Umbrella Movement and hence felt furious when the police used tear gas and pepper spray. He rushed to Admiralty to join the action. He described what he saw and felt:

I was there, I can smell the smoke of tear gas, I got shot by the pepper spray. The younger participants ask the elderly (including me) to move and to leave the zone for the sake of my safety. But after a second thought, I think, I can't leave. So I returned to be one of them. I saw so many police cars and fire trucks nearby, and hence I can imagine how much worse the situation was. I foresaw that there may be many people hurt and the situation may be out of control. ... I remembered that the police fired tear gas at around 5:50 p.m., but the participants were so peaceful and rational, they didn't hurt a policeman, didn't burn any police car, didn't break any windows on the street, not like the anti-WTO movement, this movement was much peaceful. We were just expressing our voice peacefully and rationally. So I really feel so sad, I cried because I think that the government was so unscrupulous for firing so many rounds of tear gas towards peaceful protestors who have no weapons on hand. Many young participants could not handle the emotions and cried loudly. They were so sad and shocked. I went to comfort them and really felt so hurt. (Interviewee 58, retiree, male, 70-year-old)

Movement memories or legacies have been widely discussed in previous literature (Zamponi & Daphi, 2014; Abăseacă, 2018; Pearce, 2009). For instance, Zamponi and Daphi's (2014) study challenged the myth of spontaneity in understanding the origin of social movements and emphasized the continuity between different movements. They argued that movement memories functioned as a legacy in providing activists crucial interpretative frameworks to understand mobilizations through studying the continuity between the global justice movement and the anti-austerity mobilizations in Portugal (2014). Abăseacă's (2018) study showed how the collective memory affected the formation of present identities, trajectories, and events by analyzing mobilizations between 2011 and 2012 in Romania. Pearce's (2009) study demonstrated how the legacy of the Solidarity movement of the 1980s became the leading force in the region's 1989 revolutions in Poland, as the top leaders of the contending parties were former Solidarity activists. The impact of movement memories or legacies played an important in motivating people to join the Umbrella Movement.

Participants' memories of the government's reaction to the anti-WTO movement drew a huge contrast to how the government suppressed the Umbrella Movement. Many shared this memory, which strengthened their identity, believing that it was just to support the activists. It echoed Harris's (2006) argument that "a group's shared sense of the past could contribute to collective action by strengthening the bonds of group identity, providing a frame to articulate grievances, or by reducing material incentives for group members to engage in cooperative action" (pp.19-20). As historian George Lipsitz (1988) suggests, collective memories contribute to the micro-level processes in the life of social movements: "even when oppositional groups confront an unfavorable outside opportunity structure, they still retain the capacity to fashion a counterhegemonic struggle by drawing on the collective memory of the past as a critique of the present" (pp. 241-242).

The above findings demonstrated that the police suppression functioned as a critical emotional event that triggered people's moral outrage and finally made them step up and join the movement. The intensive emotions they felt related to the unequal power between the government and the activists. Since students played a key role in the movement, the respondents expressed that they felt shocked when the government arrested the students, who were doing the right things peacefully. The contrast between the suppressor and the suppressed they saw on the TV news was the critical factor in pushing them to join the event. The simple tools adopted by the activists for self-protection against the police pepper spray and tear gas was the most significant factor explaining their decision to engage in the movement. Besides, the intensive emotional response to the police suppression also related to their life experience, including their expectations regarding government response based on prior protest experience and the memory of certain historical events.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

The findings echoed the past literature in showing that collective identity in terms of cognitive, emotional and relational connection contributed to the movement attracting so many people. First of all, framing the movement as a just action against an unjust political decision triggered resonance and public outrage because the government's decision had violated the moral values cherished by the public. The study also showed that it is important to look into the biographical backgrounds of the respondents and their related historical and socio-cultural backgrounds in order to understand why certain events would generate moral shock for certain people. The values cultivated or cherished during the colonial period explained why justice is an important value upheld by the participants.

My study also demonstrated that the emotional liberation from the government played a significant parallel role in understanding how they decided to join the movement.

The present study contributed to the literature on social movement theories by demonstrating how emotional liberation happens. It showed that a process of consciousness-raising is critical in generating emotional liberation. In addition, it demonstrated that consciousness-raising would be more effective when it is delivered by those with positive emotional bonds (i.e. brokers with strong affective ties) and takes place in non-hierarchical and face-to-face settings. This is different to the other Occupy movements. The role of leader was downplayed in most Occupy movements in Western and Middle Eastern countries (Ganesh & Stohl, 2013; Aldas & Murphy, 2013; Bamyeh, 2012; Sbicca & Perdue, 2013; Brissette, 2013; Piven, 2013; Milkman, 2012) whereas the leaders played a crucial role in consciousness-raising in the Umbrella Movement. The self-sacrifice of the Occupy Trio itself functioned as a civic awakening. Through risking arrest or even going to jail, the Occupy Trio hoped to trigger the public to ask what was wrong with society. This element of civil disobedience as a form of consciousness-raising was the distinguishing feature of the Umbrella Movement. Student leaders also contributed to the present movement by generating a sense of hope due to their success in prior movements right before the outbreak of the Umbrella Movement. Collective identity refers to a process in which the person is aware of and recognizes themselves as part of wider social groups and then develops a feeling of group belonging (Melucci, 1989, 1996; Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2001b; della Porta & Diani, 2006). In the framing process, a common interest and worldviews were formed between the movement participants and organizers. The movement organizers framed the situation that the participants were facing as a problem that needed to be solved. The activists constructed a frame that enabled the participants to arouse a shared cognitive understanding of the movement's emergence. The participants believed that they needed to get involved in the movement to uphold the values they cherished. Through the consciousness-raising process, the participants not only shifted to the frames promoted by

the movement organizers but also detached emotionally from the authorities. They also developed an emotional connection with the movement leaders through the framing process. This strong feeling of group belonging enabled the participants to feel that they could change the status quo and were willing to do something about their situation.

This chapter has contributed to the understanding of the Occupy movement in that the role of leadership can be an important factor in social mobilization. The Umbrella Movement not only showed the importance of emotional attachment to leaders but also demonstrated the sources of emotional attachment. The credibility of leaders can be generated from several sources, including the success of previous protest and the leaders' symbolic image. In the Umbrella Movement, these two kinds of leaders were present. Student leadership in the Anti-moral and National Education Movement enabled the participants to feel hopeful about the Umbrella Movement. In the case of the Occupy Trio, their backgrounds had certain symbolic meaning for the participants. The life histories of the Occupy Trio acted like a mirror in reflecting many Hong Kong people's life histories or the life history that many Hong Kong people are looking for. The Occupy Trio's giving up of the successful life for the sake of the movement generated a sense of empathy, and that acted as an activating mechanism that motivated people to join them. Put differently, their participation was inspiring to other participants. Their actions inspired the participants to ask why people with high social status might sacrifice their careers and even perhaps get sent to jail. This question was raised by a number of respondents, and it eventually aroused their attention to the movement and finally caused them to join it.

The present study also demonstrated the importance of collective memories in drawing people to engage in a movement. All the participants agree with the importance of upholding justice and righteousness. As such, they supported the movement and also the goal for which it was striving. However, many of them had not planned to join the movement even though they agreed with its objective because they feared legal

consequences, as illegality was the essential component of this movement. Besides, it seemed the movement would not push the government to take back the 8/31 Framework in the unfavourable political context. In light of that, the motivation for people to join the movement was low. The findings of my study revealed that it was the brutal suppression by the police that pushed them to decide to join the civil disobedience movement.

The study showed that there are different mechanisms to explain why people joined the Umbrella Movement. First of all, cultural resonance or effective framing of the movement played an important role in generating common worldviews that bound people together to fight for the same goal. Framing the movement as a campaign to fight for justice led to emotional liberation. Participants became emotionally detached from the authorities and hegemonic narratives and values. In addition, the suppression of the movement reminded the participants of negative memories of past movements, which intensified their outrage towards the suppression. The outrages further motivated them to join the movement. Moreover, cognitive liberation based on positive memories and the past success of the student movement also explains why many people participated in the Umbrella Movement. The participants recognized themselves as a wider social group who shared common interests and worldviews. They regarded their action as a campaign that aimed to preserve the values of fairness and justice, which were the cornerstone of Hong Kong's success. They also shared the attitude that there was the chance of success based on the collective memories of past movement experience.

There was an interesting finding that positive identification with the self-sacrifice and inspirational, charismatic leadership; however, this is only effective on the part of the movement membership and was rejected by student leaders, which shows that different processes were working on different sub-constituencies of the movement. This may have

led to the crisis of fragmentation of the movement, which will be explained in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 6      Creation of an Emotion-Based and Spatial Identity**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Following the previous chapter explaining why the movement attracted so many people, the present chapter aims to explain the intensity of the movement. One of the distinguishing features of the Umbrella Movement was the intensive engagement of the participants. As mentioned in Chapter 1, most social movements in Hong Kong before the Umbrella Movement took the form of one-day demonstrations. The level of participant engagement in the Umbrella Movement was much more intensive than in past social protests. The participants were not only present and participating passively in the protest as most participants did in past social movements but also took various proactive roles. A study conducted by Lee and Chan (2016) during the onsite occupation showed that the participants engaged in different forms of participation. For instance, more than two-thirds of their respondents had donated material resources, nearly 60% had engaged in the maintenance of order or delivery of materials, nearly 60% had joined discussions about movement directions and stages and helped handle counter-protestors, and 60% had helped protect the occupied areas when police took action. Lee and Chan's (2016) findings "illustrate a high level of participation in various frontline actions by the protesters" (p.15). The high level of participant commitment was also demonstrated by another study conducted by Cheng and Chan (2017), which showed that more than half of the protestors contributed to the operation of the movement in different roles.

My findings suggested that the creation of free space played a crucial role in explaining the high level of commitment or intensity of the participation in the present movement. Free space refers to

small-scale settings within a community or movement that are removed from the direct control of dominant groups, are voluntarily participated in, and generate the



cultural challenge that precedes or accompanies political mobilization. (Polletta, 1999, p.1)

How free space has contributed to social mobilization has been well documented (Danaher, 2010). For example, Evans (1979) pinpointed the importance of free space for challengers to mobilize collective action where collective identities, collective action frames, and oppositional cultures can be formed.<sup>58</sup> Culton and Holtzman (2010) stressed the crucial role of free space in forming collective identities. The occupied zones of the Umbrella Movement functioned as free space that enabled the formation of a new collective identity and generation of emotional benefits that eventually enhanced the participants' commitment. This thesis discovered that the participants made use of the free space as an arena to demonstrate their resistance to the authorities through gaining the autonomy to transform the city with the prefigurative political culture of which they dreamed. To them, the participation was a new collective identity building process as the occupation offered them a way to practise their ideal life, which reflected a certain confrontation towards the ideology constructed and promoted by the authorities as a process of decolonization. A mixture of pleasurable emotions was generated through the collective protest identity building, including feeling a sense of

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<sup>58</sup> Various theoretical perspectives under different terms have been developed in analyzing this arena based on Evans's discussion, including free social spaces (Fisher and Kling, 1987), abeyance structures (Taylor, 1989), submerged networks (Melucci, 1989, 1996), counterpublics (Fraser, 1990), social movement communities (Buechler, 1990), sequestered social ties (Scott, 1990), protected spaces (Tetreault, 1993), spatial preserves (Fantasia and Hirsch, 1995), cultural laboratories, spheres of cultural autonomy (Taylor & Whittier, 1995), and safe spaces (Gamson, 1996). It can be symbolic in nature, for example, when it appears as a subculture (Tornberg & Tornberg, 2017).

agency, pride, and joy. This pleasurable emotion generated in the free space formed an emotion-based and spatial identity and enhanced their commitment to participation. The following section will elaborate on how the collective identity was constructed within the free space, as well as how this process eventually generated activating and positive emotions that enhanced the participants' commitment to this social engagement.

## **6.2 Community Construction within the Free Space**

The movement can be regarded as a prefigurative protest in attempting to construct an alternative or utopian social relation in parallel with the protest (Yates, 2014). The participants felt a sense of agency in gaining the autonomy to create or prefigure a utopic alternative and constructing an idiosyncratic movement culture within the zone. This echoes Jasper's (1997) point that participants gain satisfaction through creating a separate world in which they can do things that should not be done in reality, establish certain modes of interaction that cannot be found in daily life, and also "gain a taste of a just society" of which they dreamed (p.376). As such, participating in a social movement is like an image-building process as the participants are imagining a dream city. The process of making such a creation is similar to what an artist does: both parties are making certain innovations to express visions or achieve goals that have not yet crystallized. The satisfaction that comes from this kind of artfulness is called "agency," which implies that "individuals are not mere bearers of structures or dupes of culture" but "monitor their actions and the outcomes, make adjustments, imagine new goals and possibilities, respond to others" (Jasper, 1997, p.65). This process emphasized the active role performed by the participants as they have to orient towards their past and look into their habits and traditions so that they can problematize past practices and generate new ways of doing, feeling, and thinking. In the end, they can make alternatives for their future (Jasper, 1997). The study demonstrated that gaining autonomy through using the free

space to construct a community of which they dreamed offered the participants a pleasurable and enjoyable experience which overcame the fear they had before getting involved. They gained a sense of satisfaction in making the creation. They felt pride in themselves, even though the movement did not accomplish the movement goal. They still feel proud to have participated. They not only visualized their anger and resistance through blocking the major road of a financial district to paralyze economic activity but also transformed the purpose of the district. They made use of tents to occupy the streets and turned them into a community that reflected their dream city, which cannot be found in reality.

First, the participants regarded the process of gaining the autonomy to display their outrage towards the 8/31 Framework and brutal suppression as a pleasurable experience. Though feeling disappointed regarding the indifferent government response, they insisted on staying in the zone because they perceived their presence in the occupied zones as braveness in expressing their resistance to the authorities. Since the government defined the movement as an illegal action and demanded that the participants retreat as soon as possible, they regarded the refusal to retreat as a kind of disobedience. The participants made use of the free space to show their anger and outrage to the government by displaying slogans or artwork. For example, interviewee 36 (bar bender, male, 30-year-old) said,

I know that the government won't change its mind to take back the 8/31 Framework and I also know that our hope for universal suffrage won't come true. But I just want to be here, to pour out my anger, to show the government that we are feeling hateful towards the governance.

Interviewee 57 (retiree, male, 68-year-old) also regarded it as a chance to show his anger to the government. This can be seen in the carpentry he did in the zone. He noticed

that people found it hard to cross the concrete road lanes, so he built a “staircase” of wooden boards to help people cross between lanes. He put “689,” which is a nickname mocking the chief executive who was selected by a small pool of 689 people, on the stairs to express his anger. He explained:

People will step on “689” when they use the staircase to across the lanes and it’s just like “689” was stepped on by us! (Interviewee 57, retiree, male, 68-year-old)

Such symbolic resistance not only showed their presence in the zone but also transformed the purpose of the occupied zone and cultivated a peculiar culture among the participants present in the space. These processes required participants’ active role because it was like a creation process. For instance, interviewee 34 (manager, male, 29-year-old) shared:

The participation in this movement is different from past movements. I used to just join the rally or demonstration passively. I didn’t have much opportunity to express my feelings or opinion. Though I shouted slogan during the protest, I only followed the slogan prepared by the organizers. However, I can make use of this occupied area to express my feelings through different artwork. I draw some pictures with some words on the floor to show my anger towards the government.

The sharing expressed by interviewee 34 demonstrated the different kinds of participation. He used to join past movements passively as followers but in the Umbrella Movement, he could take the initiative in expressing his point of view through the creation of artwork. Moreover, their resistance was not only a way of being present in the zone but also joining in the process of constructing an imagined city with a culture that could be found in the outer world in Hong Kong society. The culture was even oppositional to the mainstream mentality. As explained in Chapter 4 about the history of

Hong Kong, it is widely believed that Hong Kong is dominated by an economic mentality, which is reflected in the decolonization strategy; however, the participants occupied the space to construct as well as demonstrate an oppositional culture. They gained a sense of happiness and satisfaction during the creation process.

### **6.1.1 *Construction of resistant collective identity***

Central was selected because it is the financial hub, with many international commercial buildings surrounding it, and it was believed that the occupation would be a setback to the Hong Kong economy, which would be at a high cost to the government. Their consideration was based on a perception held by the public and the authorities that economic prosperity is the success of the “Hong Kong miracle,” and this mentality is reflected by the decolonization strategy adopted by the Chinese government since the handover—economic unification. As shared by Professor Chan in selecting Central to stage the occupation, the movement hoped to let participants reflect the values they upheld:

This is a movement about value selection. If Hong Kong people cherish the right to universal suffrage, I think they can tolerate the temporary interruption of road usage. I hope that Hong Kong people can stop for a few days to reflect on whether the only value they cherish is materialism.<sup>59</sup> (Christian Times, 2018)

Though the occupied zone was unintentionally changed from Central to Admiralty, the difference between these two districts is small. Both are key financial districts, and the only difference is that Admiralty is where the government offices are located. In order to express their anger and resistance, the participants blocked the economic activity of the

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<sup>59</sup> Translated by the author.

district by filling the zone with encampments of tents. They turned the zone into different villages, just like a residential community. They gained the autonomy to build their ideal residential community over the zone. They turned the hot financial district into a communist society in opposition to the economic system based on capitalism. Building a communist society in a hot financial hub was a huge contrast for the participants.

Interviewee 39, who was a banker and worked in a financial district near Admiralty, pinpointed that the occupied zone was very different from the district where she worked. As she worked in a key financial district next to Admiralty, the mentality of capitalism (aiming at earning a profit, calculative, and indifferent relationships) was the main ideology at her workplace, and she found it amazing to experience a totally different mentality (communist society) in the occupied zone, which she treasured. She explained:

I work at Central, a district with many international banks and business centres. We all talk about money for every trading, a very typical financial and capitalist society. But, here, people offer you drinks and food for free, just to support you. Here is like a utopia, the mentality and values shared by people within this utopia are very different from Central, the place where I am working. (Interviewee 39, banker, female, 31-year-old)

Hong Kongers are depicted as practical, as people always define a successful life as making money, finding a good job with a high salary, and having a high living standard. The question of how to become rich is something that we hear from childhood (Cheung, 2017). This ideology is also reflected in the decolonization strategy adopted by the Chinese government. However, the participants' transformation of the purpose of the city reflected an oppositional culture to this economic-oriented mentality. The occupied zones constituted a free space "characterized as protective shelters against prevailing hegemonic ideologies and as hubs for the diffusion of ideas and ideologies (Tornberg &

Tornberg, 2017, p.182). The occupied zone was like a communist city in the sense that all resources were shared, and no private interest was emphasized in the area. From the start of the occupation, citizens kept donating large amounts of supporting materials to them, such as food, water, umbrellas, raincoats, goggles, masks, loudspeakers, tents, tables, chairs, beds, and sofas. The toilets were well stocked with all kinds of amenities donated by the public, including tampons, contact lens solution, mouthwash, cotton buds, sun-block lotions, and facial masks. Some said that toilets had been a hit on Twitter for being stocked with more products than a five-star hotel. They described the occupied zone as a utopia or communist community, which they had never experienced before. They all felt so glad to stay in that utopia, and this also showed that Hong Kong people are not materialistic or practical. For example, interviewee 50 (lecturer, male, 44-year-old) claimed that,

the occupied zone is really like a communist society, as people will not get paid for their effort. For example, if someone created a staircase and a study room for occupants, they should be getting pay in a capitalist society. But here they do these things not for money but for the public interest. Here, we don't talk about money, we don't consider self-interest, we do all the things for public interest. ... Many donations keep flooding in, people can get these resources free of charge just based on their needs, it is very close to the communist society described by Karl Marx, very beautiful, very nice! I enjoyed staying here and this encouraged me to stay longer here.

Another interview shared a similar experience (interviewee 23, assistant manager, female, 28-year-old):

It is my first to see a protest look like a gallery or showroom. People put the things that they like here to express their voice. For example, there are different ways of decorations of the tents that participants are living in order to voice their messages. The one that I am living in also has my own decorations. I put some posters on my tent to express my messages. Besides, the occupied zone looks like a community, and there is plenty of time for us to exchange ideas. I also meet some new friends here and we think of work on some artwork together in order to show our ideas. I feel so happy that I can take active role in this movement through doing some artwork to show my voices.

The following photos show areas and amenities of the occupied zone.



**Figure 1. Tents in the Occupied Zones**



Photos by the author.

Figure 2. Tents with “Village Name” or “Address”



Photos by the author.



**Figure 3. Sign Expressing Planting as an Act of Resistance against Land Monopoly**



Photo by the author.

**Figure 4. “Decorating” the Tents with Plants and Rainbow Flag**



Photo by the author.



Figure 5. Free Tutorials Offered to Occupants within the Occupied Zones



Photos by the author.

**Figure 6. Free Books for Borrowing**



Photo by the author.

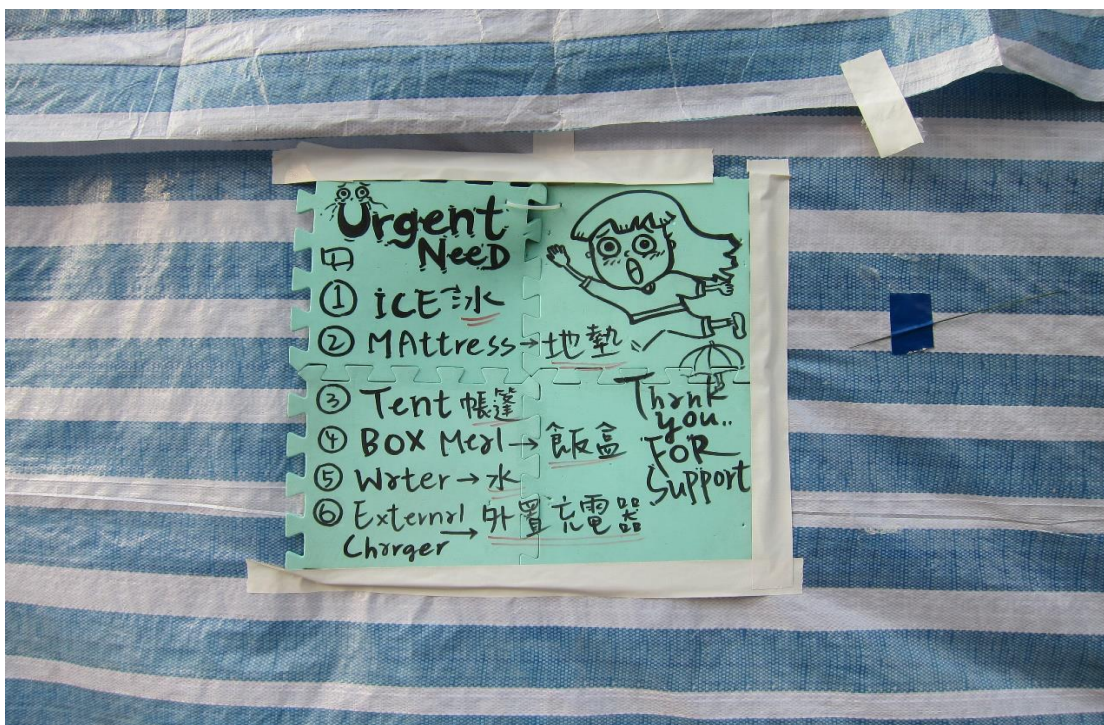
**Figure 7. Free Haircuts Offered in the Occupied Zones**



Photo by the author.



**Figure 8. Free Resources Offered in the Occupied Zones**



Photos by the author.



Figure 9. Recycling in the Occupied Zone



Photos by the author.



**Figure 10. Self-Study Area Constructed by Occupants in the Occupied Zones**



Source: *Apple Daily News*, 12 October 2014.

**Figure 11. Self-Study Area Constructed by Occupants in the Occupied Zones**



Source: *Ming Pao Daily News*, 12 October 2014.



The transformation of the occupied zone by displaying values in opposition to our mainstream mentality aimed to show the authorities that the participants were not only materialistic or concerned with economic prosperity. They wanted to show that they cherished values beyond materialism. For example, interviewee 45 (teacher, female, 34-year-old) said,

we want to tell the authorities that we not only care about money earning! We also have other values that we cherish and want to safeguard. We want democracy, we want universal suffrage!

Participants all felt glad to stay in this utopia, and this showed that Hong Kong people are not materialistic or practical. For example, interviewee 34 (manager, male, 29-year-old) shared:

I used stayed in the occupied zones after work. I enjoyed to stay in the zone as it is really like a communist society. For example, you can see many people contributed in constructing a better environment for participants to stay in without getting any reward. It really didn't look like the capitalist society that we are living in. We didn't expect others to make any payment in the zones. There are many resources flooded in by the mean time. It is just like the communist society, very impressive to me. I enjoyed staying here and this encouraged me to stay longer here.

In addition to Admiralty, where the Occupy Trio announced the activation of the Occupy movement, the protestors occupied two more places. The selection of these districts for occupation also reflected strategic considerations. These two places were Mongkok and Causeway Bay, which are very popular shopping spots for Mainland Chinese tourists. People can hear others using Mandarin, the dialect of the mainlanders,

in these areas (Beam, 2015). The influx of Mainland tourists was one of the results of the Chinese government's strategy to cope with ineffective decolonization.

### ***6.2.2 Demonstration of resistance to the economic unification policy***

The selection of Mongkok and Causeway Bay as occupied zones also displayed challenges to the economic unification approach adopted by the Chinese government. Before the occupation, there was a common discourse that Hong Kong citizens were antagonistic towards the mainlanders and still do not have a sense of nationalism. It is believed that “the gulf separating citizens in the former British colony and those on the mainland appears to be widening” (Liu, 2012). The conflicts between Hong Kongers and mainlanders can be traced to the policy of economic integration proposed by the then Chief Executive, Tung Chee Wa, in the 2000s. As the first step to achieving economic integration, mainland tourists had been allowed to visit Hong Kong individually since 2003. The number of mainland visitors grew significantly from 8.4 million in 2003 to 47.2 million in 2014. However, negative impacts on Hong Kongers caused by the policy were becoming more visible, which led to the rise of antagonism towards the mainlanders. The negative impacts include the rise of rents, more local shops selling daily necessities were replaced by shops that catered exclusively to mainland tourists, and more pregnant mainland women delivered babies in Hong Kong by rushing to public hospitals during their “visit” in Hong Kong as tourists.

Though the visits by the mainland tourists brought economic benefits to Hong Kong society, they also created problems, as Hong Kongers found it hard to buy daily necessities, make their way onto rush-hour metro trains, get a hospital bed, and acquire schools for their children due to the competition of the mainlanders. One study showed that “fewer Hongkongers agreed that mainland tourists “stimulated local consumption”; at the same time, a majority of respondents held that mainland tourists “worsened

criminal problems” (63.8%), “increased rent” (71.4%), and “raised commodity prices” (69.5%) (Zheng & Wan, 2013, pp.33-35, cited in He, 2019, p.51). The Umbrella Movement reflected their resistance to the decolonization policy. It took off in a new direction on 27 November 2014. The pro-Occupy group gathered on the sidewalks in Mongkok, repeatedly chanting “Gau Wu,” which in Mandarin means “shopping,” and hanging a sign “I want universal suffrage” as a tactic to express their demand for universal suffrage after the demolition of the occupied site in Mongkok. This action is also called the “Shopping Revolution” as the “shoppers” kept voicing their request for universal suffrage through “Gau Wu” (i.e. shopping, but not real shopping, just chanting) (Ng, 2014). The process led to clashes with real shoppers, especially those from Mainland China, and hence it reflected a sense of antagonism towards the mainlanders for the protestors to pick this popular shopping place for mainlanders to stage the protest.

The resistance and courage to say “no” to the authorities through the presence in the occupied zone encampment constituted the participants’ protest identity. Interviewee 45 (teacher, female, 34-year-old) explained that,

it seems that the occupied zones are gathered with like-minded people. It is always believed that Hong Kong people care about money and will not spend time for something that cannot get economic rewards. However, here, I can see so many people are sharing similar belief with me! We are not that kind of materialistic person. We are willing to spend time for something that may not be so-called “rewarding.” We just want to stay here to demonstrate our resistance. I’m so glad that we seem to share the same mentality.

The creation process also helped them to construct a collective identity through practising their way of life in the free space, which is a way of showing their courageous resistance to the government. It can be shown by their construction in the free space that

was different from the outer world; for instance, the above-mentioned mentality in opposition to economic interests. As Jasper (1997) suggested, “protest is a way of life, a defining aspect of their identity. Their very lives can be thoughtful efforts to work out the meaning of ‘the good life’” (p.343). It is also found that such collective identity was further strengthened through creating a distinctive interactional culture in the free space. Social movement studies have stressed that collective identity among activists may be formed when participants come together and interact within a social movement context (Johnston & Gusfield, 1994; Melucci, 1989; Taylor & Whittier, 1992). More specifically, a collective identity can be formed by constructing a movement culture shaped by day-to-day practices that draw a boundary between its members and the challenging group (Taylor & Whittier, 1992). In the Umbrella Movement, a unique movement culture was shaped with a set of specific day-to-day practices that drew a big contrast between the occupied community and the outside world. The communist-like mentality was one of the cultures constructed by the participants in the free space.

### **6.1.2 *Tactical tastes and local culture***

The new collective identity formed through the intensive engagement of the movement was not only emotion-based but also spatially based, and the spatially based collective identity could lessen the tension caused by the generational and tactical divides. After the protestors had occupied the streets for nearly one month, the Hong Kong government agreed to have a dialogue with the student leaders. However, the dialogue failed to make any breakthrough, and the two sides remain deadlocked. This made participants frustrated. In responding to the indifferent response from the authorities, the occupiers divided into two camps in terms of their points of view on the direction of the movement. One of the groups was making the occupation a pleasurable experience by creating a joyful aura while fighting for democracy. However, another

group of protestors disagreed with this direction and believed that protest should be confrontational rather than joyful. The two groups mainly stayed in two different occupied zones, which were Admiralty and Mongkok, respectively. Non-violence and civility, together with a joyful aura, were highly emphasized in Admiralty, where the Occupy Trio and the leaders of student associations and other key social activists (including the legislative counsellors) stayed. However, the protestors started to express the need to fight back against violence in order to protect themselves in Mongkok. Protestors in Mongkok supporting this mentality or tactic were called “militant” (Yuen, 2018, p.397). They tended to wear masks and carry homemade shields to protect themselves from injury. Some of them even taught martial arts there for self-protection.

The divergence of these strategies can be explained by the rise of counter-movement forces as well as the different spatial components of these two places. Admiralty is a key financial district with many international companies gathered around. Headquarters of government offices are also nearby. The place presents an image of the people who live or work there as middle or upper class. For example, interviewee 23 (assistant manager, female, 28-year-old) expressed her feeling towards the occupied site in Admiralty:

here is like full of people from the middle class as there are so many international companies nearby. The people here are polite and cautious in their manner as they always try not to cause disturbances to others. Here is very peaceful!

The occupied zone in Admiralty was created like a utopia in which people felt pleasure and enjoyment. As mentioned in the previous section, the facilities in Admiralty were very well equipped, including a study area for students’ self-study, a shower room for protesters for their personal hygiene, an “Occupy Workshop” in which different arts and crafts were carried out, a Lennon Wall for participants to express their feelings, and various first-aid stations. With well-equipped facilities and high degree of civility,

occupants enjoyed and felt pleasure in staying in the zone. Many participants were willing to stay overnight in Admiralty because they regarded it as a safe place. It is estimated that there were more than two thousand tents around eight-lane Harcourt Road in Admiralty between 25 October and 22 November (Harcourt Village Voice, 2014, pp.24-25). For example, interviewee 40 (doctor, female, 32-year-old) expressed that she observed that the occupied zones in Admiralty and Mongkok shared different cultures. She stressed that she would stay overnight in Admiralty but not in Mongkok as Mongkok was not a safe place compared to Admiralty. Another interviewee, interviewee 43 (36 year-old, male) shared similar feelings:

I will stay in Admiralty if I have to stay overnight because the facilities were well equipped and participants seemed be more self-disciplined.

In contrast, Mongkok is full of people from the grassroots or lower classes due to lower rents. There were many local neighbourhoods (i.e. people from different backgrounds and social status), and no prominent movement leaders were stationed in Mongkok. As such, it was found that this zone “carried more of a working-class character” (Hui, 2017, p.155). Moreover, counter-movement forces that caused occasional violence to the protestors were mainly found in Mongkok. The occupiers in Mongkok encountered recurrent raids from counter-protesters at the beginning of the movement (Yuen, 2018). For example, hundreds of masked thugs gathered in Mongkok in early October to shout anti-Occupy slogans, clear the barricades, dismantle the tents set up by the occupiers, and attack the occupiers violently. In light of that, the occupiers in Mongkok urged to fight back against the counter-movement forces by using violence (Yuen, 2018). They made use of different homemade tools to protect themselves and the site, such as umbrellas, shields, goggles, and facemasks. Some participants reported that they would intentionally choose to stay in Mongkok at nighttime as they believed that the

occupiers would be safer if the occupiers outnumbered the counter-protestors. The image of the danger of the Mongkok site is reflected in the participants' sharings. For example, interviewee 32 (maintenance master, male, 31-year-old) said,

I stayed in Mongkok because I think that here is unsafe or even dangerous, so I want to help others here. I sleep here every night after work because I hope that the counter-protestors will retreat if they see so many occupiers stay here.

The reason so many interviewees expressed that they felt unsafe staying in Mongkok overnight was the frequent confrontational scenarios. For example, interviewee 33 (designer, male, 32-year-old) stayed in Admiralty most of the time but had stayed in Mongkok a few times, and he observed that there were more confrontational scenes in Mongkok, which made him feel unsafe there. He shared that a few muscular counter-protestors had moved his belongings, something he had not seen in Admiralty.

The militants used violence not only to protect themselves and the site from attacks by opposition forces but also to protect against the occasional clearances by the police. For example, police started to clear the site in Mongkok on the morning of 17 October when the occupiers were inside their tents. Thousands of occupiers returned and took back the site in the evening (Yuen, 2018). Since the police used violence to disperse the crowds, including pepper spray, batons, and shields, the protestors resisted intensely with metal barriers and umbrellas. After a few hours of struggle, the occupiers successfully reoccupied the site (Yuen, 2018). Interviewee 29 (teaching assistant, male, 29-year-old) shared that it was impressive to see so many confrontational scenes in Mongkok:

I saw there were conflicts between police and occupants. Both occupants and police were so angry, the police like triad society, lost rational mind. They even talk in foul language.

Interviewee 30 (officer, male, 30-year-old) also reflected that Mongkok was an occupied zone with people from different backgrounds, and there were confrontations every day. To the occupants in Mongkok, confrontational scenarios had become normal in the movement, as they regarded the movement as a battle between the protestors and the government. Some of them even despised the peaceful movement culture found in Admiralty. The occupiers in Admiralty reflected that they preferred Admiralty to Mongkok because they enjoyed the harmonious atmosphere in Admiralty and were proud of the high civility demonstrated there. In contrast, some participants who mainly stayed in Mongkok felt negative towards the movement culture created in Admiralty, as they believed that protest should be confrontational and not harmonious. For example, interviewee 32 (maintenance master, male, 31-year-old) expressed that he disliked the atmosphere in Admiralty. He stressed that it was a movement, not a carnival, which meant that participants should be alert to the fact that the police could clear the zone anytime and therefore, protestors should always be well prepared for suppression and not be enjoying life in the zone. He said,

I don't think we should sing and dance during protest. I cannot accept to see people sing and waving mobile vigil, as it is not a carnival, it is a protest! I always wonder will they still join the movement if need sacrifice? Or need to get hurt? My mood was dropping in the later stage of the movement when seeing people enjoying the life in occupied area.

The discussion of divisions between the participants of the two camps reflects not only tactical differences but also class divisions. Admiralty is a key financial district with many international companies gathered around. The headquarters of government offices are also nearby. The place presents the people who live or work there as middle- or upper-class. In contrast, Mongkok is full of people from the grassroots or lower classes



due to lower rents. There were many local neighbourhoods (i.e. people from different backgrounds and social status), and no prominent movement leaders were stationed in Mongkok. As such, this zone carried more of a working-class character.

The tactical divide reflected the generational divide. Jasper (1997) claimed that “tactical tensions often arise between different cohorts of recruits, who arrive with contrasting tastes in tactics” (p.241). He further used the civil rights movement to demonstrate that there is a close relationship between generational and tactical cleavage because of “biographical availability” in which students tend to be able to afford time in protest, even several days in jail. As such, students tend to adopt more radical tactics. Jasper (1997) stressed the impact of the tactical divide in a movement as he said: “diversity in tactical tastes can destroy protest movements” (p.242). The key figures of the Umbrella Movement came from two main parties from different generations: the “Occupy Trio” and the leaders of two student organizations. The two parties reflect two different generations of Hong Kong citizens with different characteristics. The Occupy Trio is middle-aged, politically experienced, and self-restrained, while the leaders of the student organizations tend to be more idealistic and headstrong than their older counterparts.

The Occupy Trio once mentioned in an interview that they overlooked the dilemma between different generations because they did not understand the youth’s outrage and their way of social engagement. Both Professor Benny Tai and Professor Chan Kin-man said students were dissatisfied with how the middle-aged act. The youths thought they were acting too “slow” (Lam, 2019).<sup>60</sup> Students tended to criticize the Occupy Trio for not being determined. For example, the student leaders suggested having a rehearsal of the Occupy movement right after the 1 July demonstration in 2014 when they first heard

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<sup>60</sup> Translated by the author.

the idea of occupying Central initiated by Professor Tai. However, the Occupy Trio refused as they regarded the Occupy movement as a last resort, which should only be carried out if the negotiation was over. As explained by Professor Chan, they were still communicating with the government at that time and therefore, it was not an appropriate action. This divide was raised in Professor Chan's testimony during the trial. Professor Chan was asked by the lawyer, "Can I say that you think the students are not patient enough while the students think that you are too slow?" Professor Chan replied:

Students always think that we are too slow. They believed that the civil disobedience should be carried out first in order to pressure to government to negotiate. However, we believe that we can only start the civil disobedience action when the negotiation is over. (Chong, 2019)<sup>61</sup>

There was another occasion that demonstrated the divide between the youth and the Occupy Trio, in which the youth criticized the Occupy Trio for not being determined enough. The Occupy Trio planned to start the Occupy movement on 1 October and end on 3 or 5 October 2014 in Central. Unexpectedly, students reclaimed the Civic Square, which attracted crowds to gather at Admiralty on 26 September 2014. The key leaders of the student associations were arrested afterwards. Professor Chan and Professor Tai walked along Tim Mei Avenue on 27 September and were criticized by many students for not making any contribution while students had already contributed a lot. Professor Chan shared what he heard from the youth:

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<sup>61</sup> Translated by the author.

There were youths kept scolding us when we walked along the road. They said that the youth had already contributed a lot, but where were you? They urged us to kick off the Occupy movement at once. (Chong, 2019)<sup>62</sup>

At that moment, Professor Chan was still struggling with whether to start the movement earlier than they had planned. In the end, the Occupy Trio kicked off the Occupy movement on 28 September due to the request of the student associations; however, many youths left the protest site at that moment for they thought the trio was hijacking the movement. Professor Chan described students' feedback as follows:

Those at the back claimed fiercely that we were hijacking students' movement. I immediately explained that this decision was supported by the Hong Kong Federation of Students. ... I remembered that many people were leaving ... there were a few thousands protestors at Tim Mei Avenue before the announcement of the Occupy movement, but after dawn [i.e. after the announcement of the Occupy movement] only a few hundred stayed. (Chong, 2019)<sup>63</sup>

The youth stressed that they were supporting the student organizations but not the Occupy Trio. They felt indifferent and even hateful when the trio kicked off the movement. It turned out that it was hard for the trio to organize and coordinate actions among the protesters. The divisions between the youth and the Occupy Trio can be explained by their different life histories. While the youth prefer to take up more radical and determined approaches, the Occupy Trio preferred to act comparatively moderately because they had experienced the June 4 Democratic Movement in Beijing in 1989, which was mentioned in previous chapters. The brutal suppression of the June 4

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<sup>62</sup> Translated by the author.

<sup>63</sup> Translated by the author.

movement made them cautious about any radical action that might result in students getting hurt. Therefore, they stressed that they were using peaceful methods to fight for universal suffrage.

Past studies showed that collective memories of past injustices have an impact on activism during a movement (Lipsitz, 1988; Couto, 1993; Payne, 1995). The Reverend Chu Yiu-ming of the Occupy Trio mentioned in an interview in 2018 how his memory of the June 4 Tiananmen Square protest impacted his life:

People who witnessed 1989 should have some sort of historical comparison when they participated in the Umbrella Movement. Hong Kongers will not forget the evening on 28 September four years ago. The police shot dozens of tear gas canisters into the crowd outside the headquarters. When the sky was getting dark, the anti-riot police holding long guns and wearing anti-toxic masks came to disperse the crowd. They raised the orange banner “Disperse Or Fire” suddenly ... I feel terrified, I cannot stop reminding myself of the scenario in 1989. ... So I always insisted that we cannot cross the borderline of “love and peace.” Don’t clash, ... we cannot let the youth sacrifice themselves at that moment unpreparedly. (Ng, 2018)<sup>64</sup>

One of the key volunteers of the movement who worked closely with the Occupy Trio, interviewee 37 (lawyer, female, 30-year-old), shared that she believed that Chu Yiu-ming’s experience in the June 4 democratic movement in 1989 made him fear any radical action for the sake of students’ safety. She said:

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<sup>64</sup> Translated by the author.

Since we all know that happened to Chu and what Chu experienced, it's not hard to understand why Chu always requests us to obey the principle of "love and peace."

The impact of what happened on June 4 in 1989 was great to Chu.

Therefore, the Occupy Trio could not bear to witness any student getting hurt in the movement. They always stressed the importance of being peaceful during the Occupy movement.

Different choices over movement strategies reflected people's different "tastes" for certain tactics. For example, some may enjoy using moderate tactics, while some may prefer being avant-garde or radical. To Jasper, participants can develop different identities based on different tactical tastes when they are proud of using certain protest styles or particular styles of action (Polletta & Jasper 2001). For the Umbrella Movement, there were two kinds of tactical taste, one using moderate tactics by adopting the principle of non-violence or civil disobedience and the other using radical or "militant" tactics. However, the case of the Umbrella Movement showed one more distinguishing feature regarding the choice of tactics, as it also reflected the different cultures of different districts or locales. As mentioned above, Admiralty is a place with many middle-class people and where international corporations and governmental departments are situated, while Mongkok is filled with grassroots people. So, the protest identities built during the occupation were also spatial or place-based. Though there were internal splits or divisions over the tactics or among protestors from different places, it did not lead to the fragmentation of the movement, for they shared emotional connections. Some of my interviewees stayed in different occupied zones and shared about the common feelings. For instance, Interviewee 48 (shop assistant, female, 38-year-old) said,

I used to stay in Mongkok during the movement because it is near where I am living. I enjoyed the participation in Mongkok as we are free to express our

opinion on the stage created by other participants. I didn't pay attention to politics before the movement as I didn't read news. I just care about my life and earn money every day before the movement. However, I wondered why people keep staying in the zone every day during the movement. I started to ask myself why they sacrifice their free time to stay there every day. I have to walk across Mongkok when I return home after work, and therefore I stayed there to see what they were doing in the occupied zone and also try to understand the reason behind it. After chatting with the occupants, I started to know what was happening and also wanted to support the movement. I stay in the zone after work since then. There was a stage in Mongkok where participants can voice their opinion. I feel so amazed as I never thought of having the chance to voice my opinion in public as a working-class person. I know some friends during the movement and I also went to Admiralty with them to see what was happening over there. The atmosphere was different between Admiralty and Mongkok. It was like a carnival in Admiralty. There were many booths demonstrating different artworks. I joined some of them. For example, I draw some pictures to express my feelings and opinions in one of the booths. Though the atmosphere was different between the occupied zones, I enjoyed the participation in both places. I can contribute myself in both places and also showed my resistance to the authorities in different ways.

There were also some common feelings shared by participants in different occupied zones. For example, interviewee 38 (driver, male, 30-year-old) stayed in Mongkok during nearly the whole period of the movement as he supported the militant strategy in fighting for universal suffrage. He shared:

I didn't agree with the strategy adopted by the participants in Admiralty for I think that social movement should be radical. Therefore, I stayed in Mongkok instead of

Admiralty. Though I didn't agree with their strategy, I think its fine to have different occupied zones with different strategies. This is because we can demonstrate our anger to the public in different ways. We have the same goal and therefore we should respect each other.

Another interviewee 31 (Technical officer, male, 28-year-old) who stayed in Admiralty shared similar feelings. He mentioned:

I stayed in Admiralty in daytime as I think that I have to support the trio and also the strategy of using peaceful way to fight for universal suffrage. However, I used to sleep at Mongkok at nighttime because I want to protect the participants there. Though I didn't support the radical method, I still think that we belong to the same group as we all feel anger towards the authority. We are just using different method to fight for the same goal. We are using different method to show our resistance and therefore we should support each other.

The above sharing showed that the participants in both occupied zones believed that they belonged to the same group as they shared the same anger throughout the occupation. They also gained a sense of satisfaction for they would take up the active role in different ways no matter they stayed in Mongkok or Admiralty. They shared the same emotions though they adopted different strategies that enabled them to maintain the solidarity throughout the participation.

Moreover, the participants in both occupied zones earned a sense of agency in creating different kinds of protest cultures. They also shared the feeling of having power in constructing their ideal community or imagination for the future. They felt pride in their actions and the community built within the occupied zones. This emotional

connection overcame the internal divisions over tactical choice. For instance, interviewee 28 (officer, female, 26-year-old) stated:

I used in stay in Admiralty at most of the time as I was attracted by the beautiful scenario created by the participants in Admiralty. The tents set up by the participants look like different villages or communities. They put their messages or posters on the tents to show their point of views. I also lived in the tent and formed a village with other participants nearby. We created a name for this village and selected a leader to represent the decisions made by our village. We also created our own living rules, such as shared the resources among each other. We used to have discussions when making every single decision, no matter how small the issue is. We decorated the living environments by different posters to show our messages. We seem like having the autonomy to create our ideal community during the occupation.

I noticed that the interviewees who stayed in Mongkok also shared similar experience. For instance, interviewee 23 (human resources officer, female, 25-year-old), who stayed in Mongkok in most of the time said:

I slept overnight in most of the time in Mongkok during the occupation to support the movement. One of the reasons that sustained me to stay there was the happiness and satisfaction that I gained during the participation. I lived in a tent and made many new friends who also lived in the tents nearby. We keep close contact with each other for the purpose of protection, especially during the nighttime. I sometimes feel unsafe when staying in Mongkok and therefore I made new friends who also lived in the tents during the occupation. We helped to set up resources centre where participants can pick up resources they needed for



free. We also set up many voluntary groups to offer voluntary services to each other, like free haircut and free tutoring. It is so amazing that we established an ideal community.

The interviewees' sharing showed that the participants in both campuses shared common emotions though they fight for the political goal with different strategies. As such, the protest identities created in the Umbrella Movement were not only spatially based but also emotion-based. These new protest identities contributed to maintaining the high level of participant commitment.

## **6.2 Demonstration of Resistant Identity through Artwork**

The above section demonstrated the movement culture and how the resistant identity was constructed, and such dimensions were further enhanced through the creation of collective rites. As I will show in this section, many respondents emphasized that they felt energized when back in the space to initiate social action. They elaborated that they felt stronger and more powerful when there were many like-minded people gathered in a physical space. Hirsch (1986) suggested that a "bandwagon" would encourage people to participate in a movement if a large number of people are willing to make sacrifices for the movement, as people tend to believe they can accomplish the mission (p.383). Empowerment may come from "cognitive assessment of chances of success" or from the "emotional thrill derived from the pursuit itself, from the sensation of working toward a common moral end" (Jasper, 1997, p.221).

In connection with that, ritual plays an important role in generating the bandwagon effect of a social group. Collective activities play a significant role in maintaining the morale of a movement because they make participants feel energized and offer a sense of togetherness. Embodiment takes various forms, such as a form of embodiment with sensuous, aesthetic qualities, drawing people into collective performances where bodies

are meaningfully active together (Strathern & Stewart, 1998; Young, 2001). A sense of togetherness will be generated in such situations, enabling participants to feel energized and generating a positive feeling that they can make a difference, i.e. empowerment (Jasper, 1997). People feel they are energized and empowered through collective rituals, and hence the chance of success is higher.

### **6.2.1 *Collective rites generate emotional energy***

My findings show that the collective rituals performed within the free space played a significant role in prolonging the movement as they helped generate collective effervescence. Collective effervescence refers to the transmutation of the initiating emotion into emotional energy, which makes a person feel stronger and become pumped up with enthusiasm and confidence (Durkheim, 1912). To Durkheim (1912), collective effervescence is crucial in forming solidarity among a group. The criteria for achieving such status include the physical assembly of people so as to achieve a bodily awareness of copresence, and a shared focus of attention among the members so that participants become aware of each other's awareness. With the presence of these things, a feeling of group solidarity and emotional energy will be created in individual participants, and the participants will then become pumped up with enthusiasm and confidence. This is the emotion which makes the individual feel stronger as a member of a group (Collins, 1990). Interviewee 30 (designer, male, 29-year-old) shared the positive feeling that he felt empowered when he was in the free space with many like-minded people around him. He mentioned that

it is really different between to do the things alone and to do the things with a group of people together ... if you do things with a large number of people, ... at least I will not feel lonely ... also I can have persistence to stay longer if I have someone to talk to! (Interviewee 30, designer, male, 29-year-old)

The participants further mentioned that there were particular moments that offered them high morale, such as when they waved their mobile phone lights and sang together. The song “Raise Your Umbrella,” sung by several Hong Kong popular music singers, was created as the theme song of the Umbrella Movement. It aimed to encourage protesters to insist on their goal and moral values in the times of darkness. When the song played, a “mobile light” vigil was held to accelerate the morale of the occupation. People waved their glowing cell phones and sang the song together. Some interviewees shared that they felt not only very romantic at that moment but also powerful, which helped them maintain their solidarity. For example, interviewee 39 (banker, female, 31- year-old) said,

when people turn the light of their mobile on, it’s so amazing and touching! You know that there are more than ten thousand people sharing the same goal with you. They are your companions! I am not alone.

Participants felt a sense of empowerment through waving the light and singing because a sense of commonality can be fostered through coordinated physical activity and bodily contact (McNeill, 1995). These collective rites also generate pleasurable feelings; participants felt joyful in practising the collective rites. For instance, interviewee 8 (student, male, 18-year-old) said,

I enjoyed the moment of singing and waving the mobile light, it gives me energy as I know that I am not alone. It’s really very romantic. This moment is very important, as we were exhausted and especially starting to lose morale when the government kept giving us no response to our request. So, I think that such moments are needed, especially for a long-lasting movement. I had joined many marches and protests before, but they only lasted for one day or just a few hours, so we could keep energized during the whole period as it was short. However, the

Occupy movement lasted for such a long time that we must encounter certain moments of feeling exhausted. In such cases, doing things together to boost our morale was needed. Though it was a tough battle, as we did not know when we would achieve the goal, the moment we waved the mobile phone light and sang together made me feel relaxed and enjoyable. It is a joyful moment.

They mentioned that the “mobile light vigil” visualized their sense of togetherness and solidarity. They stressed that doing the same thing with people with the same mindset made them feel great and powerful. Collective activities help construct group boundaries that aim to enhance protest identity. As Whittier (2009) argues, “participants establish group boundaries through a symbolic system and by constructing an alternative culture or network that serves as a “world apart” from the dominant society” (p.119).

Song lyrics also help to maintain solidarity among movement participants. Eyerman and Jamison (1991) suggested that music and song may remind members (e.g. activists) of a common fate. Lyrics also help spread the message of the movement to bystanders and share their experiences or grievances with the public. Singing was especially important to the civil rights movement (Morris, 1984). Lyrics such as “We shall overcome” lent biblical authority to the campaign with specific references to fundamental beliefs and narratives (Watters, 1971). Jasper (1997) claimed that in singing, “lyrics are a form of shared knowledge that helps one feel like an insider” and reaffirms participants’ identities and beliefs, as well as their power (p.193). Many respondents reflected that they enjoyed singing “Raise Your Umbrella” created for the Umbrella Movement because it reflected their situation. For example, interviewee 12 (student, male, 20-year-old) said,

I love the lyrics of the song “Raise Your Umbrella,” “together holding up our umbrellas, we may feel uneasy, but not alone when together.” I feel so warm and

touched when singing this song with many like-minded people. It helped me to overcome fear.

Bell (1992) claimed that the richer a movement's culture—with more rituals, songs, folktales, heroes, denunciation of enemies, and so on—the greater these pleasures. A successful interactional ritual has three major consequences. The first is solidarity, a feeling of belonging together in a common identity. The second consequence is membership symbols, emblems that the group respects and which remind them of their common membership. These can be physical emblems like flags or religious objects, which Durkheim called sacred objects, but membership symbols can also include actions, gestures, words, and particular persons. The third consequence is emotional energy—a longer-lasting feeling that individuals take with them from the group, giving them confidence, enthusiasm, and initiative (Collins, 2004).

### **6.2.2 *Artwork functioned as demonstration of interstitial power***

The present study discovered that collective rituals could also take a static form, like artworks or handicrafts. Since people had no idea when the movement would end, arts and handicrafts helped them to maintain their morale and remind them they were in a group. They made artworks or handicrafts in the free space together, which functioned as a demonstration of their autonomy or determination. It worked as a demonstration of interstitial power. They used the free space to make art showing the public and the authorities what they were fighting for. They turned the occupied zones into exhibition spaces in which the public could voice their opinions through different artworks, e.g. posters, post-it notes, banners, chalk drawings on roads and pavements, sculptures, installations, and photographs. A Lennon Wall has received media attention for displaying many colourful post-it notes with messages from citizens expressing their hopes and mutual support. They emphasized that the government did not put resources

into the development of art, and therefore it was a valuable experience to use the Occupy movement to demonstrate their artwork. Also, the display of artwork within the space helped maintain participants' solidarity and commitment by reminding them that the movement was still in progress. For instance, interviewee 15 (student, female, 21-year-old) said that,

I keep painting on the street to remind me that the movement was still going ... I do feel frustrated when the government adopted a hands-off approach in facing our request. Nothing we can do ... but I feel like gaining power when I draw on the street. The drawing represents my autonomy over the city and also helps to express my message to bystanders.

#### **6.4 Relational Transformation within the Free Space**

The participatory democracy practised in the occupied zone demonstrated a specific collective culture in opposition to the Hong Kong political culture, especially contradicting the political implications of the 8/31 Framework. This practice generated a specific interactional culture, which led to strong affective bonding among the participants. As explained in previous chapters, the 8/31 Framework was framed as an unjust decision that denied citizens' political rights as promised in the Basic Law. The movement aimed to protest this unjust decision to preserve the moral values that Hong Kong citizens treasured, including justice and fairness. As the movement fought for democracy, the participatory democracy promoted and practised in the occupied zone reflected the utopic world for which the participants had been fighting. It reflected a kind of prefigurative politics, which means "a desire to practice and experience one's values and principles in the struggle" (Ancelovici, Dufour & Hez, 2016, p.180). This is a common feature of other Occupy movements around the globe. The "call for an

autonomy vis-à-vis political parties” is a principle adopted by most Occupy movements (Ancelevici, Dufour & Hez, 2016, p.27).

Horizontalism is also a common feature of Occupy movements. Horizontalism refers to a form of consensus-based participatory democracy in which participants are highly participatory within the decision-making process (Barber, 2012). These features were common to many Occupy movements around the globe, including the 15M Spanish Movement, the Movement of the Squares in Greece, and Occupy Wall Street in the United States (Oikonomakis & Roos, 2016). For instance, the Occupy Wall Street participants used the occupation of Zuccotti Park to construct their own “microcosm of democracy by prefiguring the society they advocated” (Swan & Husted, 2017, p.203). General assemblies were established as a platform for communication and decision-making in which all decisions were made based on active participation and democratic deliberation in the assemblies (Kang, 2013, cited in Swan & Husted, 2017, p.203). As consensus was needed before making any decision, a “people’s microphone” was adopted to ensure that every voice within the assembly was heard (Radovac, 2014). People within the general assemblies repeated speakers’ voices at least once in an expanding circle so that the speakers’ actual words could be heard among the crowd when electronic voice amplification was disallowed by the city (Barber, 2012).

The above features were also trademarks of the Occupy movement in Spain. Protest against traditional forms of political representation was the key objective of the 15M Spanish Movement. The slogan “we do not represent any party or association” was the manifesto of the general assembly of Puerta de Sol (Nez, 2016, p.127). General assemblies were also adopted in the 15M Spanish Movement and committees, and working groups were established to facilitate discussion. They called for “real democracy” based on the “principles of self-management, deliberation, and participation open to all,” and internal democracy was stressed in the movement (Nez, 2016, p.127).

Similar to other Occupy movements, deliberative democracy was encouraged or practised in certain occupied areas as prefigurative politics, which can be shown in the three Deliberation Days as well as during the Umbrella Movement.

#### **6.4.1 *Horizontal mode of interaction embedded in deliberative democracy***

Deliberative democracy as movement culture can be seen in the Umbrella Movement. In contrast to movements in Western countries, however, in the Umbrella Movement, deliberative democracy was planned as a means of civic awakening before the occupation. As mentioned in Chapter 4, civic awakening was one of the key objectives of the movement, and participatory deliberation was practised through the organization of three days of deliberation before the occupation began so that they could communicate with different participants. Participants reflected that this process was a fresh experience to them, as they rarely got the chance to have open discussions on social issues in this way. For example, interviewee 34 (manager, male, 29-year-old) had joined the deliberations and reflected that he got the chance to know more about the importance of universal suffrage and democracy, which raised his concern about governance. He elaborated:

I joined the deliberation, as I was interested in the idea of civil disobedience. I attended the deliberation day and had a chance to have communication with many other people. We shared our ideas and concerns. I got the chance to learn about the ridiculous policies with other attendees. Since then, I believe that we need a democratic system to protect ourselves. (Interviewee 34, manager, male, 29-year-old)

Deliberative democracy was also practised during the occupation of certain areas, which was similar to Occupy movements around the globe. However, deliberative



democracy was practised differently in Admiralty and Mongkok. The role of leadership was more explicit in the Umbrella Movement. Since the movement kicked off at Admiralty, the leaders mostly stayed there, and that is where the main stage was established, “symbolizing the intention to centralize the movement leadership” (He, 2019, p.132). While deliberative democracy was not well developed in Admiralty, it was practised systematically in Mongkok. A podium was set up at Mongkok for everyone to express their opinion. Interviewee 30 (officer, male, 27-year-old) helped to set up and coordinate the platform. He was a core volunteer of the movement and a full-time officer who worked for a local NGO. He helped to build a platform to encourage the exchange of ideas among the occupants. He stressed that the aim of the platform was to promote and practise the spirit of deliberative democracy. He said the basic principle of the platform was that everyone had an equal right to speak. In order to protect everyone’s right to expression, he also set some rules. First, there were two lines, one for those who had never spoken on the stage and the other for those who had. If many people were waiting to express their opinion, those who had never been on the stage would have priority. Each participant got five minutes to share their opinion, and the participant could keep lining up and taking their turn if he or she wanted to keep expressing his or her thoughts. He was the facilitator at the beginning, but he passed his facilitating role to occupants to let them participate more in the movement. He mentioned that he hoped people could learn to listen to and respect others’ opinions, which is one of the key spirits of democracy. The platform he built enabled open discussion among the occupants and practised the spirit of deliberative democracy, which he found enjoyable and pleasurable. He shared the pleasure he acquired through this practice:

It is so amazing that I can practise my vision of promoting deliberative democracy in the community. It was one of my dreams to see participatory democracy come true! (Interviewee 30, officer, male, 27-year-old)

Interviewee 30 was impressed to see that the participants could practise deliberative democracy. He gave an example, saying that he was impressed by the behaviour of one of the occupants who expressed his opinion patiently. Since the occupant had disagreed with four people's opinions, he lined up and waited four times for the chance to express his disagreement. The interviewee was amazed that the occupant listened patiently to others' opinions and followed the rules in waiting for his turn to express his opinion. After his expression, one of the women he disagreed with also lined up and responded to his idea, and then the man kept lining up and expressing his concern.

The interviewee was amazed by this kind of interaction and exchange of ideas between people with different standpoints. He found that such interaction could be found every day during the occupation among different classes and occupations, such as waiters, students, retirees, tourist guides, salespeople, and social workers. He felt that he could learn something by listening to these discussions, and he got the chance to learn how people from different backgrounds think. He was thrilled that they could practise deliberative democracy in the zone and have a discussion to achieve consensus before taking any action. He witnessed one example of how participants within the zone came to a decision through deliberation and consensus. A bus was planning to pass the zone, and the participants discussed and voted on whether to let the bus go. The atmosphere reminded him of the high quality of Hong Kongers. He witnessed how Hong Kong citizens can respect each other's opinions through listening patiently to different arguments. He believed that the movement raised the quality of Hong Kongers in not only offering them a chance to practise democracy but also in raising their political

consciousness through the discussion. Since the movement, interviewee 30 has taken up a much more active role in fighting for democracy in Hong Kong by taking leadership roles in many demonstrations. He shared that he was not certain that Hong Kong people are capable of practising democracy. However, he witnessed that the participants from different classes, including those with lower educational and economic status, could learn how to understand social policies and then learn how to voice their opinion, as well as how to respect others' opinions. Therefore, he believed that Hong Kong is ready for universal suffrage after the Umbrella Movement. He emphasized that the experience of the occupation functioned as a lesson to the public to show how to practise democracy.

With the aim of promoting and practising the spirit of deliberative democracy, some participants organized various forums to invite people from different classes to express their opinion with equal opportunity. Some interviewees claimed that they had never been on stage to express their opinions in past movements, as the stages were believed only for the leaders or scholars (they used the term "people with high social status or educational levels"). Consequently, the deliberative democracy promoted in the Umbrella Movement enhanced their level of participation. This mode of interaction enabled deliberation among the participants, which strengthened their commitment to the movement. The deliberative process triggered participants' political consciousness, especially for those who were previously apolitical.

Deliberative democracy was not only reflected in the intensive interaction and exchange of thoughts among the participants but also in the relationship between the movement leaders and the participants. The organizational structure of the Umbrella Movement was non-hierarchical, and participants could get involved in the decision-making process. Though the leaders took a more explicit role at Admiralty, they showed a willingness to have discussions with other participants in making decisions. Many respondents expressed that they felt respected by the organizers, which enabled

them to feel a sense of actualization and sustained them to join the movement. For example, interviewee 38 (driver, male, 30-year-old) had never joined a social movement before, and he stressed that his participation in the Umbrella Movement was pleasurable in that he felt respected by the organizers. He explained that he joined the Umbrella Movement because he was angry with the police and the government for using tear gas to attack the public, especially the students. He came to join the movement to protect the students. He set up a tent near the boundary of the occupied zone of Admiralty. He “lived” with other participants nearby, and a so-called “village” was formed. The village contained around one hundred participants, and those living in the village were called “villagers.” One of the “villagers” named the “village” “Gray village.” Since the interviewee was tall, muscular, and strong, the “villagers” always asked for his help in doing heavy work or in protecting them from attacks by anti-Occupy parties. He later even quit his job to stay in the zones every day and overnight to protect others.

#### **6.4.2 *Formation of strong affective bonding***

Due to his intensive involvement in protecting the village and other villagers, interviewee 38 became the leader of one of the defensive lines and would be the first to know of the police reaction. He felt that he had to take up the responsibility of protecting the participants when he became the leader of the defensive line. After taking up the role of an informal leader, he got the chance to have meetings and discussions with the organizers. Later on, some political parties even suggested recruiting him to be a core member due to his very positive image among the participants. He mentioned that he was amazed about being involved in decision-making with the organizers. He emphasized several times that as a driver with a low educational level and social status, he had never imagined that he would get the chance to do something significant and meaningful to society. He could not imagine that the well-known professors and politicians would

recognize him and even consult his opinion in making decisions. He felt very excited when he knew that his participation was important to others, and such feeling motivated him to have intensive participation during the movement and even afterwards. He remarked that his life became different after he joined the Umbrella Movement. He said,

I have never thought that I can be a kind of leader in a significant movement. I got a sense of responsibility and was glad to take up the role of protecting the participants as I felt that I was being respected and cherished. The student leaders and the Occupy Trio would consult my opinion when they made decisions, as they know that I will collect opinions from the occupants and hence somehow I got involved in the decision-making process. For example, when they were deciding whether to take a rather radical action to express their anger when the government showed no response to their request, I shared my point of view with them. I got a sense of satisfaction as I could contribute to their decision-making process and therefore I became highly involved in the movement.

The respect shown by the organizers for the work done by occupants encouraged the emergence of informal leaders, which helped strengthen the communication between the organizers and participants (Freeman, 1972). One of the interviewees (Interviewee 12, student, 20-year-old) claimed, “no matter who you are, you can be one of the creators in the occupied zone,” which enabled the occupants to get a sense of actualization. This accords with Ryan and Gamson’s (2009) argument that the participatory communication adopted by the movement organizers encouraged the generation of people’s sense of agency and developed the capacity for collective action. It generated a positive feeling in joining the movement as it led people to transform themselves through the work of building an ideal community in the movement.

The horizontal mode of communication brought by the deliberative democracy helped to overcome the legitimacy crisis over the leadership of the movement. As mentioned, the movement was initiated and organized by the trio, but many participants decided to join the movement because of outrage triggered by the firing of tear gas as well as when the student leaders became highly involved in the movement. Therefore, it turned out that the trio might not perform the role of leadership effectively during the entire movement. However, the adoption of a horizontal mode of communication helped to solve the problem caused by this crisis. My study found that some active participants were selected by other participants to take up the leadership role in different “villages” created in the occupied zones. These informal leaders functioned as a bridge to enhance the communication between the movement leaders and the ordinary participants. It helped the ordinary participants to voice their points of view and feelings. For example, one of the participants who became an informal leader reflected that he was consulted by the movement leaders several times in making any decisions during the occupation, such as whether to take a rather radical action to express their anger when the government showed no response to their request after occupied the zones for a certain period. He then collected other participants’ ideas and shared them with the movement leaders. It helped the movement leaders to understand the ordinary participants’ opinions, enhancing the occupants’ solidarity during the movement. Moreover, a podium was set up in the occupied zone where everyone could take a turn to share their point of view. Participants lined up in front of the podium and took turns to express their ideas. Other participants could also take a turn to give feedback to the speakers. Participants reflected that they got the chance to exchange ideas with other participants through this kind of interaction.

As introduced in the first chapter of this thesis, the Occupy Trio initially raised the idea of the Occupy movement. As such, when the media reported on the movement, they only focused on the information provided by the Occupy Trio, especially before the

outbreak of the movement. According to the Occupy Trio's plan, students were not the target group for membership recruitment as it was an illegal activity. Student participation was even discouraged. The Occupy Trio initially planned to encourage middle-aged people, as they regarded this movement as a valuable chance to arouse a sense of civic engagement among the middle-aged in Hong Kong. Professor Tai mentioned in the "Q & A" section of the press conference announcing the details of the movement that he hoped to see people aged over 40 joining the movement so that they could rethink what kind of society they want the next generation to be living in (*Apple Daily News*, 2018). Professor Chan also mentioned that he did not want those under 18 to join the movement, and he recommended that they do the backup support. Even if they joined, the organizers would not let them sign the declaration to turn themselves over to the police after the movement. In the case of university students, he would not reject those who had thoroughly considered their decision to join the movement, but he asked them to reconsider because of the legal consequences they would have to bear. He said,

this movement is an illegal gathering, there will be a chance of getting a criminal record, so I hope the university students will rethink again and again and be aware of the legal consequences.

The scenario that Professor Chan imagined after kicking off the Occupy movement was that there would be a group of around two to three thousand middle-aged professionals sitting on Central's crossroads while the youngsters looked on (Sanpoyan, 2013). Students were not the key party that drew public or media attention during the preparation stage of the movement. The public and the media regarded the Occupy Trio as the leaders of the movement and updated the progress of the movement from the information released by the trio, and students were not their main targets. The situation changed when the students broke into the Civic Square in front of the Legislative Council

on 26 September and got arrested. The police took away the students trapped in the Civic Square on 27 September, and Professor Tai announced the launch of Occupy Central on 28 September. Since many protestors came to support the students rather than the trio's idea of Occupy Central, they regarded the trio's launch of the movement as hijacking the students' protest. Also, the protest took place at Admiralty instead of Central, so they did not regard their participation as part of the Occupy movement initiated by the Occupy Trio. In order to show their discontent, some students who were joining "Reclaim our Civic Square" even determined to withdraw from the movement when Professor Tai announced that the Occupy Central was going to start on 28 September. Even if they stayed to support the movement, they tended to regard the two students' organizations, Federation and Scholarism, as the leaders, and therefore, they refused to obey the rules and regulations set by the trio. For example, interviewee 16 (teaching assistant, female, 21-year-old) claimed:

I did not pay attention to the Occupy movement raised by the Occupy Trio as I came out because I felt so angry for seeing the government arrest students so brutally! Also, the firing of tear gas towards the students is unacceptable to me. I support the students and being proud of what they have done. As for the trio, they only hijacked the movement and hence I would not regard them as the leaders.

Another interviewee, interviewee 10 (student, male, 18-year-old) shared a similar point of view:

I was at Admiralty when Professor Benny Tai announced the start of the Occupy movement and I planned to leave the place immediately as I did not come to support the Occupy Central planned by the trio, but just to support the students. In



the end, I did leave but came back after a few hours as I think I need to support the students, though I believed that the trio had hijacked the movement.

From the above discussions, it can be seen that many participants (especially students) did not regard the trio as leaders. They came out not because they supported the originally designed non-violent civil disobedience movement, but because they were triggered by the firing of tear gas over the students. Some participants did not recognize the trio's leadership role because they thought the trio's idea was infeasible, and they would not come out if only the trio led the movement. For example, interviewee 51 (handcrafter, female, 45-year-old) expressed that,

I did not plan to join the movement at all! The reason is that I don't think its effective in pushing the government to change their mind regarding the arrangement of selection of the Hong Kong Chief Executive by just occupying the road for a few days! (Interviewee 51, handcrafter, female, 45-year-old)

Interviewee 46 (manager, male, 34-year-old) also did not pay much attention to the movement when raised by the Occupy Trio as he felt detached from it. He said the movement only took place in Central, which did not relate to him, as he did not work there. Also, he thought that using the Occupy movement to fight for universal suffrage was infeasible, so he never thought of joining in the beginning. He said,

The idea was crazy! It was just like a show! I did not see any significance in occupying Central for a few days and that's why I did not pay attention to the movement in the very beginning. Frankly, I felt negative towards the trio and the idea.

A number of interviewees responded that they did not plan to join the trio because they doubted their movement's effectiveness in fighting for universal suffrage. For example, interviewee 33 (designer, male, 29-year-old) said:

The reason that I joined the movement was mainly not because of the trio as the idea proposed by the trio was too moderate. I do agree with their goal and values, but I do not agree with their strategy. I think that it's hard to initiate a protest with love and peace. Or, put simply, I support the value of love and peace but it's not necessary to initiate a protest with love and peace. I prefer to use more confrontational and radical methods. Also, they need to take time to communicate with the government before starting the occupation, and I think this is not a right decision. I believe that we should have the occupation as soon as possible. So, I did not determine to join the movement proposed by the trio. I joined finally because I was so angry about the firing of tear gas. I cannot do nothing in facing government suppression, so I take action.

In addition, there was a group of protesters who rejected both parties as their leaders, as they believed that the movement should have no leader. They held up a sign with the slogan "No Organizations, Only the People" when the leaders of the two parties proposed to evacuate the occupied zones in early October when facing attacks by anti-occupation parties in Mongkok. A group of people showed up at Admiralty to challenge the leadership and urged the dismissal of the pickets because they disagreed with the decision to evacuate. They believed that the protesters should take further action to pressure the government for the implementation of universal suffrage, such as a mass hunger strike or surrounding the government buildings.

In such circumstances, ordinary participants' roles and informal leaders were crucial over the entire course of the protest, and hence it can be regarded as bottom-up activism.

The self-organized voluntary activities maintained the daily operation of the occupied zones, including the collection and distribution of donated materials, the arrangement of guest talks and seminars, disposal of garbage, and maintenance of security. Ordinary participants' contributions were described in Cheng and Chan's (2017) study. More than half of the protestors contributed to the operation of the movement by donation, while 34% and 19% of participants contributed to more demanding tasks, such as volunteering and frontline defence, respectively (Cheng & Chan, 2017, p.233). The movement was well organized, with contributions from various self-initiators. The community creation process not only enhanced the intensity of their participation through the generation of positive emotions but also enhanced their solidarity and collective identity. Since they were creating an imagined ideal community together, it reminded them that they belonged to the same group. For example, interviewee 41 (public relations officer, female, 33-year-old) mentioned that the occupation experience was like they were creating something together:

I really feel so good to have many like-minded people together. We like creating something together which is significant to Hong Kong history. I feel proud to be one of the creators.

The collective identity formed among the participants enabled them to enjoy companionship. It felt great to have people with similar mindsets fighting for the same goal at the same moment. Later on, different "villages" were formed to provide mutual support, especially in facing the brutal suppression from the police. For example, interviewee 27 (research assistant, male, 25-year-old) mentioned that,

I have a job and I need to go to work in the daytime. But I go back to the zone immediately right after my work. I need to rush back to the zone as soon as

possible as I am afraid that there will be another round of brutal police suppression. I created a WhatsApp group with people staying around so that we can see whether others are safe when I am not in the zone. Later, I even quit my job to stay in the zone all day long to protect our place.

The interaction between the participants within the free space was different from their previous protest experience. They felt there was strong bonding with other participants in the Umbrella Movement. For example, interviewee 28 (administrative officer, female, 27-year-old) said,

I joined rallies before, but I did not have any interaction with other participants. I would just be there for a few hours and then leave. I felt my role was passive. But, in the Umbrella Movement, I could have close interaction with other participants. We not only had face-to-face meetings but also had deep communication and interaction every day. The main difference is that the group that I interacted with was the same group of people. I lived in a village with other participants in the same area during the whole period of occupation. I used to wake up and meet the same group of people. The experience was like forming a new family with people having the same mindset.

As Jasper (1997) suggested, these ongoing feelings towards each other created through participation in the movement are called reciprocal emotions, which can be affective ties of friendship, love, and loyalty. These feelings can create erotic pleasures and become the “libidinal economy” of a movement (Goodwin, 1997). All interviewees reflected that they were amazed to have people with similar values, beliefs and moral standards around them, in which the exchange of ideas could happen every moment during the occupation. Some of them even developed very close relationships with

previously unknown occupants. For instance, interviewee 38 (driver, male, 30-year-old) claimed that he stayed in a tent during the entire occupation and developed a close relationship with other occupants, closer than with his family members. He and participants nearby formed a village, and the “villagers” came from all sorts of people, including photographers, drivers, managers, shop owners, students, housewives, administrative officers, and retirees. Though they came from different backgrounds, they had similar mindsets. They had intensive exchanges of ideas during the occupation. He enjoyed the free talk with these people around the occupied areas. He rarely had such companions in daily life, as most of his friends were apolitical or occupied by a busy work life. He emphasized that he was a blue-collar worker with a low educational level, and his friends were usually in the same class, always working hard to earn a living while paying no attention to political issues. Therefore, he felt very happy to stay in the occupied zone with people who shared the same moral values and feelings. He stressed that the happiness through the interaction encouraged him to stay in the zone for the entire period. He even quit his job so that he could spend the whole day in the zone. He explained,

I am so happy to be able to share my point of view with people being around. No matter which class you come from, you will get the same opportunity to share your views. Everyone is equal and respected. We all come out for the sake of Hong Kong’s future, so we support each other. I enjoy the interaction with them so much! I feel we are in the same group as we fight for the same goal. We have lots of topics to share with as we have same values and beliefs. We really feel so happy to have such companionship. Their company enlarges my determination. We were like living in a utopia where we did not care about self-interest. We developed strong bonding and deep emotional attachment. Since we share the

same vision, I did not feel lonely when I was with them. (Interviewee 38, driver, male, 30-year-old)

The strong affective ties did not end even after the occupation. They became close friends and meet regularly to share daily life. Interviewee 38 continued,

We later became very close friends. When the zone was demolished, I cried. It's just like my own house was destroyed. We really feel depressed for not being able to see each other after the clearance of the zone, so we keep meeting each other every day after the movement in the following few weeks. We not only discuss political issues but also share daily life experience, e.g. talk about family, career, even emotional problems. One of the "villagers" is an elderly woman with some physical problem with her feet, and we even drive her to the meeting place so that we can keep in touch with her. Another example is that one of the "villagers" got married after the movement, and we all joined her wedding banquet. See? We really developed a close relationship during the movement. I know that we will gather again when another round of movement emerges in the future. We are like comrades-in-arms! (Interviewee 38, driver, male, 30-year-old)

Some interviewees pinpointed how valuable it was to nurture the close bond among participants with the same collective identity within the free space. They emphasized that it is rare in life to be able to gather a group of people to have deep communication and intensive face-to-face meetings to discuss social issues. For example, interviewee 15 (student, female, 21-year-old) said it is hard to have face-to-face interaction and deep conversation with strangers in our daily life due to different reasons, including a busy working life, lack of public space, and unequal social status. She further explained that Hong Kong people have long working hours and are rarely willing to interact with

strangers to discuss political issues and anything related to moral values. However, in the occupied zone, people left their jobs and families and were willing to spend time listening to others' opinions, which was very rare in our reality. Also, there is less and less public space in Hong Kong where people can gather to share their views. So, the occupied zones had the unintended consequence of allowing people to have deep interaction on social and political issues. In daily life, people with lower social status (e.g. blue-collar workers, people with a low educational level, and low-income groups) usually have little chance to interact as equals with others of higher status. But, in the occupied areas, people from different classes had the same opportunity to express their opinions. She said,

the occupied zone was like a public sphere. People have the same equal status to express their opinion, to exchange ideas, and such sphere is lacking in Hong Kong society. But, I have the chance to have deep interaction with people with different backgrounds, including housewives, chiefs, retirees, students and construction workers, and so on, during the occupation. Since we have same moral values and similar feelings, I'm so happy to exchange ideas with them. (Interviewee 15, student, female, 21-year-old)

The above discussion showed that the participants formed a collective identity, and the collective identity acted as a strategy that generated a strong affective bond among them. They all felt anger towards the police suppression, and therefore they hoped to protect each other by staying in the zone together. The movement culture that developed within the zone enhanced the formation of strong affective ties. They shared equal status no matter who they were; they could express their opinions equally regardless of their race, sex, educational background, and socioeconomic status. They regarded each other as family members, and they stayed in the zone to protect other members. The formation of these "villages" unintentionally generated the opportunity for deeper communication

and exchange of ideas among the occupants, which further fostered the generation of positive emotions and further enhanced the formation of protest identity.

Many interviewees described that they felt very comfortable staying in the occupied zone, which felt like home. It was an interesting experience for them. As a home, it should be a shelter that enables them to have a sense of security and to feel comfortable. On the other hand, it should be a place that is quite boring because it is a safe place. People inside the home should share intimate relationships and display the real self. This should be a big contrast to the outer world, which is exciting but dangerous, and also intolerant (Jasper, 1997). Many interviewees said that participation in the Umbrella Movement was an interesting experience, as it was in a public place with strangers around. They did not know each other, and so they would never have thought of describing their relationships as those of family members. Though they did not know each other, they cared for each other and gave each other great support. They enjoyed staying in the occupied zones where the positive atmosphere enabled them to feel relaxed and comfortable, which felt just like staying at home. They regarded the people they knew in the occupied zone as family members, and staying in the occupied zones after work and study became parts of their life, and they got a sense of belonging through occupation.

For instance, one of the interviewees had felt very sad in recent years due to family and financial problems. She was unemployed and had a negative relationship with her family. She had no one to talk to even though she was at home. However, she made friends with other occupants who shared her values and beliefs during the occupation and enjoyed staying in the occupied zones. She kept in contact with these new friends and joined the voluntary work they organized to fight for democracy, and she seemed to have started a new life after the occupation. These positive feelings enabled her to have the energy to extend her occupation.



Also, the participants had never imagined that a social movement could be so peaceful, with so much love around. So, it was just like a home, which was different from their previous experience of joining a movement. Many of them even cried after the demolition of the occupied zones and missed their life during the occupation. Interviewee 38 (driver, male, 30-year-old) explained that he treasured the relationship so much because it was hard to find similar relationships in daily life. He explained:

We are isolated in daily life. We do not greet our neighbour when we wake up. But, in the occupied zone, we just like brothers and sisters, a family. We greet each other when we wake up and then have breakfast together. Later on, we have conversation on politics and all kinds of topics for the whole day. But, I cannot find such interaction in daily life, not even from my family and my friends. Actually, they were much closer than my real family members. My family members usually care about your health, such as always worrying about whether you have taken enough food and wear enough clothes, but there is no deep conversation about our values and beliefs, no spiritual sharing. I cannot find such relationship outside the zone as my friends and family cannot have this kind of interaction. My family members were working-class people and only care about their livelihood. They never read news! So, I do not talk about politics with them as we just have fun together. (Interviewee 38, driver, male, 30-year-old)

Another interviewee (Interviewee 15, student, female, 21-year-old) claimed that she had a strange feeling about her participation experience. She described the other participants as “strangers” as she did not know them before the occupation. However, she enjoyed being with them, so she described the zone as a home filled with many “strangers,” but the “strangers” were trustworthy, and she felt comfortable having discussions or even deep communication with them.

The above discussion showed that the participants see their participation as embodying real democracy. They regarded the participation in the movement as the embodiment of real democracy in action, which enabled them to gain a sense of agency. They also felt excited about being able to voice their opinion in equal status. The occupied zone functioned as a free space in which they could demonstrate their different standpoints in their own ways. For instance, some of them voiced their opinions on the stage established by other participants, some expressed their views and values through the decoration of tents or the “villages”, some used the public space to conduct artworks to show what they were thinking, and some of them organized talks in the occupied area to exchange their ideas with others. It was a platform for them to have deep exchanges of ideas, something hardly found outside the occupied zones. They learned how to make a decision through discussion. They learned to practise democracy through participation in the movement.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

The Umbrella Movement played a significant role in Hong Kong history not only because of its scale but also its intensity. The movement showed a high level of participant commitment. Participants took up active roles during the mobilization. The present chapter has explained the high intensity of participation in the Umbrella Movement. The findings echo past studies in stressing the role of the construction of new collective protest identities (e.g. Lofland, 1996; Jasper, 1998; Kemper, 2001; Summers-Effler, 2005; Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2001b; Woods et al., 2012). Earlier studies have demonstrated that the emotional dimensions of the collective identity formation process play an increasing role in explaining high levels of commitment to social movements. They have shown that the generation of emotional benefits, including a sense of agency, pride, and joy, contribute to the commitment of movement participants.

The present chapter contributes to social movement studies by delineating the close relationship between emotions and collective identity based on my empirical findings. It confirmed Goodwin and Jasper's (2006) analysis that collective identity can be defined based on positive affects towards the group members instead of the drawing of a cognitive boundary. The contribution of my study is to show explicitly how the collective identity formed during the movement captured the emotional dimensions. It showed that collective identity was formed based on resistance and counter-culture during the occupation and was both a product of and a means explaining the intensity of the movement.

The study discovered that a collective identity is a product of this movement. My data showed that the collective identity formed during the occupation was simultaneously emotion-based and spatial. It was emotion-based in that the identity was formed through the demonstration of resistance to the authorities regarding the political contentions and the outrage towards the police suppression. The resistance and outrage were demonstrated through the presence in the occupied zone, which the authorities regarded as an "illegal" activity. It was place-based at the same time as the protest identities were also tied to the different cultures of different occupied zones. Despite the different tactics used in different occupied zones, they shared emotional connections.

The above discussion showed that the participants in both occupied zones believed that they belonged to the same group, as they shared the same anger throughout the occupation. The study reflected the key role of the free space, which functioned as a stage for the participants to display their resistance through creating a utopia. They also gained a sense of satisfaction, for they would take up the active role in different ways, whether they stayed in Mongkok or Admiralty. The participants in both places also gained a sense of agency and enjoyment in creating different kinds of protest cultures. They felt joyous during the occupation in practising collective rites. They also shared the feeling of having

power in constructing their ideal community or imagination for the future. They felt pride in their actions and the community built within the occupied zones. This emotional connection overcame the internal divisions over tactical choice.

Also, both resistance and pleasurable experiences were shared by the participants and defined their group boundary, and thus collective identity was formed. The shared emotions were intensified through collective rituals within the space as it acted as a stage visualizing the shared emotions. Besides, the elastic nature and open membership requirement of the movement may also help overcome the tensions caused by the divisions. It is believed that membership criteria are highly elastic or tolerant for autonomous movement groups (Della Porta 2005; Flesher Fominaya 2007b). For instance, activists can identify themselves as members of the global justice movement without identifying with a particular group. For the Umbrella Movement, participants in either Admiralty or Mongkok identified themselves as part of the movement whenever they showed their resistance to the authorities differently.

There were some moments in which the movement was in deadlock (e.g. indifferent response from the government), and a platform for participants to make artworks for display helped maintain membership of the movement. Thus, the free space functioned as an important stage for the emotion-based and spatial identity formation process.

## **Chapter 7      Formation of Instrumental and Affective Bonding**

### **7.1 Introduction**

There are always some moments that make people drop out of a movement, such as frustration, exhaustion, disappointment, or fear. As Jasper (1997) pointed out, “most times, the pains of protest are eventually too great and drive supporters back to their daily routines” (p.226). In light of that, maintaining participant solidarity is significant in sustaining a movement. This also happened in the Umbrella Movement. Chapter 5 explained that participants generated a sense of hope when students had taken up the leadership role in parallel with the Occupy Trio; however, they started to feel exhausted when they failed to get an active response from the government in the middle of the movement. Though there was a dialogue between the student leaders and the government on 21 October 2014, no solution resulted. The dialogue failed to make any breakthrough, and therefore students refused to end the movement. The student leaders also reflected that they did not want to have any more conversations with the government after the first trial. However, as explained in the previous chapter, the Umbrella Movement enabled the participants to engage in a creative process that enabled them to feel pride in themselves. The above process enabled the participants to perceive participation as pleasurable, which overcame their fear before joining the movement. The creative process was not limited to changing the purpose of the city but also created a new movement culture with a distinctive mode of interaction that could not be found outside the zone.

Prefigurative politics was practised in the Umbrella Movement, which enabled occupants’ active participation during the movement. Deliberative democracy was planned as a means for civic awakening before the occupation, and the participants were highly participatory within the decision-making process. The movement organizers

arranged several sessions of deliberation in which participants could freely communicate with participants from different backgrounds. Many participants reflected that this experience was fresh to them as they rarely got the chance to have open discussions on social issues in this way. Deliberative democracy was also practised during the occupation of certain areas, such as Mongkok. A podium was set up at Mongkok for everyone to express their opinion. The aim of the platform was to promote and practise the spirit of deliberative democracy, in which everyone has an equal right to speak. Certain rules were set up that everyone had to obey to ensure participants' equal right to freedom of expression. Participants were amazed by this kind of interaction and exchange of ideas between people with different standpoints. Moreover, such interaction could be found every day during the occupation among different classes and occupations, such as waiters, students, retirees, tourist guides, salespeople, and social workers. They got the chance to learn how people from different backgrounds think. There were some examples showing that participants could hold a discussion before making a decision. For example, they could vote on whether to remain in the occupied zone when the movement came to a deadlock. This mode of interaction enabled the participants to have an intensive exchange of ideas and enhanced their solidarity and sense of belonging. They seem to live in a common community with equal status to express their ideas.

The newly formed identity led to a specific relational and interactional culture that contributed to the formation of subunits within the movement that prolonged its sustainability.

## **7.2 Generation of Instrumental Networks**

The affective ties formed on the basis of collective emotion and identity contributed to the transformation of the movement when it was in deadlock and even after the

eviction of the zones by the police. The formation of new forces was built on the strong affective bonds formed during the occupation and a sense of hope generated during the movement. Hope is especially important when we believe the chance of success to be limited (McGeer, 2004). This is because “hope manages fear and inspires action which in turn produces more hope” (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017, p.508). The sense of hope was generated through the newly formed collective identity and strong affective bonds created during the occupation. It was an emotional experience in which people believed that they might be able to make some changes after going through the occupation. It echoes Kleres and Wettergren’s (2017) claim that “hope not only spurs action, but is in turn produced through action in a social process of scaffolding” (p.513).

### ***7.2.1 Transformation of knowledge, skills, and techniques***

The occupied zone acted as a “gravitational field” which attracted people with similar mindsets, and the experience of being in the Umbrella Movement linked them and formed different forces to keep fighting for democracy in Hong Kong after the end of the movement. The participants transformed the Umbrella Movement into a series of local activities to promote democracy, called the Parachute Umbrella Movement, after the demolition of the occupied zones. The Parachute Umbrella Movement is composed of different activities which aim to keep spreading the seed of democracy. For instance, a series of public lectures have been organized in different places (mainly in the streets so that they can be open to the public), which is called the “floating classroom.”

One of my interviewees joined the movement because of her anger about the firing of the tear gas and decided to stay in the occupied zones because her anger had transformed to hope when she saw so many people come to support the movement. However, her hope soon changed to disappointment due to the government’s indifferent response. Despite that, she continued the occupation until the clearance by the

government. The reason that sustained her participation in the occupation was that she found new hope in providing voluntary work for a newly formed group during the occupation, called Democracy Groundwork. This pressure group organized different talks to share democratic ideas to arouse people's political awareness and aimed to promote democracy. She found that although the occupation aim of pushing the government to retract the 8/31 Decision would not be achieved, a new hope was generated through joining Democratic Groundwork in the form of arousing political awareness among the public. She met many like-minded friends in the zone and developed strong emotional ties with them. Later on, she was recruited as a volunteer for Democratic Groundwork, which gave new meaning to what she was doing. She felt a sense of hope in pursuing democratic development in Hong Kong. She said,

I feel that I may not be able to do anything to change the big political environment or political policy but I can contribute myself to small issues, such as helping to create a platform for citizens to exchange ideas. It's good that I met a group of people who have the same goal with me! So, I feel a sense of hope after the movement. (Interviewee 15, student, female, 21-year-old)

Several other organizations were established by the participants of the Umbrella Movement to keep fighting for democracy. They can be classified into two main types. The first type was alliances formed by different professionals, and the second was the formation of alliances across different backgrounds. As shown by a study conducted during the occupation (Cheng & Yuen, 2014), a large percentage of participants were professionals. They were inspired by the self-sacrifice of the Occupy Trio and wanted to contribute by aligning with other participants from the same professions. They were able to do so because they got the chance to build networks with people in the same professions through the Umbrella Movement. For instance, there is a pressure group to



fight for democracy formed by a chef I interviewed during the Umbrella Movement (interviewee 52, male, 49-year-old). He was apolitical before the Umbrella Movement and had never paid attention to politics. He only cared about his livelihood and once had the idea of setting up a labour union to protect his own interests, but he gave up this idea, as he did not know how to set up a labour union. However, he was inspired to care about politics by attending the talks and seminars during the occupation. The occupation also enabled him to meet many like-minded participants. A strong affective bond was formed between him and other like-minded participants. This bond cultivated during the occupation enabled him to set up a pressure group after the Umbrella Movement.

Interviewee 52 worked at a restaurant located near the occupied zone and could see how the movement was going when he went to work each day. He noticed that many students joined the sit-in at the Civic Square before the outbreak of the Umbrella Movement. This made him wonder what was going on. He stopped at the square and listened to the talks after work during the week-long class boycott. After listening to the talks and having discussions with the activists, he started to see that what Hong Kong people were suffering was due to ineffective governance. He felt angry about the firing of tear gas and pepper spray in suppressing the activists. After that, he stayed in the zone for the entire occupation period to show his support for the movement. He got the chance to meet many like-minded people and developed strong affective bonds with other participants.

Participation in the Umbrella Movement inspired interviewee 52 to adjust his idea regarding the establishment of a labour union. He was inspired by the movement and decided that he should fight not only for the labour rights of chefs but also for Hong Kong democracy as the roots of many social problems related to our political system. Though he had this idea, he had no concrete knowledge and skills to set up a pressure group. Fortunately, he met many activists and politicians and received support from them to set

up a pressure group after the occupation. He stressed that the supports they provided were important and included the sharing of skills, knowledge, manpower, and even emotional support. This challenging task enabled him to cultivate a new and fruitful meaning in the occupation and motivated him to extend his passion and action to fight for democracy even after the demolition of the occupied zones. He said:

I met many people who work for a political party during the occupation and they taught me how to set up a labour union. It's really hard to establish a labour union as it requires many resources, including a group of people who get consensus from their employers to be the core members of the union, an official address and volunteers, etc. I encountered some problems with the first step, i.e. I failed to find a group of people who could get consensus from their employers to set up the union. However, the people that I met during the occupation introduced me to some members of the political party who can do such work, so they helped me to solve the problem of forming the core. Second, I had no resources to rent an office and therefore could not provide an official address. However, the occupants also helped me to solve this problem by allowing me to share their address, so these newly met friends really helped me a lot in establishing the labour union. The political party also offered us training in dealing with cases. They still continue to provide us with help when we encounter difficulties in handling cases. We not only share the same office but we share volunteers as well. They even provided me with emotional support when I felt depressed. My girlfriend broke up with me when I picked up the responsibility establishing the union. Luckily, they gave me emotional support to help me through the hard time when my girlfriend left me.

(Interviewee 52, chef, male, 49-year-old)

Another example is a group of my interviewees who are doctors. They joined the voluntary medical team to provide medical services to participants during the occupation and formed an alliance after the movement. For example, interviewee 40 (doctor, female, 35-year-old), a volunteer in the medical team, revealed that she met “old friends” every day accidentally. This was because many doctors she knew were also pro-democracy and supported social movements fighting for democracy. Therefore, many of her “old friends” joined the Umbrella Movement “together.” Since they did not know when the movement would end, they supported each other. As they gathered and even “lived” in the zone, there were many opportunities for them to communicate and interact. She found that she and many of her friends shared the same mindset, and later on, she and other medical professionals joined a newly established pressure group to fight for the Hong Kong democratic movement after the end of the Umbrella Movement. She described the movement as a “gravitational field” that attracted people with similar views, and she felt hopeful in seeing that like-minded people were willing to commit to this “illegal” movement.

This newly established pressure group formed by medical professionals is called Médecins Inspires. The formation of this professional alliance was the result of an event during the Umbrella Movement. One of my interviewees (interviewee 47, male, 37-year-old) was the core member of this group, and he explained the formation of this pressure group to me. He mentioned that the establishment of this NGO related to their outrage about a brutal police attack on an occupant during the occupation. A group of police were caught surrounding and beating a protestor for four minutes during the protest, which aroused public anger. In a press release, he and other doctors expressed their anger about this and their opposition to the use of violence. They also voiced the importance of following democratic procedure in selecting the Chief Executive. Their request received a great deal of unexpected support from doctors. He said,

It's so surprising that our action received a large number of medical professionals' support. We collected signatures from our supporters, which filled more than 600 pages! The result was so encouraging and unexpected! We did not know how to make use of the signatures and therefore we sought advice from different parties, such as the Hong Kong Medical Association and legislative councillor, who are responsible for medical issues. The legislative councillor suggested that we transform the signature into some powerful energy, such as the establishment of pressure group. In order to make this come true, we had regular meetings to discuss the daily work routine and this was NGO established. (Interviewee 47, doctor, male, 37-year-old)

The network established during the occupation was important to the formation of this NGO, as most of the members were also on the Umbrella Movement medical team and shared similar views.

In addition to the above two examples, pressure groups were formed by lawyers and financial professionals. A group of lawyers formed a pressure group called the Progressive Lawyers Group. Its website showed that its establishment was closely linked with the Umbrella Movement:

The Progressive Lawyers Group was established by a group of Hong Kong lawyers in January 2015, shortly after the Umbrella Movement. In the face of a decline in democracy, rule of law and freedom in Hong Kong, we felt it was imperative for the legal profession to come forward and speak for the Hong Kong people ... we actively engage with our community through writing for and participating in interviews with local and international media, conducting legal research, bill drafting, educational seminars, school talks, street stations, rallies, campaigns and community work ... we will continue to serve our society with

passion and dedication and hope that our work will help enhance democracy, rule of law and freedom in Hong Kong. (Progressive Lawyers Group)

The pressure group formed by the financial professionals is Financier Conscience, which aims to monitor the government and promote democracy in Hong Kong. One of my respondents (interviewee 39, female, 31-year-old) was a member of Financier Conscience and shared that the organization was formed after the Umbrella Movement as a continued force of the movement to fight for Hong Kong democracy. The goal of the organization is as follows:

Financier Conscience aims to gather the voice of fellow finance professionals in monitoring the government and promoting democracy in Hong Kong. We strive to raise the finance industry's awareness of, and participation in, public affairs, and make our voice heard through our financial constituency representatives in the Legislative Council. We believe the continued success of the finance industry depends on a sound legal system, effective supervision, and free capital and information flows, all of which can only be achieved through a democratic and fair system. Our goal is to safeguard the rule of law and justice, and build a better Hong Kong. (Financier Conscience)

### ***7.2.2 Formation of subunits transcended people with diverse backgrounds***

The formation of new social groups was not limited to people with similar backgrounds but also occurred among people with diverse backgrounds. The collective identity constructed through the occupation was emotion-based and spatial and transcended difference. As such, several social groups were established by people from diverse backgrounds after the movement. For example, a new pressure group called "Repair Hong Kong" was formed right after the Umbrella Movement by a diverse range

of people, including handymen, students, social workers, administrative officers, and volunteers with other backgrounds. They aimed to promote democracy among people from the lower classes by offering free household maintenance. The group also gave people from different backgrounds the opportunity to exchange ideas about social policies and hence maintain the social solidarity of the community. They ultimately hoped to raise civic awakening among the public. The members of Repair Hong Kong mainly met in the Umbrella Movement.

The formation of different pressure groups after the Umbrella Movement was attributed to the deep communication and intensive interaction among the participants within the free space. Many interviewees reported that they got the chance to meet people from both similar and different backgrounds in the free space, and this interaction allowed them to form pressure groups with people who shared the same emotions and identities but had different specialties. They did not have any idea of setting up a pressure group before joining the movement. However, through attending talks and forums, they started to develop a sense of political awareness and thought that they should do something for Hong Kong's democratic development.

During the later stage of occupation, interviewee 33 (designer, male), who was a social activist, performed the role of broker to line up a group of social workers and students who met in the Umbrella Movement to form Repairs Hong Kong, mentioned above, to offer free maintenance services to low-income people so as to promote the idea of democracy, and ultimately to fight for Hong Kong democracy. He mentioned that they felt hopeful after seeing so many people come out in protest. Therefore, he lined up people from diverse backgrounds and hoped to transform their engagement into other forces to help the campaign. In the beginning, there were around 10 members, and the group later expanded to more than 30 members. Interviewee 32 (handyman, male, 28-year-old) was an air-conditioner repairman and was recruited as a core member of this

newly formed NGO. He felt very happy to be able to make friends with so many like-minded people and contribute to democratic development by joining the group. They kept in close contact to discuss how to achieve their aim:

We keep meeting each other during and even after the movement. We keep discussing how to continue our passion and persistence. I cannot share such values and vision with the friends that I met before the movement, as they are working-class people and only care about their livelihood. They were not interested in politics and not eager to fight for social interest. So, I really treasure the friends that I met in the occupied zone. I have to protect the zone as it's just like my home. (Interviewee 32, handyman, male, 28-year-old)

The Umbrella Movement also transformed into another steady force that fought for Hong Kong democracy, the “Gau Wu” campaign mentioned in the previous chapter. When the government demolished the Mongkok occupied zone, the Occupy movement took off in a new direction on 27 November. The pro-Occupy group gathered on the sidewalks in Mongkok and repeatedly chanted “Gau Wu,” which in Mandarin Chinese means “shopping,” and hanging a sign “I want universal suffrage” as a tactic to express their demand for universal suffrage. This action is also called the “Shopping Revolution” as the “shoppers” keep voicing their request for universal suffrage through “Gua Wu” (shopping). “Gau Wu” is a tactic to mock both the anti-Occupy movement and the government. It has been widely criticized that the anti-Occupy movement is ignorant of the purpose of the movement. They always reported via the news that the organizers reward them in material or monetary form for joining the movement. For example, one of the marchers at the rally organized by the anti-Occupy movement to oppose Occupy Central was interviewed by a reporter. She was a Mainland Chinese, and when the reporter asked her why she joined the rally, she answered the question in Mandarin and

said that she joined for “Gau Wu” (i.e. for shopping). Therefore, the occupiers used “Gau Wu” to mock the marchers for not knowing the purpose of joining the anti-Occupy movement.

The occupiers also used “Gau Wu” to mock the government. Police could do nothing to the occupiers when they were chanting “Gau Wu” and holding signs saying “I want universal suffrage” as they walked the streets in large groups because the action was not only legal but even was a “response” to the call made by the then Chief Executive. After the clearance of the occupation in Mongkok, Chief Executive Leung Chun Ying had encouraged the public to go shopping there to boost business, which supposedly had been affected by the Occupy movement on 26 November.

Also, the action was a way to show their anger about the government ignoring their request. “Gau Wu” represents another meaning if these two words are pronounced in Cantonese (a Chinese dialect spoken in Hong Kong). In Cantonese, “Gau” is a sort of foul language while “Wu” refers to shouting. Therefore, chanting “Gau Wu” in the street implies shouting our anger to the disrespectful government through the use of foul language to show our discontent. This action is still in progress. The above discussion showed that collective identity and strong affective bonding were assets constructed through the Umbrella Movement, which transformed the movement into different forces to keep fighting for the democratic movement.

The concept of social capital has been applied in the discussion of the formation of instrumental networks between the participants during the occupation. The Umbrella Movement enhanced the generation of bonding social capital. Social capitals refer to the productive resources embedded in a person’s social network (Coleman 1988), in which bonding social capital relates to the cooperative relations between people who regard themselves as similar (Putnam 2000). As mentioned above, the occupied zones functioned as a “gravitational field” that attracted people with similar mindsets, and their



engagement in the Umbrella Movement linked them and formed different forces to keep fighting for democracy in Hong Kong. Bonding social capital was created through the formation of social networks between participants of the movement in which they formed different professional groups to share their knowledge, experience, and skills to sustain the movement.

The above findings showed that the relational connections generated by the formation of the protest identity accounted for the sustainability of the movement. With the creation of free space, a protest identity with distinctive communicative and interactional cultures was created during the occupation. Participants were equal in status and free to express their opinions, which led to deep communication and the exchange of ideas within the free space. This relational connection also led to emotional benefits as the participants gained positive feelings through this kind of interaction. The relational connection was a new experience to them, for it was different from their relations with other protesters in prior protest experience. In past social movements, the role of leadership was strong, whereas participants were passive. However, deliberative democracy was practised in the Umbrella Movement in which the participants enjoyed equal status and freedom of expression. Also, various villages were formed within the free space, which enabled the participants to practise their ideal mode of communication of interaction through day-to-day living experience. The participants built close relationships with other participants, much like family members. This strong and close affective bond transformed them into an instrumental network, which transformed the movement into other forces.

#### **7.4 Conclusion**

Like other Occupy movements around the globe, encampment was one of the key features of the Umbrella Movement (Sbicca & Perdue, 2013, p.322; Brissette, 2013;

Williams, 2012). Encampment offered participants a free space to cultivate their movement cultures. It also enabled participants to construct a community to demonstrate the living style they sought. For instance, deliberative democracy was encouraged in the occupied zone. This feature is also found in other Occupy movements. Besides, the communist-like mentality was one of the cultures constructed by the participants in the free space. The movement culture had a crucial role in cultivating collective identity during the participation. An arena where participants can gather and interact in specific ways with a social movement context helps cultivate collective identity. These specific day-to-day practices shaped movement culture and drew a big contrast between the occupied community and the outside world. It also formed the collective identity by drawing a boundary between its members and the challenging group. This sense of belonging embedded emotional aspects, for it made participants feel energized in engaging social actions. The strong emotional connection between the participants generated function as social capital between them, and the instrumental network generated productive resources among the occupiers. With such strong affective bonding, the participants shared their knowledge, skills, and techniques in forming different subunits to fight for democracy after the movement.

## **Chapter 8      Conclusion**

### **8.1 Summary of the Study**

The Umbrella Movement was a unique social movement in Hong Kong in terms of scale, duration, and intensity. The Umbrella Movement demonstrated a unique feature in the above three dimensions compared to past protests in Hong Kong. It was the largest-scale protest in Hong Kong history with participants from all parts of life, including different age groups, classes, genders, occupations, and religious backgrounds, while previous collective actions mostly comprised university students and politicians. In terms of intensity, participation was much more committed than past protests, which usually took the form of one-day marches in which participants took a passive role. However, the level of commitment in the Umbrella Movement was much more intensive, as the participants took an active role in constructing the protest culture. The duration of the Umbrella Movement was seventy-nine days, which was the longest-running movement in Hong Kong history, and it then transformed into another form of resistance, which is still in progress. In conclusion, the Occupy movement was a significant social upheaval in Hong Kong.

This study draws from the cultural approach of social movement theories to explain the significance of the Umbrella Movement, especially through the adoption of the concept of collective identity, which refers to the cognitive, emotional, and relational connections shared by a particular group of people. My study found that collective identity functioned as the precondition in attracting people to join the movement and also as a by-product of the movement that accounted for the intensive and prolonged participant engagement.

My thesis found that collective identity played an important role in explaining the movement's duration, scale, and intensity. As Snow (2001) suggested, collective identity

may lead to collective agency, which acts as a powerful impetus to collective action. A sense of “we-ness” is generated among people who share the same collective identity. It transforms individual interest to group interest and individual action to group action, as well as offering participants a sense of empowerment, enabling them to believe that the action is feasible (Bernstein, 1997). The literature on social movement studies has argued that people tend to join a protest if they can anticipate success, i.e. having a sense of cognitive liberation (McAdam, 1982). There is a greater chance of recruiting more members if protest organizers can give the hope or belief that something can be changed through the protest (Jasper, 1997). As such, the sense of agency or empowerment generated by the shared collective identity is crucial in accounting for why people join a social movement. However, collective identity may not be a ready-made product; it requires a process of construction so people can imagine they belong to a community and share a common interest. Instead of regarding social movements as a force with a standby collective actor, Melucci (1995) argued that we have to investigate how it becomes a movement first.

This thesis contributed to bridging the gap between individual beliefs and collective social action by investigating how movement organizers framed the action that echoed the participants’ values and beliefs. This dynamic and interactive process involves constructing a shared cognitive understanding between the actors and participants of the ends and means of the social action. Collective identity functioned as a precondition in explaining why people joined the movement. On the other hand, collective identity is also a product created through the movement itself which further intensified and prolonged it. Melucci (1995) distinguished latent moments and visible moments of movement activity, and both moments were found in the Umbrella Movement and formed the protest identity. Latent moments are day-to-day movement activities and ‘visible’ moments of movement activity refer to actual protests. Fominaya (2010) believed that interaction between latent

and visible moments results in the formation of collective identity as they enhance participants' emotional engagement, which leads to stronger commitment and solidarity within the members of the movement (p.398).

In addition, after taking the in-depth interviews of 60 ordinary participants' biographies and their related socio-historical backgrounds, my study found that the values they cherished needed to be considered in explaining why the movement could attract so many people. Hong Kong people have cherished social justice and righteousness since the colonial era. Participants shared that the values of social justice and righteousness enabled them or their parents to have upward social mobility and make Hong Kong a prosperous city, which they believed they needed to uphold. This cognitive understanding formed one of the important contexts in defining Hong Kong people. When the movement was framed as fighting against injustice, it led to cognitive connections with participants who define themselves as Hong Kongers and cherish the values of social justice and fairness. In drawing this cognitive connection, consciousness-raising was needed. The findings showed that consciousness-raising took different forms. In addition to the formal consciousness-raising process planned by the movement organizers, the symbolic role played by the movement leaders was important as well. Their life histories represent how the values of justice and righteousness were crucial to the success of Hong Kong, and hence the sacrifice of the movement leaders by taking the legal consequences aroused public attention and questions about the social problem that the movement raised. This was the first step in pushing people to join the movement.

After the movement kicked off, occupied zones formed. The occupied zones functioned as free space, which contributed to the formation of protest identity among the participants. The participants made use of the free space to develop a community demonstrating a culture that is opposite to the economic-oriented mentality, which was

adopted by the Chinese government as a kind of decolonization strategy. The participants gained a sense of agency and pleasure through engagement, and such emotional connections functioned as the key content of the protest identity. The protest identity was also spatial or place-based in that participants adopted different tactics due to the socio-cultural historical backgrounds of different districts. Though they had different views on tactics, they shared enjoyment in taking the initiative or having autonomy in building the community they used to demonstrate their resistance to decolonization. This pleasurable feeling encouraged them to overcome the fear of legal consequences and hence have intensive engagement in the movement.

In addition to creating an ideal community that showed values opposite to the economic-oriented mentality, participants also constructed a distinctive communicative and interactional movement culture within the occupied zones, which also functioned as the protest identity. Due to the weak leadership, participants took up active and initiative roles during the protest. They built different “villages” in the encampment within the free space where they developed strong affective bonds with other participants. This strong affective bonding was transformed into an instrumental network that offered them knowledge, skills, and resources in setting up different subunits, which finally also transformed the movement into other forces and prolonged it.

## **8.2 Contributions of the Study**

The present study confirmed the finding of past social movement studies in that collective identities played a crucial role, especially in making the cognitive connection between the participant and the movement organizations so as to make the participants believe that the social issue raised by the movement organizers was a problem and action was needed to solve the problem. In addition, my study showed the importance of

investigating participants' biographical backgrounds and how they relate to the broader cultural context in understanding why framing is crucial in triggering emotional liberation. The Umbrella Movement framed the 8/31 Decision as an unjust action, whereas the protest was an action to fight for justice. This framing drew support from participants, as justice was the core value for them, which has to be understood through studying their life histories and experiences. The participants' life histories showed how they cherished the values of justice and fairness. Therefore, the framing of the movement as an action against an unjust political decision triggered their moral outrage and led them to join the movement.

In discussing the importance of framing, the study also confirmed past literature about the crucial step of consciousness-raising in leading participants to agree with the framing constructed by the movement leaders. The present study contributed to movement studies by showing the various channels of consciousness-raising and demonstrating the importance of strong emotional ties with movement leaders in arousing political awareness. In contrast to past studies regarding the role of leadership, which has tended to be downplayed in most Occupy movement studies, the leaders of the Umbrella Movement played a significant role in motivating people to join the movement, especially in the process of consciousness-raising. The Occupy Trio stressed that this movement was a civil disobedience movement in which they would turn themselves in to the police and receive the legal penalty after the movement in order to get the public to think about what happened in society. They hoped that their self-sacrifice would trigger the public to pay attention to the political system and its injustice.

The present study also confirmed with past studies that emotional connections between the participants and movement leaders played an important role in attracting people to join the movement (Touraine, 1995; Benski & Langman, 2013; Flam, 2005; Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2001b; Flam and King, 2005; Vanderford, 1989). It also

showed that emotion played an increasing role in explaining the significance of social movements (e.g. Bosco, 2006; Flesher Fominaya, 2007; Jasper, 1997, 1998; Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2000, 2001b; Goodwin & Pfaff, 2001). The study aligned with Jasper's (1998) argument that emotion has strong explanatory power in social movement studies. It explained why people overcame fear to take action to join this illegal social protest and extend their participation in the movement. The study agreed with past studies that emotional liberation is crucial in motivating people to join a movement (McAdam, 1982; Touraine, 1995; Benski & Langman, 2013; Flam, 2005). It also confirmed past analysis that suggested that framing is important in leading to emotional liberation (Touraine, 1995; Benski & Langman, 2013; Flam, 2005; Goodwin Jasper & Polletta, 2001; Flam & King, 2005; Vanderford, 1989).

Additionally, the present study agreed with past studies regarding how critical emotional events may lead to the generation of emotional liberation, especially in outrage and anger towards the authorities (Yang, 2005; Abrams, 1982; Zolberg, 1972). It shows that how people react to critical events, and what kinds of emotions are triggered in facing them, relates to how respondents filter the information. In connection with that, a cultural approach, especially with the concept of emotions, may have to be adopted to look into respondents' biographical backgrounds in order to have a thorough understanding of their reactive emotions in facing critical events. In other words, the development of moral principles held by the participants and the development of a sense of self were highly related in explaining their reactions to critical events.

The present study also showed that a movement should not be treated as an ad-hoc action, for it has to be put in a wider social context. One cannot understand moral outrage or anger towards the police suppression without situating the movement within the Hong Kong social and political context. Participants felt shocked about the use of tear gas and the police intention to fire plastic bullets because they shared a collective memory of the



brutal suppression of the June 4 Tiananmen Square protest in 1989. Besides, the use of tear gas was unusual in Hong Kong social upheavals, and therefore people felt outrage and anger towards the police for using tear gas to suppress peaceful protestors. Moreover, participants' decision to join the movement was also because of the leadership role taken up by the student leaders. This sense of cognitive liberation was rooted in the triumph of the anti-moral and national education movement led by students. Without this prior protest experience, we may not understand why people would have a sense of cognitive liberation towards the movement.

The present study also confirmed with past research in social movement studies that the transformation of emotion prolonged social engagement (Kane, 2001; Flam, 1990a, 1990b; Hirschman, 1982; Woods et al., 2012; Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2001b; Eyerman, 2005; Lofland, 1996). Past social movement studies indicated that reciprocal emotions would form during a movement and sustain social engagement (Jasper, 1998; Klandermans, van Der Toorn & Stekelenburg, 2008; Woods et al., 2012; Lively & Heise, 2004; Scheff, 1999; Romanos, 2014). Positive emotions generated through the occupation included a sense of pride, agency, and autonomy. The study helped to address the issue of membership maintenance, which also aligns with past studies (Flesher Fominaya, 2007; Summers-Effler, 2005; Jasper, 1998; Kemper, 2001; Lofland, 1996; Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2001b; Woods et al., 2012; Calhoun, 2001; Flam, 2005; Goodwin & Pfaff, 2001).

The occupied zone functioned as a free space where the participants of the Umbrella Movement regarded their presence as a way to demonstrate their resistance to the authorities. Their resistance was also demonstrated in their transformation of the purpose of the city. The study discovered that participants gained a sense of agency and had a joyous experience in transforming the financial centre into a communist society. They gained a sense of autonomy in the transformation process. This echoed Jasper's (1997)

finding that participants gain satisfaction through creating a separate world in which they can do things that should not be done in reality, establish certain modes of interaction that cannot be found in daily life, and also “gain a taste of a just society” of which they dreamed (p.376). Through transforming the purpose of the city, a specific movement culture also developed to further enhance their solidarity. The participants of the Umbrella Movement tried to practise deliberative democracy, which was denied by the government through the enactment of the 8/31 Framework, and they established their ideal way of living through day-to-day practice in the occupied zones. This process made participants feel joyful and empowered because participation in the movement was like an image-building process as they imagined the dream city for which they were looking. As Jasper (1997) claimed, “individuals are not mere bearers of structures or dupes of culture” but “monitor their actions and the outcomes, make adjustments, imagine new goals and possibilities, respond to others” (p.65). The creation process made them feel pride in themselves. They described the occupied zone as a utopia and felt pride and dignity in seeing that high civility was displayed in the zone.

The study also confirmed Goodwin and Jasper’s (2009) analysis that collective identity can be defined based on positive affects towards the group members instead of the drawing of a cognitive boundary. On top of that, the study contributed to the discussion of collective identity by incorporating the discussion of emotion attached to place. As mentioned, pride and pleasure were generated as reciprocal emotions during participation, which functioned as a glue to maintain solidarity among the participants. Their presence in the occupied zone was interpreted as a gesture to demonstrate that what they treasured and protected was not economic value or a materialistic mentality. The main occupied zone is a key financial district, and therefore they constructed a culture in opposition to capitalism to display that they were fighting for something beyond economic values. The other two occupied zones were hot spots for mainland tourists

since the implementation of the Individual Visit Scheme in 2003. The scheme has allowed residents of four mainland cities to visit Hong Kong. The scheme was treated as a good intention offered by the Chinese government to rescue the Hong Kong economy, which was severely damaged by the SARS crisis in 2003. The policy also demonstrated that the government believed that economic prosperity was the key success factor in the “Hong Kong miracle.” They turned each place from hot economic activity into a communist community to demonstrate their resistant identity. Thus, the present study proposed the importance of inquiring into the meaning of place in understanding the collective identity formed during the Occupy movement.

The above-mentioned creation process was not limited to transforming the purpose of the city but also created a new movement culture with distinctive modes of interaction that could not be found outside the zone. The participants could express and exchange their ideas freely with deep interaction, which enabled them to perceive the participation as pleasurable and overcame the fear they had before joining the movement. Moreover, the collective rites or artwork performed within the space accelerated their solidarity as their shared emotions could be visualized because the free space acted just like a stage. They felt joyful in the performance. As the participants could not anticipate how long they would need to stay in the zone before making any changes, collective rituals and artwork played a key role in maintaining their morale. This pleasurable emotion generated in this free space enhanced their solidarity and even formed an emotion-based cum spatial identity.

### **8.3 Reflections and Implications**

The present study showed that the Umbrella Movement shared certain similarities with Occupy movements around the globe, including the reclaiming of public space as a movement tactic and the stress on deliberative democracy as a decision-making process

(Tejerina et al., 2013; Ancelovici, Dufour & Hez, 2016; Brissette, 2013; Nez, 2016). On the other hand, in most other Occupy movements, the role of leaders was downplayed or leaders were even absent (Ganesh & Stohl, 2013; Bamyeh, 2012; Piven, 2013; Brissette, 2013; Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Aldas & Murphy, 2013). As He (2019) mentioned, in “global eventful protests such a decentralized pattern of participant was common” (p.152). It is believed that organizations and leadership had become obsolete (Graeber 2009). The recent global social upheavals happened “without the need for a leader and without any individual having a privileged insight” (Karatzogianni & Robinson, 2010, p.131, cited in He, 2019). Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2017) observed that “leadership” had become a dirty word in an age when the “multitude” became capable of strategy making (cited in He, 2019, p.152). Williams (2012) claimed that “the most immediate inspiration for Occupy is” that the role of leadership is weak. He used a “multi-headed hydra” to describe the leaders of the Occupy movement as when the leaders (certain individuals) are arrested, others will take their place (pp.19-20). They are “suspicious of parties and organizations in traditional sense, as well as of leaders” (Bamyeh, 2012, p.18).

The present study demonstrated that in the Umbrella Movement, the role of movement leaders was crucial in membership recruitment, especially in high-risk movements. Many participants reflected that their willingness to bear the risk of getting arrested or going to jail was mainly inspired by the movement leaders. The symbolic figure of the Occupy Trio was significant in recruiting members. This difference may lead to the rethinking of the recent discussion on the effectiveness of leaderless movements. Recent studies showed that the role of leadership was declining under the trend of social mobilization through online channels. The idea of the rising importance of non-hierarchical organizational structure in leaderless movements may not explain the significance of a high-risk civil disobedience movement. The present study demonstrated

that movement leaders still played a significant role in mobilizing people to join the movement. The Occupy Trio did not coordinate the participants, and I mentioned in Chapter 7 that the legitimacy of the leadership was one of the key dilemmas of the movement. Due to the leadership legitimacy crisis, informal leaders rose up and took leadership roles in coordinating or directing the action. However, the role played by the Occupy Trio was different. The Occupy Trio functioned as a symbolic leader in this movement, for their active role represented the spirit of self-sacrifice. One has to understand the trio's biographical background in the socio-historical context of Hong Kong in order to have a more thorough understanding of the meaning of their action.

The Occupy Trio represented the so-called successful persons in Hong Kong because they have decent careers with high social status. Their successful life is represented in the famous Hong Kong idiom, Lion Rock Spirit, which embraced the principle of fairness that as long as you work hard, you will be rewarded, as everyone has an equal chance. Lion Rock Spirit implied the importance of fairness, which enabled people to have an equal chance of upward social mobility. The successful lives of the Occupy Trio represent the Lion Rock Spirit in which they moved to the upper ladder of the social strata through their own effort under the fair system. However, they determined to take the leadership role in the Umbrella Movement and face the legal consequences in order to awaken the public to question social status. In other words, they were using their own action as a symbolic gesture to challenge the existing political and social system and arouse the public to problematize the status quo. The message sent by their action of risking jail by joining a high-risk movement was inspirational to many respondents. In light of that, leaders may still play a key role in social mobilization studies.

## 8.4 Afterword

Though the Umbrella Movement failed in the fight for universal suffrage, it was still a significant movement in Hong Kong society in terms of raising political consciousness among the public. Scholars believe that movement participation can have lasting biographical consequences for participants (Giugni, 2004; Klatch, 1999; McAdam, 1982). The Occupy Trio also agreed that the movement exerted a certain impact on the public, although it failed to achieve its planned goal. Professor Chan suggested that the movement pushed many people to think about why Hong Kong needed democracy, and also to think about how to fight for justice. This can be regarded as a by-product of the movement (Church-think-tank, 2014).<sup>65</sup> Professor Tai shared a similar point of view that the Umbrella Movement had positively impacted the political culture in Hong Kong because it made the concept of non-violent civil disobedience popular among the public (Ng, 2019). A journalist asked Chu Yiu-ming whether he thought that, in facing the risk of going to jail, what he did was worthy. He replied:

there are some things where we may not be able to see the immediate consequence once it has been done, we have to sow a seed, the seed will grow slowly, people can sit under the tree to enjoy the cool one day, I may not be the one enjoying the cool, but once the seed has been sown, don't feel disappointed about the protest we fight for because we have done our duty. (RTHK, 2019)<sup>66</sup>

The above sharing leads us to reflect on the impact of the Umbrella Movement on the public. Hong Kong is facing another wave of protest, the protest against the China extradition bill after five years since the Umbrella Movement. Some have argued that

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<sup>65</sup> Translated by the author.

<sup>66</sup> Translated by the author.

the fight against the extradition bill is an extension of the Umbrella Movement. It would be worthwhile to make use of this opportunity to record this significant social movement that happened in Hong Kong five years ago.

## Appendices

### Appendix A Interviewee Details

<b>Anonymous ID</b>	<b>Age (at participation)</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Educational background</b>	<b>Date of interview</b>	<b>Length of interview</b>
Interviewee 1	18 (15)	Male	Student	Secondary school	6/Dec/2017	2hr & 10mins
Interviewee 2	19 (16)	Female	Student	Secondary school	2/Dec/2017	2hrs
Interviewee 3	19 (16)	Female	Student	Secondary school	28/Nov/2017	2hrs & 20mins
Interviewee 4	19 (16)	Female	Student	Secondary school	29/Aug/2017	1hr & 35mins
Interviewee 5	19 (16)	Female	Student	Secondary school	28/May/2017	1hr & 20mins
Interviewee 6	21 (18)	Male	Student	Bachelor Degree	6/Jul/2017	2hrs & 40mins
Interviewee 7	21 (18)	Female	Student	Secondary school	29/Nov/2017	2hrs & 35mins
Interviewee 8	21 (18)	Male	Student	Secondary school	29/Nov/2017	2hr and 30mins
Interviewee 9	21 (18)	Male	Student	Secondary school	28/Oct/2017	2hrs and 40mins
Interviewee 10	21 (18)	Male	Student	Secondary school	6/Aug/2017	1hr & 25mins
Interviewee 11	23 (20)	Female	Student	Bachelor Degree	30/May/2017	3hrs
Interviewee 12	23 (20)	Male	Student	Bachelor Degree	8/Jun/2017	2hrs & 40mins
Interviewee 13	23 (20)	Male	Student	Bachelor Degree	17/Dec/2017	2hrs & 50mins
Interviewee 14	23 (20)	Male	Teacher	Bachelor Degree	29/Sep/2017	3hr & 10mins
Interviewee 15	24 (21)	Female	Student	Bachelor Degree	10/Sep/2017	2hrs & 20mins



<b>Anonymous ID</b>	<b>Age (at participation)</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Educational background</b>	<b>Date of interview</b>	<b>Length of interview</b>
Interviewee 16	24 (21)	Female	Teaching Assistant	Bachelor Degree	11/Oct/2017	2hrs & 30mins
Interviewee 17	24 (21)	Female	Research Assistant	Bachelor Degree	13/Dec/2017	2hrs & 15mins
Interviewee 18	24 (21)	Female	Legislative Councillor assistant	Bachelor Degree	7/Aug/2017	2hrs & 25mins
Interviewee 19	26 (23)	Female	Teacher	Bachelor Degree	3/Jun/2017	3hrs & 5mins
Interviewee 20	26 (23)	Female	Research Officer	Bachelor Degree	26/Jun/2017	2hrs & 50mins
Interviewee 21	27 (24)	Female	Emigration Officer	Bachelor Degree	2/Sep/2017	2hrs & 20mins
Interviewee 22	28 (25)	Male	Student	Master Degree	29/Oct/2017	2hrs & 10mins
Interviewee 23	28 (25)	Female	Assistant Manager	Bachelor Degree	3/Aug/2017	2hrs & 15mins
Interviewee 24	28 (25)	Female	Housewife	Bachelor Degree	5/Nov/2017	3hrs & 50mins
Interviewee 25	28 (25)	Female	Administrative officer	Bachelor Degree	28/Jul/2017	2hrs & 15mins
Interviewee 26	28 (25)	Male	Officer	Secondary school	5/Nov/2017	2hrs & 25mins
Interviewee 27	28 (25)	Male	Research Assistant	Master Degree	6/Jan/2018	2hrs
Interviewee 28	29 (26)	Female	Officer	Bachelor Degree	18/Jun/2017	2hrs & 10mins
Interviewee 29	29 (26)	Male	Teaching assistant	Bachelor Degree	30/Dec/2017	3hrs & 15mins
Interviewee 30	30 (27)	Male	Officer	Secondary school	6/Dec/2017	4hrs & 20mins
Interviewee 31	31 (28)	Male	Technical Officer	Bachelor Degree	26/May/2017	3hr
Interviewee 32	31 (28)	Male	Maintenance master	Secondary school	30/Nov/2017	3hr and 30mins

<b>Anonymous ID</b>	<b>Age (at participation)</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Educational background</b>	<b>Date of interview</b>	<b>Length of interview</b>
Interviewee 33	32 (29)	Male	Designer	Associate Degree	2/Jan/2018	2hrs & 20mins
Interviewee 34	32 (29)	Male	Manager	Bachelor Degree	29/May/2017	3hrs & 30mins
Interviewee 35	33 (30)	Male	Liberian	Bachelor Degree	18/May/2017	2hrs & 15min
Interviewee 36	33 (30)	Male	Bar tender	Secondary school	5/Dec/2017	2hrs & 35mins
Interviewee 37	33 (30)	Female	Paralegal	Bachelor Degree	30/Nov/2017	3hrs & 50mins
Interviewee 38	33 (30)	Male	Driver	Secondary school	4/Dec/2017	4hr and 10mins
Interviewee 39	34 (31)	Female	Banker	Master Degree	30/May/2017	3hrs and 15mins
Interviewee 40	35 (32)	Female	Doctor	Bachelor Degree	16/Jan/2018	2hrs & 30mins
Interviewee 41	36 (33)	Female	Public Relation Officer	Bachelor Degree	9/Aug/2017	2hrs & 5mins
Interviewee 42	36 (33)	Male	Photographer	Higher diploma	31/May/2017	3hrs
Interviewee 43	36 (33)	Female	Student	PhD Candidate	20/Dec/2017	2hrs & 15mins
Interviewee 44	36 (33)	Female	Clerk	Master Degree	18/Jun/2017	2hrs & 50mins
Interviewee 45	36 (33)	Female	Teacher	Master Degree	8/Jun/2017	3hrs & 15min
Interviewee 46	37 (34)	Male	Manager	Bachelor Degree	29/Nov/2017	2hrs & 50mins
Interviewee 47	37 (34)	Male	Doctor	Bachelor Degree	16/Jan/2018	1hr and 10mins
Interviewee 48	41 (38)	Female	Shop Assistant	Secondary school	20/May/2017	3hrs & 20mins
Interviewee 49	42 (39)	Female	Lawyer	Bachelor Degree	25/Oct/2017	3hrs & 5mins

<b>Anonymous ID</b>	<b>Age (at participation)</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Educational background</b>	<b>Date of interview</b>	<b>Length of interview</b>
Interviewee 50	47 (44)	Male	Lecturer	Doctoral Degree	30/May/2017	4hrs
Interviewee 51	48 (45)	Female	Handcraft	Secondary school	17/Sep/2017	4hrs & 10mins
Interviewee 52	52 (49)	Male	Chef	Secondary school	23/Nov/2017	4hrs & 15mins
Interviewee 53	53 (50)	Male	Surveyor	Bachelor Degree	3/Jun/2017	3hrs & 5mins
Interviewee 54	53 (50)	Female	Manager	Secondary school	11/Dec/2017	3hrs & 10mins
Interviewee 55	55 (52)	Female	Surveyor	Secondary school	8/Jan/2018	3hrs & 15mins
Interviewee 56	55 (52)	Male	Maintenance master	Secondary school	30/Nov/2017	3hr & 40mins
Interviewee 57	71 (68)	Male	Retired	Secondary school	19/Jun/2017	3hrs & 20mins
Interviewee 58	73 (70)	Male	Retired	Secondary school	20/Nov/2017	3hrs & 30mins
Interviewee 59	73 (70)	Male	retired	Secondary school	2/Dec/2017	3hrs & 35mins
Interviewee 60	94 (91)	Male	retired	Secondary school	9/Jan/2018	3hrs & 50mins

## Appendix B Interview Questions

### **Umbrella Movement: Exploration of the Significance of the Movement**

I start the interview with an oral warning in order to avoid leading to the discussion of any legal issue: “we know that some forms of participation and activities were denounced as illegal by the government in 2014–2015 (which includes assaulting a police officer, committing criminal damage, and possession of imitation firearms). I will now ask you some questions about your participation in the movement, but I would like to ask you not to disclose whether you participated in the activities that were considered illegal.”

#### **Section 1: Personal Background Information**

*In the following section, I will ask you some basic personal background information (such as age, educational background and especially your past experience in political participation) and the reason why you participated in the movement.*

- Age, sex, educational level, career and political orientation
- Would you say that you were interested in politics before joining the Umbrella Movement? Did you follow political debates? What in particular were the issues you were interested in? Did you discuss these issues with your family, friends, or maybe at work?
- Did you consider yourself as active politically before participating in the Umbrella Movement? Can you give me example of your political participation in the past?
- Have you ever participated in social movements in the past? And in other forms of political or civic activities (volunteering maybe...)?
- Did you have any particular feeling towards the government before joining the movement?
- How did you hear about the movement? (In the news? Through discussions with your friends, family, at work?)
- What were your views about the movement when it started?
- What were the issues the movement mobilized about?
- Did your views about the movement change throughout the occupation period?
- What did you think of the ways journalists reported about the movement? And what did you think of how the government reacted to the movement when it emerged?
- Why did you join the movement? Was there a particular event that motivated you to

- join the movement? Was there a particular argument that motivated you?
- Did you stay in the occupied zone? If yes, how many days? If no, was there a particular reason?
  - There were three occupied zones, which one did you stay in most often? Why?
  - What did you do in the occupied zone during the occupation?
  - What did you think about how the movement evolved? (Were there divisions you were aware of?)
  - What did you think of how the government addressed the movement? (Did you know anyone who was imprisoned?)
  - How did you participate in the movement? What did you do concretely? (You were there physically? Did you attend meetings? Did you participate online?)
  - Did you know any leaders of the Umbrella Movement organizations before joining the movement? If yes, did you keep in contact with the movement leaders after the movement?
  - Did you have any particular feeling towards the movement organizations before joining the movement?

## **Section 2: Emotions Held before and during the Occupation**

*In the following section, I will ask you about some feelings towards the participation, especially changes of feeling before and after joining the movement.*

- Can you tell me about your life in the months/years before the movement happened? What were the major things that happened in your life? What were the things/issues that made you happy/sad generally?
- How did you feel when you heard about the movement for the first time (happy, sad, excited, no strong feelings...)?
- Did you have some special feelings that motivated you to join the movement (excitement, curiosity?)
- And how did you feel the first days after you joined the movement? What did you feel when you discovered the movement?
- Did these feelings change after the first days?
- Were you concerned about possible consequences of joining the movement (at work, or maybe the fact that some friends/family might not agree with you)?
- There were many reports about police repression during the movement. Were you afraid of any imprisonment for joining this movement? If yes, what made you overcome the worry?
- Can you describe a moment that was very important to you during the occupation? What were your emotions during this moment?

### **Section 3: Relational and Interactional Experience during the Participation**

*In the following section, I will ask you about relationships with the other participants.*

- Did you know anyone who participated in the movement in the beginning? Among your friends? Family?
- Did you join the movement alone or with other persons? If with other persons, who are they?
- How did you communicate with other participants during the participation?
- Did you make any new friends in joining the movement? If yes, who are they? Did you keep in contact with these new friends? If yes, how often and for what reason?
- Can you tell me about your relationships with other participants in the movement?
- What did you talk about with other participants during the occupation? What were the issues you discussed?
- Are there any differences between your relationships with the new friends made during the occupation and the friends that you already knew?
- Did you share your feelings with other participants during the occupation? Can you tell me how? What is it that you discussed?

### **Section 4: Collective Identity before and after the Participation**

- If you had to describe your identity joining the movement, what would you say?
- If you had to describe the identity of the participants in the movement, what would you say? Who are they?
- Did the identity of “Hong Konger” motivate you to join the movement? Why?
- Did the identity of “Hong Konger” change after joining the movement?
- Did you have any expectation/hope for any social change after the occupation?
- Do you feel you have changed since the occupation? Why and how?

## Appendix C Ethical Approval Letter



University Ethics Sub-Committee for Sociology; Politics  
and IR; Lifelong Learning; Criminology; Economics and the  
School of Education

28/04/2017

**Ethics Reference:** 11448-ksn7-sociology

TO:

Name of Researcher Applicant: King Sau Ng

Department: Sociology

Research Project Title: (4th Version) Umbrella Movement: exploration on the  
significance of the movement

Dear King Sau Ng,

**RE: Ethics review of Research Study application**

The University Ethics Sub-Committee for Sociology; Politics and IR; Lifelong Learning; Criminology; Economics and the School of Education has reviewed and discussed the above application.

### 1. Ethical opinion

The Sub-Committee grants ethical approval to the above research project on the basis described in the application form and supporting documentation, subject to the conditions specified below.

### 2. Summary of ethics review discussion

The Committee noted the following issues:

Thank you for your patience in dealing with queries about your application. I am now

satisfied that you have reflected fully on the issues of illegal behaviour in relation to your interviewees.

### 3. General conditions of the ethical approval

The ethics approval is subject to the following general conditions being met prior to the start of the project:

As the Principal Investigator, you are expected to deliver the research project in accordance with the University's policies and procedures, which includes the University's Research Code of Conduct and the University's Research Ethics Policy.

If relevant, management permission or approval (gate keeper role) must be obtained from host organisation prior to the start of the study at the site concerned.

### 4. Reporting requirements after ethical approval

You are expected to notify the Sub-Committee about:

- Significant amendments to the project
- Serious breaches of the protocol
- Annual progress reports
- Notifying the end of the study

### 5. Use of application information

Details from your ethics application will be stored on the University Ethics Online System. With your permission, the Sub-Committee may wish to use parts of the application in an anonymised format for training or sharing best practice. Please let me know if you do not want the application details to be used in this manner.

Best wishes for the success of this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Laura Brace  
Chair



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