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AFTER A RAINY DAY IN HONG KONG: MEDIA, MEMORY AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, A LOOK AT HONG KONG'S 2014 UMBRELLA MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The period following an occupied social movement is often overlooked, yet it is an important moment in time as political and economic systems are potentially vulnerable. In 2014, after Hong Kong's Chief Executive declared that the citizens of Hong Kong would be unable to democratically elect their leader in the upcoming 2017 election, a 79-day occupation of major city centers ensued. The memory of the three-month occupation, also known as the Umbrella Movement was instrumental in shaping a political identity for Hong Kong's residents.

Understanding social movements as a process and not a singular event, an analytic mode that problematizes linear temporal constructions, can help us move beyond the deterministic and celebratory views often associated with technology's role in social movement activism. Memory studies can help us explore social movements in a more nuanced way. Developing an awareness of how technology continues to serve as a location of memory after an occupation is just as relevant as exploring digital media's role prior to and during occupation. This case study of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement will examine the way in which we frame "what happened" and how this can influence "what comes next," thus exploring how these narratives shape the continuous struggle for democratic freedoms. By exploring the use of symbols and their continued role after occupation; the function movement memory has in constructing various identities: political, national, and generational; how these locations of memory help and hinder the course of reflection and whether or not such reflection even occurs; and the way memory artifacts are stored to be reinterpreted in the future, will help to make sense of the continuous struggle for political freedom experienced in Hong Kong and throughout the world.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CCP…………………………………………………………….…………Chinese Communist Party

LegCo………………………………………………………….Hong Kong Legislative Council

SAR……………………………………..……………………Special Autonomous Region

HKSAR………………………………………………Hong Kong Special Autonomous Region

BrandHK………………………………………………………….Brand Hong Kong Campaign

RTHK……………………………………………………………… Radio Television Hong Kong

PRC……………………………………………..People's Republic of China (Mainland China)

ICC………………………………………………………………..International Commerce Centre

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Chapter 1

Introduction

"Remember, remember the fifth of November the gun powder treason and plot. I know of no reason why the gun powder treason should ever be forgot."

Written by Alan Moore for the graphic novel *V for Vendetta,* this quote dramatizes a crucial component of social movements that is often ignored: the important role played by memory. Although Alan Moore's story is itself fictional, Guy Fawkes and the gunpowder plot were real and might have been forgotten in our public memory had it not been for a graphic novel and film adaptations commemorating rebellion. The Guy Fawkes mask itself has become a symbol for hacktivist collectives like Anonymous and other anti-establishment groups and causes. Remembering these moments and recognizing these symbols is now easier thanks to digital media, but in many ways digital and social media have also changed the way we remember. As researchers, we often focus on the catalyst of social movements, how technology shapes mass gatherings and mobilizes participants, but what happens after everyone has left the streets and gone home? How do movements tap into these moments to sustain themselves? Is the memory of these movements meaningful enough to fuel the democratic changes that these initial moments of collective action were so passionate about? November 5th, also known as bonfire night and still celebrated to this day in the United Kingdom, is not a celebration of Guy Fawkes' dissidence, but rather a recognition of his failure to blow up Parliament (Macphail & Lockart, 2016). The unadulterated story of the gunpowder plot is less significant today; instead, how we remember Guy Fawkes and the symbolism of the mask is what matters.

Mediated memories have always placed a crucial role in cultural movements that affect social change, though not always in the sense evoked in the epigraph above. Zelizer's (1998)

Remembering to Forget, states that the ubiquitous circulation of Holocaust photos, rather than animating action on similar fronts, allows individuals to dismiss atrocities going on today. The artifacts from the Holocaust, namely pictures, have come to overshadow modern genocide. While it may be true that we "never forget" the Holocaust and the iconic images that came to represent such barbarity, this kind of "remembering" does not necessarily sensitize society to analogous situations: when we focus our gaze on this mediated history, we tend to miss analogous problems in the present. Recirculating the images and discussions of the Holocaust may take our attention away from the atrocities in Rwanda, Bosnia, and now Syria. Extending Zelizer's argument further, the compression of time and space often associated with new technologies may accelerate the process of foregoing reflection upon current events. We may seem interested for a time, while our social media feeds and mainstream news bombard us with pictures of mass occupations, but a week later these events are disregarded for the next breaking news segment. Social movements like the traumatic events of the Holocaust depend on monumental memories in order to sustain themselves, yet these memories can also function in ambiguous and ambivalent ways. The function of a social movement is to disrupt the status quo thus creating a fissure in the general mindset of a community in order to establish cultural and structural change (Gamson, 1975; McAdamn, McCarthy & Zald, 1996), If the memory of a social movement is constructed in an ambiguous or ambivalent way, the movement itself is irrelevant if the disruption that could create change is not sustainable. Like the photographs that became influential locations of memory at the same time as the atrocities of WWII (Zelizer, 1998), social and digital media has grown up in the environment of the "occupied" social movement. Social media's ability to shape the individual and collective memory of these events

(and perhaps increase the rate at which they are forgotten) is possibly just as influential as photography was in its media infancy during the second World War.

Media pundits and scholars often talk about how technology influences identity or how rebellion defines a generation during a social movement, but how does media and technology influence the way we remember social movements in ways that sustain the goals often set forth during these events? Castells (2012) claims that, "The legacy of networked social movements will have been to raise the possibility of re-learning how to live together. In real democracy" (p. 246). Castell's analysis of events like the Egyptian Revolution, the Arab Spring and the Occupy Wall Street movement do not appear to have epitomized this legacy of "re-learning in real democracy." Despite how often social movements are framed in the media as etiological events of democratization, in many cases, the situation in these areas has deteriorated. Exploring how these events are remembered after the fact, how technology influences identity, and how rebellion defines a generation once people have left the streets, may help to provide an answer to the question of why Castell's conviction has not been realized.

The tendency to focus on a social movement as an isolated event fails to recognize the importance of the overall process or continuation of political struggle. Castells' (2012) last chapter of *Networks of Outrage and Hope* devotes just three paragraphs in a 298-page book to the consideration of what happens to the memory of a social movement after it stops occupying space and making the news. "The networked social movements, whose experiences you and I have shared in this book, will continue to fight and debate, evolve and eventually fade away in their current state of being, as have all social movements in history" (p. 245). Although this statement alludes to a continuous process, it fails to understand and acknowledge the complexities of moving forward after a mass occupation. Castells' claims that the formation of

new political parties and renewed efficacy are "unlikely" social movement outcomes. While it is reasonable to agree with the assertion that the atmosphere surrounding social movement occupation eventually fades, his argument that it is too early to "evaluate the ultimate outcome" seems to avoid a more complicated analysis of its long duree. It is easier to wipe your hands of a social movement once it loses its original luster, or rather to equate the movement with the nascent flash mob that was recognized in the media sphere. It is harder, however, to engage in the ongoing work of social change that must necessarily come later if they want to have a lasting impact. Memories are not static and will continually influence how we interpret social movements. Our memories of social movements will continue to be shaped by mainstream media accounts, social media posts, and historical renditions of how the events transpired. Media and technology have a strong influence on how a society remembers an event and it is important to begin to understand how these locations of memory shape how we interpret past events like social movements. As the notion of what is deemed the "past" is constantly changing, the process of reflecting on the significance of these movements should begin immediately.

Reducing these movements to either a singular memory of democratic struggle or the technological apparatus, promotes a linear, one-sided way of looking at these events that does not seem to be enough to sustain the momentum after occupation. Although these elements are important locations of memory unto themselves, the symbolism that redefines new identities as a citizen or an activist should also be explored. Identity and the symbolism that structures the formation of national and group notions of "self" are just as relevant to the democratic struggle as the movement that promotes these ideals (Nora, 1996). When a movement is most prominently framed in the context of technological innovation, it can be difficult for activists to

utilize other important elements like symbolism and cultural identities, which represents a "lived" memory that connects the past to the present instead of a fixed point in time. Nora (1989; 1996) believes that the "disappearance of peasant culture" and "industrial growth" have eradicated "real environments of memory." Technology has changed the way we construct our idea of the past. An article published by *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1945, already recognized the problems with society's obsession with collecting and storing information calling the process an "artificial system of indexing." Bush (1945) believed that linear thinking was not natural and that the human mind processed information in a nonlinear fashion. However, with the influx of new technologies like the Internet, the potential to conceptualize memory in a nonlinear fashion is once again possible and may help to promote more democratic ideals based on stronger collective identities. The problem though, is that while social movements are beginning to tap into this potential, they do not yet seem able to move beyond linear constructions of time and memory.

Multiple actors and circumstances contribute to the construction of memory. The individual informs the collective; the collective informs the individual. In addition, how a group may remember a particular event is separate from how the media at large remembers (Halbwachs, 1992; Vivian, 2010; Haskins, 2015). Each group may remember an event through a variety of lenses, but our understanding of these social movements is still always presented in the context of the past or present. Given a movement's propensity to significantly influence the future, understanding the complexities of how multiple groups construct memory and their temporal perceptions are noteworthy considering that what happens next is framed by the struggle to define what happened[1]. The moment after the event can be just as significant as the

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[1] For the purposes of this study, the frame of "what happened" will be understood as the occupation of physical spaces. Occupation gets the most media attention and is often the most recognizable stage of a social movement.

event itself as the process of reflection can help propel the lingering energy from the movement into new forms of civic participation. Instead of focusing on social movements as past events or current affairs, it may be that the introduction of a new conception is warranted. Memory scholars recognize the flexibility and importance of memory construction, which may be more suited to the period of transition following occupation. As memory is socially constructed (Halbwachs, 1992), understanding the importance of new media technologies that structure how memories are circulated and reiterated, is crucial.

It can be said that media allows us to "bear witness" to significant events, but the nature of the witnessing is ambiguous. The act of bearing witness can be an important marker in what events are deemed worthy of being incorporated into a group's collective memories; however, time, social and economic status, and medium can influence the process of conceptualizing such moments (Zelizer, 1998). For example, slacktivism is a form of bearing witness to social movements, but clicking "like" does little to further the memory of occupation in a meaningful way that will help in the next stages of a social movement. Media helps to construct these memories in ways that are not necessarily accurate but are still able to influence the retelling of historical narratives.[2] Narratives surrounding recent social movements tend to be similar in nature. Mass media outlets focus on the new technological apparatus that thrived during the

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Understanding the movement as a process and not a singular event, "what happens" next is just as important as occupation, but is focused on less. This study will look at how the framing of occupation by various actors comes to define the next stage in the process.

[2] An example of the retelling of such fantastical narratives can be found in Kathryn Schulz's (2016) *New Yorker* article, "The Perilous Lure of the Underground Railroad." In the article, Schulz claims that the history and popular narrative that emphasizes the triumph of the Underground Railroad is actually false. The network never really gained any prominence in the South and operated mainly in Northern states that, while opposed to owning slaves, had no problem sending subjugated individuals back into servitude. The mythology of the Underground Railroad is an exemplary example of why it is important to understand that historical accounts are not necessarily factual just because they have been passed down over the years.

latest movement, while media scholars are trying to find the narrowest gaps in the existing literature to explain technology's latest impact on social change. These events and the subsequent narratives are "reenacted almost before they are over" (Sturken, 1997, p. 43). The focus on technology distracts from the task of reflecting on the movement in ways that could help enact meaningful change.

New technologies have influenced society's relationship with memory and the speed with which events are processed, catalogued, and remembered. The iconic symbols of one social movement are replaced by the new technologies and symbols of the next. Borrowing from past movements has always occurred but today's movements seem to appropriate certain icons without understanding their context. Our current 24-hour-news cycle is a constant repetition of the same narrative structure with different content to make it seem new and timely. As a result, we never have the time to process significant events. Sturken (1997) acknowledges that "reenacting" serves as a means to find closure; those who observed the Ant Farm reenactment of the Kennedy assassination believed that witnessing the parody helped them to come to terms with the death of a beloved president and the loss of America's supposed innocence. In a way, Castells (2012) is correct in his claims that the original momentum of a social movement does fade away, but when the media cycle pushes us to move forward, those who were involved in the movement do not seem to get closure.

As one of the most heavily reported and mediated events of the new century, the Umbrella Movement that took place in Hong Kong in 2014 may help to shed light on the emerging role that digital technology and social media play in memory construction as it relates to the process of reflection and the ongoing work of a culture defining itself after an occupation is over. The elements that make Hong Kong a relevant case to explore are the very elements that

make this study a challenge. Social movements often evoke the symbolism and cultural memory of national identities as a way to unite a diverse group of people. Nora (1996b) characterizes national heritage as a *lieux de mémoire*, or "any significant entity, whether material or nonmaterial in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community" (p. xvii). A certain romanticism envelops national symbols in a way that brings people together. In Tunisia, during the Jasmine Revolution, which sparked the Arab Spring, the use of the country's flag and the singing of the national anthem became a rallying cry for their quest to enact political change. Social movement participants often rally around national symbols as a way to reclaim their identity as a people unified towards bettering their society (Castells, 2012; Wolfson, 2014). However, Hong Kong has no solidified images or dominant cultural memory to rally behind. The territory is more well-known for being a melting pot of Eastern and Western cultures and a technologically advanced business hub, in this sense Hong Kong is always being contested as the various interests try to define its identity. Protesters have to do more to change the territory's political system, they also have to convince Beijing's central government to grant them universal suffrage. Unlike many of the other recent social movements that have utilized nationalistic *lieux de mémoire*, Hong Kong's connection to these locations may be different given their lack of a relationship with a national identity.

To be sure, Hong Kong has a complicated history, and its future is unclear. Hong Kong's relationship with colonialism is unlike most cases explored in post-colonial literature. Hong Kong did not receive its independence from Great Britain in 1997. Instead, China acquired control and thus the power to decide Hong Kong's political future was placed in the hands of the Beijing elite. "Whereas colonialism was once seen as a traumatic experience for native people, it

is now understood more as a layer of encounters, some based on bewilderment but others based on mutual understanding. Repressive and racist as it was, colonialism in Hong Kong was not always confusing or disruptive for the local Chinese population" (Carroll, 2007, p. 5). Tailoring post-colonial and national frames to Hong Kong becomes complicated because the territory is neither a colony, nor a nation. As it is becoming more common to explore how the conceptualization of the nation is changing in global and technological environments (Aronczyk, 2013), Hong Kong may provide a window into what a world without national sovereignty could look like. Hardt and Negri (2004) acknowledge that the nation is still an important frame through which to analyze contemporary culture, but also cite the imaginary topoi emerging through the Internet that people see themselves through as being relevant models for contemporary society. People see themselves as parts of multiple identity formations each of which have different past, presents, and futures. To touch upon a famously stereotyped Asian phrase, the multitude is "same, same, but different." The multitude is a collection of people who recognize their differences but are still able to find common ground for which to communicate the common good. This can, but does not depend upon, national identity. Yet this is precisely why Hong Kong provides an important case for understanding cultural identity in the 21st Century. As such, to examine the complexity of Hong Kong is to provide ourselves with an essential tool through which to move beyond the old structures of organizing social activism around the nation state in an attempt to communicate the idea of "the people" connected to "the multitude" as opposed to the "nation."

Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement provides the observer with a case study of how social movements work in the interconnected era of digital multitude. The movement explored new ways of communicating and mobilizing through the affordances provided by social media as it

fought for political change for the territory. Unlike recent social movements that took place on Wall Street, in Gezi Park, and Tahir Square, the Umbrella Movement did not have to face the undertaking of transitioning from an urban movement to one on a national scale. Hong Kong is also a technologically advanced area with a relatively stable economy. The contained area of Hong Kong thus provides an ideal venue to capture the influence technology has on memory construction in the wake of a major protest involving the occupation of urban space. Those who study social movements often discuss the historical conditions that lead up to occupation or other catalytic events in addition to talking about the uses of technology during the actual occupation. However, as will be demonstrated by the following case study, the efforts to maintain the goals initially articulated during occupation are just as important after the fact, if not more so. The memories associated with occupation have the potential to maintain the hope and energy of the original movement in a way that could further democratic change, while at the same time casting a shadow on the outcomes when change does not occur in the immediate future. Such struggles over the meaning such memories hold are important to consider as we are beginning to see an increase in major social movements throughout the world. It is thus imperative that we explore all aspects of these events and not the most exciting snapshots. While each of these movements has their own unique cultural and political identity markers, perhaps there is something that does connect these movements in a way that creates a universal collective memory that could facilitate real political and economic change, shifting the focus from our current neo-liberal environment to the utopian collectivity discussed by Hardt and Negri (2004), Castells (2010), Harvey (2010) and others. The connecting factor that joins many of these modern movements is the struggle over memory in the wake of mass occupation.

From Fishing Village to the Land that Would Redeem China: Hong Kong's Early History

Hong Kong's ambiguous status as a *lieux de memoire*, and as a site through which people construct their sense of community and self, is related to its complicated history. The events that transpired in Hong Kong in the summer of 2014 were the culmination of a tumultuous past. This island territory, whose main island is only eleven miles long, has had an inflated significance that dwarfs its geographical mass. Hong Kong has never been its own nation, but it has been a politically significant enclave for the British colonial empire, Japan's WWII imperial expansion and China's quest for global legitimacy. Hong Kong was a meager fishing village when the Empress Dowager ceded the land to the British in an attempt to establish peace after the first of the opium wars (Thomas, 1999; Baker & Wolf, 2005; Carroll, 2007).

Under British rule, Hong Kong was actually three discrete territories acquired during separate conflicts between the Chinese and the British Empire. Hong Kong Island was surrendered after the first Opium War, known as the Anglo-Chinese war that culminated in the treaty of Nanjing. In 1860, after the Convention of Peking and the conclusion of the second Opium War, Britain acquired Kowloon. Though the land that the British had acquired served as a significant seaport, it was not self-sustaining. Hong Kong Island and Kowloon were not areas known for having abundant farmland and fresh water supplies, therefore, the British needed to find additional land resources that could sustain the colony. During the Second Convention of Peking in 1898, Britain obtained the New Territories and many of the outlying islands in what would be the only non-military means of gaining the rights to the land that would eventually become modern Hong Kong. British historians generally cite commercial interests and trade as reasons for Britain's annexation of Hong Kong. Controlling Hong Kong meant that the British

were able to command significant trade routes in Asia, a region and market that had been difficult for Western powers to enter (Thomas, 1999; Carroll, 2007).

The story of Hong Kong's history is just as much a story of British imperialism as it is the story of China's perceived period of weakness and shame. China viewed the British acquisition of the three areas as an undesired outcome of the Qing Dynasty's deficient rule. After WWII, another period of instability for the territory, the opportunity for China's honor to be restored was realized thanks to modern international law. The 1974 United Nations Resolution on the Definition of Aggression asserted that any territories obtained through military coercion would be invalid. Thanks to the growth of post-colonial politics of restitution and reclamation, China finally had the means to reclaim the land they believed was rightfully theirs (Carroll, 2007; Thomas, 1999).

Five years after the 1974 Resolution was ratified, Deng Xiaoping met with Hong Kong's current governor to discuss the future of the territory. During this meeting, Deng introduced the notion of what would later become known as "one party, two systems[3]" (Ren, 2010). The Chinese government was adept with regards to using their 1971 United Nations admittance to their advantage. Knowing that they would make a move to reclaim their jurisdiction over Hong Kong and Macau, Chinese ambassador Huang Hua declared that Hong Kong was "a Chinese territory under British administration." This official story was contrary to how identity formation had naturally occurred in the territory prior to this assertion thus marking significant cultural distinctions present in Hong Kong to this day. It was also this wording that resulted in Hong

[3] In 1979, the official title "one party, two systems" was not yet established. Deng told Murray MacLehose, Hong Kong's governor, that China would allow Hong Kong to maintain its capitalist economy, while the Mainland would remain socialist. The program was originally developed for Taiwan, but diplomatic relations between the two never normalized to the point where the program could be implemented. This plan was put into motion beginning in 1982 and eventually became the system Hong Kong adopted in 1997 after Hong Kong was relinquished to China (Carroll, 2007).

Kong and Macau's removal from the United Nations' list of colonial territories. Hua stated that the matter of Hong Kong's control was an internal matter (Carroll, 2007).

The "internal matter" Hua referred to was officially settled in 1984. Prime Ministers Margaret Thatcher and Zhao Ziyang met to sign the Sino-British Joint Declaration, which set in motion Hong Kong's transition. It also began to outline how the territory would be governed under Chinese authority (Thomas, 1999). The period between 1984 and 1997 became known as Hong Kong's period of transition, a period where a lot of the anxieties that eventually bubbled up to the surface in 2014 began to fester. The issue of sovereignty was the first to be resolved. China was determined to take back all contested areas, not just the New Territories and Kowloon, which are geographically attached to the Mainland. Hong Kong would be allowed to maintain a local government, which led to the creation of the Basic Law[4]. The territory would also be allowed to oversee their own "relatively independent and impartial legal system" and prior to 2013 were able to maintain the educational system originally established during Britain's colonial period[5] (Chu, 2013). In an attempt to make the political process look fair, the committee that drafted the Basic Law was comprised of 36 members from the Mainland and 23 from Hong Kong. Deng believed that the people of Hong Kong could rule themselves, because they were, after all, Chinese. However, the act of including Hong Kong in the process was merely an illusion, as the Chinese government maintained their control over the committee guiding the development of the Basic Law (Ren, 2010; Thomas, 1999).

[4] The drafting of the Basic Law unknowingly triggered the actions that came to a climax in the summer of 2014. The Basic Law established that Hong Kong had always been a part of China

[5] In 2013, Beijing and Hong Kong authorities proposed to implement a "national education reform." Thousands of protesters took to the streets to say that the reform was essentially "brainwashing." It was during these protests that the student led group Scholarism, which was also influential during the Umbrella movement, was created. (Chong, Tam, Wei & Franchineau, 2013).

An example of this power was demonstrated in a meeting between the drafting committee and Deng in 1987. When asked if Hong Kong would be allowed to hold direct elections, Deng said he did not want the system to become too "Westernized." Deng believed that establishing a democratic system that mirrored that of the United States would not elect the people Deng felt would be appropriate leaders. To put it in other terms, Deng wanted to control the electoral system in Hong Kong (Ren, 2010). The Basic Law was written in such a way that seemed to allow Hong Kong to maintain their current lifestyle of relative freedom, but established conditions that allowed China to exert more control under the guise of "national security" (Thomas, 1999). The provision to allow Hong Kong to hold elections made the territory's citizens feel like they were autonomous; however, the system was rigged in such a way that always seemed to give pro-Beijing politicians the advantage. This became one of the major points of contention during the 2014 Umbrella Movement. In addition to Deng's proposal to control Hong Kong elections, the Tiananmen Square crackdown also elevated concern with regards to the upcoming 1997 handover.

The events that transpired at Tiananmen Square in 1989 complicated the already contentious transition. Residents of Hong Kong, while mostly ethnically Chinese, were at the time legal British citizens who, within the decade, were about to come under the control of Chinese sovereignty. This tension between Eastern notions of filial piety and Western adherence to the liberalism of British law are still significant aspects of Hong Kong's cultural memory. Many of these individuals did not identify with either political entity, thus the actions of both governments further intensified anxieties surrounding the transition (Ren, 2010). Christopher Patten, then governor of Hong Kong, attempted to establish last minute reforms for the territory before power was officially in the hands of the Chinese government. It was during this time that

many of the political parties, who are major actors in Hong Kong's political system today were created, including many of the pro-democratic and pro-business, functional constituency parties[6] (Ren, 2010). China, realizing that this move would give Hong Kong's local government more autonomy, made concessions so that the CCP would look more favorable in light of the June 4th crackdown. The CCP allowed an extra two directly elected legislative seats and also increased the number of those holding foreign passports to serve in Hong Kong's Legislative Council. However, the CCP would still have the authority to appoint Hong Kong's highest-ranking official, the Chief Executive. Beijing would also have the power to overturn any laws that did not conform to the Basic Law (Ship, 1995; Thomas, 1999; Chu, 2013). The first Chief Executive was "elected" on November 11, 1996 (Chu, 2013).

Tung Chee-Hwa replaced Governor Chris Patten as Hong Kong's leader and even though he allegedly won in a "landslide" victory, many Hong Kong residents did not support Tung's leadership. Tung's administrative legacy culminated with protests in 2003, which at the time were the largest protests in Hong Kong's history. "Notoriously indecisive and weak in governance, Tung was widely criticized as making Hong Kong a less liberal and modern city than Mainland cities such as Shanghai" (Chu, 2013, p. 44). The CCP was hoping that Hong Kong's position as a global capitalistic city would balance the desire to be more autonomous. Hong Kong was meant to be China's "gateway" to the world and yet Tung's government quickly undermined Hong Kong's hope of maintaining its autonomy under Chinese rule. If Hong Kong's function as China's window to the world was diminished, there was little possibility that

[6] Those in business and other professions have the option to either vote for their geographical representative or their functional constituency often associated with their occupation. The Civic party, for example, represents many lawyers and professors among other "elite" professions. As there are multiple political parties in Hong Kong, the term "Pan-Democrat" or "Pro-democrat" generally refers to a party that favors a more liberal political system "Pro-Establishment" or "Pro-Business" tends to favor Chinese influence and the economic status quo. The Functional constituencies in Hong Kong tend to favor Pro-Establishment policies.

China would continue to allow Hong Kong to maintain their relative independence. Donald Tsang's administration, however, attempted to revive Hong Kong's claim on modernity (Chu, 2013).

The era of "Donaldization" began in 2005. Donald Tsang was surprisingly well liked when he first took office owing to his "pure" Hong Kong background. He was born and raised in Hong Kong and a native Cantonese speaker. Tsang's political focus was to ensure "strong governance," which eventually became known as "Donaldization. Chu (2013) likened Donaldization to that of McDonaldization, stating that the four main elements of the two included: efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control. During Tsang's reign, he introduced the "Brand Hong Kong" campaign that promoted Hong Kong as "Asia's World City." Tsang attempted to run Hong Kong as a corporation; the bottom line was to make money regardless of how this impacted people. Castells, quoted in Chu (2013), referred to the phenomenon as the "megacity," a title frequently associated with Hong Kong, as: "'globally connected but locally disconnected, physically and socially" (p. 50). In an attempt to preserve some administrative dignity after the famous Star Ferry pier was demolished in 2006, Tsang began to promote the importance of "collective memory." The Star Ferry, which connects Hong Kong island to Kowloon, was seen by many as a symbol of Hong Kong's cultural legacy. Despite protests, the pier was demolished in December of 2006 to "allow for reclamation." The "reclaimed" Star Ferry still runs to this day, but has become a tourist destination. The pier is nestled amongst other ports that cater to ex-pats and provide other luxury accommodations. Under Tsang, Hong Kong's cultural policy was tied to what became known as "Central District Values." Tsang promoted the policy as cultural preservation but instead of preserving "culture," Hong Kong became increasingly caught up in the neoliberal corporate conception of culture as a

marketed good (Chu, 2013). Tsang's push to preserve collective memory was contradictory to his desire to also promote the neoliberal capitalist ideals embodied by the "Asia's World City" campaign. Unlike major Western cities with skylines that remain relatively static, Hong Kong's "reinvents itself every few years" (Abbas, 1997, p. 63). The proposal to demolish the Star Ferry and Queen's piers sparked "public outcry." It was only after the piers were demolished that Tsang presented his proposal to "'preserve universal memories for the sake of the world's future generations"' (Chu, 2013, p. 54). However, despite this proposal to protect the island's heritage, Tsang continued to further his neoliberal agenda.

While Tsang's solid Hong Kong roots may have garnered favor when he was first elected, his predecessor Chung-Ying (C.Y.) Leung's administration began on shaky grounds. Protestors gathered outside the convention center during Leung's 2012 victory speech. Many believed that the new chief executive was a member of the Mainland's Communist Party and would not have Hong Kong's best interests in mind. Leung was elected during a time when the relationship between Hong Kong and China was already tense as Mainland tourists were increasingly seen as being a cultural and financial nuisance to Hong Kong residents. Mr. Tang, Leung's political competitor, was initially ahead in opinion polls but was discredited by a number of scandals and the fact that he was also viewed as someone who was likely to have a similar pro-business mentality as his predecessor Tsang (Chen &Yung, 2012).

In an article written after Leung's election, *The Wall Street Journal* captured a growing sentiment that escalated into the political frustrations that sparked Hong Kong's largest social movement two years later. "Sunday's vote had added significance because the next chief executive election five years from now is supposed to be democratic, though Hong Kong residents are skeptical that China will allow free elections" (Chen & Yung, 2012). Though the

protests during Leung's acceptance speech were not seen as having significant enough numbers to be deemed successful, the 2014 Umbrella movement would demonstrate that there were a significant number of Hong Kong residents who were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with Hong Kong's political system and Beijing's looming power.

A Sunny Moment for Hong Kong: The Beginning of a Movement

As evident from the historical account, post-1997 Hong Kong has always had a tumultuous relationship with its electoral system. In spite of the fact that the Chinese government strived for a peaceful transition, distrust in Hong Kong's political system was always lurking below the surface. On July 7, 2014, half-a-million-people marched through downtown Hong Kong on the 17th anniversary of the British handover to China. The march foreshadowed events to come and reflected an increasing dissatisfaction with Beijing's dominance over Hong Kong's electoral system. There was also an intense distrust with regards to the current Chief Executive, C.Y. Leung's administration. Zhang Dejiang, one of Beijing's top legislators, headed Hong Kong's political reform in 2014. The reforms did not convey the democratic autonomy that was promised after Leung's election. Instead of having a direct election, Hong Kong would only be able to choose from candidates that had been preapproved by a committee "dominated by Beijing loyalists and business elites" (Cheung, 2016a).

The origins of the Umbrella Movement began with the "Occupy Central" campaign that had taken approximately twenty months to plan (Lee & Chan, 2016). An unofficial referendum organized by Occupy Central organizers took place on July 1, 2014, which allowed residents to directly elect their desired representative. Media outlets from the Mainland touted this move as an "illegal farce" claiming that the referendum violated the Basic Law. On August, 31, 2014, C.Y. Leung denied Hong Kong's plea for universal suffrage. Then in late September, students

opted to boycott classes. The boycotts, which took place at Chinese University of Hong Kong were seen as a direct reaction to a meeting held by powerful Hong Kong businessmen and China's leader Xi Jinping. Alex Chow, a student leader from the boycott said, "we demand the government responds to our call to endorse civil nominations." The strike was said to "act as a transitional point" as activists planned their next course of action, the central focus always encompassing universal suffrage. The class boycotts eventually led to a march on government offices where police fired tear gas at many of the pro-democracy protestors. The act of tear-gassing students and the call for universal suffrage became key locations of memory that have been continually evoked since the end of the occupation. Tear-gassing the protesters also prompted others to join the movement (Connors, 2014; Connors, 2015 Chan, 2015).

The Umbrella Movement lasted for 79 days and occupied major city centers. It is believed that 20% of Hong Kong's adult population went to the occupied sites in support of the movement (Lee & Chan, 2016). However, the level of individual participation has been widely debated. Some individuals camped out at sites, while others simply visited to see what the movement was about. "A lack of rigid rules gave protestors a greater sense of autonomy. It opened up a space in which they could construct a movement of their own" (Chan, 2015, p. 5). During the movement, mainstream media outlets from Western countries extoled the various art installations that were found throughout the occupied areas. Articles discussed the peaceful communities that had emerged at many of the sites that had clean public restrooms and study areas for protestors. New technologies like FireChat, an off the grid Twitter-like platform, were heralded as the new technological icons of the movement (Olson, 2014; Pollock, 2015). For a time, there was a growing sense of hope and democratic participation. The majority of non-Chinese publications portrayed the students as being optimistic, many discussing the sense of

community that had been created at the occupation sites. However, after three months of occupation and a clash between police and some of the protestors in early December, the founding three members of Occupy Central turned themselves in and encouraged the remaining protesters to "retreat." It was time to transform the movement into a different form of political action. On December 15, 2014, police cleared the last of the protest sites and C.Y. Leung declared that the movement was over (Connors, 2015 Sep. 27).

A year later, media outlets like *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* ran articles commemorating the first anniversary of the movement. These articles claimed that the movement was not over and that the fight would continue (Hilgers, 2015; Phillips, 2015). Academic journals devoted entire issues to the movement (Lee, 2015b) and for a moment it seemed like the discussion started during the occupation would continue to be relevant in the mainstream and academic press. Yet as time went by, interest in the movement subsided. Renewed interest in the movement arose after booksellers went missing and the Fishball riots occurred, but the sense of community that was so integral to the success of the movement had dwindled.

At the end of 2015, five Hong Kong booksellers went missing; the individuals were said to have been selling materials that criticized Chinese officials. Although no direct links between the booksellers and the movement were made, the disappearance created a "chilling" effect most notably felt by Hong Kong's publishing industry. In the wake of the occupation, the political atmosphere was tense and the disappearances caused concern for those who wished to continue to question China's authority in print (Kuhn, 2016). The Fishball riot[7], which was more related

[7] Fishballs are a common street snack found throughout Hong Kong and China. Most street vendors sell various skewered food, including fishballs, and the street food culture in these areas is well-known and much beloved by locals and tourists.

to the Umbrella Movement, broke out during Hong Kong's Spring Festival celebration in 2016. Political groups classifying themselves as "Localists" protested the crackdown on unlicensed food vendors. For many Hongkongers, the food vendors that line the streets of Mong Kok are part of Hong Kong's longstanding local culture. When officials ordered the removal of the vendors, a tacit erasure of a local site of memory, many took this, "as a sign that the government ha[d] grown out of touch with ordinary Hong Kongers' desire to preserve their unique identity and freedoms" (Tsoi & Wong, 2016). Protesters originally gathered to demonstrate on behalf of the local food vendors, but the protest eventually turned violent. After the area was cleared, 50 people had been arrested, and approximately 100 were injured. The leaders of the movement claimed that they were prepared to take violent action if necessary citing that the peaceful atmosphere of the Umbrella Movement amounted to no change (Moss, 2016). Although some events were directly related to the 2014 occupation, others were more concerned with the lack of freedom in general. These smaller events may not have gotten the same global publicity or even as much widespread support, but still managed to evoke elements from the Umbrella Movement.

Western media made some connections to subsequent events in passing, but very few took the time to understand the entire process. Major news organizations like the *BBC, Time,* and *The New York Times* created timelines of the events that transpired, not understanding the implications of depicting the narrative of the movement in linear form. Digital and social media does help to mobilize groups, spread messages, and bring awareness during times of civil unrest, but these same technologies also change our conception of time. Haskins (2015) wrote, "the audience no longer acts as a consumer of a linear story—it takes part in the experience by making choices to connect particular messages and images as well as to register responses to them" (p. 50). Social Media has democratized memory construction and maintenance (Nora,

1989, 1996) and these memory artifacts can just as easily be created and controlled by ordinary individuals as mainstream media and other hegemonic forces. Understanding social movements as a process and not a singular event, an analytic mode that problematizes linear temporal constructions, can help us move beyond the deterministic and celebratory views often associated with technology's role in social movement activism. Memory studies can help us explore social movements in a more nuanced way. Developing an awareness of how technology continues to serve as a location of memory after an occupation is just as relevant as exploring digital media's role prior to and during occupation. This case study of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement will examine the way in which we frame "what happened" and how this can influence "what comes next," thus exploring how these narratives shape the continuous struggle for democratic freedoms. By exploring the use of symbols and their continued role after occupation; the function movement memory has in constructing various identities: political, national, and generational; how these locations of memory help and hinder the course of reflection and whether or not such reflection even occurs; and the way memory artifacts are stored to be reinterpreted in the future, will help to make sense of the continuous struggle for political freedom experienced in Hong Kong and throughout the world.

Movements and Memory

The protests in Hong Kong can be seen as part of a larger global trend combining the use of technology and the occupation of space to demonstrate mass dissatisfaction with current systems of power. Scholars and media pundits have been quick to herald "new media" as the savior of democratic action, stating that technology will facilitate new and more successful means to topple existing power regimes (Diani, 2000; Bimber, 2001; Nye, 2002; Hinderman, 2009; Diamond, 2010; Fox & Ramos, 2012; Oxley, 2012; Wheeler & Mintz, 2012; Castells,

2012). Although there has been significant insight into the role technology has played leading up to and during social movements, very little is written about how these movements are maintained and how the memory of the event is utilized to influence change in the present.

In Nora's (1996) series *Realms of Memory,* he discusses the importance of studying sites or locations where collective memory is rooted, as opposed to "traditional themes" or "chronological manners," as these locations create a more vibrant national memory steeped in a symbolism that is more conducive to collectivity. Globalization, democratization, and a culture based on uninterrupted media consumption have "turned the world upside down." Although these global trends have led to the rise of independence movements and brought people closer together, they also have the potential to homogenize memory, erasing unique cultural elements. For some ethnic minorities and formerly oppressed cultures, advances in technology have allowed them to have more say in how their culture is viewed and remembered. Yet it is still difficult to move beyond the existing power hierarchies that control politics, culture, and even how memory is constructed. Hong Kong is always viewed as either a British colony or a Chinese SAR, and while Hong Kong has been both, Hong Kong does have its own *lieux de mémoire* that are different from the territory's power categorizations. Social movements are usually viewed as the culmination of a dissatisfied group of individuals who wish to control their own destiny and in the process, control their own cultural memories and national histories. However, in the wake of mass occupations it seems that the momentum behind these events dissipates or transforms into smaller groups who use these *lieux de mémoire* for their own purposes. The Arab Spring saw the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood, Occupy Wall Street gave way to Trumpism and in Hong Kong, Localists groups have been gaining popularity.

Technology may have helped fuel the beginnings of these movements, but they also helped to create an environment where certain locations of memory are used for more extreme purposes.

The influence of technology in modern social movements is not a new concern for communication scholars. The idea that social movements and advancements in technology are linked is not something confined to the advent of digital media; the printing press was once viewed as a technology that facilitated societal change, disrupting the status quo (Eisenstein, 1979). A theoretical understanding of the role technology played in social movements was eventually developed in the 1960s, but its intellectual history can be traced back to early scholars such as Plato, Marx, and Machiavelli (Gamson, 1968). This study continues the exploration of these seminal theorists in that it examines the relationship between technology and social change, yet it also attempts to lay a foundation for future work relating to the connection between memory and technology once a social movement has ended. In an effort to establish a framework for which to begin this study, an examination of recent literature relating to new technology and social movements while they happened may help to shed some light on how technology may continue to be used once the movement has ended. Subsequently, a consideration of how technology determines the way certain events are remembered will be explored in relation to how these movements are later recalled. As there is little writing about memory and social movements, this foundation will be largely based on the role memory has played in the commemoration and remembrance of national traumas like the Holocaust, 9/11 and the Vietnam War.[8]

[8] It should be acknowledged that I am aware that it may be perceived that I am comparing two separate moments in a social movement's evolution, but I see the existing literature as a theoretical foundation that will help to situate future chapters.

New Technology and Social Movements

Slack and Wise (2005) believe that technology and culture are not separate entities; technology cannot be divorced from the progression of human development. The way we communicate is determined by the technologies we use. According to Carey, (1989) media consumption is ritualistic and although the technology may change overtime, the ways in which culture is influenced by media consumption is a continuous process. “A ritual view of communication is directed not toward the extension of messages in space but toward the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs” (p. 15). As such, the definition of a “new” technology is constantly changing. While new media is defined by its time, what makes today’s media novel is the notion of interactivity. Individuals can now experience “uninterrupted connectivity.” We are able to interact with the technology itself in addition to others in a more compressed sense of time and space (Kejanlioglu, 2014). The utopian idea that “new” technology will change the world is by no means groundbreaking and the notion that today’s new technology is just a continuation of the relationship between technology and culture is common (Eisenstein, 1979; Marvin, 1988; Darnton, 2000). Darnton (2000) asserted, “that every age was an age of information each in its own way, and that communication systems have always shaped events” (p. 1). Marvin (1988) furthers this perception by focusing on inherent power relations in social norms as new technologies are adopted. The interconnection between Twitter and Facebook and modern social movements can be viewed in a similar light to the technologies used in past movements. “New practices do not so much flow directly from technologies that inspire them as they are improvised out of old practices that no longer work in new settings” (Marvin, 1988, p. 5).

Although the technologies themselves may be "new,"[9]the processes in which they are utilized appears to be a well-established social condition.

While scholars like Marvin and Darnton recognize the historical tendencies of associating newly developed technologies with preexisting social conditions, other scholars believe that the technologies of today are something entirely different from their analogue ancestors. Castells (2012) maintains that Internet social networks are "spaces of autonomy," believing that corporate communications systems and government control are unable to penetrate these independent online spaces. Similarly, many of these technologies are also heralded for their ability to record and archive large amounts of information, giving individuals the ability to control their own historical legacies (Haskins, 2015). Castells seems to believe that cyberspace is sovereign. This naively optimistic view is one shared by others who believe that new technologies will finally solve all of the world's problems. Castells (2012) is correct in asserting that new technologies do facilitate a greater sense of transparency and have had significant success connecting like-minded groups from around the world, more so than their technological predecessors, yet ignoring the fact that there is corporate and government influence negates a comprehensive understanding with regards to the functionality of recently developed technological devices.

Those with power generally produce new technologies with the intention of maintaining their own control (Carty, 2011; Castells, 2012; Wolfson, 2014). The development of any technology is generally tied to the power elite (Carty, 2011). Wealthy individuals or governments, depending on a country's regulatory media framework, own the majority of newspapers and major television stations. Twitter, Facebook, and Google – the platforms dominating our contemporary conjuncture – are no different. Although these apparatuses can be

[9] For the purposes of clarity, for the remainder of the document, "new" technology will simply refer to digital technologies, specifically those created in the last decade like Twitter and Facebook.

used in an emancipatory way and were crucial tools of the Arab Spring and Umbrella Movement, there is no denying that there are already preexisting power structures involved whether it be in the form of government or corporate control. Dick Costolo, former CEO of Twitter, allegedly had programmers write an algorithm that would filter unsavory replies during a question and answer session with President Obama, thus negating Twitter's doctrine to promote free speech (Warzel, 2016). These applications and affordances have been tailored to suit the needs of the nation state as well.

The "Great Chinese firewall" is a well-known case highlighting the means that authoritarian regimes, like China, use in order to control the spread of information (Morozov, 2011). While the "Great Firewall" has not extended to Hong Kong's technological infrastructure, a growing fear that the territory's relative openness may diminish if China continues to exert their power is prevalent; a reality that seems to be more palpable in the wake of the Umbrella Movement. Lievrouw's (2011) approach to new media and social movements acknowledges that corporate and political actors are influential but that new technologies have "helped generate a renaissance of new genres and modes of communication and have redefined people's engagement with media" (p. 1). Media audiences are no longer just consumers of media, they also have the ability to create and produce content, thus reinterpreting the meaning of what it means to be an amateur or professional journalist, activist, and even archivist (Zelizer, 1998; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010).

Current social movement literature often highlights the emancipatory power of new technologies, yet the ways in which these new technologies are used and are successful is difficult to measure. To focus on a singular aspect of a new technology as it affects the outcome of social change disregards the historical trends that brought these new technologies to the

forefront of such arguments (Tarrow, 1991). Individuals involved in social movements today are using a variety of different technologies to communicate with others as well as a larger global population. There is no denying that new technology is being used, but these movements are not solely dependent on any one medium (Gerbaudo, 2012). Although new technologies have helped to reorganize how social movements are conducted, one cannot simply define this change via the use of a single apparatus.

One element that is often underrepresented in discussions of new technology and in the literature on social movements is the role of people. Technology often becomes the focus of research, ignoring the individuals who are using the technologies and the causes they are attempting to further. Malkia Cyril, quoted in Wolfson (2014) said, "the biggest defining characteristic of media justice is that it's not about the media, it's about the justice, justice comes first. Media is a medium for change, it is not the change itself" (p. 15). A technological apparatus or platform is merely a tool deployed in the struggle for power. The context in which these social movements are arising is also a significant factor. Without certain political and economic conditions, the need to develop and pursue collective behavior, aimed at changing these emerging societal concerns, would be nonexistent (Carty, 2011). Social movements do not occur when the majority of society is content, nor do they occur just because a new technology has been developed.

Social movements generally manifest in the form of protest they utilize. Lipsky (1968), observing the counter-cultural movements in the 1960s, saw protests as a means to give the powerless an opportunity to sway those in power. Not having access to mainstream media platforms like newspapers, radios, and television, the easiest way to receive attention was to gather in massive groups in the form of rallies, boycotts, and marches. Fifty years later, this is

still a viable form of political deliberation as events like Occupy Wall Street have demonstrated. "Protest has become the action of choice for social movements to such an extent that it has become a normal aspect of the political landscape" (Loader, 2008, p. 1929). New technologies have been found to provide cheaper, faster, and a larger geographical scope than traditional means like petitions. However, as more social movement activity occurs online, how does this impact communities that are created during a rally in a real setting? Social movements are complex entities and to ignore one factor (such as people) in favor of another (such as technology) can fail to capture the essence of a movement and diminish the chances of influencing future activists. The very technologies that are emancipatory can also be the same technologies that promote surveillance systems that violate our privacy or lead to environmental degradation. New technology has not only impacted our perception of time and space, with respect to social movements, but has changed this concept for daily life in general (Loader, 2008). It is important to critically examine the level of influence these technologies actually have and whether or not this influence is sustainable after the movement ends. These technologies may be efficient in real-time, but the way they help to preserve and construct the memories that will help promote future democratic participation is a question that has been largely left unanswered.

Memory

Castells (2012) begins his book with the remembrance, "No one expected it" (p.1). The "it" he was referring to was the financial and political turmoil that led to the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street. Yet anyone who has an historical understanding of the economic and social conditions that provide the impetus for any movement knows that these events should be "expected." Most social movements are the culmination of a deeply experienced emotional and

economic oppression, and as such, it could be argued that memory serves as the foundation for political dissatisfaction and as the spur for "the people" to take to the streets. Donald Trump's entire political campaign was predicated on the hopes that a select group of people would selectively remember what life was like when other groups were "properly oppressed." "Make America Great Again" is the perfect example of how the rhetorical act of being asked to remember is a significant political action.

One can define memory in many ways. Memory is fluid. It may change based on individual or group dynamics. Some elements of an event may be forgotten and others may be distorted as time goes on. Memory is in a constant state of negotiation (Nora, 1989; Nora, 1996; Zelizer, 1998; Vivian, 2010). While memory has an impact on our historical accounts, it is not history. If memory is like water, flowing, evaporating, and constantly changing form, history is like a road without U-turns that goes nowhere. History is often viewed as "factual" and scientific, whereas "memory is life," having an emotional component. History is so strongly tied to the past that it becomes convoluted when it is understood in relation to the present. Memory, however, is always tied to both the past and the present, it changes based on individual and group needs and does not pretend to represent a static point in time (White, 1978; Nora, 1989; Nora, 1996). As Nora defines it:

> Memory is blind to all but the group it binds—which is to say, as Maruice Halbwachs has said, that there are as many memories as there are groups, that memory is by nature multiple yet specific; collective, plural, and yet individual. History, on the other hand belongs to everyone and no one, whence its claim to universal authority. Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures,

> images, and objects; history binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things. Memory is absolute, while history can only conceive the relative (1989, p. 9).

Those in power write history; therefore, like the "emancipatory" technologies that will give marginalized people a voice, one must look cautiously at the role of power. Memory can be institutionalized and called "history" just as easily as the CEO of Twitter can eliminate negative tweets. But like new technologies, memory can also provide an outlet for disenfranchised groups to construct their own account of the past so that they can bring about change that will ensure a better tomorrow.

Considering the power dynamics behind historical accounts, looking at memory in relation to social movements allows for a more vibrant understanding of how activism serves to provide a counter to hegemonic notions of the past and present. Nora's *lieux de mémoire* does not represent memory itself but rather the process of how memory is constructed around the symbolism of particular spaces and objects. "*Lieux de mémoire* thrive only because of their capacity for change, their ability to resurrect old meanings and generate new ones along with unforeseeable connections (that is what makes them exciting)" (Nora, 1996c, p. 15). When viewed from an historical perspective, events like social movements are often viewed as done and complete, yet these movements often represent a continuous struggle. If viewed as "complete," such perspectives could hinder the progress of causes that strive for greater equality, democratization, and universal suffrage (Nora, 1996). The rhetoric surrounding the memory of new technology often highlights a quality of life that is better today than it was in the past. Such accounts tend to favor existing power structures that have provided the conditions for these

supposedly better environments (Ozouf & Ozouf, 1996). Nora believes that technological advancements have led to a degradation of "lived" memory. Although this is a valid argument, Vivian (2010) also acknowledges that technological advancements have also led to more dynamic archival methods in addition to local, regional, and global memory centers. Vivian also makes the claim that public forgetting can be beneficial to the maintenance of a collective memory.

We commonly associated forgetting with the antithesis of remembering, but forgetting is an essential part of memory. In today's digital society, the ability to remember everything—at least in a particular way—is essentially at our fingertips. "The call to never forget is not only a moral and political slogan, but in the realm of digital innovation, a potential reality" (Vivian, 2010, p. 35). Digital technologies allow us to store vast amounts of information, but it is this externalization of memory that concerns Nora (1989, 1996). Nora claims that we now have *lieux de mémoire* or sites of memory because we no longer have "real environments" of memory. "Mass culture" according to Nora, "separates collective memory from state history" (Vivian, 2010, p. 33). A common criticism of Nora is that his conception of national memories tends to be very Eurocentric (Matten, 2011). Nora's theory is often viewed as being "nostalgic" and speculative in that he assumes traditional or "lived" memory ever "existed in the first place" (Vivian, 2010). For Hong Kong and other cultures oppressed by authoritarian regimes, the more information they can produce and archive, the harder it is for regimes to erase and control counter-hegemonic memories.

Although Nora's theory of *lieux de mémoire* is an important part of this project, his thoughts with regards to the importance of national memory is not necessarily universal. The events and symbols that construct national memories for one nation will not be the same for

others. China's identity has not always been constructed around a sense of nationalism. Confucianism was once a stronger facilitator of collective identity than the nation-state. In addition, China's relationship with surrounding regions like Korea and Japan were different than those established in the West (Matten, 2011; Tzi-ki, 2011). To assume that "lived" memory functioned the same way in France as it did in China is presumptuous. Given China's long, and at times tumultuous history along with the rise of the Communist party in 1949, the CCP controls the "official vision of patriotism." Most of China's *lieux de mémoire* are related to the country's modern history. As such, these locations of memory focus on the Opium War, the Sino-Japanese War, and the rise of the Communist movement. Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, as well as events like the Cultural Revolution and the 1989 Tiananmen Square Movement are excluded from official national narratives (Matten, 2011). Hong Kong has their own locations of memory, but using memory to construct a "national" identity is difficult considering their lack of any known culture prior to British colonialism and their continued struggle to gain universal suffrage.

Space, time, groups, and individuals influence how memory is constructed. How we remember the "past" is not an accurate depiction of everything that happened, but the events that are remembered from those historical accounts will be influenced by group dynamics and the individual will influence the group. These details are essential to the understanding of how collective memory is constructed (Halbwachs, 1992). Zelizer (1998) notes that unlike individual memories that fade with time, collective memories are strengthened as time progresses by new ideas and circumstances, even as they transform and change. Collective memories become threads in the cultural, social, and political fabric that are essential to everyday life. This notion of collective memory and group influence is especially pertinent in light of the use of new technological platforms like Facebook, which have increasingly turned to memory to suture

individual users to the technology on an everyday level. Individual users are required to navigate both group and individual identities in many of these online environments that are becoming increasing utilized in social movement mobilization and identity construction.

Just as technology and culture are intertwined, the relationship culture has with memory is also essential for understanding the intricacies of human development. “Memory is fundamental for culture, history is not” (Matten, 2011, p. 3). We look at the history of technological development, but it is rare to look at how such progressions are remembered. Scholars like Marvin (1988) acknowledge the problems of looking at apparatus-based histories in that they fail to account for cultural considerations like the nature of authority and how various groups are influenced by technological innovation. Examining how technology helped construct and preserve sites of memory in addition to understanding how technology influences the way we remember certain events, accounts for many of these cultural considerations. In addition to social media platforms shaping the way we construct memory and recollect our past, traditional media platforms like television are still a powerful tool that helps to shape “popular memory.” Television, in the form of corporate and state controlled media has the ability to influence the narratives that surround significant national events; however, with the rise of convergent technologies, television is no longer relegated to cable and broadcast capabilities. The one-to-many dissemination approach associated with traditional television viewership has been interrupted by viewer interaction on adjacent sites like Twitter and Facebook (Metzger, 2009). However, television is still able to reach a wide audience and the reporting of national events eventually become entangled with individual and collective memories. A common example of this phenomenon is the ability to remember where you were when Kennedy was shot or when planes hit the World Trade Center on 9/11. These memories are also what often comes to define

the identity of different generational cohorts. As time progresses, it becomes increasingly more difficult to separate one's personal account of an event with one that is produced by corporate media (Sturken, 1997; Vivian, 2010). Sturken (1997) refers to this as cultural memory, or "memory that is shared outside the avenues of formal historical discourse yet is entangled with cultural products and imbued with cultural meaning" (p.3). If culture is communication as Carey (1989) – remembering Raymond Williams - infers, then these new technologies will be afforded more power than they deserve thus widening the divide between "lived" memory and mediated memories. But Carey assures that, "technology is technology; it is a means for communication and transportation over space, and nothing more" (p. 107). Even if we begin to "demythologize the rhetoric of the electronic sublime," cultural memories of today are still produced, stored and reformatted through media objects that have become notable contributors to culture. Media often guides how we reflect upon significant events like the assassination of a president or a national tragedy (Haskins, 2015). Social movements, perhaps due to their counter-cultural affiliation, are rarely discussed in the realm of national remembrance and reflection. Nonetheless, social movements are significant events that disrupt the status quo for a time and deserve to have a more significant role in public reflection and memory.

Remembering Social Movements through Media

National memories are often shaped by the origin story of a revolution, yet subsequent social movements are not viewed as a continuation of these archetypical events. Nora (1996) often cites the rhetoric surrounding the French Revolution as being a central focus to France's collective identity. The foundation of American democracy and the basis of the American Revolution are immortalized in the pages of the Declaration of Independence:

> When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitled them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation (US, 1776).

The idea of a "Continuous Revolution" is also a common theme in China's communist ideology. Yet, today's social movements are not remembered in the same way as the actions of their revolutionary predecessors. These original revolutions are now mythical and shrouded in historical accounts; they are fact and therefore above the vague recollections of memory. The framing of these events is also significant as revolution, social movement, and riot are used as interchangeable terms to describe the same event. The democratization and globalization of memory has complicated the locations of memory associated with such social disruptions. Cultural memories that were once confined to specific groups and cultures are now manipulated by multiple outside sources. The Umbrella Movement was sometimes referred to as a revolution by Western media channels and the Chinese media claimed the 79-day occupation was a riot or form of civil disobedience. The way these events are framed by media outlets, whether they be traditional one-to-many systems or the more interconnected platforms of social media, does influence the way events are remembered. "When individuals or social groups thus contest a place of memory, they most often try to regain the memory of parts of history that have been forgotten or suppressed by other hegemonic authorities" (Matten, 2011, p. 5). The foundational memory highlighting the importance of revolution that pervades many national identities is

acceptable because it often confirms existing power structures. To remember the social movements of today in the same way as those in the past would result in shifting power dynamics unfavorable for those currently in charge.

One of the key purposes of this study is to investigate the role memory plays in sustaining or even forgetting the events surrounding mass occupation in the hopes of understanding how new technologies continue to influence particular communities after the initial movement has subsided. These memories also have the potential to shape group identities in ways that sustain the process of the movement in more provocative ways. Evoking certain memories can be a political act. Haskins (2015) sees the participatory co-construction of public memory as a form of enacting citizenship and creating solidarity. She references the importance of "narratives and images of the past [to] promote a consensual notion of collective identity" (p. 4). However, social movements tend to move away from identities constructed based on national personalities as today's movements are often centered around identity constructions related to age, gender, ethnicity or language, thus moving away from class and national categorizations that defined past movements (Lievrouw, 2011). Unlike Nora (1989, 1996), Haskins sees democratization as a potentially positive way to construct memories "of the people, by the people." Technology does allow regular individuals to "put their stamp on history" and challenge preexisting narratives propagated by existent power hierarchies. Vivian (2010) writes, "To live is to be recorded and retrieved, effortlessly" (p. 36). Technology can aid in the construction of more open and diverse identities that do help to promote new outlets of activism often in the form of social movements; however, these same technological tools have helped to establish so many identities and viewpoints that it is hard to sustain a movement's momentum once the unifying element of occupying a shared space is no longer possible.

Shared memory gives social movements a sense of reference, but different memories or accounts of a particular movement can disrupt the notions of a collective identity once the occupation phase subsides. If one were to look at the conditions that often serve as the catalyst for many movements, it is hard to say that these events "were not expected" (Castells, 2012). A major critique of new technology's influence on society posits that the logics of a technological based society "suppresses us from history" and that those in power are able to continue to exert control through "anti-historical language[10]"(Marcuse, 1964). If we are cut off from historical understandings and social movements are viewed as solitary or spontaneous events, it becomes difficult to comprehend why social movements occur, especially for the members of oppressed groups for whom the stakes are more meaningful. The nature of resistance is defined by the struggles of a particular time. Resistance can also be viewed as an act in "dialectic tension with history" in the sense that the movement itself is meant to change preexisting institutions (Wolfson, 2014). Fritsch (2005), exploring Marxist thought through the perspective of Benjamin and Derrida argues that memories that are tied to political promises are often "one-sided." Analyzing Marx, Fritsch writes that Marx "construes the relationship between a memory of the victims of capitalism's beginnings and the promise for liberation from it, a relationship most often governed by the idea of immanent laws of progress" (p. 14). Benjamin in turn was weary of how the past is "constructed" and warned against looking at the future from a linear perspective of constant progress (Benjamin, 1968; Fritsch, 2005). When memories are simply evoked and not evaluated, there is a potential to disregard the origins of systematic dissatisfaction (Benjamin, 1968; Vivian, 2010; Haskins, 2015). If these issues are not discussed

[10]For more on the negative influences of technology on society see the writings of Adorno, Horkheimer, and other Frankfurt School theorists.

or reflected upon in a timely manner because of an overabundance of information or viewpoints, it may be too late and unwanted social conditions will continue.

Amongst those who have experienced injustice, there exists a greater desire to preserve the memory of these wrongdoings. Zelizer (998) refers to memory as a "form of representation," a concept closely aligned with the evolution of identity construction often associated with social movements. Memory can also be an important identity marker as it too is adaptive. However, given the plasticity of memory, narratives of remembrance can just as easily reinforce the status quo as they can help to strengthen the identities of disenfranchised groups. The inclination to "never forget" can "breed ignorance about, or sponsor distortions of, the past" (Vivian, 2010, p. 63). Public commemorations of events often lead to "public forgetting" as these narratives become universally recognized accounts negating alternative perspectives. When we memorialize events like 9/11 or the holocaust, we "derive models for judgment and action" as a way to make sense of a complex event or situation. Forgetting is often seen as a negative, but forgetting certain memories or redefining new locations of memory may actually be beneficial to social movement causes. Sometimes forgetting allows us to begin again and to create new memories and power structures (Vivian, 2010).

An obsession with being or announcing "the first" also seems to permeate the discourses surrounding the role technology plays in social movements. The movements of the 1960s were relevant because these were the first protests to be aired on television, mobile technologies changed the fabric of social unrest during the 1998 Battle of Seattle. The conversation that surrounds "revolutionary" technologies utilized during social movements will continue. Yet at the same time, these first accounts are also "tainted by the aura of past events" (Zelizer, 1998). Emphasizing technology's newness does not wash it clean of the sins of its technological

predecessors. For every technological enthusiast, there is someone who views these new technologies with skepticism based on a preconceived historical understanding. To reiterate Marvin's (1988) point of view, what is "new" is often just a combination of the novel and the old. Even cultural memory gets caught up in redefining the old as something innovative. Rituals, images, buildings, and monuments are constantly reinterpreting the past to fit the constantly changing interests and needs of society. The recycling of these cultural memories can help to "sustain group identity and continuing political resistance" (Matten, 2011). With the cyclical nature of cultural memory, what was once considered old can always be seen as something new to the next generation.

Benjamin (2008), unlike many of his counterparts in the Frankfurt School, was more open to the merits of technological progress. In an "age of mechanical reproduction," an audiences' ability to participate in the construction of meaning offers new perspectives that encourage a more democratic way of thinking. Benjamin's theory as it relates to digital technology, like the production of memes among other forms of expression, meets the social movement world half-way by offering *lieux de mémoire* that are not fixed and easily accessible and pliable (but of course with all of the problems that this might create as well) as opposed to fixed rituals and monuments as per Nora's (1996) view. The pliability of these locations of memory does offer activists more autonomy in constructing their own narrative, but as such, makes it more difficult to disseminate a sustainable account of a given event. It is this ambiguity that makes memory work and the commemoration of social movements a challenge for scholars, archivists, activists, among others, who are interested in the preservation of social movement memory.

The interest in technology and activism will continue to be of great interest as new apparatuses and platforms are developed. Digital technology was a decisive element that contributed to the scale and attention garnered during the Umbrella Movement. Although it is important to understand how technology influenced a social movement as the movement is occurring, understanding how technology helps to preserve locations of memory or even becomes a location itself is also an important consideration. Social movements are not singular or isolated events and while each movement possesses its own characteristics, there is something universal about the desire to change oppressive conditions. In some ways, technology has changed the way we remember social movements as our conception of archives has been radically altered by the influx of digital media. In others, digital media has done little to alter these power dynamics, which allow certain entities to control how national and regional memories are constructed. As Carey (1989) has stated, to move beyond technological determinist perspectives, it is important to see technology as a tool and not an anthropomorphized entity that is granted more power than it deserves. In this sense, Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement is the ideal location to study the relationship between social movements, technology, and memory. The narrative surrounding most of today's social movements immediately focuses on what technologies were used and most discussions of Hong Kong rush into describing the territory's relationship to the Mainland. Yet both seem to be in need of a new perspective. "To write a genuine history of Hong Kong, […], the new history must be written from the local's perspective taking into account their roles in transforming Hong Kong from a fishing village into an international financial center in the age of global capitalism" (Tze-ki, 2011, p. 160). Like this new history written by those who should have the power to

define their own Hong Kong, we need to look at how those who participate in social movements remember these events in ways that continue to promote notions of change.

Methodology

A case study is an ideal methodology for those seeking to understand the "how" and "why" of certain occurrences (Kumanyika, 2013). In this circumstance, the present study seeks to ask how technology transforms and preserves social movement memories and why this could be significant with regards to future democratic change. In addition to providing answers to these two questions, a case study also provides a level of context that helps to situate an event within the larger scope of a distinct field or body of literature. Given the various arguments associated with technology and social movements across disciplines, a case study also provides a more impartial account that can be more easily used as a foundation for future studies. "Case study methods can be regarded as a methodological middle ground between positivists and constructivists" (Kacowicz, 2007, p. 107). I chose to study Hong Kong based on my background in Asian studies and communications. As my background was already interdisciplinary in nature, it was important to apply a methodological framework that would speak to multiple fields.

In order to answer the "how" and "why" question proposed by the initial case study, a number of methodological tools helped triangulate the procedures implemented for this inquiry. It was important to explore both online and physical communities. Boellstorff, Nardi, and Pearce (2012) acknowledge the importance of confirming data with information gathered through the use of journalistic and online forums. The materials that are collected and produced online are important artifacts that are widely circulated among different communities and eventually become a part of one's everyday experience. Not only do these documents help give

meaning to the lives of those living in a community, they also provide a foundation for a particular research topic (Wilson, 2006). In-person interviews, an exploration of Facebook content, and a consideration of the spaces and cultural aspects of exploring an international territory, were essential elements in the pursuit of answering the question of how technology influences the way individuals remember a movement and how this memory then influences a communities' ability to move forward and create change.

To collect personal interviews and recollections, I visited Hong Kong twice after the Umbrella Movement occupation dissolved in December of 2014. My first visited lasted a little over a week in August of 2015; almost a year after the occupation initially began. The second trip to Hong Kong spanned over two weeks in May of 2016. In addition to conducting interviews with various participants, the purpose of these trips was to get a sense of the city's atmosphere after the movement. Being in the city itself helped to explain many of the how and why elements of my initial inquiry. Abbas (1997) refers to Hong Kong as a "culture in a space of disappearance." Hong Kong is a place that is often seen as a corporate or transient space; however, given the emotion and collectivity of the Umbrella Movement, it was clear that there were some who saw the island as their home, steeped in memory, and protested to maintain a sense of freedom and belongingness. Walking the streets of Hong Kong during both of these visits, all traces of the occupation had been erased. People were going about their daily activities. On occasion, you would round a street corner to see a yellow umbrella or universal suffrage banner posted on a door, but the mood of the city seemed to shout "business as usual." As will be discussed in further chapters, there seemed to be two different environments associated with the movement's past. The physical environments, which had been so integral to the initial movement, were devoid of memory of the event, returning to their corporate sanitized

urban space. Hong Kong's urban landscape has essentially been one where the old is erased by the corporate new. Yet memories of the movement still lingered on the cell phones and social media posts of many Hong Kong residents. I was amazed by how many individuals would show me the pictures they had taken during the movement or some of the Whatsapp feeds from the days of occupation. It was this experience during my first visit to Hong Kong that helped to conceptualize the role of memory in the wake of social protest occupations.

Finally, this case study will highlight the way that rhetoric, and rhetorics of memory, work within this particular social movement. Hass (2012) contends that place matters in her work exploring the pedagogical implications of the intersection of race, rhetoric and technology. As rhetoric is viewed as the "negotiation of cultural information," history, socio-economic conditions, political atmospheres, and other elements associated with a specific region, become relevant aspects in the consideration of how technology may be influencing memory. Rhetoric is meant to persuade and helps to employ civic discourse (Haas, 2012). Throughout this case study it was important to consider the rhetorical implications of occupying particular spaces both online and offline in addition to the role technologies like Facebook had in preserving memories that would be utilized in the form of civic participation as individuals moved forward.

"Asia as Method"

Along with analyzing the rhetorical negotiations associated with case studies and their relationship to place, the exploration of an international location needed its own methodological consideration. An intermediary methodological approach is pertinent with regards to international research. As communications, regional studies, and international relations tend to be interdisciplinary fields, the importance of methodological "synergies" are necessary in order to find common ground across these various areas of study (Breninger & Kaltenbacher, 2012).

Chen (2010), in his book *Asia as Method*, outlines many of the implications and concerns associated with conducting research in foreign countries that may contrast with Western perspectives. The nature of nationalism plays a large role in identity politics, and as such, has methodological implications, as Chen describes:

> My primary concern is with the social world, and I engage with academic discourse only when this kind of explanatory machinery is necessary to understand real conditions. As a result, the object of dialogue often emerges after the analysis. I see this mode of operation as continuing one strand of Lu Xun's critical tradition. There is no desire to formulate theoretical concepts, which are applicable to all events and in all contexts. The point is to generate historically grounded explanations so that specific interventions can be waged more effectively (Chen, 2010, p. xi).

As this project attempts to highlight how memory impacts the democratic process after a social movement, specifically in the context of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement, it is important to continually engage with the discourses associated with the movement in order to achieve a "historically grounded explanation" that could help to further the democratic process. Therefore, the particularity of the Asian context must serve as a methodological frame.

As such, it was especially important not to "other" Hong Kong in the process of conducting research. The territory straddles the worlds of modern and traditional, East and West, thus making it easy to fall into the trap of essentializing a region based on these dichotomies. Chen (2010) believes that to avoid such measures, it is essential to "not only understand different parts of Asia but also to enable a renewed understanding of the self" (p.

254). As researchers, we need to move beyond the common "understandings" of nationality or cultural norms in order to create a more conscientious view of a more interconnected world. Hong Kong is a notable place in that it has been plagued by dichotomous definitions, but it is also the ideal place to study social movements and memory as one attempts to move beyond these common misconceptions.

In-Depth Interviews

Denzin and Lincoln, (2005) claim that qualitative research aims to "make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring them" (p.3). As the current study attempts to understand how memory plays a role in the maintenance of social movements after the action abates, it became necessary to conduct interviews with the individuals associated with the phenomenon explored by the case study. It was these individual accounts and retellings that made the topic of study a vibrant subject of interest.

I interviewed approximately fifty individuals over the course of my visits to Hong Kong from members of the student group "Scholarism," who emerged as the next generation of political activists, to politicians and college professors. Participants were from a variety of generations, as some were still finishing their university education while others were retired schoolteachers. This study was pre-approved by the IRB, and for the purposes of anonymity, I will refer to those interviewed as "participant" or by their occupation if it is relevant to the given topic.[11]

Given the importance of establishing the role collective memory played in the Umbrella Movement, talking to individuals as well as groups helped to capture this notion of "collective." For some participants, discussing their experiences in a group environment made it easier to talk

[11] Occupation and age dynamics will be especially relevant in the third chapter discussing identity and generations. In subsequent chapters these demographic markers are not as relevant to the argument.

about various subjects they may not have felt comfortable telling a stranger. Liamputtong (2011) has said that unfocused group discussion, "may suit people who cannot articulate their thoughts easily and provide collective power to marginalized people." Providing a safe environment where individuals could voice their concerns with regards to Hong Kong's political future was essential. I would often let my contact choose a location where they felt most comfortable and knowing that I was interested in hearing stories about the Umbrella Movement, participants would often ask if they could bring a friend who had also been involved. Unlike the structured approaches that are often implemented by market researchers, the group discussions that took place in Hong Kong were more relaxed. For the most part, discussions were "complementary" where people shared stories and remembered various details in a consolatory manner; however, a discussion between a retired teacher and his former student did become "argumentative" (Liamputtong, 2011). Talking to individuals involved in the movement was necessary in order to get their perspective and move beyond what was remembered by mainstream sources. Considering that this project looks at what happened after the occupation, it was important to get these stories in order to counter the prevailing narrative.

I had a limited amount of time to spend in Hong Kong, and while there are elements of this study that share similar characteristics to an ethnography, it is more appropriate to refer to the interaction I had with participants as in-depth interviews. One element taken from the tradition of ethnography is the idea of flexibility. Boellstrof et al., (2012) note the importance of being able to adapt one's methodological practice to the various situations that may arise during a study. It was common to have to frame questions differently based on what I had observed throughout my fieldwork in addition to navigating the various generational, cultural, and even occupational characteristics of my participants. One of the biggest challenges with regards to

this particular methodology was that of language. Fryer, Mackintosh, Stanley, and Crichton (2012) state that language is an integral tool for conducting in-depth interviews. The information gathered during these sessions becomes your data so it is integral to understand both meaning and context. It is common for researchers to shy away from the challenges of multi-language research because it is difficult to develop a “critical awareness’ in a language that is not your native tongue (Mabel, 2006). While I have a background in Mandarin and Mainland Chinese culture, Hong Kong has its own unique culture and language. Over the course of two years, I learned enough written Cantonese to be able to interpret protest signs, Facebook posts, and online articles. Mandarin and Cantonese are similar in their writing structures, separated by style in the form of traditional verses simplified characters. Most of the interviews were conducted in English, with the exception of a few with pro-Beijing Hongkongers who preferred to speak Mandarin. Given Hong Kong’s colonial history, the majority of the residents, including the individuals I interviewed for this study, have had formal English language training. For a better understanding on the development of the online group Kongish Daily, I spoke with a linguistics professor at a local Hong Kong university, who specializes in trans-languages.

Studying memory is not only integral to the study at hand but is just as relevant when we consider methodology. In *Ethnography as Commentary*, Fabian (2008) discusses the nature of a researcher’s memory. Field notes and interviews are often transcribed after the initial event or discussion. As researchers, when we return to these documents to begin our analysis of the data, these chronicles and recordings are artifacts of the past. In order to recall the event as it was taking place, we must rely on our memories. “As the protocol of a performance or of a communicative exchange, a text’s presence signals the absence of the event it documents; the text may be present, the event is past. Commentary, therefore, is writing in the face of that

tension" (Fabian, 2008, p. 11). This "tension" is often overlooked when we recount the methodological considerations of a particular study. Given that this study does focus on the construction of memory, it seems necessary to acknowledge such matters. While I took careful notes, and recorded many of the interviews I conducted with various participants, my analysis is still based in part of my memory of these past events. Memories, which like those of my participants, are not an exact account of the event as it transpired. There are epistemological considerations when we think about how our memories can impact our way of knowing and producing knowledge. Just as Facebook and data storage advancements in mobile technology helped Hong Kong residents record the events of the Umbrella Movement in 2014, my tape recorder and typed up notes chronicled an event in the past that was evaluated later. A technology's ability to influence how we conceptualize memory is not only the topic of this dissertation but one that should be considered by researchers in general.

While I was cognizant of the limitations of my memory, the use of social technology did help to fulfill the necessity of collecting data in a more traditional sense. Kozinets' (2010) *Netnography* outlines the methodological tools for conducting research in online and physical communities. Many of my participants were initially contacted online via Facebook connections or email through other academic channels. The initial online contact was generally to set up a time and location to meet in-person during my trips to Hong Kong. Kozinets (2010) notes the importance of "one or two central questions" to guide the researcher's investigation of a particular community. I followed many of Kozinets' recommendations during my own in-person interviews using words like "what" and "how" in an attempt to convey an open-ended question and obtain more than a yes-or-no answer. It was my goal to let the participants guide as much of the conversation as possible without being prompted to give an answer based on a leading

question. It was during these face-to-face conversations that I was able to build a relationship with many of the participants, which eventually became essential to the research conducted online.

Social Media/Virtual Worlds

One of the strengths of ethnographic research is that it is able to capture the essence of the everyday. Technological research has a tendency to focus on the bizarre, or rather, what makes virtual worlds different from our own, yet with social media platforms like Facebook, where individuals record the events of their daily lives and post about topics that interest them, it seems necessary to acknowledge what makes these virtual spaces "ordinary" (Boellstrof, et al.,, 2012). It is common to take for granted the everyday quality of these technologies even in the context of social movements. Yet the everyday mentality of social media technology is often ignored in order to focus on issues like addiction or the influence of comments sections. Since many individuals do use Facebook to record their everyday life, it was interesting to look at what many of my participants posted with regards to the Umbrella Movement after the occupation had ended.

As collective memory is constructed based on the shared recollections of a particular group or society, it is essential to see how these memories are shaped within online communities. Do online communities function in the same way as those in the physical realm? Are these virtual communities extensions of real-life communities? Does the process of constructing collective memory change in these online worlds? According to Kozinets (2010) "Online communities form or manifest cultures, the learned beliefs, values and customs that serve to order, guide and direct the behavior of a particular society or group" (p. 12). Technology has advanced in such a way that individuals are just as likely to feel like members of virtual

communities as they are physical. Kozinet (2010) refers to the study of these online environments as "netnography," a form of ethnographic research that takes place online. Just as there are strong and weak ties in the communities that inhabit the physical world, these relationships are also present throughout virtual communities. However, there are some elements associated with "netnography" that are owed special consideration. There is still an element of face-to-face interaction. It is the combination of this interaction with the information obtained online that constitute netnographic research. In addition, while communities do form online, there may be some inherent differences in these groups due to its existence in a virtual environment.

In addition to asking how technology influenced how people remembered the Umbrella movement in-person during my trips to Hong Kong, I also spent a significant amount of time exploring many of these individual's Facebook pages. I limited my primary focus to Facebook as most of the individuals I spoke with had profiles on the site and had also mentioned that Facebook was the most popular social media site in Hong Kong. Many follow-up questions occurred online. I was unable to travel back to the physical community given time and cost constraints, but had developed a good report with many of my participants during my visits that I was able to later contact these individuals online. Most of the participants "friended" me after I had talked to them in-person. During our conversations, while I was present in Hong Kong, many of the individuals I spoke with had welcomed me into their community because they were eager to tell their stories of the movement. My interactions with these individuals on Facebook was similar to those I had in-person.

Virtual worlds are "multi-user in nature" they form diverse communities that grow and evolve overtime. These virtual communities are also part of an individual's identity after they

have logged off (Boellstorff et al., 2012). Fabian (2008) does acknowledge that even though there are elements of the community that may transfer to online environments, the role of digital archives does change the nature of how most researchers conduct studies in today's technologically advanced world. The fact that we can record everything and anything and deposit these "artifacts" online does raise some interesting questions with regards to information overload and accessibility. While this is a methodological consideration, it is also something explored in further detail in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Breakdown

The chapters that follow will explore the role technology has on shaping and preserving memory in ways that has influenced the actions of Hong Kong citizens as they attempt to move beyond the Umbrella Movement. The first half of this project will focus on how technology has been used to express and react to the memories that were constructed around the initial movement. Chapter Two will focus on the role symbols played in maintaining the political identity that was developed during the Umbrella Movement occupation. Diving further into Abbas' (1997) theory on Hong Kong's identity being connected to disappearing space, the first part of the chapter will explore how this theory can be more broadly applied to the spaces associated with the Umbrella Movement. An examination of the re-appropriation of cultural artifacts after the movement will also help to highlight memory's role in preserving many of the elements associated with the 79-day occupation. Memes and films also demonstrate the role media plays in rearticulating many of the movement's memories.

Chapter Three will look specifically at the relationship between memory and identity. In addition to exploring Hong Kong's relationship with the Mainland and its immigrant history, generational differences will also be explored as potential identity markers with relation to this

project. This chapter will also explore how there may be different memories and associations to past movements that influence how particular generations have moved forward since the conclusion of the 2014 occupation. Highlighting how different generations have divergent relationships with technology in addition to engaging with Lui Tai Lok's existing theory regarding the generations of Hong Kong, will be explored in further detail. Another pertinent factor related to ties with Mainland identity is that of language. An analysis of the emergence of Facebook pages like Kongish Daily will be used to discover how technology has influenced identity construction after the Umbrella Movement, preserving specific cultural markers like the Cantonese language.

Moving beyond technology's role in preserving and constructing identity, Chapter Four will focus on media's ability to aid in the reflection process. There seemed to be a drastic mood swing among those who participated in the study from my first Hong Kong visit to my second. Chapter Four will unpack how individuals used technology to reflect upon the strengths and weaknesses of the Umbrella movement and whether or not such reflection, or lack thereof, has been successful in changing the situation that initially sparked the original movement. Many participants acknowledged that there has been a lack of reflection and a growing sense of depression, in addition to a rise in violent action since the 2014 occupation.

The final chapter will explore the differences between professional and amateur documentarians looking at the role digital archives play in articulating the memory of the Umbrella Movement. Given China's increasing influence, Chapter Five will look at two viewpoints with regards to the amount of artwork and information that was preserved in the wake of the occupation. On one hand, the more information that is preserved, the harder it will be for controlling forces to erase. However, on the other hand, the sheer amount of information

and data that was stored in relation to the movement is overwhelming and at times disorganized, allowing certain artifacts that should be remembered to slip through the cracks or to be appropriated by hegemonic forces.

The Umbrella Movement was a defining movement for the people of Hong Kong. Understanding how the movement was initially framed and remember will shed light on how the movement is being used to influence the territory's political action of today in the face of Carrie Lam's recent Chief Executive election win and the growing concern of China's influence.

Chapter 2

Jumping in the Puddles of Meaning: The symbols of Space and the Memory of Memes

As a social movement transitions from occupation to different forms of political action, reflecting and rearticulating common bonds through space, visual symbols, and film is essential to the survival of the political messages articulated during the movement. Halbwachs (1992) saw a connection between memory, perception, and the sense of a shared symbolic meaning. As we are not isolated individuals, the ability to differentiate exterior and interior observations becomes virtually impossible as we interact with external objects and beings. “There are no perceptions that can be called purely exterior, since when a member of a group perceives an object, he gives it a name and arranges it into a specific category. In other words, he conforms to the group’s conventions, which supply his thought as they supply the thought of others” (p. 168). Even within the context of a social movement, dissident ideas, though counter-hegemonic, are still rooted within the larger symbolism of past movements and national cultures. Often, the message of progress expressed during a movement is taken for granted once the occupation ends. Although platforms like Twitter help to spread a simplistic message, it also tends to homogenize the diversity of ideas associated with occupation. The Arab Spring’s “Twitter Revolution” was provocative as it unfolded, but Egypt for example, is currently governed by its second totalitarian regime since activists vacated Tahir Square in 2011. Benjamin (1968), writing during the rise of Nazism in Post WWII Germany, warned against the perils of equating technological development to societal progress. “It recognizes only the progress in the mastery of nature, not the retrogression of society; it already displays the technocratic features later encountered in Fascism” (p. 259). Equating the use of social media and other digital technologies that are used during a social movement to hope and change is not inherently bad, but it can be misguided

when we also fail to understand other implications that arise with technological advancement, especially with regards to social movements. As social movements are being framed by the apparatuses and platforms that are used for activism, technology is becoming one of the symbols of these modern movements. Technology is an important mobilization tool, but is it a symbol powerful enough to sustain a sense of collective identity after occupation? More importantly, can these same technologies sufficiently preserve other social movement symbols like protest art and icons in an online environment once the physical spaces of occupation are evacuated?

Symbols serve as the foundation of collective identities. Just as a flag or national monument serves as an important representation of nationalism, so to do the symbols that come to define certain social movements. The Guy Fawkes mask has made multiple appearances in many recent movements. *Lieux de mémoire* are already in themselves symbols, but Nora (1996) recognizes the special significance of those symbols that are "imposed" and "constructed." For each of these categorizations, the meanings associated with these symbols are generally recognized by multiple groups. National symbols, for example, are recognized just as easily by foreigners as they are by those who live within the country. Imposed symbols are most commonly those that are also claimed by the state, like the Washington Monument or the Great Wall of China. Conversely, constructed symbols have more malleable connotations and are influenced by "the passage of time" or "human effort," thus requiring more interpretation. Symbols, regardless of whether or not they are imposed or constructed, are essential to preserving collective memories and identity. To Nora (1996), "*lieu de mémoire* contribute to the study of symbols" because they "offer a possibility of revelation." We often take for granted how certain symbols are remembered and reconstructed throughout time or by different groups, but understanding the importance of symbolism to people and causes, that need to retain a

collective identity in the face of oppression, is a notion that should not be overlooked by social movement research.

Nora (1996) ends his three-volume series with a discussion of France's national symbols in an attempt to move from the broad to the specific; however—for Hong Kong, which lacks the foundation of national iconography—it made more sense to begin with a focus on symbols in an effort to help identify what it meant to be a Hongkonger. Although Hong Kong does have its own government, the territory has always been subsumed under another nation's sovereignty. The Umbrella Movement was viewed by those who participated as an attempt to gain more independence in their quest to attain universal suffrage. If the people of Hong Kong could elect their own leader, perhaps it would be easier to compose a history that was unique to the territory and not defined by colonial or economic entities. The nature of "imposed" symbols is especially pertinent to Hong Kong in the sense that many of Hong Kong's most well-known symbols were forced upon them like their flag and certain architectural styles (Abbas, 1997; Chu, 2013). Abbas' (1997) describes the complicated tensions between autonomy and dependency that have come to define Hong Kong over the years, referring to this as a "culture of disappearance."

> A culture of disappearance gives us identities to take away our subjectivity, emotions to take away our affectivity, a voice to take away representation. However, and this is the interesting point, such a situation can be turned against itself: the wiping out of identity may not be an entirely negative thing, if *it can be taken far enough*. Not all identities are worth preserving. This is to say that disappearance is not only a threat—it is also an opportunity (Abbas, 1997, p. 14).

The Umbrella movement was framed as an integral moment for Hong Kong and regardless of whether or not certain symbols will be remembered in the context of the occupation, the fact that new symbols and identities were created and reconstructed proved to be a significant step in the territory's claim to an identity of their own. For countries like the United States and France, the national symbols that help to describe our identities as citizens are more or less accepted. In Hong Kong, the sites of memory that helped define the Umbrella Movement may be the beginnings of a new wave of collective memory that will help to define a sense of "self" for the territory, or they may come to reinforce existing ideas promoted by the forces currently in power that have suffocated cultural growth.

Hong Kong's identity has been most commonly defined by its economic standing as a hub for global trade, which may complicate the idea of a "national" symbolism that can help promote cultural identities based on a collective memory. The spaces that activists occupied during the 2014 Umbrella Movement were significant because of their relationship to the city's major economic and political centers. Former Chief Executives from Chee-hwa Tung, who in 1999 unveiled the slogan "Asia's World City" to Donald Tsang, the central figure behind "Donaldization," which attempted to promote Hong Kong as if it were a homogenized "McCity,[12]" have consistently defined Hong Kong through marketed iconography. Hong Kong's "national" symbols have essentially been brands. The Brand Hong Kong campaign was conceptualized prior to the 1997 transition as a way of preventing the territory from "becoming [just] another Chinese city." Unfortunately, as the campaign grew, the attempt to differentiate themselves from Chinese urban centers backfired as the visual brand which was supposed to be a

[12] As previously explained in the introduction, scholars like Chu, 2013, viewed Tsang's political policy more commonly referred to as "Donaldization" as similar to McDonaldization or the mass production of a homogenized product. Regardless of where you go in the world, a BigMac will always be the same.

“blend of East and West” instead became a “cliché” (Chu, 2013). One participant mentioned that when the brand was first developed, the government attempted to display the logo in a prominent location somewhere in Admiralty so that people could see it across the harbor. Most people did not realize the logo was even present amongst the skyline as consumer brands like “Panasonic” were much larger than the BrandHK logo. The logo featured in Figure 2.1 was meant to symbolize the essence of Hong Kong’s identity.

Figure 2.1: *Brand HK logo developed in 2002*[13]

The dragon featured on the right is made up of the characters 香港 (Hong Kong) and a Romanized “HK,” meant to symbolize the cultural “hybridization” of East and West. The blue and green lines symbolize the natural environment of Hong Kong and the orange line is the silhouette of Lion Rock, “a local landmark representing the ‘can-do’ spirit of Hong Kong people.” (BrandHK.gov, 2017; Chu, 2013). During the 2014 Umbrella Movement, a yellow banner with the symbol of an umbrella and the characters “我要真普選” (We want real universal suffrage) hung prominently from Lion Rock. Despite attempts to use certain symbols like Lion Rock to frame Hong Kong as an economically prosperous global city, activists during the

[13] Logo image retrieved from the official BrandHK website: http://www.brandhk.gov.hk/html/en/BrandHongKong/WhatIsBrandHongKong.html

Umbrella Movement were able to reclaim a prominent Hong Kong symbol for their own purposes. “The symbol thus typically has an empirical referent,” writes Oleson (2016), “but one that is over-layered and infused with collectively anchored meanings and values: it integrates the particular and the universal to become a carrier and repository of collective values” (p. 327). The “can-do” symbolism of Lion Rock was used in two different ways to represent Hong Kong and the meaning that will be remembered will be continually reconstructed by various actors.

Many of the symbols associated with Hong Kong have been sites of memory for other cultures, but the Umbrella Movement seemed to be the beginning of a new wave of collective memory based on a symbolism that was articulated by Hongkongers. For the British, Victoria Harbor symbolized the empire’s colonial might and position as a key figure in Asian trade. Other symbols like the Terrace of the Sung Emperor were icons of resistance and the perseverance of Han culture for Mainland immigrants living in Hong Kong (Tze-ki, 2011). At the end of WWII, the terrace was an important location for those who had left the Mainland for various reasons as the site represented a sense of hope in the face of exile and isolation. Mongolians invaded during the Song Dynasty, pushing the emperor and political figures South, eventually landing in Hong Kong. The young emperor and his guard jumped off a cliff to their death instead of falling into the hands of the Mongolian invaders. The terrace was rebuilt and relocated multiple times over the years, but for generations, the stone that commemorated the emperor’s martyrdom was an important site for various rituals and ceremonies related to the resistance of the Southern Song. During the Cold War, the memory of resistance associated with the site became synonymous with “loyalty to the Western Block and the fight against communism.” Eventually the stone was removed and replaced in a new location to make way for the construction of a new airport. The site still interests Mainland Chinese researchers

attempting to rearticulate Hong Kong's past as part of China's history, but for the majority of Hongkongers today, the site has lost significance (Tze-ki, 2011). When asked about the terrace, a participant said that the story was not that significant anymore, it was just about a "guy who jumped off a cliff." For the participant, it was a story "briefly mentioned in history class," but they had never gone to the site or felt an emotional connection to the story and location. Forgetting symbols like the Terrace of the Sung Emperor could signal the development of a cultural memory that represented Hong Kong and not what the territory meant for the British or Chinese.

The symbolism of revolution is significant to the cultural memories of countries like the United States and France that have had time to develop these national memories in ways that have generally promoted democratic ideals;[14] however, the notion of "revolution"—if conceptualized by today's occupation movements—struggles to utilize "revolution" as an essential location of memory[15]. The symbols used to frame the French and American revolution are far removed from our present understanding of the original event, yet they are still memorialized in the rituals and celebrations associated with the end of these revolutions. The Fourth of July and Bastille Day still evoke a sense of nationalism, but are less connected to the emotion of those original movements. "After a century of ritualized celebration, the original necessity, historical significance, and emotional content of those dates and symbols so often elude us that we find it difficult to imagine how effective an instrument the national holiday that France decreed for itself in 1880 once was (Amalvi, 1996, p. 117). These dates are symbolic and

[14] I recognize that Le Pen and Trump's rise to popularity does contradict this statement; however, the democratic experiment and the memories associated with such constructions of national identity have in the past more or less progressed for the betterment of these nations as a whole.

[15] Some Hongkongers do feel connected to the revolutionary memory of Mainland China. Those who did seem to revere Maoist ideas were generally new immigrants and those from the older generation. However, those from the younger generation and more long-term residents dismissed such Mainland values. Cultural, ethnic, and generational divides will be explored in more detail in the following chapter.

still evoke national memories, but given the span of time separating those movements and today, the memory of struggle associated with these events has been forgotten. It is safe to conjure these symbols of revolution because they have had time to become a more sanitized version of revolution safe to those in power. For today's movements, the symbolism associated with events like the Umbrella Movement still carry a sense of raw emotion and those in power fear the potential these symbols may possess. The connections between time and the symbolism of revolution, or even the end product of independence, is especially pertinent to Hongkongers who face the prospects of an unknown 2047. China's "one country, two systems" Hong Kong policy, established by the Sino-British Joint Declaration, granted the territory a "high degree of autonomy" with regards to their economic and legal systems, but only for 50 years (Tatlow, 2016).

The symbolism of time became an important visual element after the 2014 occupation. The Umbrella Movement seemed to reawaken anxieties about an unknown future under Chinese rule. As early as 1994, a countdown clock was placed in Beijing's Tiananmen Square to commemorate the 1997 return of Hong Kong to its rightful place as a Chinese territory (Ren, 2010). Prior to the transition, Oscar Ho, a prominent Hong Kong intellectual said, "time is running out: people in Hong Kong need to find their cultural heritage and to reassure their sense of identity, for in four years' time they might have lost it" (Ren, 2010, p. 60). Hong Kong's culture has always seemed to have an underlying relationship with the symbolism of time and during the visit of Zhang Dejiang, a high-ranking Beijing official, the symbolism of Hong Kong's temporal anxiety was displayed as the 2047 countdown clock on the I.C.C building (Cheung, 2016b). Zelizer (1998) wrote that, "much of our ability to remember depends on images" and "visual memory's texture becomes a facilitator for memory's endurance" (p. 5-6).

We remember these visual displays a countdown clock, a protest banner, and various other images in the form of pictures or films because they "help to stabilize and anchor collective memory's transient and fluctuating nature." In an environment where, time is of special concern, the visual symbols produced during moments of defiance against the Chinese and Hong Kong government, heavily influenced by Beijing, or authoritarian regimes in general, are important because they help to show that people are not satisfied with the status quo. The more these visual symbols are circulated, the harder it is for authoritarian regimes like China to control the narrative of events they deem counterproductive to their power. Given Hong Kong's unknown future, the visual symbols produced during the Umbrella Movement and subsequent events may serve as significant rallying cries for future demonstrations.

The success of social movements depends on maintaining a memory of their foundational movements as a source of inspiration. During the Umbrella movement, there was an energy of hope and promise. Ideas were exchanged and productive discussion seemed to take place. One year after the protest, this atmosphere of positivity was still apparent. However, this hope for a democratic future seemed to dissipate shortly after. Two years after the movement, a sense of depression set in and extreme viewpoints replaced the sense of collectivity previously associated with the occupation. In an atmosphere where it is easy to pursue interaction online and through various other technologies, it is easy to forget the emotions originally connected with the symbols of occupation. As time went on, the umbrella – as a mnemonic icon - was not always seen as a symbol of hope, but rather one that evoked new emotions like anger, despair, and frustration. Regardless of the emotion attached, the umbrella is still a symbol of Hong Kong. Even in France, the symbolism of "Revolution" has been reiterated in multiple ways, but it was always something that represented France (Amalvi, 1996).

In addition to creating new symbolic memories, the Umbrella Movement also repurposed historical symbols that were important sites of memory for the democratic struggles of both Hong Kong and China. The 1989 Tiananmen Square movement has been memorialized each year in a candlelight vigil in Hong Kong on the date of the massacre. The struggle is an important location of memory for Hong Kong because the memorial serves as the only place where "Chinese[16]" individuals can openly remember what happened without fear of being persecuted. Recently, Chinese authorities have evoked the rhetoric used in the wake of the 1989 Tiananmen Movement in an attempt to "tighten its grip on the way history is told" (Nihil sine Xi, 2016). The importance of reclaiming China's historical narrative was deemed necessary after the film *River Elegy* was broadcast on national television in 1988. The documentary depicted China's past in a way that did not support the official record. *River Elegy* sparked a discussion that was credited for helping to fuel the 1989 student protests (Calhoun, 1994; Nihil sine Xi, 2016). Even though the film has been largely forgotten by Mainlanders thanks to official attempts to erase the memory of the film and Tiananmen Square, *River Elegy* is still an important location of memory and shows how important media is to the preservation of certain *lieu de mémoire.* Films like *Yellowing*, a documentary about the Umbrella Movement, and *Ten Years,* about Hong Kong's possible future under Chinese rule, became important symbols because, like *River Elegy*, they frame events that contradict the cultural memory China attempts to control (Cheung, 2016; Yu, 2016). China's history, or rather their "official" version of history, is relevant to the current political situation in Hong Kong regardless of one's ideological stance.

[16] For the majority of this project, I have chosen to make a clear distinction between Hongkongers and Mainland Chinese even though they share the same Han ethnicity and thus the CCP argues are all "Chinese." I used "Chinese" in quotations in this example because older Hongkongers did feel more connected to their Chinese identity during this time as a symbol of solidarity to China's democratic struggle and fear that this struggle may soon befall Hong Kong. More on this generational and ethnic connection will be discussed in Chapter 3.

While conducting field research in 2016, the 50th anniversary of China's Cultural Revolution became a significant topic of discussion in Hong Kong. The story was one of the trending topics listed on my Facebook newsfeed, which is connected to one's geographic location. Many of my participants brought up the significance of this anniversary because it was relevant to their personal and cultural identities as pro-democratic Hongkongers. Yet there was hardly any mention of the historical milestone in the Mainland's media (Phillips, 2016). In addition to media silence on significant historical events, a crackdown on content that questions China's approved historical narrative has become the cornerstone of the CCP's battle against "historical nihilism" (Nihil sine Xi, 2016). If Hong Kong is unable to create an environment where these sites of memory can be freely shared and maintained, China will. If China is able to control how the Umbrella Movement is framed, the movement's meaning and significance could be used as a tool to hinder the possibility of a democratic future. Although it is important for Hong Kong to preserve their own sites of memory in an attempt to define a Hong Kong identity, it is also important to recognize the importance of their connection to China as a space where oppressed memories can be remembered in an open environment.

The symbols associated with the Umbrella Movement became important locations of memory for Hong Kong's democratic struggle, but they seemed to take on a different meaning once the community atmosphere associated with physical space disappeared. Exploring the symbolism of space, the marketization of movement symbols, the dissemination of popular memes and works of art, and how the movement was remembered by films memorializing the event, will help to show how the framing of a movement as it is happening does influence the way the movement is remembered and how these memories subsequently promote or hinder future activism. Understanding how symbols are utilized in the process of redefining identity

after mass occupations will help lay the foundation for subsequent chapters focusing on cultural and generational identity and the period of reflection that comes after occupation. We cannot assume that the symbols promoted during a social movement will be remembered in the same context once the occupation has ended. These symbols help to fuel activist mentalities during the movement; however, it is unclear how these symbols will serve as *lieux de mémoire* that promote democratic action and solidarity once embodied by the emotionally charged atmosphere of the initial movement.

The Symbolism of Space

Hong Kong is itself a unique area. The island territory, which comprises more sea than land area has a precarious relationship with available space. Young (2005) notes the accuracy in the common cliché: "Hong Kong is a city of contrasts." Hong Kong is an urban metropolis, but mountains and lush vegetation surround the city, a fact not lost on the creators of the BrandHK logo depicted in Figure 2.1. There is no suburbia, but there is fertile farmland in the New Territories. Hong Kong in many respects is a self-contained ecosystem, where skyscrapers and nature co-exist, at least for the time being. Hong Kong's tourist and transient populations often ignore the territory's natural beauty as Hong Kong is more often than not portrayed as an urban playground and consumer's paradise. During the Umbrella Movement, the significance of space—and who and what occupied it—was widely discussed (Lee, 2015; Tang, 2015; Lee & Chan, 2016). Corporate and public spaces were transformed into open-air galleries and temporary habitats. Instead of being symbols of law and order associated with the central government's power and planning, busy streets, public parks, and restrooms became urban communes that developed their own set of rules. The appropriation of space was an important strategy for the protesters. Yet to walk the streets today, it is difficult to tell what these areas of

capitalist expansion must have looked like during the protest. Very few visual reminders of the Umbrella Movement's impact remain in the spaces that were once occupied by protesters for 79-days in 2014.

The symbolism associated with space has important cultural meaning at a moment when Hong Kong's identity is in flux. In Hong Kong, space has rapidly changed in the quest for economic prosperity, and many significant cultural symbols have been lost, symbols relevant to the territory's connection with the Mainland and also their colonial past (Carroll, 2007; Lee, 2008; Chu, 2013). Abbas (1997) writes, "if the situation I have been describing can be called decadent, it is decadent not in the sense of decline but in the sense of one-dimensional development in a closed field. It is such decadence that has made it difficult to recognize the existence of a Hong Kong culture" (p. 5). As the cultural symbolism that once defined Hong Kong became replaced with corporate logos and Hong Kong became branded as "Asia's World City"—a bastion of capitalism managed by Beijing and Hong Kong elites—the cultural relationship to space seemed to disappear, and with it Hong Kong's sense of itself as a self-determining space. Museums that attempted to preserve these "uniquely Hong Kong" spaces were appropriated by the Mainland's attempt to redefine a history that was more conducive to "Chinese" roots than the reality of what life was like in the territory (Ren, 2010). Most of the participants I spoke with had never gone to these museums and walking around *The Hong Kong Museum of History,* it was evident that most of those who were perusing the various exhibits were Western tourists or individuals from the Mainland who were taking a break from shopping.[17] Tourist brands and the territory's embrace of capitalism became associated with a democratic system that existed in a reality that supported the interests of the Mainland and

[17] *The Hong Kong Museum of History* actually had a designated space where patrons could put their "shopping suitcases" while they walked around the museum.

corporate entities. The Mainland's attempt to synthesize Hong Kong's history through museum displays that supported the Mainland's narrative of Hong Kong's progress was inaccessible to the territory's natives (Abbas, 1997; Chu, 2013). On the surface, Hong Kong was a democratic and economically prosperous urban environment, but below lurked dissatisfaction with a history that has been manipulated to support the power of foreign interests and a political system that could barely sustain democratic ideals under the hybrid system established in 1997. The symbolic gesture of occupying public space during the Umbrella Movement was an attempt to reclaim a sense of place that represented Hong Kong and not outside entities.

While Abbas (1997) has claimed that Hong Kong's identity is disappearing as corporate forces shape the spaces and skyline of Hong Kong, an artist who has spent a considerable amount of time photographing the distinct spaces of the territory, saw the relationship between identity and space differently. He claimed that Hong Kong people, "having to cope with a unique urban geography see a promise of convenience and personal independence in architecture that to Westerners evoke deadening utility and impersonality" (Baker, 2005, p. 9). The artist stressed how the private and public are understood by Hongkongers, believing that individuality in public is the result of a lack of domestic privacy. Space is important to the identity of Hong Kong and while it is easy to define the territory's spatial identity as corporate (Abbas, 1997), it is also possible to see the creativity and individuality of Hong Kong's "residential" areas. The Umbrella Movement was able to tap into this more "democratic" conception of space during the occupation. Given the blurring of public and private space in Hong Kong due to the lack of expandable area, these ambiguous locations were symbolic incubators during the movement and have seen temporary resurgences of political action since 2014.

The relationship between space, politics, and identity inhabit the same plane of existence and are tied up in the everyday. Inhabiting a space, and feeling a sense of belonging to it, also has political significance. "This dialectical movement permeates the everyday. It gives it life. The everyday is the space in which the dialectical movement advance or comes to a halt, in the unpredictable blend of opaqueness and transparency" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 10). Living one's everyday life in accordance with the use of a designed space, moving in and through them, is conforming to the space as designed, thus occupying a public square is a form of resistance. The occupation of space creates community and symbolic meaning, while also creating a space for deliberation. Political institutions and corporate commerce generally dominate these spaces; therefore, the occupation of these areas becomes a political act in the sense that occupiers are able to redefine the meaning of public space. By establishing an alternative meaning for these spaces, the activists involved in a social movement are able to construct a meaning representative of their own identity and thus challenge existing power structures (Castells, 2012; Gerbaudo, 2012). Unfortunately, once the movement dies down, these spaces often return to the emblem of the status quo, so it is up to the participants to keep the memory of the alternative use of space alive.

Although I was not in Hong Kong during the actual occupation, I had seen countless pictures of city streets full of individuals who wanted something different for Hong Kong. During both of my trips to Hong Kong, this vision of solidarity seemed to be erased with few exceptions. One photographer actually closed his store to show me pictures he had taken during the movement for fear that someone would walk in and see he had these images. Although China did not resort to violence to end the occupation, a fear associated with Chinese control and the memory of the Tiananmen Square massacre lingered for many older individuals who had

been involved in the movement. Multiple individuals shared photos with me because I had asked about the movement, but younger individuals said that even though they have these pictures and they had posted many of them to Facebook and WhatsApp, few actually revisited these images after the movement ended. The public spaces that were once occupied were now the sites of new construction projects and many Western businesses from Ruth Anne's Steakhouse to an Audie dealership. It was hard to imagine what these spaces were like throughout the occupation. Glimpses of umbrella posters and yellow universal suffrage banners could be seen on building doors on the outskirts of the city near universities, but the more densely populated urban centers of Hong Kong had been wiped clean. However, the images of the movement and these occupied spaces, while not currently influential, were still significant sites of memory that could be recalled easily by scrolling through a phone or Facebook page.

Space provides meaning and a location to gather; identity creates self-realization, personal satisfaction, and a sense of belonging—elements that are integral to the success of creating a communicative aura that leads to an effective movement. Establishing a collective identity around the movement helps to create a sense of attachment to the issues at hand, while also connecting with those who have similar feelings towards a cause (Polleta & Jasper, 2001; Gamson, 1992). Melucci (1996) as quoted in Carty (2011) "defines collective identity as an interactive shared process that links individuals or groups to a social movement through sustained interaction. It is constructed and continually negotiated and provides a shared cognitive worldview" (p. 13). But identity, like memory, is not a static concept and sustaining a sense of collectivity outside of the occupied space can be difficult ongoing work. Similar to that of space, identity and symbolism share many of the same characteristics with regards to negotiating meaning and creating an encompassing environment. Urban spaces are generally

carefully constructed so particular classes and ethnic groups do not interact. However, during times of mass mobilization, these arbitrary boundaries collapse and a more diverse collective identity, rallied behind a cause, can potentially emerge (Gerbaudo, 2012). Collective identity forged through a moment of occupation, where space is inhabited for counterhegemonic purposes, allows space to become meaningful for the purposes of resistance. The importance of establishing a space of resistance was one of the primary catalysts that started the initial occupation in 2014. As such, it becomes an important memory symbol through which to sustain the movement.

Many of the participants I spoke with alluded to the significance of Tamar Park.[18] The park, public property, was a significant place to protest due to its proximity to central government offices. One participant even referred to the park as the "heart of Hong Kong." In an attempt to gain more attention as government officials turned a blind eye to protests occurring in the park, Joshua Wong, and other members of the student group Scholarism, attempted to enter government buildings in an effort to start their occupation campaign. The need to establish a strong relationship with the protest space escalated when a driveway that was open to the public was shut down and became barricaded by high walls. Protesters felt that this space should be open to the public as a venue for public discourse. Eventually police sprayed the young protesters with teargas and images of the hostility were shared online, fueling the growing momentum of what would become a 79-day occupation of multiple public spaces throughout Hong Kong.

[18] Tamar park is located in Admirality nestled among Hong Kong's Central Government offices, the Legislative Council Building and the Office of the Chief Executive. The central location of these political institutions was the result of a campaign initiated by former Chief Executive Donald Tsang.

Each of the three primary occupation spaces were said to have had their own unique identities. A Hong Kong graduate student said that Admirality was comprised of middle and upper class individuals, whereas Mong Kok was more solemn and grassroots. He felt that the protest environment in Mong Kok was more peaceful because of the location of various temples throughout the area. Other participants mentioned that Causeway Bay's occupation was more innocent because it was mainly comprised of teachers who had transformed the area into a kindergarten classroom-like environment. Other participants believed that Admirality was the most peaceful and artistic and Mong Kok and Causeway Bay were said to be more prone to aggressive altercations. The one common thread spoken among all of the participants interviewed was the idea that individual protest spaces did have their own culture. Moreover, they were all conceived as spaces with a democratic purpose and maintained as such in memory. The international press, following as an echo of the BrandHK campaign—which promoted a homogenized and marketable identity—did not understand the particular cultures of the individual protest spaces. The movement was generally depicted as a cohesive movement ignoring the particularity of a diverse city with neighborhood characteristics. Urban environments tend to stand on their own as evidenced by numerous city branding campaigns.[19] However, in an attempt to brand themselves as different, many cities hide the fact that their public images are carefully constructed in the same way that commercial products try to present themselves to potential consumers. By homogenizing cultural identities in an attempt to create a simple brand, the complexities of urban culture are watered down to simplistic tourist slogans and symbols (Aronczyk, 2013). These simplified symbols have the potential to become "imposed" *lieux de mémoire*, which may in time slip from a critical gaze, thus losing their

[19] Nations have even begun branding campaigns in an attempt to implement soft power tactics to promote tourism and generate more capital (Aroncczyk, 2013).

capacity to serve as locations of collective memory with the potential to inform identities based on the principle of resistance (Nora, 1996). In time, it will not matter that individuals disagreed with regards to the atmosphere at the various protest sites. What will be important is a remembrance that each space did possess a distinct character that represented Hong Kong's diversity while demonstrating that individuals with varying backgrounds and cultures can peacefully inhabit the same space.

Understanding the importance of spatial symbolism is difficult because no standard meaning exists. Speaking about the significance of Tiananmen Square in China, Wu (1991) wrote, "the Square partakes every event and consequently changes its meaning […]. As historical memory itself, the square is renewed and enriched by ongoing events while at the same time encompassing them" (p. 85). These spaces imbued with memory can be either "cold" and unofficial or "sanctuaries" for the faithful. Wu (1991) likens these spaces to family graveyards where individuals go to "refresh their memories of previous struggles and sacrifices" (p. 107). Without a specific monument, it was easy for corporate and political actors to reclaim these spaces and attempt to wipe the memory of occupation. Figure 2.2 was taken by one of the

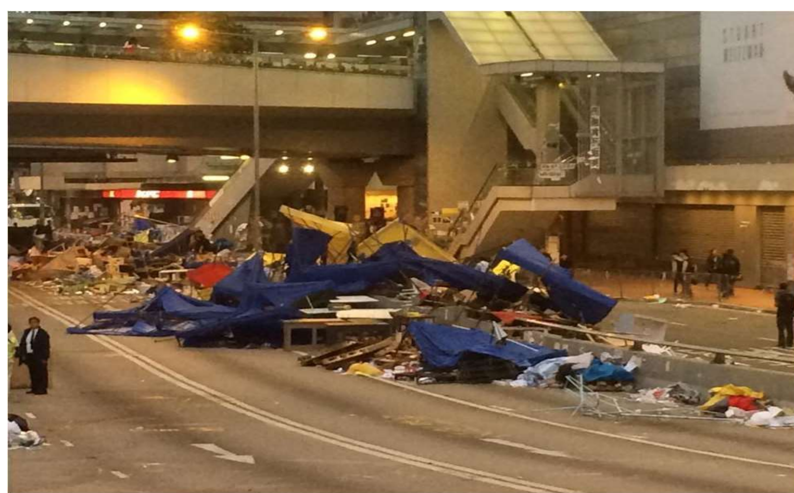

Figure 2.2: *Rubble from cleared occupation site shared by a participant.*

participants the day after the occupation ended. In the rubble are the makeshift shelters protesters inhabited, the artwork and food stalls that sustained spirt and body throughout the 79-day occupation. The clearing of the space was an act of erasure from the counterhegemonic occupation, an act of forgetting imposed by those who wanted to reclaim their symbolic power of these sites in an effort to return to the status quo. Yet despite the clearing of these spaces, a ritualistic aura remained. To the average bystander, it seemed as if all traces of the movement had been cleared, but even without a visible monument, these spaces were tied to protest movements from the past and continued to be the sites for smaller protests after the Umbrella Movement ended.

The same spaces, when reoccupied, become memories of continuity and of the ongoing resistance to corporate or state control. Occupation of space becomes a ritual through which to communicate a shared commitment. Two years after the Umbrella Movement, the Fishball riots occurred in Mong Kok after a group of "Localists" escalated a peaceful demonstration meant to protect local food hawkers. Local reporters speculated that the riots represented more than the hawkers' rights, expressing grievances that had been building since the 2014 movement ended (Lau, Ngo, Lau, Kao & Sun, 2016). Each Lunar New Year, food vendors would sell traditional snacks and gifts in Mong Kok until recently when authorities decided to crack down on unlicensed vendors despite the tradition. Like the New Year ritual, there appears to be a ritualistic call to protest in Mong Kok. Given the more pedestrian nature and narrow streets of the area, Mong Kok has always been a place for individuals to gather. In 1966, after a protestor was arrested for going on a hunger strike at the Star Ferry Terminal, sympathizers gathered in Mong Kok and Tsim Sha Tsui to show support (Carroll, 2007). Space occupation takes on a ritualistic form and these ritual communicative acts are part of the collective memory of a

diverse people. The individuals protesting in 1966 supported Chinese Communism, while those gathered in 2014 and 2016 were against the Mainland's communist influence. Corporations and political entities will continue to try to police and control the meaning of these public spaces that people move through in their everyday life, but there is a memory of demonstrating that cannot be erased regardless of the ideological foundations of the activists involved.

Space is also frequently occupied by the forces of the state in a display of state power, moments that also figure powerfully in the collective memory of a group of people. During Zhang Dejiang's visit to the territory in May of 2016, Hong Kong authorities took precautions to secure the areas where protesters commonly gathered. Protests were confined to a small area far from anywhere the Beijing official would be visiting. Tourists in these controlled areas, unaware

Figure 2.3: *Images of the police barricades set up for Zhang Dejiang's May 2016 visit*

of the current political situation, were actually scared off by the appearance of a highly visible police force. Figure 2.3 shows how space was controlled during this time and how the memory of the 2014 occupation actually backfired for the Hong Kong and Chinese officials who were accused of being overprepared. Returning to the artist's thoughts on the nature of spatial meaning in Hong Kong, citizens were still able to manipulate the symbolism of these controlled spaces to make a political statement. Yellow "I want real universal suffrage" posters were hung

from apartment building windows that faced government buildings where Zhang would be visiting. Turning private dwellings into spaces for public display highlighted Hong Kong's distinct relationship with public and private spaces. Protesters also thwarted police attempts to restrict access to Lion Rock, where another yellow banner was hung during the 2014 movement. Late in the evening prior to Zhang's visit, protesters managed to hang a banner from the iconic cliff face, despite increased security, reclaiming a space that had been significant during the original movement. The memory of the everyday disruption associated with the occupied spaces of the Umbrella Movement was enough to prompt a panic amongst those who wished to depict Hong Kong as a submissive Chinese territory during Zhang's visit. In an attempt to erase the significance of the occupied spaces, police wound up making them more noticeable, failing to erase the memory of the movement.

Corporate spaces and political entities may have reclaimed a sense of control over many of the public areas around Hong Kong, but there is still a counter-cultural symbolic memory associated with these spaces. The memories of these public areas are easily conjured as new political conflicts arise. As Wu (1991) claims, "memory, though invisible and hidden, bridges separated events into a continuous process" (p. 107). The memory of the Umbrella Movement still lingered in the spaces that were occupied even if it was not always visually present. Such was the case with police control during Zhang's visit and the smaller protests in many of the same areas where demonstrations of the past occurred. What originally prompted the mass occupation in 2014 was the spread of images of police teargassing students that had been disseminated online. Another picture that was widely circulated online was the yellow "we want real universal suffrage" banner hanging from Lion Rock.

Lion Rock: Connecting Media and Physical Space

Lion Rock's position as a prominent location of memory is a noteworthy example of media's ability to help preserve a sense of collective identity. The cliff-face has always been a significant cultural icon for Hongkongers, but in the period following the Umbrella movement, the landmark has served as a vital symbol central to a Hong Kong identity defined by those who live there. Lion Rock can be seen as one passes from Shenzhen in the Mainland to the New Territories. It serves as both a physical and cultural boundary separating Hong Kong and Mainland China. In the early seventies, the rock became the backdrop of the popular television program, 獅子山下: *Below the Lion Rock* (Lee, 2008). The subject matter of the episodes told realistic accounts of the struggles faced by Hong Kong people and helped to create the "can-do" symbolism associated with the landmark. The show has had five resurgences over the years. The first iteration of the show depicted the stories of those living in settlements beneath the Lion Rock in the poorest conditions of the territory. The individuals in these episodes were portrayed as the backbone of Hong Kong's economic expansion, rebuilding the territory after the Japanese occupation in WWII. They struggled, but always persevered with a hopeful attitude.

A series that was meant to be entertaining and a potential government mouthpiece, turned into an outlet that discussed concerns central to the lives of Hongkongers. At first, *Below the Lion Rock,* produced by Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK)[20] was meant to serve as a form of propaganda, disseminating information about government policies in an effort to make the colonial government look more favorable. The show employed different directors to oversee each episode and over time, the creative perspective of the directors' vision phased out the

[20] RTHK, established in the 1970s, is a government funded media outlet. Chinese University of Hong Kong has listed the outlet as one of the most trusted in the territory, but there is some hesitation that this status will be maintained as the Mainland government has begun to influence more economic and media policy in the territory.

propagandized elements. The show's realistic depictions of the daily struggles of a significant subset of Hong Kong's population resonated with audiences (Cheuk, 2008). Episodes covered issues of drug use, nationality, and police corruption. *The Bridge*, an episode that aired in 1978, focused on the government's destruction of a bridge integral to the daily needs of nearby residents. The people demonstrated and altercations with the police became a common theme throughout the episode. Eventually, a journalist reveals bureaucratic oversite that ignored the opinions of the public, thus unveiling a system of endangerment and exploitation. Well-known Hong Kong filmmakers like Ann Hui, used *Below the Lion Rock* as an outlet to discuss issues relevant to the daily lives of Hong Kong residents and Lion Rock itself became a symbol of the issues discussed in the show and accordingly an important location of memory. The show and the landmark are remembered as an important creative and social outlet for Hong Kong society, something that did seem to disappear during the period of the 1997 transition (Abbas, 1997).

Hong Kong's media was instrumental in establishing a collective identity that represented a sense of what it meant to be from the region, a notion that was essential to a space that had always been defined by outside forces. Nora's (1989; 1996) nostalgia for what he describes as "real environments of memory" is not possible in places like Hong Kong that have never experienced this form of memory. For Hong Kong, "democratized" *lieux de mémoire*, are crucial to preserving a sense of a Hong Kong identity in the face of outside forces, like the Mainland, attempting to redefine Hong Kong for their own purposes. The more these locations of memory can be invoked for the purposes of creating a Hong Kong identity, the simpler it will be to conjure these sites as a form of resistance to forces attempting to control the region. Television in Hong Kong during the 1970s when *Below the Lion Rock* was first produced was a space where directors could be experimental and follow creative interests. At the time, film in

Hong Kong was attempting to appeal to a global audience with films like Bruce Lee's *Enter the Dragon* (Cheuk, 2008). Television, however, was a medium that could be used to create stories for those in Hong Kong. Sturken's (1997) conception of "cultural" verses collective memory embodies the importance of *Below Lion Rock*. "I use the term 'cultural memory' to define memory that is shared outside the avenues of formal historical discourse yet is entangled with cultural products and imbued with cultural meaning. […] The self-consciousness with which notions of culture are attached to these objects of memory leads me to use the term "cultural" rather than "collective" (p. 3). *Below Lion Rock* was an important cultural memory that turned the landmark into a central symbol for the residents of Hong Kong. A symbol that embodied the perseverance of the Hong Kong people that has continued to be viewed as a marker of resistance.

Reclaiming the symbolism of the Lion Rock landmark was a significant act of ritualistic resilience during the Umbrella Movement and Zhang Dejiang's visit to the territory two years later. Over the years, the show's theme song has become an "unofficial anthem" that was even sung during the Umbrella Movement. However, with any symbol, its meaning is polysemic and can be appropriated and contained in the act of communication. The BrandHK campaign and various pro-establishment and Beijing leaders have tried to appropriate the symbolism of Lion Rock since the 1970s. In 2002, Hong Kong's financial secretary used the popular theme song from *Below the Lion Rock* to present his budget. Even Zhang attempted to evoke the cultural symbolism expressed in the theme song when he expressed that Hong Kong and China should "set aside our discord, pursue our goals together in pursuit of our dreams" an allusion to the song's lyrics. (Quoted in Wu, 2016)[21]. During Zhang's speech, "he spoke extensively about

[21] Alice Wu is a former associated director of the Asia Pacific Media Network at UCLA. The excerpts used in this section were taken from an opinion piece Wu wrote for the *South China Morning Post* under the tagline, "Enough of the Lion Rock refrain—can Hong Kong and Mainland China move on to actually setting aside their discord? "

independence. He did so by sanctifying localism from secession. That message, too, is clear: your Lion Rock is great, but the rock is ours." (Wu, 2016). Wu (2016) continues by articulating problems with this ritualistic evocation of the Lion Rock's symbolism stating, "we've been stuck playing the same old tune, while our politics has become increasingly tired, and out of tune with the tempo of our time. We're only nostalgic out of desperation." Wu has a point as the continuous use of the symbol by Chinese authorities and pro-establishment politicians does push the "never forget" mentality in a way that favors institutionalized memory, thus promoting public forgetting in a way that encourages political apathy and compliance (Vivian, 2010). However, Wu fails to recognize the importance of Lion Rock as a symbol of perseverance and acknowledge the significance of the "universal suffrage" banner. Even though the picture that accompanied her article featured in Figure 2.4 depicts the yellow banner, she emphasizes the appropriation of the symbol by Mainland authorities, failing to recognize the importance of the activists who reclaimed the space as a site of resistance in a way that ensures the landmark's place as an important cultural memory.

The placement of the banner on Lion Rock was a symbol of dedication and perseverance due to the location's accessibility. When the banner was first hung in 2014 during the occupation, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department had difficulty figuring out how to remove the banner given the "rough" and "jagged face." The group of rock climbers that claimed responsibility for the placement of the banner called themselves "Hong Kong Spidie" in homage to the comic book icon Spiderman (Lo, So, & Tsang, 2014). In a YouTube video released shortly after the banner was displayed, the group said they were "occupying

Lion Rock" because they felt that the Chief Executive C.Y. Leung's comments with regards to open elections only acknowledged the importance of Hong Kong's elite, ignoring the views of those residents less fortunate. "The people fighting for real universal suffrage all over

Figure 2.4: *"We want real universal suffrage" banner hanging from Lion Rock*[22].

Hong Kong have shown great perseverance," claimed the group, "This kind of fighting against injustice, strength in the face of trouble, is the true Lion Rock spirit" (Lion Rock, 2014). Images and memes inspired by the banner were some of the most popular images disseminated and circulated online during the Umbrella Movement. The symbol was such an important component of the movement that The League of Social Democrats hung a similar banner on Beacon Hill, near Lion Rock, prior to Zhang Dejiang's visit. Despite the fact that the original site of the cliff was heavily guarded by police officers at the time, activists still managed to reclaim the rock as a site of Hong Kong's perseverance and determination (Cheng, 2016a). The banners hung at Lion Rock were an example of the connection between physical, mediated,

[22] Photo credit: Felix Wong. Image was retrieved from: http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/1948687/enough-lion-rock-refrain-can-hong-kong-and-mainland-china

and virtual spaces. The League of Social Democrats acknowledged their involvement on Facebook, while the group Hong Kong Spidie utilized YouTube to contextualize the act of hanging the original universal suffrage banner at Lion Rock, capturing the essence of the original television program *Below the Lion Rock* that helped to define part of Hong Kong's cultural memory.

While other landmarks like the Song Terrace have been largely forgotten given the site's inability to remain a relevant cultural symbol, Lion Rock has been a location able to redefine its meaning over the course of regime change and across multiple generations. Given the Rock's physical presence, one is unable to move this location like the tablet marking the terrace, which was seen more as a Mainland symbol than one representing Hong Kong (Tze-ki, 2011). The idea that the terrace has lost importance, while the Lion Rock has remained a significant location of memory, could point to one of the "opportunities" Abbas describes with regards to forgetting certain aspects of Hong Kong's culture. The yellow "We want real universal suffrage" banners that were hung prominently from the Lion Rock during the Umbrella Movement and Zhang's visit demonstrated the importance of this location to the Hong Kong identity as constructed by those who participated in the Umbrella Movement. The prominence of the original show's symbolism has become overly ritualistic, but Wu's (2016) claim that "we're only nostalgic out of desperation" is a bit unfair. The mass dissemination of the memes and images associated with the Lion Rock banner were more popular than the appropriation of state officials. Umbrella Movement activists claimed the space and the symbolism of Lion Rock and made it their own continuing to reinvent the spirit of resistance and perseverance of the symbol to suit the current struggle of Hong Kong's residents living below the Lion Rock.

From Spatial Occupation to Virtual Environments: Transitioning Locations of Memory

The symbolism of Lion Rock can be seen as a great example of how physical and virtual space helped to preserve the memory of the movement. However, other symbols that were integral to the movement's success during occupation were not sustainable locations of memory, failing to bolster the same sense of collective identity experienced in public space or abused by more radicalized groups once the movement ended. Once the occupation concluded, it was hard for activists to maintain the sense of solidarity that was experienced during the occupation of public places. The relationships built during events like the Umbrella Movement are essential as a movement transitions to new forms of political action. The ties built in online and physical environments can produce relevant distinctions that could lead to the success or failure of a movement's future. When viewed as separate entities, online environments are often plagued with weak relationships that hinder the creation of a unified character. Strong collective identities and symbols that bind such solidarity require more than superficial connections. Research shows that social networks tend to maintain weaker ties (Granovetter, 1973; Gladwell, 2010); however, research also claims that weak ties sustained by online social networks can facilitate growth (Carty, 2011). Nonetheless, it is more commonly agreed that the collective identity and symbol systems facilitated by these cyber environments leads to a lack of leadership and organizational structure making it more difficult to sustain a symbolic narrative of an event in such a way that promotes future activism (Wolfson, 2014). Many of the stances and connections that form in online environments already exist "within a particular sociohistorical context (Kang & Chen, 2014). It appears that even though technology can facilitate an initial sense of community and shared identity, collective unity generally emerges in shared physical

spaces and continues to emerge through the production of new meanings and symbols. If the "unified" identities created online during social movements are as strong as some researchers would have us believe, why is it that these collective identities and the symbols that represent the movement seem to whither once people return to their homes and businesses after a movement ends?

The act of exchanging and circulating photos, memes, and stories is crucial to maintaining the collective identity of an event as significant as the Umbrella Movement; unfortunately, this act of sharing does not necessarily maintain the memory of the experiences of occupying public space in an online environment. Pictures of packed city streets and large numbers of activists carrying umbrellas and signs were circulated and shared using social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp.[23] Even though these images, potential locations of memory, were shared, the act of revisiting these images was not guaranteed. One participant mentioned that he rarely went back and looked at old pictures he had posted on Facebook even though he posted frequently. He said he was embarrassed by older images of himself and did not want to relive those "awkward moments." Other participants mentioned that they would go back and look at photos of the movement on occasion, but not in a manner that seemed to preserve a "lived" experience of the occupation. Zelizer (1998) wrote that while the photographs depicting Nazi atrocity helped to preserve the memory of the Holocaust at first, the power these photographs initially had eventually faded. "As the atrocity story moved in time away from the events at its core, it failed to reassign the horror of the past into meaningful lessons for the

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[23] I do not include Twitter in this analysis because it is not overly popular in Hong Kong. The platform was used, but not extensively. In discussing social media use as it related to the Umbrella Movement, very few participants mentioned Twitter. Twitter is not overly popular in areas where the written language is not based on Romanized characters. One-hundred and fifty characters in Cantonese or Mandarin is a lot in comparison to a language like English where one letter equals one character. Therefore, the appeal of the short message delivery system that Twitter thrives on is not as enticing to those who speak and write in these languages.

present, raising questions about the limits of historical experience" (p. 142). Shortly after the Umbrella Movement ended, the images that were shared on social media did seem to preserve the energy and excitement that accompanied the occupation, but like the atrocity photographs of the Holocaust, these images lost their capacity to serve as key locations of memory. Zelizer (1998) notes that in time, people became over-saturated with the "never forget" discourse associated with the photographs that were constantly being published and republished by the popular press. Today's social media platforms are able to saturate these narratives even more, a topic that will be further discussed in Chapter Five with regards to archives in the digital age.

Despite the possibility of over saturation, social media did help preserve and nurture some of the emotional connections established in occupied public spaces online. Individuals still have profile pictures that reference the Umbrella Movement. A participant even believed that the legacy of the Umbrella Movement was, "this social media connection." Hong Kong's public space is usually controlled by corporate and political entities whereas the region's online spaces are still relatively free. One could easily argue that Facebook is also a corporate space, but most of my participants saw the online platform as a venue where they could freely express themselves as opposed to a form of corporate control. Although China blocks sites like Facebook in the Mainland, it is still one of the most popular social media websites in Hong Kong. Technology is a tool wielded by people; McLuhan (1994) believed that technology was an extension of man. Therefore, the technologies individuals use to express themselves in digital spaces can be viewed as an extension of their regular identity. For much of the younger generation, known as digital natives, "real" and digital identities are so intertwined that it is difficult to see them as separate (Palfrey & Gasser, 2010). The Umbrella Movement did become

a major part of people’s social media identity. Figure 2.5, a screengrab of a participants Facebook profile picture, was still displayed two years after the occupation ended.

Figure 2.5: *Facebook profile picture of participant showcasing the connection between the Umbrella Movement symbolism and online identities.*

The individual had not replaced the profile image since October 7, 2014. When the image was first uploaded, it referenced a quote pertinent to the sentiment of the movement at that time: “任暴雨下，志向未倒下: *under heavy rain, ambition did not fall.”* The individual is still an active Facebook user posting frequently, the longevity of the profile picture was not a case of inactivity, the movement was still something this particular user felt was an important representation of her online identity. Certain symbols and emotional connections were able to retain their power as significant locations of memory for movement participants, but in general, the overabundance of all the information shared online seemed to have the opposite effect of preserving remembrances of the movement.

The same symbolism that represented physical spaces during the movement seemed to be plagued by ideological echo chambers. The symbols that could potentially serve as important locations of memory were more easily manipulated and overlooked online. Sturken (1997) stated that Oliver Stone’s film *JFK* distorted our collective understanding of the Kennedy assassination and eventually the film’s narrative became just as much a part of our collective

memory as the event itself. The rise of fake news stories, rampant during the recent U.S. election also demonstrated that such falsities could just as easily become a part of our collective understanding of an event as accurate information. Various accounts of an event get wrapped up in the same narrative of what happened that different groups are able to more easily control what happens next in a way that suits their own needs. Online environments have nurtured nationalistic movements like the one that elected Donald Trump in the United States as well as the separatist or Localists movement gaining popularity in Hong Kong. Online spaces nourish radical ideas, and likeminded individuals encourage these ethnocentric and bigoted notions to thrive. They evoke and abuse memories of the past in ways that are not conducive to preserving open and diverse societies. The same technologies that bring people together for mass occupations also have the ability to bring people together for more radicalized movements that seem to emerge in online spaces in the wake of larger protests.

The echo chambers often associated with online environments do have the ability to subvert certain memories and ignore others creating a narrower perspective of the events that happened. After the Umbrella Movement, more extreme groups, deliberating on plans for future action, discussed the prospects of "throwing urine, igniting fireworks at police and even making Molotov cocktails" (Ng, 2014). Although none of this has actually happened, there have been more violent riots since the end of the occupation. Words do not necessarily lead to action, but if these ideas are being incubated in conjunction with the symbolic memories of the movement in online environments with little to no counter-perspective, the possibility that the memory of the movement gets abused and that such negative comments cold be enacted is a real possibility. The most recent example of social media's bubble effect creating a more polarized society is the recent election of Donald Trump. In a recent article published by *The Guardian,* Claire Wardle,

research director at the Tow Center for Digital Journalism, was quoted as saying, “people have unfriended friends and family members because the style of discourse is so harsh. Facebook stumbled into a news business without systems, editorial frameworks and editorial guidelines, and now it’s trying to course-correct” (Solon, 2016). Many of my participants from Hong Kong shared similar stories with regards to their social media experiences following the Umbrella Movement. Participants who supported the movement would unfriend “friends” who were “blue ribbons,” individuals who supported pro-Beijing policies. They were trying to control their online environment by barring people access from virtual space, thus controlling their own narrative of what happened during the occupation. Not everyone in Hong Kong supported the Umbrella Movement and there were many who opposed the actions of activists for a variety of reasons. To bar those viewpoints from online environments, was to control the frame of what happened in a way that promoted one’s own preexisting worldview.

In addition to radicalized groups, political parties have also tried to use the memory of the movement to promote their policies to constituents in online environments. Political parties that have seemed out of touch with their constituents have used Facebook to try and connect to a more diverse crowd and tap into the politically charged atmosphere sparked by the Umbrella Movement. Following Beijing’s announcement to influence the outcome of recent Legislative Council elections, in an attempt to block the election of pro-separatist candidates, the Civic Party changed their profile picture to black.[24] The black image was meant to be symbolic of the death of Hong Kong’s “one country, two systems” form of governance that China has begun to erode. The pro-separatist politicians that were recently elected, and subsequently barred from office,

[24] The Civic Party is one of the most influential pro-democracy parties in Hong Kong. Even though they did not agree with the actions that resulted in the banishment of some of the pro-separatist candidates, they recognized that Beijing’s exertion of authority regarding the manner undermined Hong Kong’s autonomy. The Facebook profile picture was meant to be viewed as a symbol of solidarity to all pro-democracy causes.

used social media to connect with their base. While this can be seen as another example of catering to specific groups, social media has encouraged a new generation to become more politically involved in Hong Kong. Younger individuals said they would not have joined the Umbrella Movement or become interested in the Umbrella Movement if it had not been for social media. Since the movement ended, many of these individuals have said they have remained politically active in their communities. Young students went door to door in their neighborhoods talking to individuals, trying to get them to vote in the LegCo election and to become more politically active. Virtual spaces provide a great catalyst for massive occupation and it is a combination of virtual and physical space that can actually facilitate the conditions for positive change in the wake of mass occupation. As Leung (2016) notes, "social media can thus allow activists to virtualize the physical 'place frames' by drawing on the common symbolic repertoires found in places to assemble mobilizing frames and harness collective emotions." The collective memory associated with physical spaces can be conjured in the documentation of these events on social media and in time, perhaps, these virtual spaces can be used to facilitate a more constructive democratic discourse.

The relationship between memory and space, both public and online, is ritualistic. The original plan to occupy public places as a form of protest against the decision to block Hongkongers from directly voting for the next chief executive, was organized by veteran pro-democracy activists like Benny Tai (Kaiman, 2014). Pictures of students getting teargassed disseminated online prompted more individuals to come and occupy physical spaces. After the occupation ended, the memories of the event were preserved and in some cases distorted in online environments. The radicalized sentiments that were nurtured in these online environments manifested once again in public spaces when Localists groups incited a riot after

they felt an important cultural icon significant to Hong Kong's identity, local food vendors, was threatened (Moss, 2016). These memories are continually cycled through online environments and public spaces demonstrating how these sites of memory are changed and adapted as they rotate through different groups and spaces, thus indicating the importance of this idea of "movement." Social movement's do not end after occupation and the memories of the movement are just as significant to the future of political causes, like Hong Kong's desire for universal suffrage, as the conditions that prompt occupation.

This is not an Umbrella: The Lasting Influences of the visual and artistic symbols of the Umbrella Movement

Symbols that index a particular space like photography, uses of the color yellow, or the umbrella icon, help to memorialize what happened during the occupation of public space. In 2014, a break with Hong Kong's traditionally business oriented identity seemed to emerge as students, residents, and countless others took to the streets to protest for universal suffrage. During the occupation, when the streets were shut down and tent cities cropped up throughout major urban centers, a new narrative and symbolic system began to represent a Hong Kong different from the status quo. "In a city as crossed as Hong Kong, where policy is often controlled by real-estate developers, the public has never had such unbridled access to roadways and avenues. The proliferation of artworks is in many ways a response to this expression of freedom and expansiveness" (Polloack, 2015). One way that the spirit of the occupation was memorialized was through symbolic creation and exchange. Symbols are exemplary tools to do memory work because they are often mnemonic devices that are frequently repeated during an occupation of public space and subsequently passed along to different people (Nora, 1996; Sturken, 1997). The symbol of the umbrella, for example, not only defined the event, but also

served as an important icon that became an easily recognizable show of solidary and could be employed in a variety of ways. Western mainstream press from *The New York Times* to art magazines and websites, heralded the burgeoning art scene that developed in Hong Kong during the movement to be a step towards democratic progress and creative expression (Sheehan, 2014; Pollack, 2015; Qin, 2016). It was often claimed that the works of art created during the protest, art that often incorporated an umbrella, had the ability to encourage a larger sense of activism, adding vibrancy to the overall politically charged atmosphere associated with the movement.

The identity of a movement is often created during the occupation of public spaces through symbolic gestures and emblems. Visual representations have the ability to influence our attitudes and impact our emotional responses to a particular event. In Tunisia, the use of the country's flag and the singing of the national anthem became a rallying cry for their quest to enact political change. These movements represented a group struggle and the people involved often rally around national symbols as a way to reclaim their identity as a people unified towards bettering their society (Castells, 2012; Wolfson, 2014). Yet beyond the obvious symbols through which the movement "branded" itself and was communicated, there are also symbols that were trafficked as part of the memory work used to sustain the movement. Art as a form of expression is significant. Creative expression encourages a dialogue with dominate tropes perpetuated by authoritative forces. Such creative acts in the form of art, music and poetry help groups mobilize around new symbols thus creating an evolving identity within the movement itself (Wolfson, 2014). Symbols as simple as an umbrella may represent something significant for the various participants involved in the movement. Yet despite these various meanings, the icon itself represents a synecdoche of a unified identity. Many of these artistic artifacts are then recorded and disseminated through social media connecting online and physical identities and spaces. But

questions with regards to the symbols' power remain: are these symbols commanding enough locations that will continue to promote activist activity? Will changing the nature of these symbols by transferring them to a virtual space or marketed good change the symbols' meaning?

The umbrella itself served multiple functions from practical usage to artistic design. In addition to protecting the protesters from pepper spray, umbrellas were also used for their intended function to keep individuals dry as they camped out during the occupation. Umbrellas became shelters in new and creative ways, being sewn together and placed atop barricades and walking bridges. They were also placed in trees and drawn on the streets with chalk. The usual artistic expressions accompanying movements were also present: banners, posters, various cartoons, and songs relating to the umbrella and the movement were found throughout the occupied spaces. The creation of these new symbols and the flourishing of this creative identity occurred organically, an aspect of the movement that inspired many of the participants. The identity created within the protest sites during the Umbrella Movement was not a corporatized identity and the fact that it was mainly driven by individuals not normally associated with the art community, meant that these symbols were more than just icons of artistic expression. These symbols were a new consolidated way to represent the growing dissatisfaction with the current regime and since these symbols became associated with the experience and memory of occupation, their significance is thus tied to the memory work through which the movement sustains itself.

Memories, like materials, can be re-purposed to support the movement. In addition to reclaiming space, many of the art projects created during the occupation utilized discarded materials to create some of the most well-known installations of the occupation. The Umbrella Man, a large sculpture of a man holding a yellow umbrella, was made using discarded planks.

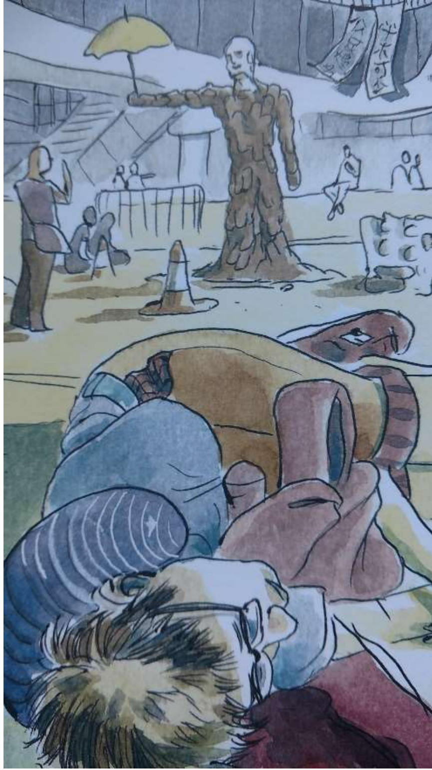

Figure 2.6: *Luis Simoes' piece called Admiralty Shelter depicting the Umbrella Man statue at the top of the illustration*

Pictures of the statue were then disseminated widely and other artists created art that incorporated the figure. Figure 2.6 depicts an illustrator's rendering of the Umbrella Man. The piece was featured in a *CNN* article about the artist's trip around the world and along with other pieces portraying scenes of the movement, were turned into pamphlets handed out around Hong Kong (McKirby, 2014). The symbolism of the Umbrella Man thus became a well-known icon of the movement and the many renditions of the sculpture in photographs and illustrations became important locations of memory. Other famous installations used everyday items to create expansive artistic objects of expression. The Lennon Wall, a collection of thousands of Post-It-Notes brought a sense of color and whimsy to the LegCo Building with its seemingly "grey, harsh, and inhumane surfaces." The Post-It wall, "offered a chance for the public to organically add to a building that is supposed to be for the people" (Young, 2015). These artistic endeavors also repurposed the memories from other global movements. The Umbrella Man was inspired by the 1989 Tiananmen Square Movement's Goddess of Democracy and the Lennon Wall is a living memorial to the democratic struggles of the Czech Republic. Like Tamar Park, the movement created a new symbol system to redefine public spaces appropriated for political means and turned them back to spaces for the people.

The creative atmosphere associated with the Umbrella Movement allowed individuals to redefine their home in an unprecedented way. In a territory controlled by economic structures

and the shadow of Chinese authority lurking across the border, the ability to create a space shrouded in symbolism that was meaningful to Hongkongers came to define the 79-day occupation. The poetic meanings associated with the art created during the movement were able to transcend the more standardized categorization of space and meaning by using metaphorical language. All of the ways of viewing the movement were encompassed in a way that promoted creative expression therefore aiding to further new meanings that at the time, helped to facilitate democratic discussion in a stagnant system (Burke, 1989). The movement and artistic expression was different in the sense that it allowed people to think outside the general confines established by the political and economic institutions that generally controlled the narrative of the territory. One participant, a young professional, expressed his view on the hope brought forth by artistic expression:

> I think the art brought a lot of messages and also a really good way to describe the message. Actually, I think the art kind of propelled the movement. The movement was more than a protest. We were building a new community; we were building our dreams of a community. I remember my Chinese teacher told me that she would always remember this because we expressed our ideals. It wasn't just an ordinary protest with banners. It was more like we're building out dreams here, our community here. So I think the artwork was a part of the idea.

However, this sentiment was not shared by everyone and some felt that the emphasis on the art took away from the movement's message.

> I think Hong Kong people tend to be too artistic about these pro-democracy movements. I think they should be more. They should do something useful rather than being artistic. Instead of posting something on a wall or drawing on the floor—the Mainland government doesn't care about this. I think they should do something more effective than this.

All of these views become part of a greater narrative that frames what happened, which complicates how individuals and activist groups are able to use these recollections as the movement progresses in new directions. The creative atmosphere does help to create new meanings, but it can also be overwhelming to synthesize these views into a coherent message.

Zelizer (1998) believed that the photos taken of the Holocaust actually came to hinder our understanding of atrocity as time passed. "The recycling of photos from the past not only dulls our response to them but potentially undermines the immediacy and depth or our response to contemporary instances of brutality, discounting them as somehow already known to us" (p. 15). In the case of Holocaust photographs, it took years for these images to "dull our response," but with the speed of new communications technologies, the time in which we become numb to the symbols and slogans of powerful events may be happening at a faster pace. "We are the 99%" from the Occupy Wall Street Movement, or the fist and peace signs often portrayed during the Arab Spring are symbols that are often recalled with hallow effort. There are activists who have genuinely continued to fight for the causes established during these mass occupations, but the majority of people seem to recall these images and slogans as part of their personal history, a way to claim they were present for a significant event.[25] The notion of a shared or collective

[25] This idea developed after a discussion with a University professor teaching in Hong Kong with regards to a person's social media presence. She said she noticed that during the movement, many participants would take

understanding of the symbols with regards to memory, or even a particular cause, seems lost. The number of images, memes, and various other visual icons were so expansive that a discussion concerning the impact of these symbols was daunting. Like the use of Holocaust photos to mask modern atrocities, discussions involving the artistic expression of modern social movements impede the important discussions needed during the transition period between occupation and other forms of political action (Zelizer, 1998). The symbols of these movements stood for "complex ideas" and as one moves further from the original context as time passes, it becomes difficult to recall what these symbols originally meant.

As with memory, where the past is sifted through the insistent needs of the present, forgetting the original meaning of some of these symbols may actually be beneficial to the promotion of a more democratic environment. Symbols that remain constant reinforce the status quo and represent a past and present that obviously no longer satisfies a significant number of people. "the more we explicate the meaning of complex ideas, the further our original understanding of topics vital to human well-being passes into oblivion" (Vivian, 2010, p. 27). Forgetting makes way for new and innovative ways of thinking through societal issues. Forgetting does not mean that the past cannot still influence the future; rather, it is a mode of remembering the past (Vivian, 2010). Many of the younger participants did not realize that the Umbrella Man statue was a tribute to the Goddess of Democracy destroyed during the Tiananmen Square protest in 1989 or that the Lennon Wall of the Soviet occupied Czech Republic influenced their sticky note wall. Even though these symbols and their meanings of solidarity may be "forgotten," this does not mean that they are no longer able to influence a new generation of activists. Perhaps forgetting some of these older symbols can leave room for the

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pictures of themselves at the movement to prove they were there. These are personal locations of memory, but the professor said she did not really see this contributing to the occupation's atmosphere of collectivity.

creation of new ideas and forms of political action. In the wake of occupations like those of Occupy Wall Street, the Arab Spring, and the Umbrella Movement it was evident that the energy from the original movement was not sustained once media coverage and the occupation ended. Maybe aspects of these movements need to be forgotten in order to move forward.

Constructive forgetting does not include controlling what memories are preserved based on ideological stances. The poetic meanings often associated with visual icons have a similar influence as the polarized spaces of online environments. The very symbols that can bring individuals together can also divide. One of the most well-known divides during the movement was between the "blue ribbon" and "yellow ribbon" groups. The yellow ribbons supported the Umbrella Movement desiring universal suffrage, while blue ribbon individuals, those from the pro-government camp, believed that Beijing should have a strong presence in Hong Kong. As individuals changed their Facebook profile picture to these symbols there was a lot of "unfriending" from those with opposing viewpoints. These colored ribbons came to represent the dual perspectives and when participants from one group mentioned those from the other, they would say their name with disdain. In polarized environments, those who wish to frame what happened by only using symbols and memories that reinforce their own beliefs, hinder the essence of democratic progress and render the atmosphere of hope that often accompanies these movements as useless. In the period following the Umbrella Movement, the prominence of Hong Kong's economic identity attempted to coopt the symbolism of the movement, which like polarized memories, have the ability to distort how what happened is framed in respects to future action.

Putting a Price Tag on Memory: The Commodification of Social Movement Symbols

When I sat down with a young graduate student in their mid-twenties on August 19, 2015. I noticed that their cell phone cover had an umbrella and a yellow background. After commenting on the case, I was told of the many e-commerce sites where individuals could go to purchase Umbrella Movement themed products. A year after the end of occupation, the movement was being remembered by some as a marketable product. For $10.50 you can own your own yellow "We want universal suffrage" slogan keychain or a laptop sleeve with a yellow umbrella for $27.95.[26] Jhally (2006) states that the advertising industry was established to promote consumption in an attempt to "create a culture in which desire and identity would be fused with commodities" (p. 100). Commodification can preserve the memory of an event, though the bottom line of such conservation measures is based more on the desire to make money than promote the memory of a movement (Haskin, 2015). Like the symbolism surrounding Lion Rock or the various artistic works associated with the occupation phase of the movement, the commodification of the movement's symbols is more complicated than a black and white perspective of memory work and the iconography of a movement.

The participant who had purchased the cell phone case said she did so because it reminded her of the various art projects and goods that were given away during the occupation for free. During the 79-day occupation, participants found various ways to keep themselves occupied including making arts and craft projects that they would often give away to fellow participants. The same participant who had the cell phone case gave me a number of Umbrella Movement themed postcards that were given away for free during the occupation. One artist who has a number of Hong Kong inspired pieces for sale online has produced some prints

[26] Prices taken from products sold on zazzle.com. Similar products could be found on sites like Etsy and other e-commerce sites that allowed independent artists and merchandisers to sell their products.

inspired by the Umbrella Movement. Although these products are not free, they do not appear to be a malicious appropriation of the symbols of the movement, but rather an opportunity for some artists, already interested in Hong Kong, a chance to continue to interpret issues relevant to the region. One participant mentioned that a lot of small boutiques and art galleries also began selling Umbrella Movement themed products. The products sold in these places would benefit the local Hong Kong economy and help preserve the symbolism of the movement. Unfortunately, not everyone who profited from the symbolism of the movement had the same connections to Hong Kong or a desire to preserve the icons created during the occupation. The "We want universal suffrage" keychain found on zazzle.com for $10.95 is not produced in Hong Kong nor sold in local shops. Acrylic Idea Factory, based in Tucson Arizona, made the keychain sold by the e-commerce website. Although these keychains may help to preserve the memory of the movement, they also help to preserve the conditions promoted by the BrandHK campaign and Hong Kong's constructed identity as an a-political capitalistic haven.

In general, the commodification of social movement symbolism always has the potential to erase the complexities of the movement in ways that will impact how a particular event is reinterpreted and rearticulated by future activists as they conceive their own identities (Haskins, 2015). The proliferation of Che Guevara's image on t-shirts and posters, for example, has led some to debate the role commodification has in the promotion of revolutionary ideals. Some argue that the marketization of Guevara's image diminishes "its power as a political symbol," while others claim that "his memory appears to function as a powerful mnemonic symbol and powerful galvanizing force in various contemporary radical movements" (Larson & Lizardo, 2007, p. 426). Scholars exploring the relationship between commodification and the symbolism of social movements generally believe that the collective memory of the groups engaging with

these symbols are either "manipulated by elites" or that the groups do have agency and can "recover memories in order to imbue them with new counterhegemonic interpretations (Larson & Lizardo, 2007, p. 427; Fine; 2001). Recent social movements do seem to be remembered by a single catch phrase, slogan, or symbol that is easily commodified. For the Arab Spring, it was "The Twitter/Facebook Revolution," a slogan that incorporated a corporate tech company as a major foundation of the movement's core identity. Occupy Wall Street can be recalled by the slogan "We are the 99%" which can be purchased on a t-shirt for $20.[27]

In the case of Hong Kong, one sees a similar problem of symbolism being denatured, its symbolic importance reduced through the process of commodification. The Umbrella Movement's most recognizable catch phrase, "We demand real universal suffrage" is now featured on key chains and t-shirts for sale online. Although these catchphrases are great mnemonic devices, they do little to convey the complexities of the actual movement and as such, neutralizes the political content and flattens the message. A professor at a Hong Kong university stated, "everything was just subsumed under the Umbrella Movement label." In Hedbidge's (1979) account of the influence of the punk music subculture, he stated that the mixture of different elements subsumed under one heading was unstable. By attempting to synthesize the movement into something more easily manipulated into a one-dimensional identity, symbolic and easily identifiable aspects of the movement were remembered, but at what cost?

Drawing on Eco's phrase "semiotic guerilla warfare," Hedbidge (1979) states that the promotion of counter-cultural symbols is not often successful. Dominant culture will either re-appropriate the subculture in some way or will position the culture as something so far on the outskirts of society that it will not be considered a realistic threat to power. Both of these

[27] Both zazzle.com and Amazon.com sell "we are the 99%" T-shirts ranging in price from $15 to $30.

conditions seemed to appear in the period following the Umbrella Movement occupation. The commodification of the movement's symbols can be viewed in a similar manner to that of slacktivism. Clicking the "like" icon, sharing videos and memes online, or buying an Umbrella Movement themed t-shirt made some of the individuals, who participated in the 2014 occupation, feel like they were still connected to the movement's ideals, but in a capitalistic environment that was compatible with Hong Kong's dominant economic identity. Although none of my participants implicated themselves in such actions, they would often mention friends who said they did not care about Hong Kong's political future so long as they could still make money. If the symbolism of the Umbrella Movement was profitable, these individuals would carry the yellow key chain regardless of whether or not they believed in the movement's political goals. However, like Lion Rock, the symbolism behind a keychain with a slogan still has the ability to evoke memories that can help sustain a movement, even if that symbol has become commodified. Memory work is intricate and a symbol can represent dollar signs just as easily as it can represent the emotional component of a movement.

Memory and Memes

Dawkins' (1976), reflecting on his definition of a meme as a concept, behavior, or symbol that spread among people within a culture, never expected his term to be associated with the proliferation and circulation of visual symbols in online environments and the growing significance of online visual symbolism. When Dawkins wrote *The Selfish Gene*, he never intended for memes to be anything but a biological concept. In an article published in *Wired* regarding Dawkins' thoughts on the Internet's 'hijacking" of the term he claimed that, "instead of mutating by random change and spreading a form of Darwinian selection, they are altered deliberately by human creativity. Unlike with genes, there is no attempt at accuracy of copying;

internet memes are deliberately altered" (Solon, 2013). While the previous discussion has regarded artwork and visual symbols, memes were probably one of the most widely circulated visual representations of the movement and unlike Dawkins' genes, these visual symbols were often "deliberately altered" to convey a specific point of view.

Memes have become a significant form of communication and embody the ritualistic action Carey (1989) emphasizes as crucial to the communicative processes. Memes disseminated during Occupy Wall Street helped to facilitate vibrant political discussions as the images were altered and redistributed on sites like Tumblr and Reddit (Milner, 2013). Memes can become important cultural symbols like the case of Kenya's first Internet meme Makmende, a super hero that helped to challenge cultural stereotypes (Ekdale & Tully, 2014). Howley (2016) describes how popular media narratives and elements from our collective memory are easily compared and disseminated as memes like the connections between Obama's rhetoric and Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. Such examples show how memes are able to incorporate the past and present as a unified element. Memes have the potential to serve as significant locations of memory that are able to adapt the past into a relatable present. The dissemination of memes online during and after occupation can serve as a mnemonic device that helps to frame what happened in a meaningful way.

Like many modern social causes, the Umbrella Movement had a significant presence on Facebook. Even today, participants from two years ago have an umbrella movement related meme as their profile picture. Memes were a great way to spread messages and they were easy to recall and disseminate like the leaflets and posters of past protests. During Zhang's visit, one participant shared a collection of some of the more memorable memes associated with Hong Kong's democratic struggle which made fun of the over abundant police presence during the

Beijing leader's tour of the city. Shown in Figure 2.7, the cartoon depicts the Chief Executive walking with Zhang saying, "let me introduce you to my cabinet. This is barricade, and then this is barricade, and then this is barricade…" With Zhang replying, "good." The participant who shared this image had said that he liked the meme because it showed the weakness of government officials since they were so over prepared. The meme on the right depicts the Queen of England's corgis on the top and Hong Kong's Chief Executive and his cabinet on the bottom. The caption in the middle loosely translates to "The corgis are energetic and cute and even when they move in the same direction you can still recognize their differences. But the Chief Executive's people look exactly the same." The second meme was originally found on the Facebook page of a satirical news critic akin to America's Jon Stewart and had been shared 244 times. While these memes were popular and entertaining, it is unclear how influential they were in promoting the ideas originally expressed during the Umbrella Movement.

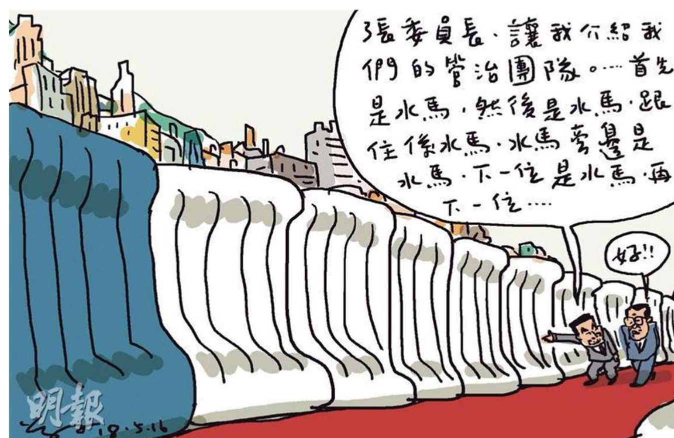

Figure 2.7: *Popular memes shared by a participant during Zhang Dejiang's visit to Hong Kong in May 2016*

Many of the younger participants I spoke with claimed that the mainstream media, and more specifically television, were generally biased towards the establishment (the Chinese Mainland). Most said that they received their news online and alluded to the importance of videos and images that had been uploaded to the site during the movement as being essential tools used to stay connected when they were not in the occupied spaces. One participant said that Facebook images were the most important elements of the movement because the mainstream media did not support the truth and Facebook images filled this void confirming the importance of Facebook's virtual space as an incubator for memory work. Most scholars and journalists writing about the start of the movement do credit the images of police teargassing the original occupy central protestors as the catalyst that created a greater show of support. However, although these initial photographs got people to take to the streets, in the two years since the occupation, the visual images that were so moving in the past, have done little to spark a similar call to action. "Viewing images may now stand in for action itself, raising crucial questions about the shape of public response in the contemporary era" (Zelizer, 1998, p. 213). Zelizer's quote references trends like slacktivism. Even though these memes may help to facilitate a discussion, their longevity as important locations of memory that can sustain these discussions is unknown.

The technological affordances of digital media make it easier to store and share images and memes that represent what seems to be a collective movement, but as will be discussed in a later chapter, technology can also contribute to the sense of hopelessness that follows once the creative momentum of occupation subsides. However, even though creative expression seemed to die down after individuals left the protest sites, some groups did attempt to revive some of the more popular symbols. Alvin Yeung, leader of the Civic Party, wore a yellow tie during his

meeting with Zhang as a way to show solidarity with the continued message of the Umbrella Movement. He even highlighted the symbolism of this gesture on Facebook. These symbols have moved beyond their movement identities representing something much larger. One participant said of these well-known icons:

> I think it is more like a symbol, a statement of defiance. It is a reflection of what they want. And then with the banner hanging from the cliffs. Yes, it is a form of protest inherited from the Umbrella Movement, but there is an element of reinstating the movement itself. I think they're trying to appeal to the general demand rather than the specific Umbrella Movement.

The participant's statement brought up the important fact that the Umbrella Movement of 2014 has passed, but that does not mean that symbols from that time cannot be repurposed and remembered in a way that will help as activists continue to fight for a democratic Hong Kong.

Memes and videos produced after the occupation in 2014 continued to play on the common symbolic elements associated with the Umbrella Movement. One of the more popular symbolic displays of action that drew upon the significance of occupying public spaces from 2014 was a video that also spawned multiple memes. "Every day go Shopping" a video originally created by Mocking Jer,[28] was brought up in many of my interviews with younger participants. The video spoofed a popular news story with regards to "paid' protestors from the Mainland. In order to disrupt the initial pro-democracy protest in 2014, Mainlanders were allegedly bribed to participate in pro-Beijing rallies with money, shopping trips, or a free lunch. Hong Kong residents already make fun of Mainland Chinese tourists who cross the border with

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[28] Mocking Jer is a comedian and political activist who parodies pop culture references. He began posting videos under this pseudonym after the end of the Umbrella Movement occupation.

large suitcases to shop. After the movement ended, pro-democracy activists staying true to the claims that "We will be back,"[29] created a new "shopping revolution" that employed the memory of the Umbrella Movement. Individuals would go to Mong Kok on "shopping trips" as an excuse to crowd the streets and disrupt consumer traffic in the area. Not only was this a creative way to reclaim the public spaces occupied during the original movement, but the term *gau wu,* which came to represent the creative flash-mob-like demonstrations, became the subject of a number of different online memes thanks to its fun play on words (Kuo, 2014).

The term *Gau wu* is one of the words that sounds similar in Mandarin and Cantonese. The term, which translates to shopping, was made popular after a woman at a pro-government rally, attempting to counter the message of the Umbrella Movement, said that she was there for "fun and to go shopping" (私隱政策, 2016). Pro-democracy activists saw this interview as a creative opportunity to evoke the symbolism of occupying physical spaces once the occupation ended. *Gau wu* or 9wu, which is also slang for penis in Cantonese, encouraged the production of Flash mobs and satirical YouTube videos. Police had a difficult time prosecuting many of the activists involved in the "shopping" movement because it was hard to distinguish the protestors from the actual shoppers.

Euphemisms and slang were often incorporated into memes that connected public and virtual spaces and were also a creative way to impede interruption in the planning stages of the Umbrella Movement itself. One participant mentioned that activists, discussing protest plans prior to the mass occupation, would make plans using coded descriptors of a banquet in order to prevent authorities from gaining insight into their strategies and thwarting the beginning of the

[29] The "We will be back" slogans began to emerge towards the end of the 79-day occupation when protesters were told that officials would begin clearing the streets.

movement. Multiple participants brought up one of the more famous examples of protest slang known as the "Stand By You: Add Oil Machine," which allowed supporters from anywhere in the world to show their support for the movement. The creators of this project would later project a countdown to 2047, the end of Hong Kong's transitional policy, on the I.C.C. building influencing another round of meme production. At the height of the occupation, the creators of the concept said they hoped that support for their project would grow thanks to Twitter and Facebook. Messages of support in all languages from across the world were projected on to a nearby wall so occupiers could read messages sent in solidarity. Many of the younger participants said that they had sent a message to @oilmachine, the website that projected the messages, but were disappointed when they did not see their message displayed. Even though this sentiment was individualistic, it did show that people wanted to be associated with the movement. "Add oil" may be a strange phrase to promote a movement, but it is a colloquialism found throughout the region in multiple dialects. Viewers of the 2008 Beijing Olympics may have heard Chinese spectators yell *jiayou* during various sports competitions, which means "more fuel." The phrase is meant to increase an event or athlete's energy and show support. The artists who started the campaign wanted everyone, regardless of one's location, to add more energy to the small territory's movement and to expand the perception of the spaces that were occupied during the movement in a way that connected the Umbrella Movement with the world.

The recollection of many of the symbols and memes that were created during the umbrella movement demonstrate the ebb and flow associated with significant memories. Hong Kong's shopping revolution eventually subsided and during my second visit in May of 2016, was not mentioned as frequently as it had been during my first visit exactly one year after the demonstration. In an article discussing the importance of memes in the Trayvon Martin case and

the detention of Chen Guangcheng, a blind lawyer and activist under house arrest in Mainland China, Mina (2012) writes, "in both cases, sustained internet activity kept the conversations about these two men in public discourse" (para. 2). Mainstream media used to have a monopoly on how symbols were recalled in mediated environments, but social media has given activist groups more autonomy to maintain and distribute symbols that can evoke the memory of past events in a way that can promote new forms of activism. In an environment like Hong Kong, where China is continually trying to exert their power, being able to revisit Umbrella Movement symbols online may prove to be an important location for future activism. The memes also rekindled a sense of creativity that Abbas (1997) said Hong Kong had lost during the cultural upheaval of the 1997 transition. Some of these symbols may not be utilized now, but that does not mean they will not be rearticulated at a later date when the memory of the Umbrella Movement is needed to inspire new acts of resistance.

A Tale of Two Countdown Clocks: The Symbolism and Significance of Time

The 2047 I.C.C. Countdown clock was a large-scale artistic installation that became the subject of images and memes widely disseminated online during Zhang's visit, but it also aroused an anxiety related to Hong Kong's relationship with time. Instead of producing a number of smaller artistic works, an act common during the Umbrella Movement occupation, Hong Kong artists decided that Zhang's visit warranted a grand artistic gesture. The creators of the projection "hope[d] to deliver this work to illustrate the biggest anxiety of the Hong Kong people" (Qin, 2016). That anxiety was Hong Kong's unknown future under Chinese rule, which was becoming a more uneasy reality since the Mainland's decision to deny Hong Kong universal suffrage. The symbolism of the clock touched upon many of the themes discussed in Hughes' (1976) book *Borrowed Place, Borrowed Time*. Even in the 1970s, prior to the signing of the

Sino-British Joint Declaration, Hong Kong's role as China's economic pawn was already being planned. The symbolism of time, which was also evoked in the wake of the Umbrella Movement, has been a constant motif in the construction of Hong Kong's identity.

The Mainland understood the importance of cultural memory in creating a sense of identity, and as early as 1994, began preparations to reconstruct Hong Kong's identity to one that was more representative of the official Chinese narrative. In December of 1994, a clock was erected in Tiananmen Square counting down to Hong Kong's reunification with the Mainland. The clock became the central focus of a campaign, designed for both Hong Kong and Beijing residents, steeped in spectacle. "The spectacle of the Hong Kong countdown was also critically important to both the creation of a new Hong Kong cultural identity and the preservation of Hong Kong's historical past" (Ren, 2010, n.p.). It was during this time that the Mainland began funneling money into research projects that attempted to re-popularize historical monuments like the Terrace of the Song Emperor in an effort to connect Chinese history with Hong Kong geography (Matten, 2011; Ren, 2010). Theme parks and museums that focused on Hong Kong's history shifted Hong Kong as a location that embodied China's "national humiliation" to one that represented the nation's "revival" (Ren, 2010). To the Mainland, Hong Kong was a massive *lieu de mémoire* and not a place that had developed its own sense of cultural memory.

China's use of the Tiananmen Square countdown clock framed time as a linear construct ignoring the idea that memories function in a different capacity. Memory is often conceptualized in waves that are recycled based on the needs of the present (Zelizer, 1998: Carey, 1989). China also failed to account for the subjectivity of time and the emotional essence of the past when they attempted to rewrite the historical narrative from their own perspective. To those in the Mainland, Hong Kong was rightfully theirs and the people who lived in the territory were and

had always been Chinese. One participant from the Mainland said they remembered the atmosphere of excitement and pride during the 1997 period of transition. Other Mainlanders confirmed this sentiment. Hong Kong was returning to the motherland, it was a happy occasion. For those who had been living in Hong Kong; however, the emotions surrounding the transition were more ambiguous. Over the years, Hong Kong had developed their own cultural identity and established a name for themselves in the creative industries through film and music. In an effort to make sense of the transition and what would happen to the everyday lives of those in the territory, a push to "creat[e] memories that would endure" became a priority (Ren, 2010) The uncertainty of Hong Kong's future under Chinese sovereignty is what created the space of disappearance described by Abbas (1997). Culture became connected to economics in an attempt to preserve a sense of Hong Kong's cultural identity; however, the process wound up homogenizing Hong Kong's characteristics with tactics like the BrandHK campaign. The period of transition did exude the aura of living in a "borrowed place" on "borrowed time" and forced those who lived in Hong Kong to conceptualize the region from the perspective of a place with a sense of time that had a clear beginning, middle and end (Ren, 2010; Chu, 2013). The end for Hong Kong, unlike most places, is not ambiguous, for many who call the territory home, it is 2047.

While the 1997 Tiananmen countdown clock was meant to symbolize reunification and hope, the 2016 I.C.C. countdown projection, represented anxiety. The I.C.C. is Hong Kong's tallest skyscraper and thus an ideal canvas to those who wanted to convey a message that could be viewed by everyone. The projections began the Tuesday of Zhang's visit and for one minute every night, a projection of a nine-digit number would be projected onto the building. That number was a countdown in seconds to July 1, 2047 the day the "one country, two systems"

policy will expire. The artists deliberately meant to arouse the memory of the 1997 countdown clock recalling that, "numbers were called out loud in schools, on television and in radio broadcasts (Qin, 2016a). Although memory is often associated with conceptions of the past, there is also a memory of how the future will be predicted. Carey (1989) writes: "And yet while the future as a prophetic form has a long history, the future as a predicable region of experience never appears. For the future is always offstage and never quite makes its entrance into history; the future is a time that never arrives but is always awaited" (p. 134). For China, the reunification with Hong Kong helped to envision a more complete and prosperous future. China was whole again and could now reclaim their position as a super power (Thomas, 1999). However, many of those in Hong Kong had grown accustomed to a certain level of autonomy and exposure to Western democratic philosophies over the years, thus conceptualizing Hong Kong's future as one being democratic; a vision contradictory to China's. Technological advancement has always been a symbol of the future (Carey, 1989), as Benjamin (1968) alluded to with the rise of Nazism, the promise of a technologically advanced future does not always translate to a democratic political environment. In most circumstances, the process of conceptualizing an essentially unknown future is a ritual in hypothetical predictions, for Hong Kong, this future is not so hypothetical and has a much clearer sense of conclusion.

The Umbrella Movement demonstrated that Hongkongers did envision a different future than the one proposed by the Mainland. In contrast to the period of transition where Hong Kong tried to preserve their sense of culture through economic means, the Umbrella Movement took a different approach and tried to reclaim cultural memories that had been appropriated by economic policies and the Mainland. Hong Kong's cultural industries saw a resurgence in independent projects that focused on the concerns of Hong Kong's residents, like the themes that

made *Below the Lion Rock* popular in the 1970s. One film released shortly after the Umbrella Movement received a lot of critical acclaim for its portrayal of the anxieties associated with Chinese sovereignty. *Ten Years* was released in December of 2015 and promptly sold out in Hong Kong Theatres. The film was also popular amongst independent film fans in Canada, Germany, the U.K, Australia, and the U.S. Not surprisingly, the film was banned in the Mainland. Five directors created short stories depicting their vision for Hong Kong in 2025, essentially ten years after the Umbrella Movement occupation. The film pays homage to some of the Mainland's most chilling historical events that have been lost to many of those in the Mainland as a result of state sponsored acts of forgetting. In one story, children conjure the memory of China's Red Guard during the Cultural Revolution, spying and telling on adults. Another story references the self-immolation of Tibetan Monks. One of the film's directors acknowledged the influence of recent events in Hong Kong like the Umbrella Movement and Fishball Riots and created the film as an attempt to ask the question, "If nothing changes in Hong Kong, what will the city be like in 10 years?" (Yu, 2016). The directors said it was important to ask these questions because authoritarian countries are well known for indoctrinating the young. China already attempted to exert their influence in 2010, when then Chief Executive Donald Tsang proposed a new national education program (*Associated Press*, 2012, Sep. 7). Although the film is fictional, it does memorialize a possible future and touches upon preexisting anxieties, but it can also be viewed as an attempt to reclaim the ritual of predicting a future based on Hong Kong's identity and not China's.

Summary

Nora's (1989; 1996) idea that sites of memory are externalized and not "lived" or "real" is more restrictive than Carey's (1989) theory that communication is part of culture and that

culture is constructed by intelligent human beings with free-will. Nora takes for granted the cultural longevity of France, often ignoring the role technology has played in giving oppressed people a chance to reclaim and record memories that have been absent from past narratives. There will always be the possibility that those with power, either economic or political, will appropriate the symbolism of the oppressed for their own purposes, but as demonstrated by Lion Rock and the various memes produced and disseminated, oppressed groups do find a way to continue to redefine the memory of these external locations in a way that fits their own needs. In a place like Hong Kong, where attempting to define a localized identity has always been a challenge given the power dynamics of the region, preserving certain symbols is essential to the continuation of their democratic struggle. The anxiety and hope that embody the symbolism of technological advancement is nothing new. Television was just as instrumental in disseminating the cultural memory of Hong Kong in the 1970s as digital platforms were at preserving and disseminating memories associated with the Umbrella Movement in today's time.

Zelizer (1998) believed that the images of the Holocaust came to be seen as a placeholder to avoid conversations about modern day atrocities. In many respects the same could be said for many of the visual emblems of the Umbrella Movement. Scholars and activists talked about the movement, but not how to move forward. Technology motivated people to take to the streets in 2014, but afterwards, seemed to divide the various groups who originally wanted the same thing. By emphasizing the importance of technology, scholars and mainstream media outlets reinforced a view that established technology, devoid of cultural nuance, as a significant point of memory. They emphasized the technological sublime and not the role technology does play as a tool that can disseminate significant cultural symbols that are able to help activists frame what happened during the occupation in a way that is more conducive to future action.

Individuals do have the ability to construct their own narrative with social media, a narrative that utilizes symbols that ties singular accounts of an event like the Umbrella Movement in ways that make up the web of collective memory. A profile picture of an umbrella may hold significant meaning for an individual, but it also connects these individuals to the symbolism of a greater ideal. Memory work that focuses on specific cultural symbols is especially important in places like Hong Kong or with other social groups that struggle to define and articulate their own culture using memories that are often controlled by authoritarian regimes. The way conceptions of space and symbols are remembered are important because in addition to helping to construct what happened, they also help to construct individual and group identities. Hong Kong is not a homogenized island and has a rich history of social activism. The constructed reality of one group does not necessarily reflect that of the other; however, these divides are not necessarily adverse, but rather contribute to Hong Kong's diverse identity.

Chapter 3

Constructing Identity after Occupation; The Influence of Memory on Hong Kong's Ethnic and Generational Identity

Symbols help to construct and reinforce individual and collective identities, and culture is constructed by how these symbols are created, used, and exchanged. The Umbrella Movement can be viewed as a movement that induced new forms of symbolic interaction as a means to establish a more concrete political identity. Yet the symbols' success was tied to their ability to disrupt preexisting assumptions with regards to Hong Kong's sense of self, and this struggle has been ongoing since the occupation ended in 2014. One of the most well-known characteristics is the region's relationship to trade and commercialism. The British originally wanted the territory to serve as a hub for Asian trade routes. After Deng Xiaoping reformed China's economic policy, reclaiming Hong Kong and using the region as a gateway to capitalistic enterprise was integral to the Mainland's strategy. Nora (1996) states that the sites and symbols that construct a national identity are enacted by many different parties. In Hong Kong, sites of memory are not just constructed by those who define themselves as Hongkongers, but those who also visit the territory for business and pleasure. Like Nora's description of French "historical" memory, Hong Kong locates its political identity in a collective memory "based on a relatively limited number of political myths" that "reflect and reinforce the others" (Chu, 2013). It is for this reason that understanding how events like the Umbrella Movement are remembered and subsequently reinforce the myths that help to construct the identity of Hong Kong is so important.

Instead of a revolution where people fought for a principle or having a connection to an ancient civilization, Hong Kong's origin myth seems tied to economics highlighting the story of

a fishing village that became a prosperous global trading hub. The territory's identity is most dominantly framed from an economic perspective exemplified by the BrandHK campaign following the 1997 transition (Chu, 2013). In an attempt to mask Hong Kong's complicated political relationship, economic prosperity has been the primary focus of Hong Kong's political and cultural identity. Commercialism does have the ability to evoke and appropriate memory, but usually in the form of brand recognition that tends to be ahistorical and fixed. Branding national and urban centers in the same way that we do consumer goods creates a one-sided, homogenized version of a diverse location. Aronczyk (2013) writing on the myths created by an advertising agency stated, "the myths they rally to their cause evoke civilization, community, and unity; but the quality of these terms is restricted to the frameworks in which they are created" (p. 106). As opposed to traditional origin myths that are integral to a place's collective memory (Nora, 1996), branded symbols struggle to move beyond these superficial constructions. Applying these branded frames to national identities complicates the line between citizen and consumer in ways that undermine democratic principles (Aronczyk, 2013).

By introducing new symbols and reclaiming old ones, the Umbrella Movement was able to shift the focus from an identity constructed around a branded idea to one that represented a renewed sense of a more organically constructed Hong Kong. During the occupation, a Portuguese illustrator offered his perspective of the event in a short video showcasing the art he had created during the occupation: "I just say it's very peaceful out there so don't worry, you're not destroying the image of Hong Kong" (AnswerMark, 2014).[30] The image the artist described was unclear; therefore, predicting whether or not this preconceived notion of Hong Kong would

[30] Comment taken from a video of Portuguese artist Luis Simoes. One of my participants helped to put together a video of the artist in addition to gathering and distributing the art created during occupation which detailed what daily life was like during the movement. A full version of the video can be viewed at https://vimeo.com/109920609

be maintained once the movement ended was difficult. Returning to the spaces of the movement a year after the occupation, the image described could very easily be a metropolitan hub of commerce. However, new groups attempting to use a different political myth to reconstruct their version of Hong Kong's identity did emerge in the wake of the movement. The artist went on to say, "they want to show their dignity and that's the reason they keep coming here." A desire to reclaim and redefine a Hong Kong identity did seem to be awakened following the occupation. The process was often not well publicized, structured, or successful, but people still tried to construct this new identity based on the symbols and themes that were addressed during the Umbrella Movement. The way in which individuals, various interest groups, and the media framed what happened during the movement connected the notion of Hong Kong's identity to the legacy of the Umbrella Movement in an effort that would construct what came next. As the energy of a social movement dissolves, holding on to the collective identity established during the movement becomes untenable. Since collective identity is integral to the success of a social movement, maintaining the memory of it should also be fundamental once the movement has ended.

The individuals who participated in the Umbrella Movement wanted a say in the construction of Hong Kong's cultural and political future, one that would include universal suffrage, the ability to oversee their own education system and the freedom to express themselves. "Changing identity is often the primary movement goal," (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 296). These Hongkongers did not want to be "Asia's World City," they wanted to be Hong Kong. The movement was an attempt to reclaim Hong Kong's identity from economic constructions or Chinese control. On the surface, Hong Kong seemed to return to the status quo after the occupation. The groups that did try to preserve the memory of the movement, in the

construction of new group identities, struggled to reconnect under a singular idea, which lead to a high degree of factionalism. The rise of Localists groups took the message of universal suffrage one step further desiring complete separation from the Mainland. Like the nationalistic movements that have gained more prominence across Europe and the United States, many of Hong Kong's Localists groups have adopted an us-versus-them mentality. Anti-Mainland rhetoric became more popular and at times led to physical violence (Zhang, 2016). Hong Kong, like the United States, is a land of immigrants. In the past, these individuals helped to establish the prosperous economic system that allowed both regions to become the economically established locations they are today. As soon as economic affluence began to waiver, the immigrant populations who helped establish the profitable conditions of the past are now framed as the cause of the problem. By ignoring how the messages of a movement are remembered, extreme identities are able to utilize the symbolism of the movement in negative ways. National and even urban identities are diverse and encompass multiple genders, religions, ethnicities and so on; therefore, Localists groups that used the symbolism of the movement to promote their singular version of identity is just as bad, if not worse, as the BrandHK identity. The capacity to distinguish between one's cultural origins from geographic, political, and economic conditions complicates the ability to maintain a stable identity, especially after an event like a social movement that challenges the status quo (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 1999).

Yet despite the multiplicity of identity, when we do memory work, we attempt to reconstruct history so that it might seem more singular in its focus, "Like the history we experience" (Nora, 1996, p. 13). Even when new conceptions of identity are constructed, they are done so using familiar frames that often conceal ambivalence or contradiction. "We depend on memory for our individual and collective sense of identity, meaning and purpose. The idea

that we know who we are now because we know who we have been is commonplace (Vivian, 2010, p. 10). Hong Kong has had such a complicated history that it is difficult to understand this past. Proclamations like "the old Algeria is dead" expressed by Fanon after Algeria's liberation are not as easily applied to Hong Kong's colonial history: having no identity prior to colonization and then in lieu of independence, becoming subsumed under another nation's sovereignty (Fanon, 1965; Abbas, 1997). Nonetheless, Fanon's example is still applicable in the sense that his declaration attempted to wipe out the old in order to make way for something new, much in the same way that the Umbrella Movement attempted to forge a new identity. But while many former colonies have had the opportunity to rearticulate the narrative of their national identity and establish new power dynamics, Hong Kong is still plagued by a colonial power structure. Many of my participants felt that the Umbrella Movement was an attempt to "redefine" or "reclaim" a Hong Kong identity, implying that there was once a distinct Hong Kong identity to claim. Other than referencing the idea that there used to be more opportunity, an allusion to Hong Kong's generic economic identity, very few were ever able to expound further on the past they were trying to retrieve. Some of these individuals felt that even though they believed their identity was tied to China, Hong Kong should still remain autonomous. Others felt that Hong Kong needed to be independent, but most agreed that there was this realization of a unified Hong Kong. This sense of a unified Hong Kong that was distinctly its own, separate from a Chinese identity, lingered despite the upheaval associated with the Umbrella Movement and in many respects, became more enhanced.

Significant events can help draw people together into a coherent identity group, but this sense of collective identity tends to fade away once the momentum of an event subsides. In the wake of the U.S. Civil War, Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address* helped to "redefine U.S. national

identity." The speech emphasized the importance of unity, depicting a country that was not divided. Lincoln also stressed that evoking the memory of past national unity was not enough, the environment of division needed to be forgotten in order to establish a cohesive national identity after the war (Vivian, 2010). However, given the number of Confederate flags that are still flown today, divisions are still apparent. Collective identity is often used conceptually by social movement theorists in an attempt to explain resource mobilization and what motivates some individuals to participate. "If people choose to participate because doing so accords with who they are, the forms of protest they choose are also influenced by collective identities" (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 284). Polletta and Jasper also note that the concept of collective identity has been used to explain more than the theory can clarify. The problem with using collective identity to explain aspects of social movements arises when the way these identities are constructed and subsequently remembered and disseminated go unnoticed. More importantly, how does one consider the role of collective identity in a region that struggles to define who they are?

Hong Kong identity, as a coherent entity, is pulled in multiple directions by those who try to define it. "Identity has its roots in the past, and whether the past is fact or fiction, constructed or fabricated, it defines who we are" (Matten, 2011, p. 4). Hong Kong's past is a story of outside entities using the territory for economic gain. As such, outsiders often tie Hong Kong's identity to capitalism, touting its metropolitan and urban characteristics. Old immigrants from the Mainland still tend to have strong ties to China, Hong Kong's "baby boomer" generation is nostalgic for British colonialism, while younger individuals seem to want to establish a new identity that conforms to their own notion of what it means to be a Hongkonger. The process in which the old replaces the new is often tied to our conception of technology. The new is imbued

with a “mobilizing energy,” while the old is viewed as obsolete (Carey, 1989; Nora, 1996). Given Hong Kong’s prominence in the technology industry, this mentality became a dominate approach used by many to construct Hong Kong’s identity throughout the years. Hong Kong equaled progress. Yet the Umbrella Movement seemed to offer a new approach to identity construction, one that was not defined by outsiders or technological development. For once, those who considered themselves Hongkongers were able to define their own identity using new symbols that had been created during the movement or redefining preexisting symbols, making them their own.

Given the Eastern and Western influences that have shaped Hong Kong up until this point, an identity constructed by those who actually live in the city, and understand the nuances of these cultural elements, has the potential to offer a vision that moves beyond traditional dichotomous constructions that often lead to “othering.” Nora’s work on memory is useful as a frame for Western nations, but as one critic notes, the tension between memory and history that lies at the heart of Nora’s argument is often overlooked by Chinese intellectuals. China “has not been actively engaged in the clear demarcation of boundaries between history and memory” (Flath, 2001, p. 68). Asian studies methodology attempts to promote an understanding of the self as a way to move beyond the framework of Western thought while still acknowledging its influence. Memories of the past did help shape the identities forged during the Umbrella Movement; memories that supported all of Hong Kong’s cultural influences. Polletta and Jasper (2001) point to a gap in the literature of collective identity and social movements stating that few have explored the “cultural building blocks” that actually help to construct the collective identities that are promoted as a key foundation to successful social movement mobilization. If the goal of a social movement is to forge a new identity through the construction and repurposing

of shared memories and goals in an attempt to gain power, those already with power, are able to manipulate what is seen as the truth (Jasper & Polletta, 2001; Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 1999). Leading up to the 1997 transition, China did attempt to exert their power by controlling the historical narrative of Hong Kong's origin story through museum exhibits and cultural programming (Chu, 2013). Even today, China's view of Hong Kong ignores the territory's Western influences; Western influences, that in the past, attempted to ignore China's influence. Those with power use memory to rally individuals and construct a past that attempts to unify a group of people in an effort to either call them to action or remain complacent. But the Umbrella Movement was a means to pay homage to all of the territory's past cultural influences because in order to understand Hong Kong today, it is important to know what Hong Kong has been (Vivian, 2010).

Abbas (1997) states that Hong Kong's identity is more marked by the tensions between colonialism and globalism than East and West. When the slogan "Asia's World City" was proposed in 1996, prior to the transition, Hong Kong's leadership wanted to promote the area as an "international world-class city' by touting the territory as a "melting pot for Chinese and Western cultures." The identity that was constructed and communicated was meant to inspire Hongkongers to invest themselves in advancing the territory's "economic, social, and cultural objectives;" politics was never discussed (Chu, 2013, p. 71). The East meets West melting pot narrative was used more to showcase Hong Kong's position as a globalized city that could be controlled by the central government in Beijing, than it was to represent those who called the territory home. If the island was economically prosperous, its residents would not care about political control. However, the individuals who participated in the Umbrella Movement wanted a chance to express their conception of a Hong Kong that was more than just economic; they

envisioned a Hong Kong where they had a vote that mattered. During the movement, the various groups involved in the occupation, as well as the Western Media, promoted the essence of a new Hong Kong identified with Democracy. Prior to occupation an unofficial referendum signaled a growing interest in Hong Kong's political efficacy. Approximately 800,00 citizens voted in an online referendum with three options granting the public more freedom in choosing their next Chief Executive. Despite Beijing's claim that Hong Kong would be allowed to "elect" the top official in the 2017 election, the reality was that Hong Kong would be allowed to elect a candidate from a pool of candidates pre-approved by Beijing. The organizers of the online referendum, who were also connected to the planning of the Occupy movement, were pleased by the number of residents who participated in the online referendum that seem to signal a "critical juncture" in Hong Kong politics (Hong Kong democracy 'referendum', 2014). During the movement, a young saleswoman quoted in *The New York Times* said, "I came here because I don't want to lose my Hong Kong. I don't want Hong Kong to be the next China" (Buckley & Ramzy, 2014). This sentiment unified many of the protesters during the 79-day occupation, and while nostalgia kept this idea going for a few months after the movement, the inability to maintain this collective identity eventually led to anger and depression. Regardless of the political outcome, Hong Kong residents were motivated to make their own political choices, ones that would benefit the people of Hong Kong and not the political and business interests of outside entities.

Identity—during any struggle for power—is constructed through multiple means and different media, and is constantly shifting. Those with power often have the most influence when it comes to "asserting an identity that comes to be accepted" (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 1999). The same is true with the ability to control collective memory, which often becomes

institutionalized. Lincoln was able to reframe American identity after the Civil War because his words were backed by the institutions of the presidency and subsequently recorded (Vivian, 2010). During the movement, the larger collective and the forces of occupation did disrupt the narrative of a Hong Kong identity promoted by the Mainland and corporate structures; however, the ability to maintain this collective sense of a counter-memory has lost momentum as new groups have emerged in the wake of occupation.

Although fractures have emerged in the unifying message of a democratic Hong Kong, the memory of the movement still carries a sense of hope. The symbols and language discussed in the previous chapter help in the process of identity construction for larger groups of people (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). The symbols associated with the Umbrella Movement helped bring individuals together, but had different meanings depending on the group. The symbolism of the umbrella and the color yellow have reappeared in various circumstances since the movement ended, just as China has tried to assert its power over these same symbols. Memories have the ability to be counter-hegemonic (Sturken, 1997) and the reemergence of particular symbols despite the firm hand of Beijing controlling traditional media channels like television shows that the identity promoted by the Umbrella Movement symbols still exist and are still being asserted and circulated. Politicians, for example, wear yellow ties and carry umbrellas to signal their support of the ideals established during the occupation. Individuals are still using the symbols of the movement to represent their online identity. And in the smaller protests that have occurred since the Umbrella Movement, familiar banners and slogans have reemerged signaling that all of these movements are connected to a greater cause, that of a democratic Hong Kong.

Certain events and symbols will help to define cultural identity and these iconic moments and images are summoned ritualistically. While the memories that evoke these events may differ

over time or for various groups, the rituals that evoke these symbols and events are always present (Nora, 1996; Carey, 1989). In the case of the Umbrella Movement, the counter-hegemonic memory these symbols promote is varied but often tied to older forms of struggle. The Umbrella Man statue, one of the most iconic symbols of the Umbrella Movement, was also connected to the student-led Tiananmen Square protests in 1989. As such, it was rearticulated as a symbol of solidarity, it connected the current struggle to Chinese political struggles for on older generation of Hongkongers. Like the polysemous nature of social movement symbols, the concept of identity has multiple interpretations. Events and symbols seemingly unknown to younger generations have a way of reemerging regardless of whether or not the symbol's origin is known. Although the younger generation may not have known of the Umbrella Man's origins, the symbol's influence still connected individuals during the Umbrella Movement. The memory of Tiananmen Square's Goddess of Democracy was rekindled by the Umbrella Man and it is likely that the Umbrella Man will influence future movements. The meaning of the statue, which at the time helped to bring people together for the singular cause of expressing the hopes of promoting a Hong Kong built on the principles of universal suffrage, was more important than providing an explanation of the statue's original influence.

The Umbrella Man was one of many symbols that evoked the past without a direct acknowledgement to a symbol's origin. The concept of the Lennon Wall, a living monument to the Czech Republic's democratic movement in 1989 was rearticulated in the Umbrella Movement's Post-It-Note version. The Lennon Wall in Prague is constantly changing as individuals paint and draw new messages on the wall's surface. Democracy does not represent stagnation and the wall's changing surface represents the essence of democracy in the sense that one wall can encompass many ideas that support a singular foundation. The post-it notes used

during the Umbrella Movement served a similar function in both their temporality and the connection to individual ideas that comprised a larger vision. In Carey's (1989) description of the ritual view of communication and its role in building community he states:

> This projection of community ideals and their embodiment in material form—dance, plays, architecture, news stories, strings of speech—creates an artificial though nonetheless real symbolic order that operates to provide not information but confirmation, not to alter attitudes or change minds but to represent an underlying order of things, not to perform functions but to manifest an ongoing and fragile social process (p. 15).

Songs from past movements or other events with important historical significance were also sung during the movement. "Do you hear the people sing" from the popular musical *Les Misérables* was frequently sung during the occupation because as many of my participants said, the song helped to articulate the feelings of the movement and everyone already knew most of the lyrics. The idea of a counter-hegemonic memory is always present and while it may lay dormant, elements will always find a way to re-emerge and help rearticulate the identities of a new generation unhappy with the status quo.

Although the evocation of counter-cultural memories has a ritualistic quality, like all acts of remembering, it is also tied up with ritual forgetting. Most often, the origins of a particular symbol are lost as it gets connected to new memories. In today's environment, new technology is often blamed for destroying the younger generations' selective memory of origins and symbols. Yet sometimes forgetting the past can help individuals and groups move beyond the narrative of the institutional memories that support the status quo and may even promote more

innovative ways of thinking about governance and education (Vivian, 2010). In the case of Hong Kong, generational divides were a significant theme expressed by multiple participants with regards to remembering and portraying the movement following the end of occupation. The older generation felt more connected to China and frustrated with a younger generation who did not feel connected to their cultural roots. The younger generation, however, has used both intentional and accidental "forgetting" as a means to move forward and construct a new identity that represents a Hong Kong defined by Hongkongers.

Just as new symbols were created and reclaimed during the Umbrella Movement, a new understanding of Hong Kong's identity began to emerge after it. Groups began to offer a new identity that at times contradicted the one promoted by "Central District Values" and BrandHK, an identity that had been crafted by Hong Kong's elite and not Hong Kong people. The Umbrella Movement was a "critical juncture" for the construction of a new Hong Kong identity based on the creation of new and reclaimed sites of memory. New preservation projects emerged to protect integral elements to Hong Kong's identity like the Cantonese language. Hongkongers also began to consider the implications of their "Chinese" ethnicity and how to reconcile the perceptions of different generations. The Umbrella Movement became an integral event in the sense that it created a conversation about what it meant to be a Hongkonger; therefore, the memory of the Umbrella Movement became an important reference point for multiple group identities as they struggled to redefine a Hong Kong in an increasingly tense political atmosphere.

Beyond the BrandHK Identity

The Brand HK campaign was launched during Hong Kong's period of transition in 1997. In an attempt to distinguish themselves from rapidly developing Mainland cities like Shanghai

and Guangzhou, the program was meant to "highlight its unique function as a gateway to the Mainland, as well as a hub for business throughout the Asia-Pacific region" (Chu, 2013, pgs. 71-72). Although the brand claimed to promote Hong Kong's core values of progressiveness, freedom, stability, opportunity, and quality, the campaign itself was more about promoting an economic rather than political identity. Hong Kong's government was more concerned with indorsing a brand and their blatant attempt to control the construction of the territory's identity promoted a less than memorable campaign symbol. Tourists failed to correctly identify the campaign's dragon logo, mistakenly attributing the emblem as representing Singapore. "In the face of competition from Singapore and rising Mainland cities, the Hong Kong government failed to observe that 'personality' [was] the key to a city's success" (Chu, 2013, p. 73). Hong Kong authorities have tried on multiple occasions to promote a branded Hong Kong identity, but seem to always fall short by attaching their brand to hollow symbolism. Hong Kong's brand campaigns have ignored the voices of local inhabitants in an attempt to promote a Hong Kong that represents business and promotes tourism. In the period following the Umbrella Movement, Hong Kong's elites are trying to once again reframe Hong Kong's brand twenty years since the 1997 transition. It is still unclear whether or not this new brand will finally include a Hong Kong identity that represents the people, an identity that gained more prominence during the Umbrella Movement.

The original BrandHK campaign was based on "Central District Values" promoted by the neoliberal policies that came to define Hong Kong shortly after the 1997 transition. Hong Kong's "Central District Values," which were meant to describe Hong Kong's core values and a term that was used by the government during the early stages of Hong Kong under Chinese sovereignty, only promoted the ideas of "growth, efficiency, and prosperity" values that are ideal

for business, but not a vibrant culture. During a time when Hong Kong was already struggling to comprehend the implications of a changing identity under Chinese rule, the “Central District Values” did more to homogenize Hong Kong’s culture than help to promote the region’s diverse cultural influences (Chu, 2013). Donald Tsang, who at first was a relatively popular Chief Executive based on his “local” identity, eventually lost popularity in his attempt to run and promote Hong Kong as if it were a business and not a community of diverse people.

Hongkongers have always struggled to find an identity that incorporated symbolic memories that encouraged a sense of belonging. The British and Chinese have viewed Hong Kong as a “place” and not somewhere that symbolized a sense of home. As Hong Kong developed economically in the 1960s and 1970s, those residing in the colony began to see Hong Kong as a place where one could make a life and not just a place of transition. This was an important step towards seeing Hong Kong as a space, which differs from the conception of place, since space is usually considered to be a more meaningful categorization. Seeing Hong Kong as a home and not an empty place laid the ground work for establishing coherent sites of memory that represented Hong Kong and not the interests of outside forces. Unfortunately, given the power dynamics on the island territory, Hongkongers still had trouble fostering this meaningful conception of space while those in charge still upheld the view that the territory was a place (Tuan, 1977; Chu, 2015).

While the Hong Kong government was trying to promote an identity based on market logics in an effort to distinguish Hong Kong from China, China was attempting to promote the idea that Hong Kong’s identity was Chinese. Ng (2009) claims that Hong Kong’s “Chinese” identity is “conditioned by state propaganda.” A study conducted before and after the 1997 transition attempted to measure how Hong Kong citizens reacted to “Chinese” national icons like

the Great Wall of China and other national symbols like the Chinese flag. Such symbols were commonly found in the Mainland's attempt to portray the transition as a return to the motherland. Cultural programming was everywhere from museums to shopping displays and television specials. But despite the Mainland's best efforts to promote their own national symbols, most Hongkongers still felt that China had a separate identity (Ng, 2009). China and Hong Kong's government were trying to promote two different branded identities, but neither seemed to be all that popular.

Unfortunately, the people of Hong Kong also failed to construct their own identity based on a collective "national" memory. Since Hong Kong had always been viewed as a place to do business, it was hard to move beyond this conception to promote a sense of space that would be sufficient enough to sustain a cultural memory against neoliberal forces attempting to homogenize culture. Chu, (2015) writes:

> For many decades, Hong Kong, seen by many as a 'floating city', has been suffering an identity crisis, and thus 'Hong Kong is my home' is arguably one of the most often heard sayings related to a sense of belonging. In their yearning for a sense of belonging, Hong Kong people were prompted to reiterate 'Hong Kong is my home', as a result, this saying embodies not a sense of belonging but a lack of it (p. 307).

At the same time Hong Kong was trying to figure out who and what it was and would become, the territory's cultural industries also struggled to create products that could sustain a "sense of belonging." During the period of transition, film and architecture tried hard to distinguish themselves from surrounding areas like Mainland China, but they failed to continue to produce

products that represented Hong Kong's vibrant urban culture in the 1970s (Abbas, 1997; Chu, 2013).

In 2010, the Hong Kong government tried to rebrand Hong Kong's identity yet again, but this time emphasizing a personality and culture for the city. One of the first images to come up on a Google search for Hong Kong is the iconic, traditional red-sailed Junk, sailing in the harbor with the modern skyline imminent in the background. Abbas (1997), referencing a similar image promoted by the Hong Kong Tourist Association, states that the narrative promoted by this image depicts "a one-dimensional image, structured on facile binarism" (p. 72). "Peeping out from under this narrative is a master discourse that, seeing only its own mirror reflections, inscribes the primacy of the economic everywhere in the most literal minded fashion" (Abbas, 1997, p. 71). In Aronczyk's (2013) description of nation branding, she claims that branding a country in a way similar to promoting goods and services, stereotypes culture and supports an atmosphere of capitalistic competition. If national symbols are going to be viewed with the same immediate recognition the same as the Nike swoosh, what does this do to the identity of the people who actually live in these promoted areas and how is this brand disrupted when political unrest like a social movement occurs?

Hong Kong's 'Faces of Hong Kong' campaign was a new attempt to promote Hong Kong's identity. Learning from the mistakes of past attempts, this campaign attempted to tell the story of real people living in the city. The campaign tried to promote a "sense of belonging" by focusing on the daily lives of average Hong Kong residents. However, central to this story was Chow Yun-Fat, one of Hong Kong's most well-known actors. Like a consumer good with a celebrity endorsement, Chow Yun-Fat was used to promote Hong Kong's new "brand" identity. The campaign was an attempt to shift from the generic flying dragon logo to depicting the more

"human" side of the city in a series of short promotional videos. But as Chu (2015) states, the question "Whose city is it?" still lingered. Quoting Huyssen, (2008), Chu, (2015) concludes:

> While 'Faces of Hong Kong' highlights the stories of Hong Kong people from all walks of life, they are simply used to illuminate the values of 'Asia's World City'. The global city label could have miserable consequences for urban populations 'when a city's success [is] measured by its participation in globality, just as the threat of not becoming global might mean stagnation and immiseration' (p.317).

The BrandHK campaign continuously failed because it ignored the idea that identities are not fixed. The Hong Kong that was portrayed by the "everyday residents" was a Hong Kong that would not be around for much longer as the city transformed old neighborhoods like the ones depicted in the 'Faces of Hong Kong' campaign to make way for new luxury high rises. The top-down approach to producing a branded identity was unsuccessful because those who were trying to "create" this sense of identity and belonging failed to recognize that cultural memories adapt and are not stagnant symbols (Chu, 2015).

Those who promoted the BrandHK campaign also neglected to define the intended audience of these campaigns. Few participants had heard of the 'Faces of Hong Kong' campaign and in reference to the general attempt to brand Hong Kong's identity, one participant said: "A general rule of thumb is: if it's from the Hong Kong government, it sucks. Anything from policy to a mere sign on a building, they all suck." Talking specifically about the original dragon brand the participant went on to say, "so many people don't like it or they don't use it. The government used it because it was supposed to 'encourage us to bond together' but people think

that it is a tactic for distracting Hongkongers from their poor policies." Other participants shared similar sentiments to most government policies and attempts to control the territory's culture. The top-down approach to creating a brand after the identity crisis of the 1997 transition failed to capture the "sense of belonging" that had emerged organically during the 1970s as Hong Kong's residents began to see the city as home and not a stopping ground on the quest for better opportunity. It was not until the Umbrella Movement in 2014 that the people of Hong Kong were able to recapture that "sense of belonging" by creating and rearticulating new symbols that represented those who lived there and not a generic identity marketed to business and tourist interests.

In the quest to promote counter-cultural memories and identities, groups often attempt to implement shock value in order to reach and influence a greater number of people. Events and traditions from New Orleans' Carnival to Hong Kong's Chinese New Year celebration promote the city's culture in ways that often amplify the spectacle as a way to create an opportunity for tourism (Haskins, 2015). However, according to Debord (1995), the spectacle is more than creating an environment that entertains, the spectacle is society itself as well "as a *means of unification."*

> As part of society, it is the focal point of all vision and all consciousness. But due to the very fact that this sector is *separate,* it is in reality the domain of delusion and false consciousness; the unification it achieves is nothing but an official language of universal separation" (p. 7).

The cultural spectacle promoted for tourism, touted by a social movement to get global attention, or even the media pageantry of the Trump campaign is the same. Under this perspective, the

memory of a peaceful and unified Umbrella Movement perpetuates a false consciousness. We assume the Umbrella Movement was unified and peaceful because that is what the media spectacle promoted.[31] Participants did allude to more violent and anarchistic leaning factions when they discussed the atmospheres of the different protest sites. Media narratives do become a part of our collective memory of an event so much so that when Localists instigated the Fishball riots, people seemed to be shocked that such sentiments existed. The Localists are a product of the Umbrella Movement just as much as the symbols that promoted unity. The memory of unity promoted by Western media, and thus adopted as a major narrative by many residents, angered groups like the Localists who did not feel like the symbolism of unity described their experience[32].

The mainstream media coverage that overwhelms the occupation stage of major movements short-circuits the movement's ability to communicate its own symbolic exchange and reinforces "The society of the spectacle" mentality. "The symbolic rituals of mass mediated spectacles offer an affective idiom that appears to engender a common civic identity form public displays of sentiment during an era of widespread political polarities, conflicting more paradigms, and heterogeneous cultural traditions" (Vivian, 2010, p. 81). But as Vivian later points out, these public displays only appear to bring people together and promote an institutionalized view of memory like that of a unified social movement or a country united after a catastrophic event. Many participants acknowledged that there were factions or differing viewpoints expressed during the occupation, despite the Western media portrayals that generally

[31] Western media outlets promoted the idea that the movement was peaceful and unified; however, the Chinese media obviously depicted a very different version of accounts. Given that Western media generally has more agenda setting power, I went with the media narrative promoted by Western media and scholars given it was the one most widely accepted.

[32] More on how groups like the Localists used the memory of the movement will be discussed in chapter 4 with a more detailed explanation about the significance of violence.

promoted a unified movement. Like the us-versus-them temperament that was evoked to represent Hong Kong's feelings towards Mainlanders, name-calling and blaming was also prevalent among the different groups that became more prominent after the Umbrella Movement[33]. The complexities of these different identities were played out on social media, but rarely discussed by more traditional media outlets.

In contrast, the Mainland Chinese press depicted the movement as a rebellion, another unified vision, but different in the sense that it depicted a group of Hongkongers unified against the "superior" ideals of the Chinese motherland. Beijing and Hong Kong's Chief Executive C.Y. Leung, perpetuated a media spectacle in the Mainland that painted the Umbrella Movement as an aggressive attempt against Beijing's central government that played to the Mainland's paranoia of foreign power (Leung, 2014). The Mainland put forth a major effort to redefine the memory associated with their relationship to Hong Kong through various cultural and media events that promoted Hong Kong's ethnic origins. These efforts highlighted Hong Kong's Chinese origins over their British colonial legacy prior to the 1997 transition. Before the transition, the Mainland's relationship with the territory was one associated with the shame of the British Empire's dominance during the Opium Wars (Chu, 2013). The media has a major influence on how collective memory is constructed and disseminated and while the Western press evoked the memory of recent mass movements to promote global democratic causes, the Mainland used the memory of foreign paranoia to explain to Chinese citizens why there was unrest in Hong Kong.

The government's multiple attempts to "brand" Hong Kong's identity labor under the false premise that identity is "clear-cut and definite." Abbas (1997) offers another categorization that is more inclusive to the various identities that make Hong Kong a vibrant city. "A

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[33] For more on the names and insults that occurred as a result of factionalism, refer to the section on language and identity.

community, on the other hand, can include a number of different identities, and the concept provides more room for maneuver" (p. 117). The Umbrella Movement encouraged a sense of community that was not a singular brand or idea, but a movement that incorporated a multitude of different views and identities that all wanted to see a democratic Hong Kong. The mediated memory of the movement as a singular and unified event created a challenge for those who were inspired by the movement to embrace an identity that was different from the status quo. Like the economically oriented identity promoted by the BrandHK campaign, the unified character that was promoted by the Western media limited the complexities associated with the spirit of the memory. Young LGBTQ activists, who were promoting awareness for their cause in Tsim Sha Tsui during my second trip to Hong Kong, said they had been inspired by the Umbrella Movement and felt that the movement encouraged those with more specific causes to be more politically active. Unfortunately, they went on to say that people seemed to forget the sense of community that the Umbrella Movement had fostered. Immediately following the movement, one activist said that politicians and other groups were eager to promote the causes of smaller groups. But as time went on, this desire to help promote a more inclusive Hong Kong became political and politicians as well as more established activist groups would use causes as political bargaining chips.

Once average Hongkongers were interested in a political identity, it seemed that they resorted to what they knew best, promoting the Umbrella Movement as a singular idea. This singular movement identity ignored the interests of the smaller groups that had become inspired by the movement, believing that a democratic Hong Kong would help facilitate their causes as well. Smaller minority groups like the Filipino, Indian, and Pakistani populations also felt left out of this new Umbrella Movement identity. One Filipino activist said that they would continue

to fight for their own rights because they felt that the Umbrella Movement had become a cause for the ethnically Chinese Hongkongers. The various groups that were trying to brand Hong Kong's identity failed to recognize the importance of representing a diverse community. Smaller groups like the LGBTQ community; however, still seemed to be inspired by their memory of the Umbrella Movement, one that encouraged them to fight for their rights as members of a diverse Hong Kong community.

Given our world's obsession with the notion of transformation and the constant need to reconstruct and redefine collective identity, Nora (1989) believes there is little "real memory" left. Nora's sites of memory are meant to signify a break with the status quo, an event like a social movement will be remembered as a specific disruption during a specific moment in time. But to Nora, these memories are generally empty sites devoid of what he considers "natural" or "spontaneous." In the face of an identity for a nation, city, or even an event becoming branded or commodified, Nora's pessimism makes sense. Similarly, Sturken's (1997) account of the unveiling of the AIDS Quilt and her discussion of the mementos left at the Vietnam Memorial are forms of "participation […] contingent on the idea that the nation is listening." With new technology and the popularity of social media, the nation stops listening after the event is no longer entertaining. The artwork created during the Umbrella Movement helped to create the new identity for the people of Hong Kong, but like the mementos left at the Vietnam War Memorial, after a certain time, they were gathered up and put into storage.[34] Although the physical artifacts of participation were stored for a later date, most of those who had occupied public spaces for 79 days had shared pictures of these symbols online. However, with new technology the need to preserve or remember an event becomes so caught up in the construction

[34] See Chapter five for more information about archiving and the affect storing the protest art has had since the occupation ended.

of a sustainable identity that "everyone is his own historian" making it difficult to define a collective identity (Haskins, 2015). Once the spectacle of occupation dissipates, everyone who was involved and recorded their version of the event for the purposes of their own remembrance complicates the notion of what constitutes a collective memory. Yet while the spectacle may mask certain divisions, it does unify the nation, or in this case territory as an "audience." Understanding how technology influences the way the memory of a social movement is maintained and continues to be used to construct both individual and collective identities helps to look at the actual transformative power of a social movement.

Identity and Technology

Instead of the remnants of BrandHK's slogans strewn throughout the city, twenty years after the campaign was launched to promote Hong Kong's identity post transition, one can now learn about the campaign online. Despite the campaign's failed attempts to promote a successful brand in 1997, the promise of new technology has revived the campaign with a new slogan: "Together, Progress, Opportunity." Two years after the Umbrella Movement and twenty years after the reunification with the Mainlaind, Hong Kong's Education Bureau, the Information Services Department of the government, and the *South China Morning Post* are encouraging Hongkongers to enter a poster design and video competition:

> As we grow up, each day presents a new opportunity to learn and to thrive. And so it is with this city we call home, ceaselessly reinventing itself over time while spawning many men and women of talent. Now, in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR, the Information Services Department is organizing a poster design competition and a video competition

> to explore how Hong Kong can better itself even further. So get your creative juices flowing and tell us your aspirations for this great city in your own talented way (hksar20.gov.hk, n. d.).[35]

The call to "get your creative juices flowing" reiterated the quest to highlight Hong Kong's cultural capital at the turn of the century and embrace the territory's cultural industries, a project that began prior to the Umbrella Movement. Designers and other creative industry personnel, having very few opportunities to find employment in Hong Kong had begun to move North to seek employment and in 2007, ten years after the transition, the government attempted to promote the creative industries in Hong Kong as a way to preserve "cultural heritage" and create employment opportunities" (Chu, 2013). Twenty years later, knowing the creative potential of many of the citizens, thanks to the creative works produced during the occupation, it seems that the Government is once again attempting to channel Hong Kong's creative industry to redefine the territory's identity in a positive, pro-trade frame.

Even though the deadline to submit a poster or video is April 2017, so far it would appear that this attempt to brand Hong Kong using a top-down approach will be no different than past efforts. When asked about the new campaign, one participant said, "No one cares, no one pays attention to them and people are watching television less these days anyway." A few of the participants had mentioned that they had never seen the 'Faces of Hong Kong' campaign on television. Most would go on to say they had stopped watching television because it had become increasingly more influenced by Beijing. But this raised an important query related to the question of "who are these campaigns for?" The 'Faces of Hong Kong' videos can be found online, but none of the videos had a view count above 300 and most were in the 100 to 200

[35] Competition information retrieved from http://www.hksar20.gov.hk/eng/poster.html

range. Many of the campaign's early promotional events have highlighted projects done by younger elementary students. Instead of attempting to promote a campaign geared at the demographic of individuals who were involved in the Umbrella Movement, mainly upper-level secondary and university students, it would appear that the government's new tactic follows the same logic of their effort to reform the educational system in 2013, get them while they are young.

The Umbrella Movement did manage to embrace the creativity of Hong Kong's residents. Pictures of the art created during the occupation were taken and disseminated on social media sites like Facebook and Pinterest, but the preservation of these creative artifacts did little to promote creativity falling into the same position as the government's attempt to promote the cultural industries back in 2008. Ultimately, the products promote a generic depiction of the city that fails to capture any real sense of Hong Kong's true identity. The images captured during the Umbrella movement, along with the calls to produce a new campaign to mark the twentieth anniversary of reunification, evoke the memory of Debord's (1995) spectacle. "Fragmented views of reality regroup themselves into a new unity as a separate pseudo-world that can only be looked at. The specialization of images of the world evolved into a world of autonomized images" (p. 7). Digital technologies seem to help facilitate the magnitude of the spectacle, while at the same time helping to facilitate a sense of community that persists during the movement. Technology's role as a tool that fosters the conservation of memory is just as complex as the understanding of memory itself. Controlling a message was easier for existing power structures at the height of television or radio's prominence under the one-to-many dissemination platform; however, with new digital technologies the ability to use specific messages to construct individual and group identities has become more diffuse. "The passage from memory to history

has required every social group to redefine its identity through the revitalization of its own history" (Nora, 1989, p. 15). Memory has, in a sense, become more individualized now that everyone is able to record their feelings and views. The process of sharing information online does offer an interesting counter to this idea in the sense that the very notion of "sharing" alludes to a collective symbol; however, given the amount of sharing that does occur online, it becomes difficult to single out the symbols that could become the most relevant to helping to establish a sense of collective memory.

With the advancement of new technologies, society is constantly attempting to reconfigure the role of technology in promoting messages. The creation of more portable cameras made the photography of concentration camps at the end of WWII easier to obtain and disseminate leaving the newspaper industry to reconsider the role of images as opposed to words in the recollection of horrific events (Zelizer, 1998). Today, social media seems to be at the center of this discussion of what constitutes news as more individuals are receiving information through sites like Facebook than ever before. Technological advancement is a component of Hong Kong's local and even global identity. The train that runs from the airport to the heart of the city has USB hubs at each seat so that individuals can charge their cell phones. Even sitting on the MTR (Hong Kong's subway system), it is hard not to notice elderly individuals playing Candy Crush on their mobile devices. Regardless of age, gender, or political beliefs, technology is an integral component in the lives of Hong Kong residents and helps to reinforce the territory's identity as a modern economically thriving city. Hong Kong boasts the highest percentage of those using smartphones to browse the Internet in Asia. More than 50% of Hong Kong's population uses Facebook with more than 3.1 million of those users logging on daily and spending an average of 30 minutes on the site. While Whatsapp is the most popular social media

platform in Hong Kong, Facebook is a close second (Bishady & Fze, 2015). A survey conducted in 2014 by market researchers found that of the 1,068 respondents surveyed, 44% acknowledged that they learned about breaking news stories from Facebook. Like many other countries, more individuals are obtaining their news from social media sites, which has a profound influence on the increasing polarization of political identities, an issue that seems to be the biggest obstacle to preserving movement momentum in the wake of occupation.

Facebook has said that their site has no political allegiance, yet in the United States, Facebook will actually categorize your political beliefs based on what pages you have liked (Merrill, 2016). A professor at Hong Kong University stated that Facebook was bipolar. In one sense, Facebook serves as a "marker of solidarity," but the social media platform can also serve as a "marker to mark out this us and them; the we and they." The professor, agreeing with many others who study the role technology plays in shaping political identities, said that technology does make it easier for individuals to get more involved in the political process, creating a more "vibrant and energetic" political environment. Technologies like Facebook do help people "connect with like-minded individuals" and the professor even credited Facebook with helping to jumpstart the Umbrella Movement. In another interview with a retired teacher and his former student, both claimed that Facebook was an integral part to their news gathering activities as well as how they stayed connected to friends and family. Facebook was the platform that was most discussed by the individuals I interviewed regardless of age and political leanings. But it is also important to consider that Facebook profiles are carefully crafted personas that do not always lend themselves to creating genuine relationships nor are these constructed online identities necessarily grounded in memory. (Beck, 2014).

Although Facebook can engage people with news and provide them a platform to exchange photos and share memories, the challenge for activists employing the use of these new technologies is to channel these individual personas into a collective identity focused on a sustainable cause once the movement has ended. A university student praised Facebook's ability to promote individual identities and voices:

> People using Facebook can create their own page and this allows a broader spectrum of thinking and voices. And this is a good thing in Hong Kong because the mainstream media is biased towards the Chinese, but the pages on Facebook aren't. They can allow for really independent criticisms.

However, while Facebook may counteract the bias of mainstream media in Hong Kong, the social media platform often contributes to concerns regarding online political identity. José (2012) warns against the openness attributed to social networking sites like Facebook. "The popularity of social networking sites, particularly the popularity of *Facebook* [emphasis added by author], makes it increasingly difficult to develop a *contingent self* that embraces and exhibits doubt, flexibility and uncertainty about the world around us" (p. 2). Social Networking sites generally confirm pre-existing political ideologies and rarely present contingent viewpoints. If individuals in Hong Kong do not trust mainstream media because they feel that the content favors the perspectives of the Mainland, it is likely that they will turn to social media and consume media that supports their preconceived biases.

The notion that technology can create political polarity or distort the creation of memory is not novel. The push to remember the Holocaust was so pervasive that denying the genocide's existence became a form of alternate representation for extreme groups. Questioning the

authenticity of photography gave deniers a venue to challenge the claims that atrocities were perpetrated by the Nazi regime (Zelizer, 1998). Today, the equivalent of photographic authenticity is the prominence of fake news on social media. While the Trump presidency brought this issue to the forefront, false news accounts were rampant during the Umbrella Movement and continued to be an issue following the end of occupation. Many participants mentioned that government and police officials would join online message groups to spread false meeting locations or circulate fake messages in an attempt to disrupt the movement's organizational structure. After the movement, Chinese officials, attempting to tarnish the reputation of the pro-democracy politicians, claimed that the group was helping "fake refuges." Questionable surveys with statistics like "80 percent of Hongkongers believe there is a need for increased cooperation with Mainland authorities" seemed counter to the statistical data released by Hong Kong University's Identity attitudes data[36] (Cheung, 2016). One group that created a strong online identity were known as the golden guys or keyboard fighters. During the occupation, they were seen as the technological heroes of the Umbrella Movement. A year after the movement ended, one participant described the group as a shy collection of individuals who did not generally socialize well in public, but during the movement stepped up to help expose police and political wrongdoings. A member of Scholarism, an influential student activist group, acknowledged the group's importance in breaking though mainstream media censorship. One year after the movement the golden guys were still considered heroes; however, two years later, this group had gained a reputation for being online bullies. What was once considered heroic, releasing the personal information of police officers who beat participants and politicians who were openly against political change, were now considered to be extremists who favored

[36] Cooperation was based on that specific issue and not cooperation in general.

Localists politics. A social media specialist working on a political campaign even mentioned that the golden guys had their own language spoken amongst their netizen community. The same individual who had praised the group a year before had formed a different opinion when asked about the group two years later. "They blame everything on the pan-democrats, they blame the old guard for not achieving progress. [The golden guys] are not trying to inform, they're just complaining, they're just pointing fingers; the keyboard fighters are not considerate." Although technology can bring people together and serve as a catalyst for a movement, it can also create a space for those who wish to promote alternative views that may hinder or distort the memory of the original cause in a way that impedes progress. One individual with technological skills can change how many people remember a moment.

Hongkongers have always been leery with regards to sources of information. One participant said that early in the occupation, fake reports were common. She said that police or other "trolls" would spread false information on WhatsApp about attacks happening on the frontline. At first, these had proven to be successful in creating a sense of chaos that helped to break-up the unified environment. However, the participant said that knowing that the opposition was using this as a tactic to cause disorder, they would rely on multiple sources of information like word of mouth or material from sources that were more trust worthy before acting on information. One of the most common complaints raised by many of my participants was that television information was untrustworthy because television in Hong Kong was funded by "red money," money from the Mainland. There was already a healthy skepticism associated with trusted news sources and the Umbrella Movement did seem to heighten this awareness.

While Polleta and Jasper, (2001) argue that the act of participation in a social movement can change one's identity after the fact, they also present the chicken and egg scenario as it

pertains to what came first, society or the individual. The memory of particular events, even those remembered on the individual level help to form the fabric of collective and group memories that are pluralistic. However, the level at which events are recorded and preserved on the individual level does seem to hinder the promotion of a collective identity and the collective memory of the event after occupation. Like the photographs of the Holocaust that have become place holders to represent our understanding of all acts of genocide from Rwanda to Syria (Zelizer, 1998), photographs of occupied social movements seem to be the stand in for further action. Although technology can influence the memories of a social movement that are used to construct personal and individual identities, its ability to influence ethnic identity is also essential, especially in the case of Hong Kong where 90% of the population is ethnically Han Chinese.

Redefining Hong Kong's Ethnic Memory

Ethnic identity, especially in the context of Hong Kong where there is a tense relationship with the Mainland's authority, is tied to memory. Memory is articulated through processes of representation (Sturken, 1997, p. 9). At the time of Hong Kong's transition, approximately ten percent of the population held foreign passports, mostly businessmen who claimed the documents were "a matter of convenience." Hong Kong's businessmen were willing to do business with the Mainland, but they were not willing to be subsumed under the umbrella of Chinese nationality (Ong, 1999). Hong Kong occupies a multitudinous space where identities are constructed by the market economy and the territory's Western colonial legacy, in addition to possessing linguistic and cultural roots tied to Mainland China. "History (or memory) is the central part of identity that allows a person or a group to understand themselves as maintaining particular characteristics over time. It is at the core of national ideologies for just this reason"

(Cohen, 1999, p. 10). One of the goals of the Umbrella Movement was to push back against the Mainland's authority over the region; therefore, an understanding of how Hongkongers remember and articulate their "ethnic" identity after the movement helps to unpack the potential legacies of occupation.

The Hong Kong government's push to promote an economic identity was not enough to influence an entire population. However, those who were doing well did seem to be more willing to accept China as the "motherland." One young professional said they did not care who was in charge so long as they were making money. Much like the millennial generation in the United States, the capitalistic policies that helped the generation before the millennials has waned, demolishing similar opportunities for those entering the workforce in today's economic atmosphere. Many from this younger generation have blamed the Mainland for the latest economic downturn and as a result have attempted to distance themselves from their ethnic roots despite Beijing's attempt to ensure that this connection remains strong. During the countdown to the 1997 transition, Chinese corporations based in Hong Kong played an important role in facilitating a positive image of the relationship to the Mainland, an image of cooperation that is still endorsed by the promotion of the HKSAR 20th anniversary poster and video projects. Various campaigns that taught residents about their "old" motherland utilized mainstream media and other cultural events to promote the territory's Chinese ethnicity as a way to erase the memory of British colonialism[37] (Ren, 2010; Chu, 2013). Chinese-owned corporations made a grand show to invest in educational programs that presented China in a positive light. These corporations played a "pedagogical role" that was meant to train Hong Kong residents to view

[37] The Mainland did not view these narratives of connecting the Mainland as new, but rather focused on the historical connections. Hong Kong was often portrayed as part of the Mainland's dynastic history. The territory was just returning to its real home as opposed to being passed to a new sovereign power (Ren, 2010; Chu, 2013; Chu, 2015).

themselves as Chinese. The campaign, run by the Chinese government, also attempted to promote strong ethnic connections to other overseas Chinese residents including those living in Macau and Taiwan in an effort to get wealthy immigrants to invest in the Chinese economy (Ren, 2010). If Hong Kong were economically prosperous thanks to Mainland influence, perhaps they would feel more Chinese, or so those in Beijing had hoped.

China has attempted to control their image by promoting their economic rise as peaceful. Taiwan, sharing a similar skepticism towards the Mainland's soft power, has met these campaigns with trepidation. One reason may be China's continued threats to use military power, which was also a cause for concern during the Umbrella Movement considering the parallels to the 1989 Tiananmen student protests. In an article published about cultural identity and Asian perceptions of China's rise to power, Hong Kong was excluded, "since it is not a sovereign state and not applicable in [a] country-level analysis" (Huang & Chu, 2015, p. 424). Beyond the notion of sovereignty, some Hongkongers do express similar sentiments with regards to China's power as Taiwan and Mongolia, who are discussed in the survey. One's cultural identity does not necessarily reflect the sovereignty of the geographic location they inhabit. Ong referencing Dieter (1999) writes, "In this world of high modernity[], national and ethnic identities 'become distinctly different entities, while at the same time, international frontiers become increasingly insignificant as such" (p. 2). Mainland and Hong Kong authorities pushed to promote a modern, economically prosperous identity; therefore, Hong Kong's disregard of the primary ethnic background as an identifying characteristic, in the wake of the Umbrella Movement, follows the modern metropolitan identity China had originally promoted. Although Hong Kong may not be a sovereign nation, Cohen (1999), echoing Haas, defines nationalism as "an ideology that rationalizes or gives meaning to a modernizing society" (p. 26). Within the context of Cohen

and Haas's definition, a modern Hong Kong identity does not need to include a connection to their ethnicity. "Whatever political ideology is competing can be nationalist insofar as it represents who the nation ought to be and how to achieve that self-image" (Cohen, 1999, p. 26). The rise of Localists sentiments and a rejection of ethnic heritage is a form of nationalism that adheres to the identity originally promoted by Beijing and Hong Kong authorities.

The memory of China's own nationality offers an interesting parallel with regards to the inclusion of ethnicity. China has also gone through periods where they struggled to define an identity based on ethnicity. Indeed, their history is fraught with dynasties comprised of outside rulers like the Mongolians. As a result, China's "traditional" cultural memory was based more on Confucian power structures that favored elite scholars. Writing about Confucius' role in Chinese memory Zhang and Schwartz (1997) write, "Chinese consciousness is not inflexible, but it is highly stable and this is why studying it, we gain knowledge of how collective memory resists social changes that would elsewhere induce its reconstruction" (p. 205). Confucianism, one of China's core cultural traditions, defends the status quo favoring those in power. Kublai Khan famously adopted many of China's traditions including the principles of Confucianism as a way to demonstrate that he was a "Chinese" leader (Rossabi, 1988). The CCP integrated Confucianism similarly as a means to promote their own ideologies as "Chinese." Although China has tried to use ethnicity as a way to define Hong Kong as "Chinese," such categorizations are obviously more complicated. For the Mainland, reclaiming Hong Kong and invigorating the Chinese identity among Hongkongers has more to do with establishing the status quo of their "traditional" empire, returning to their status of power prior to the "great humiliation" of the Opium War than an ethnic connection (Matten, 2011; Zhang & Schwartz, 1999). In some respects, the localists, who have been known to wave the flag of Hong Kong's period as a British

Colony, have evoked a similar memory of tradition over ethnicity; but instead of connecting with their ethnic identity, they have attached their identity to another form of tradition that favored the status quo of those in power: British colonialism. While one may be able to evade ethnicity as a foundational marker for national identities, it is difficult to avoid all traces of cultural memory in any modern construction of identity.

The trend towards linking ethnic identity to nationalism seems to be a global phenomenon. Talking to Americans who also travel or who have lived abroad, the prospects of a Trump presidency permeates conversations relating to conceptualizing what it means to be a U.S. citizen. Such identity markers in today's international environment carry a sense of shame. After many of my interviews, I was often asked about the political situation in my own country often followed by the phrase "what are Americans thinking?" A similar mentality seems to be present among the young professionals I spoke to with regards to their "Chinese identity." The distinctions between being "Chinese" or a "Hongkonger" as shown in Figure 3.1, show that this identity is constantly shifting. Like those U.S. citizens who struggle to rationalize their U.S. identity, those in Hong Kong also grapple with identity politics. The notion of a "national" identity is so complex for Hongkongers, that when asked if they identified as Chinese, one participant simply said, "maybe." However, when they were asked for their nationality on travel documents they would write Hong Kong.[38] One individual in his mid-twenties, who had just traveled to Tibet, talked about how nationality distinctions seemed to upset Chinese Mainlanders. On his trip, one Mainlander told him that she was upset that Hongkongers treated "China as something very foreign." Defending his choice of nationality selection, he said, "but when you

[38] Most of the younger participants mentioned that they listed Hong Kong as their nationality on official forms.

cross the border, everything is just different." His friend, who was also part of the conversation, jumped in to add that the law was also different and the Mainland was more polluted, a comment that prompted laughs around the table where the conversation was taking place. Similar to the discussion of language, the more the Mainland tries to control the narrative and historical memories of Hong Kong, the more it seems people try to resist.

Twice a year, Hong Kong University conducts phone interviews with approximately one-thousand Cantonese speaking Hong Kong residents ages 18 and above. As Figure 3.1 shows, most residents who participate in the study have generally preferred the label Hongkonger or Hongkonger in China. One reason might be related to the emotional and linguistic characteristics of the territory. The overall consensus among the younger participants I talked with was that identifying as a Hongkonger had to do with how you feel about the place, "it's an emotional connection." A young lawyer said they would consider any individual who could speak Cantonese a Hongkonger, a position that would include the Pakistani and Filipino minority populations who were able to speak Cantonese. Hong Kong's minority populations would be less likely to identify with a Chinese ethnicity. Making generalizable claims based on this survey data is difficult, and since the Umbrella Movement, identity attitudes have more or less stayed the same. Interestingly, the most significant identity fluctuation occurred around 2008 when Beijing hosted the Olympic games. Even though Hong Kong athletes compete for Hong Kong as opposed to the Chinese National team, Hong Kong did host the equestrian events, which signified that Hong Kong, at least geographically was a part of China. Many participants said that they did feel a sense of pride during the 2008 Olympic games but once the games ended, this feeling of connection wavered. Sporting events are a grand display of nation branding from Hitler's 1936 Olympic games to the modern iterations of the games held in Beijing, Sochi, and

most recently Brazil (Chernin, 2015; Aronczyk, 2013). Hong Kong's identity does seem to have an emotional component, which may possibly be linked to particular events; however, it seems that overtime, identity construction has remained relatively constant.

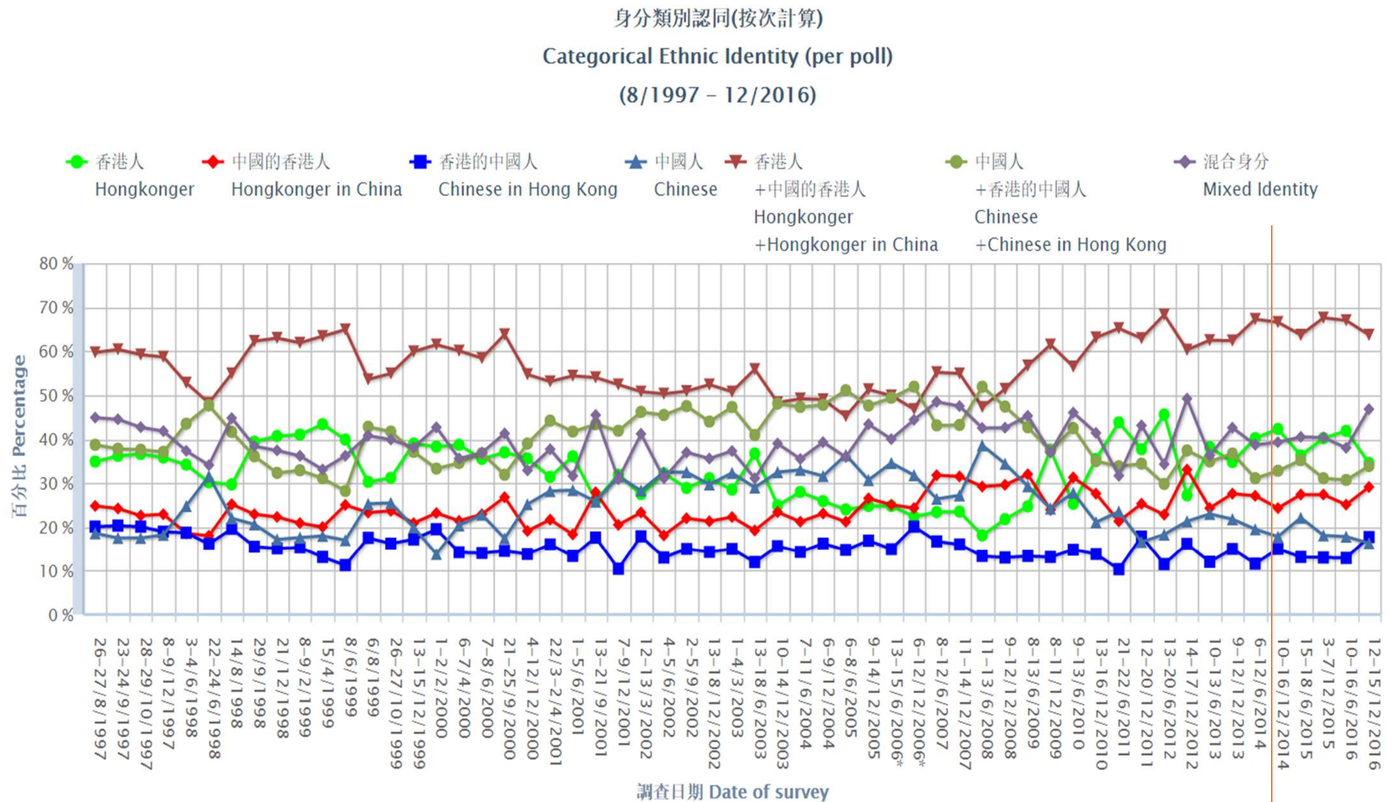

Figure 3.1: *Survey data from Hong Kong University's bi-yearly identity study. The red line marks where the Umbrella Movement occurred*[39]

For some participants, identifying with standard Chinese ethnicity is seen as ignoring the history of British colonialism, thus erasing a significant part of Hong Kong's cultural memory. A member of Scholarism mentioned that he preferred British rule because they ruled with

[39] For more information on how the survey is conducted and the data is analyzed go to the University of Hong Kong's Public Opinion Programme website at. https://www.hkupop.hku.hk/english/index.html. The figure was used for description and not statistical relevance as it would be a fallacy to interpret group level data as evidence of individual level change. The chart is used to demonstrate that identity characteristics do seem to remain relatively constant and that the spikes in one identity do not really match up with any significant event.

democratic principles. Critics of Said's view of Orientalism viewed his theory with hesitance because of the promotion of nationalism. "This is a process of selective memory where acts committed by Oriental subjects, such as the violence at the time of Patrician, are overlooked in an attempt to establish the greater evil of the power of Orientalism that has made the Oriental inferior" (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 1999, p. 79). Although the comment from the Scholarism student depicts the opposite scenario, there does seem to be a selective memory with regards to any negativity with British rule. For some, there is no recollection of negativity associated with British Colonialism, the only oppressor has been China. While a few of the post-movement messages spread online were clearly jokes, a growing movement in support of returning to British rule did gain momentum after the Umbrella Movement.[40] Hong Kong's relationship with control is unique. In a discussion of the Gauls and French memory, Pomain (1996) writes, "broad consensus had held that nationality and culture are inseparable" (p. 76). One's nationality is based on their relationship to the state, while ethnicity is racial and cultural. Given the rationale that nationality and culture are essentially fused, Hongkongers who do believe that there is a unique Hong Kong culture, would have to decide whether or not that culture is attributable to China, the United Kingdom, or something that is purely Hong Kong. The current Hong Kong is akin to other regionalist movements. While regionalism can lead to separatist movements, they are more commonly a push to preserve a nostalgic tradition (Agulhon, 2001). The Localists faction is divided into those who were nostalgic for British rule and those who want genuine freedom; however, most Hong Kong residents just want the autonomy granted to them by the "one country, two systems" policy. To many of the individuals I spoke with, Hong

[40] According to Neil Connor, a reporter for *The Telegraph,* Beijing is actually threatening to use a law created during British rule to curtail the localism movements that support the return to British rule. The laws were originally used to target those who collaborated with and supported the Japanese in the 1940s and pro-Mao communists during the Cultural Revolution.

Kong was more than a Special Autonomous Region (SAR). Some participants even corrected me when I used this classification noting that they preferred to be labeled a jurisdiction[41]. Hong Kong is a global city comprised of individuals who are not all ethnically Chinese; the Mainland's attempt to connect Hong Kong's culture with Chinese nationalism has met pushback.

"A Hongkonger Speaks Cantonese"

Since ethnicity complicates the separation of Hong Kong and Chinese identities, language became central for Hongkongers who were trying to focus on preserving and articulating their conception of a Hong Kong identity. An examination of the signs that were displayed during the occupation highlights writing in English or Cantonese (traditional characters) and not the simplified characters used by Mandarin speakers in the Mainland. Language, of course, can be a stabilizing element or location for cultural memory and is tied to various institutional structures from education to politics (Agulhon, 2001). At its best, because it is the means through which individuals express themselves, language serves as the basis for a shared sense of self.; at its worst, language can divide like-minded individuals (Acocella, 2016). Language is a defining characteristic of what it means to be a Hongkonger. Many of the individuals I spoke with highlighted the importance of Cantonese as part of Hong Kong's cultural identity. Language is an important factor in relation to identity because as Burke (1989) notes, language is symbolic and these symbols are in turn used to help identify particular groups. The situations that produce certain environments are important because these conditions are repetitive. Situations may be distinct, yet there is often something common in the way these conversations or environments are generalized (Burke, 1989). Carey (1989), also recognized the

[41] The individual who first brought this up, and translated the word into Cantonese so I would be able to address the subtly with other participants, was a lawyer who said jurisdiction was a better way to represent the unique legal situation in Hong Kong. A jurisdiction is allowed to create and enact their own legal system or form of rule, but sovereignty belongs to a different power.

importance of language stating that, “language—the fundamental medium of human life—is increasingly defined as an instrument for manipulating objects, not a device to establish the truth but to get others to believe what we want them to believe” (p. 64). The language we use to articulate cultural memories are important to the construction of our identities as citizens and individuals. In Hong Kong, language is even more important because it also holds important cultural significance.

Cantonese is one of the most significant identity markers for the residents of Hong Kong. Although the language may follow a similar writing structure, phonetically, the spoken dialect is very different from Mandarin spoken in the Mainland. A member of the activist group Scholarism said that, “to be a Hongkonger is to speak Cantonese.” He went on to say that even though Cantonese is commonly spoken in Guangdong, a Southern province of China, it is different because there, Cantonese is mixed with Mandarin. The Scholarism activist believed that the characteristics of the Hong Kong people could be found within their language, stating that when Mainlanders spoke Mandarin it sounded vulgar, Cantonese sounded more civilized. “Hong Kong people are more polite [sic], they don’t shout in public or pee on the floor in parks. We’re more aware of space than Mainlanders.” While many languages in former territories were phased out and *lingua francas* became tools of international trade, Cantonese was allowed to flourish in Hong Kong. Language has always been an important aspect of Hong Kong’s identity as a linguistics professor notes:

> The British were happy to see the local people not seeing themselves as Chinese during British colonial rule, they didn’t want for Hong Kong people to see themselves as Mainlanders or descendants of Mainlanders even though they are. So the British colonial people

> and government adopted a laissez-faire attitude that allowed Cantonese to have a space to grow, that is let it be. That is to say that the [British colonial] government never said that Cantonese cannot be heard or used in the public sphere.

As many languages have become standardized in the name of national unity and global trade, Cantonese was left to develop organically. Kongish, a hybrid of English and Cantonese, became an important element for Hong Kong's cultural identity and an important cultural memory for those living in the territory.

With the Chinese government exerting a more standardized notion of identity on the territory, the preservation of Cantonese and its Kongish hybrid, has become a growing concern. When the CCP took over the Mainland in 1949, the government standardized Mandarin in the name of national unity. The purpose for creating a universal writing system and spoken dialect was meant to promote a higher literacy rate among those had not received a formal education under the former dynastic regime (Wasserstrom, 1991), but it was also a form of control. Standardizing languages and even historical narratives became the cornerstone of many new political regimes in an attempt to create a shared national ideology that would help to preserve political legitimacy. The former territories of the Soviet Block were forced to speak and learn Russian, often eliminating local languages. "While history can be shared without sharing language, language without history does not provide the same bond" (Cohen, 1999, p. 29). We often take for granted the origin of languages, but understanding a language's history is important in relation to how collective memory is maintained and constructed. Cantonese and more specifically Kongish has been an essential component of Hong Kong's cultural identity. In

the absence of a shared national personality, language was one of the few things that made Hong Kong culturally distinct.

Kongish, a hybrid dialect that combines English and Cantonese is unique to Hong Kong. Kongish is not new, but as one participant noted, “more attention and more grassroots organizations are getting set up and being concerned about it. That part is new.” Facebook pages like *KongishDaily,* are devoted to promoting the hybridized language. The mission statement of *KongishDaily's* Facebook page reads: “The site is founded bcoz we want to collect relly research how people say Kongish by looking at everyone ge replies, including you and me, and share this finding to all people who think Chinglish=Kongish. But actcholly, Kongish hai more creative, more flexible, and more functional ge variety” (Kongish Daily, n.d.).[42] The “typos” demonstrate the distinct characteristics of the language, and as the statement says, the flexibility of the language. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the mission statement is that Kongish is not the same as Chinglish, the hybridized dialect that combines English and Mandarin. The statement shows that preserving and understanding Kongish is an important part of conserving a part of Hong Kong's distinctiveness and highlights the importance of language as a relevant feature of cultural memory.

Localists groups have also highlighted the importance of preserving Cantonese in light of China's attempts to push Mandarin language education. In a video released by *The Economist* Edward Leung, a prominent pro-independence figure said, “The Beijing authority and the Hong Kong government are eroding our culture, which is the essence of our identity. For most of our schools in Hong Kong, more and more classes are using Mandarin to teach Chinese but Mandarin is not our mother tongue. Our mother tongue should be Cantonese” (*Economist*,

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[42]Quote taken from the “about” on the organization's Facebook Page. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/KongishDaily/about/?ref=page_internal

2017). In response, Leung's counterpart Holden Chow, a pro-Beijing politician said, "To my understanding right now, it's not compulsory for the school to use Mandarin to teach Chinese. It's up to the school to choose the curriculum themselves." (*Economist*, 2017). Preserving language is a political act. As Beijing has standardized their own Mandarin dialects, Hong Kong's preservation has been viewed as a way to protect the territory's cultural identity.

The Cantonese dialect spoken in Hong Kong is interesting because it represents a living memory of Hong Kong's multicultural history. Given Nora's (1989) belief that the "acceleration of history" has created distinctions between "real memory—social and unviolated" and our modern conception of memory as a means to organize the past, Cantonese in Hong Kong could be classified as the later. A Hong Kong linguistics professor said that the need to categorize and understand has thwarted the natural evolution of languages. In an effort to stop Hongkongers from identifying with the Mainland during the British occupation of the region, the British managed to facilitate the "unviolated" evolution of Hong Kong's language. "The point is that when the speaker and the listener, when they're interacting, when they're communicating, they're not saying 'okay now I'm switching to code B, now I'm switching back to code A," stated the linguistics professor. "We're not doing that; We're just using all of these resources in our communicative tool kit." The diversity and flexibility of this tool kit is a key component of Hong Kong's current political and cultural evolution. Hong Kong's lack of a definable national identity and its position as an urban territory with diverse cultural roots has produced a more heightened understanding of the importance of language's fluidity that many former colonial powers seem to take for granted. It is now more common to discuss the phenomenon of trans-languages as opposed to code mixing. "It's just an evolving language. So, it's natural, any language will go through this process when a society has become multifarious, that is, you have

people coming into contact from all directions. Then your language evolves to meet with new communicative needs." Even those participants who were not linguistic experts discussed the importance of language with regards to Hong Kong's collective identity.

Prior to the Mainland's push to initiate new educational reforms that would aim to promote more Mandarin-based learning, Cantonese in Hong Kong had flourished in a "social and unviolated way" (Nora, 1989; Chong & Tam, 2012). Hong Kong's Cantonese dialect had developed in an organic environment without any attempt to change or preserve the complexities of the evolving cultural element. The linguistics professor emphasized the claim that we often assume that languages are static and that this assumption is often accepted because some political entity pushed to standardize a language. As the Western world came into contact with different cultures and languages, a new fascination with "otherness" emerged. From a Western scholarly position, this relationship between language and racial identity grew into the field of anthropology. The new curiosity with "other" cultures and languages during the expansion of Western power in the 1800s created the conditions for more homogenization and less diversity both linguistically and culturally. Speaking on the rise of Western interest in the structure of "Oriental" languages, Ascroft and Ahluwalia (1999) state that, "what gave these disciplines their dynamism and urgency, at least in the beginning, was the need to explain the apparent historical connections between Europe and its Oriental forebearers" (p. 59). Essentially the need to historicize a language or the means to understand something divergent from the norm was often what destroyed linguistic differences. The attempt to push more Mandarin-based learning is similar in that it is another attempt to control communications. Whether the control is educational or political, it still has the ability to push language away from being an element of lived memory. Hong Kong was perhaps one of the few places where such memory still existed

and now that too is under siege by the Mainland's reforms and the new desire to preserve the remnants of their language. The attempts to protect the language may change the nature of it as being something lived to something externalized; however, without such preservation, Kongish like many other regional languages faces the threat of oblivion. In Hong Kong's "disappearing" culture an external memory is better than nothing and may even help to promote an identity of resistance.

Cantonese is still a creative language despite recent threats that would lead to homogenization and thus control. Slang continues to remain a key identity marker for many Hongkongers and online forums discussing the significance and cultural background of new and old slang are common. In the period following the Umbrella Movement, one of the most common slang terms has been "locusts," a derogatory term that refers to recent immigrants and tourists from the Mainland. The term was around prior to the occupation, but its popularity has increased with the rise of Localists groups. James Bang an activist who participated in the Umbrella Movement was quoted in the *Financial Times* saying, "It's been festering since Occupy." It is quite ugly… [The demonstrators] are not racist, horrible people but they feel like they've been ignored and trampled on and had their country taken away from them" (Tsang, 2015). Although Hong Kong slang is interesting and an important cultural element, not all aspects are necessarily positive. However, the fact that there is a derogatory term for Mainlanders is not surprising given the tensions.

I am More Hong Kong than You: Memory and Immigration

Nora's (1989) discussion of *lieux de memoire* or "sites" of memory claims that the end of traditional society and the rise of a more globalized world has eroded "the quintessential repository of collective memory." Memory in post-colonial societies is transformed by a

"process of interior decolonization [that] has affected ethnic minorities, families, and groups that until now have possessed reserves of memory but little or no historical capital" (p.7). Media has helped facilitate the rise of a more "democratized" memory, and while social media does allow disenfranchised groups to have more of a voice than they had in the past, it has also led to bigotry and factionalism. Although terms like locust are a part of Hong Kong's "lived" memory in the sense that they are tied to language, the term did become more prevalent online. "Locusts" is a prime example of the difficulties that arise when one tries to externalize lived memory. *KongishDaily*'s Facebook page tended to be a mediated space more conducive to preserving the "lived" nature of Cantonese. Other sites like "Hong Kong & China NOT the Same 中港大不同" tend to emphasize and harbor more "extreme" locations. The Facebook page claims that their "group seeks to elucidate the differences between Hong Kong and China to the rest of the world" (Hong Kong & China not Same, n.d.). Mediated locations of memory can potentially facilitate an environment conducive to living memory if done appropriately, but other mediated locations can twist the same memory into something counterproductive. Although not all social media helped to facilitate extreme views, Localists groups have used the Umbrella Movement as a tool to target Mainland tourists and immigrants.

A Hong Kong professor, reflecting on the influence of the Umbrella Movement, noted that "the movement only fueled the trend towards more Hongkongness." Connections to the Mainland have fluctuated over the years and the professor said that for a time, Hong Kong residents had been more accepting of a Chinese identity. After 1997, China's economy began to show promise and the nation was becoming a more influential global entity. The apex of favorability towards China came in 2008 with the Beijing Olympic Games; however, the 2008 financial crisis hit shortly after, affecting the economies of China and subsequently Hong Kong.

Faith in China's ability to maintain a stable economy, while also allowing Hong Kong to remain autonomous began to waiver. The professor eventually concluded: "I think the Umbrella Movement and other movements towards localism just add to that decline. It has been going on since 2008, long before the Umbrella Movement." A similar nationalistic movement also fueled the success of Trump's campaign. In the face of economic inequality, emotions rise and the quest to find some entity to blame is exacerbated by social media polarization that can occur in times of tension (Iyengar & Hahn, 2009; Sustein, 2009).

Immigration seems to be one of the more prominent factors associated with identity construction in times of political upheaval. The memory of past immigration stories gets lost or ignored as, rhetorically, current immigration concerns becomes the central cause for what has gone wrong. Governments with failing economies have always seemed to blame foreign populations residing within their boundaries. France's historical understanding of the revolution is explained "with historical amnesia." "The myth of origin that was built upon the events of the Revolution made it impossible for "foreigners" to have a place in the collective memory of the nation" (Noirel, 1996, p. 151). The same is true with Trump's "build the wall" rhetoric. Although Hong Kong may not have the same "national" status as France or the United States, a similar xenophobia has emerged in the wake of the Umbrella Movement. A linguistics professor said that you notice a lot of unnecessary claims to Hong Kong's identity with the rise of Hong Kong's localism movements. Residents argue about who is more local depending on how long their families have lived in the territory. Like France, Hong Kong's immigration story has not been "a legitimate object of national memory" (Noiriel, 1996). During British Colonial rule, Hong Kong was viewed as a place of temporality, where Mainlanders went to work and make money, but not to live permanently. After 1997, China did not acknowledge the story of

immigration due to their stance that Hong Kong was always Chinese (Abbas, 1997; Chu, 2013). Yet given the attitude towards Mainland immigrants and tourists in the wake of the Umbrella Movement and the rise of Localists mentalities, a divide between the two groups is apparent.

This us-versus-them mentality is most noticeable in the treatment of Mainland tourists. One student believed that, "the more the border opens up, the more conflict there is." Many of Hong Kong's areas have been transformed into a shopping Mecca for Mainland tourists. Many local establishments have been replaced by businesses furnishing the three major commodities sought after by Mainland sightseers: luxury goods, medicine shops, and cosmetic shops. In the past, pregnant women would often cross the border to have their children in Hong Kong so the children would benefit from Hong Kong's education system and less strict travel restrictions. However, these open policies began to change as Hong Kong residents, according to one participant, began to complain that resources were being stretched too thin:

> The policy with the Mainland tourists is actually becoming more stringent. Before you got a pass and you could come here more often but now it's like only for one week. It's harder to obtain because there are a lot of protests. And before there were a lot of pregnant women who would come here to give birth and this took away a lot of resources at the hospital. The hospitals were all full and even local moms couldn't get a bed. So they've made it harder to get these passports and now women coming to Hong Kong to have babies can't get papers anymore because it's made a huge problem for the policy making because you don't know how to reform the education policy.

The Chinese government did in fact try to change Hong Kong's education policy, but the educational reform was met with protests. In 2012, the central government in Beijing pushed to introduce a new curriculum that would promote Chinese nationalism into Hong Kong schools. Parents and children took to the street to protest the "national education" reforms as they believed it would brainwash a younger generation to be less critical of Chinese policies (Bradsher, 2012). A group of young students protesting the education policy eventually formed the group known as Scholarism, which became a dominant figure in the 2014 Umbrella Movement.

Chinese identity is a contentious subject in Hong Kong. For those who claim to be "Chinese," the political influence from the Mainland is tied into this identity. A retired teacher who identified as "Chinese" said: "if we are Chinese, it shouldn't matter that the government is involved." However, for many of the other participants, Hong Kong and Chinese politics were different. A local photographer blamed Hong Kong's problems on the Chief Executive. "He just listens to the Chinese government." He went on to say that Hong Kong was promised 50 years of unchanged policy, but with all of the Mainland tourists, Hong Kong has changed. "More Mainlanders are buying property it's a free market here and they can't use their money in China. In Hong Kong, their money is real money so they're buying property to be legitimate." As Hong Kong and Mainland identities seem to become more divided, the political lines between the two countries have blurred. The majority of this identity-based divide can be traced to generational differences, a topic that will be discussed in more detail in the next section. Although the older generation may seem more likely to identify as Chinese, a few, like the retired teacher I spoke with still saw Hong Kong as a different entity. "Hong Kong people are different, firstly they are pragmatic. They want good government rather than democracy." The

older gentleman elaborated on his political beliefs stating that the citizens of Hong Kong just want a good leader, someone who will do what is best for Hong Kong and not what the party leaders in Beijing desire. He then went on to say that most people in Hong Kong just want this happy medium and that these radicalized identities that have emerged since the Umbrella Movement do not represent the majority. Another professor and activist speculated that extreme Localists groups try to hold on to what little aspects of distinction they have of their identity because they feel that these characteristics are becoming increasingly threatened by political entities. The retired teacher took his point further saying that Localists groups "attract the attention of the mass media because they do things like beat up tourists." The media connection does have merit as extreme behavior gets more attention. Haskins' (2015) conceptualization of popular memory, "understood as a way to render history more relevant and engaging to mass audiences" (p. 5), would support the idea that events that are shocking are more likely to become incorporated into our collective memories since we are more likely to be exposed to these stories by media that thrives on spectacle. Most participants generally agreed that they did not want Hong Kong to be considered another Mainland city, nor did they want Mainlanders to take over what they believed was their land, but with the exception of two individuals, most felt that there were better ways of addressing issues regarding immigration and tourism that did not involve violence or bigotry.

The animosity towards Mainland tourists was the most apparent when walking through many of the tourist districts populated by Mainland sightseers and shoppers. Store employees and restaurant staff would purposely avoid helping "stereotypical[43]" Mainlanders. Younger

[43] The stereotypical Mainland tourist is often seen wheeling a large suitcase through shopping areas and speaking loudly. They often tend to be categorized as uncivilized. I read one story on a Hong Kong online news forum that spoke of a Mainland woman who decided to defecate in the middle of a busy train station.

participants would talk about websites like the *Shanghaist* that feature stories about Mainland tourists' inappropriate behavior. Even popular news websites like *AppleDaily* have uploaded Youtube videos detailing some of the more outrageous examples of impropriety using phrases like "incredibly loud and high pitched frequency" to describe bickering Mainlanders (AppleDailyEnglish, 2014). China's attempt to reclaim Hong Kong through economic and cultural means since 1997 through the promotion of tourism has created more animosity than acceptance. While many believe that it is more pragmatic to remain part of China for various reasons from economic stability to a lack of military resources, Hongkongers still feel that they are different from Mainlanders and do not want the negative stereotypes and behaviors associated with these individuals to also represent how they are perceived. Hong Kong is a relatively homogenous society and according to the 2011 Census, only 6% of the population self-identifies as a minority group (2011 Population Census, 2011). Yet despite 94% of the population being ethnically Han, there has been a greater push to ignore this connection.

The connections to the Mainland are stronger than just ethnicity. Like all things in Hong Kong, there always seems to be a pull towards economics. One young professional said, "from the commercial side [Hong Kong] is not foreign." She claimed that at work she mostly dealt with Chinese clients. Another graduate student mentioned that she felt that Hong Kong was shifting from a more Western temperament to Eastern. "Because we have to adapt to the ways of how the Chinese market works, our economy has become closer to Mainland China since 2003. There are a lot more Mainland tourists coming to Hong Kong. Our economy hinges on the Mainland's market. We're changing and adapting to that culture so we can earn money." Regardless of political ideology and other disagreements of identity politics, most people agreed that the bottom line in Hong Kong was to make money. Despite this economic connection,

younger individuals were less likely to acknowledge any association with the Mainland. Campaigns to preserve Cantonese were viewed, by one professor, as a means to differentiate Hong Kong and distinguish the territory from the Mainland. "But historically we are all immigrants, we are all outsiders, we are all non-locals. Historically, it's just different layers and layers of immigrant generations. To argue that I'm more local than you is just a political discursive move saying that I'm twenty years more local than you...or thirty years more local than you." In France, the quest to find a "genuine French people" has led to a form of archeology that favors conservative values that promote xenophobic ideals that would not be tolerated by most archeological institutions (Demoule, 1996). In Hong Kong, this need to prove that one is more of a Hongkonger has been most prominent in the preservation of cultural elements like language. One participant mentioned that they had no problem considering someone of an ethnicity other than Han a Hongkonger so long as they spoke Cantonese. Regardless of this drive to distance themselves from China, Figure 3.2 shows that a large number of Hongkongers feel that it is still important to promote democracy and economic development in the Mainland.

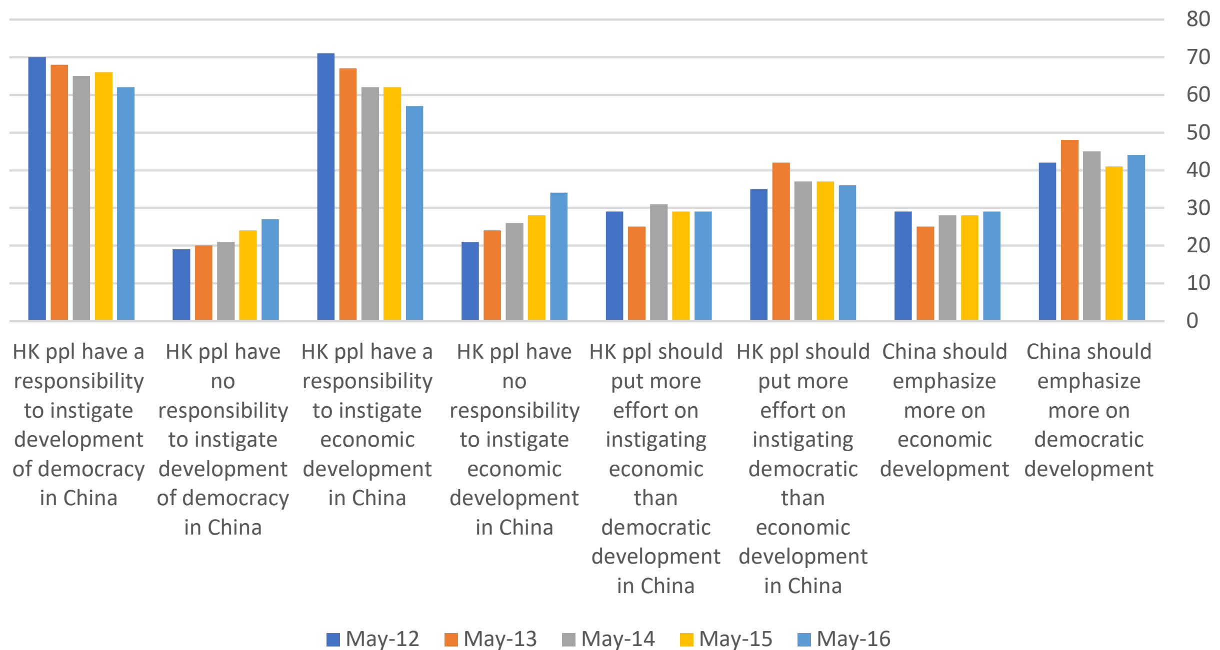

Figure 3.2: *Survey Data from Hong Kong University's yearly public opinion poll on Hongkongers' attitudes regarding civic responsibility*

These attitudes were presumably always present, but the Umbrella Movement seemed to trigger a stronger view with regards to Hong Kong's mood towards China. Media portrayals seem to exasperate these tensions by fueling the animosity felt towards Mainlanders. A search of YouTube uncovers multiple videos of misbehaving Chinese tourists. In a link uploaded by TomoNews, a Taiwanese News organization that became popular thanks to their animated news segments, it is possible to see this culture war played out online. Although the first comment is likely from an Internet troll, or someone with a VPN considering YouTube is blocked in China, one individual wrote: "Thank you, I have never thought darkies such as HKers, Taiwanese and other SE people are one of us…I met a lot of Taiwanese, HKers, all fugly looking people with short legs, noisy, wrong proportion figure, yellow and brown, f****** disgusting [sic]" In response to the comment another person wrote, "wow, you are racist and ignorant. The only

people of this sort in Asia I have seen are the Mainland [C]hinese. Even people in deeply impoverished Cambodia are much better mannared [sic] and more polite and they live in absolute misery. Just shows what communism can do." The authorship of these comments does not matter because these sentiments and acts of rhetorical distinction are prevalent in post-Umbrella Movement Hong Kong. Many of the participants mentioned that the Umbrella Movement was a failure, China did not grant the territory universal suffrage. Instead of remembering an ethnic connection with the Mainland the younger generation, further removed from their own immigration stories, have been more likely to adopt extreme views. A professor reflecting on the influence of the radicalization of Hong Kong youth said:

> The danger now is young local Hong Kong people are stereotyping the Mainland immigrants and visa versa because it's action/reaction. The Mainland immigrants feel like they are being treated in a hostile way by the local young people and they also become solidified. They essentialize their Mainland identity and they also become aloof and they don't want to integrate into Hong Kong society; they don't want to pick up the local language. It's a two-way vicious cycle and it's no good because we know that if we draw a line between you and me, we and they, us and them, it's not true because we all have roots from the Mainland and we all blend and contribute to building a new Hong Kong, a better Hong Kong, a more innovative, more hybridized, more multi-cultural Hong Kong. This kind of linguistic and ethnic essentialism is no good in the long run.

The examination of social movements often ignores the political and ethnic divisions that seem to get worse after mass occupations. A similar environment of factionalism emerged in the United States in the wake of Occupy Wall Street. Castells (2012) said that social movement occupation creates a community "based on togetherness" and that these spaces are able to bring together various groups that would not normally interact. In the quest to focus on the memory of a unified social movement, greater divides seem to have emerged when few were paying attention. The majority of the individuals I interviewed seemed to have a moderate view with regards to their ethnic identity and perhaps this is because they were more focused on the merchandise of the movement that they failed to acknowledge the growing cultural divides.

After the Umbrella Movement, the semblance of a unified identity was hard to recover and various groups that were connected through occupied spaces became labeled and divided. Sturken (1997) discusses the role trauma has in producing cultural memory, stating that if a memory is to remain culturally significant it must be "burned in." Quoting Nietzsche, she emphasizes that "only that which never ceases to hurt stays in the memory" (p. 16). Social movements are a form of trauma in the sense that they are cultural shocks that evoke strong emotional responses. In the time after trauma, a healing period is supposed to occur, but such healing often leads to "forms of forgetting and depoliticization." When we think about past social movements we tend to memorialize the good or the outcome that was the one most widely disseminated. Localists sentiments and anti-Chinese views have always been present in Hong Kong and these views may have also been expressed during the actual occupation. During my first trip to Hong Kong, a year after the occupation ended, most participants recalled the unity of the movement almost nostalgically. The only individual who discussed the importance of the Localists movement was a member of Scholarism. On my second visit to Hong Kong, two years

after the occupation, more people began to discuss the rise of localists groups in relation to the Umbrella Movement. The Mainland's attempt to construct and promote a memory that promoted a strong ethnic and cultural heritage backfired and, for some, made the memory of British colonialism seem more appealing. The collective memories of immigration and colonialism get caught up in how historical events like social movements are remembered. Younger generations are able to distance themselves more easily from their immigrant roots because they do not remember what life was like in China. Communication across generations does seem to contribute to even more factionalism. Young individuals are trying to survive economically, and while most live with their parents, only a few of the participants mentioned that they discussed politics at home. During the September Legislative Council election, one participant mentioned that he had given up on his father because no matter how hard he tried to convince him otherwise, his dad was still going to vote for pro-Beijing candidates. However, the participant also brought up the fact that his parents were originally from the Mainland, having come to Hong Kong in the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution. Generational memory is an important component as to how events like social movements are remembered and framed from one age group to the next. Generational studies in Hong Kong have always emphasized the events that have defined age-based cohorts. Hong Kong's first generation is often identified as the immigrant generation, yet perhaps this categorization has made it difficult to rationalize that Hong Kong has always been a land of immigrants, the majority of them from the Mainland.

Long Term Forecast: Generations of Hong Kong

Lui Tai Lok is the most prominent scholar with regards to defining the different generations of Hong Kong. Lui is both a well-known academic and public intellectual in the territory. One reason for this notoriety is the fact that he is one of the few scholars to tackle generational concerns in Hong Kong. Many of the young professionals I spoke with knew of

Lui's theory of Hong Kong's four generations. Lui's categorizations are most notably based on the decade of birth. The first born between 1920 and 1930 were primarily immigrants who had escaped the Mainland during the Sino Japanese war. This generation was seen as hardworking and resilient. "They created the liberal-minded environment which the second generation was free to develop" (Mok, 2010). Born between 1946 and 1966, the second generation akin to the "Babyboomers," of Western categorization, grew up in a postwar environment with the promise of liberal politics and economic prosperity. The third generation born between 1967 and 1975 continued to build upon the prosperity established by the previous two generations. However, those born between 1976 and 2000, most commonly called the "post-80s" generation, has become the most commonly discussed generation with regards to the current political and economic situation in Hong Kong (Mok, 2010).

Understanding generational context is significant as to how certain events are remembered and framed. While one generation may have experienced a specific event, another witnesses it from afar, unable to revel in the nostalgia associated with that event. A traumatic event will be remembered, but eventually the "pain" lessens and the event is recalled with less immediacy as we are left with the memorials of the event, which come to replace the memories of the generation that lived through that particular moment (Sturken, 1997). Joshua Wong and Nathan Law are two university students who became the faces of the Umbrella Movement. As participants recounting their memories of the occupation, they often referred to the Umbrella Movement as representing this younger generation despite the fact that individuals from all of Lui's generational categorizations participated. Those born in the 1980s were now young professionals and members of the workforce, and although they supported the movement and wanted universal suffrage, they were more pragmatic in their understanding of the realities of

political change in Hong Kong. Those who represented the generation born in the 1990s often had more radical views. Participants from this generation would often discuss the need to separate from China, the need to have more violent protests in the future to make a bolder statement. Lui's generations are in some ways tied to Hong Kong's economic progress. The first generation, or the immigrant generation, came over with nothing, but were hard workers and helped to create the environment of economic prosperity for the next generation. The myth of the immigrant story and its connection to economic prosperity dominates Lui's theory. Lui's theory makes it easier for younger generations to separate themselves from the immigration story regardless of when their families came to Hong Kong. A photographer in his fifties described a scene similar to the United States: recent college graduates unable to find jobs and unable to afford housing and other necessities because the concentration of wealth has created inequality. As such, this younger generation feels alienated from the economic successes experienced by past generations.

When participants spoke of the generational divide, differences were often related to perceptions of opportunity. The Umbrella Movement will come to define the generation born in the 1980s and 90s, the last generation discussed by Lui. Beyond the media soundbites that narrowed their focus to universal suffrage, many of the younger participants mentioned that they had become involved because they wanted the opportunity to determine their own future, which they felt was unattainable in the current economic environment. The fight was not just aimed at the Mainland, but also the Hong Kong government that was seen by many as either Beijing's puppet or in the pocket of multi-national corporations. Across the various generations described by Lui, each generation's relationship to consumption was also apparent. Consumption is a large part of the everyday life of the average Hongkonger, hence a feature of their identity; although

commodifying a movement may warp the memory of a cause, the connection between consumption, youth culture, and social movements is not new to Hong Kong. Those deemed the "youth" of the late 1960s were the first to experiment with consumption and identity in Hong Kong. Young individuals began wearing jeans and miniskirts and the older generation was afraid that Hong Kong's youth had become wrapped up in organized crime, failing to recognize the construction of a youth subculture based on consumption. This younger generation finally had the purchasing power to buy goods that represented a personality as opposed to consumption for the sake of daily survival. In 1966, the Kowloon Riots also took place causing concern for Hong Kong's older "immigrant population" as well as the colonial government. Initially started by one man who had gone on a hunger strike to protest fare increases, others eventually joined in the protest, which became disorderly. In response to the riots, the colonial government used the opportunity to integrate Hong Kong youth into "government-sponsored social services" (Matthews & Lui, 2001). In defense of Lui, separating age from generation is a difficult task. While it is easier to look at generational construction as discursive, a cyclical nature seems to exist as younger generations become older generations and the memory of youth comes to mean something different.

Like their peers in 1966, the student leaders of the Umbrella Movement have become involved in politics in the wake of occupation. Joshua Wong and Nathan Law founded the Demosisto Party as a way to evolve the activist group Scholarism into a more politically respected and viable entity. In 2016, Nathan Law became the youngest lawmaker in Hong Kong winning a seat in the legislative council. Both Law and Wong have claimed that they will push "for a referendum to 'decide Hong Kong's sovereignty status' in 10 or 20 years" (BBC, 2016; Wong, 2016). With the exception of academics, many of the older individuals I spoke with

adopted the mantra, “this is their fight” with regards to the Umbrella Movement. These individuals felt that they had made their living, now living a comfortable life, and it was now up to the younger generation to fight to preserve this quality of life for themselves. Regardless of who controls the territory, the younger generation always seems to blame the older generation for not changing the situation when they had a chance. Eventually Joshua Wong and Nathan Law will become members of the “older” generation and a new set of young activists may view their long-term goal of pushing for sovereignty after 2047 as not doing enough.

Generational discrepancies first became apparent after having a conversation with a retired teacher and his former student. Watching this interaction between the two made it evident that among these generational fault lines, particular dichotomies were reinforced. Us-versus-them, as a feature of identity construction, was exaggerated by the younger generation who felt that their parents were too connected to China as was evident by many of the follow up responses I received from participants during the 2016 election. Some did reference the fact that these views were reinforced by various media channels. Older participants claimed to obtain news from television networks, which many acknowledged had a more pro-Beijing/pro-government bias, while younger generations were more likely to get their news from online sites. If media is a purveyor of memory, different generations will recall significant events differently based on the media they consumed during that time. Eastern and Western ways of thinking were also exacerbated by these generational divides. Older generations were depicted as being too Eastern by the younger participants, while the older participants I spoke with (those who were not professors) saw the younger generation as being too heavily enamored by Western belief systems. Interestingly, while the notion of “old” and “young” were common descriptors, no one ever gave clear markers as to what constituted young and old. The discussion between the

former student and retired teacher at first seemed extreme, but as I talked to more individuals, it seemed like these conversations were common and more prevalent in the wake of the movement as political ties became a more delicate subject to discuss with family.

> STUDENT: His generation may not consider themselves Chinese, but they have a lot of sentiment towards the Chinese people. They feel a lot of connection with them. But for us, we don't. We think we shouldn't think too much about the Chinese. We should just care about ourselves because Hong Kong is such a mess. We should care about ourselves first.
>
> TEACHER: To him, I am already too Chinese, whereas I never consider myself Chinese. This is funny. To him I am so bloody old fashioned and Chinese. But then I'm always proud that I'm not Chinese. So you see the understanding between the two generations. I don't have these so-called Chinese traits like accumulating money, respecting their elders and being noisy. I don't have them but this generation says I'm too Chinese. This new generation, they are against China very much. We just don't like the communists, but they hate them. There's a difference between hating and just not liking something. Now they're hatred is too intense to the point where they think that people like me are supporting the regime. So they think that if I'm not with the students, then I'm with the communists.

Generational perspectives play an interesting role in periods of political transition, such as the one from social movement to political action. "It is obvious that those generations that did not personally experience key events have to acquire historical consciousness from different sources than do generations that lived through this history. But even the latter need to articulate the meaning to their common experiences" (Cohen, 1999, p. 87). New technologies have given younger generations more autonomy and access to an array of different perspectives and historical accounts. As younger individuals are able to access "historical" information online, they develop different memories and cultural understandings that provide an alternative context than those memories that were passed down through familial stories.

An older gentleman expressed concern with the impact new technology has had stating that the younger generation did not understand how damaging technology could be. He said he would not use social media because he knew that there was no security on the Internet. Another participant in his mid-fifties noted that the Internet was the "whole world" to this younger generation saying, "they're always online, they're always connected." Although there is some cyclical nature to generational behavior, the patterns that accompany generational transitions are complicated by technology. In addition to being defined by age or economic period, generations in Hong Kong, and through most of the world, are also defined by technology. The younger generation has been dubbed "digital natives." Since they have grown up in the digital world, adapting to newer technologies is easier for this cohort than those who were born when analogue media was still prominent (Palfrey & Gasser, 2010). Those like Castells (2012) who believe that digital technologies will change the way individuals voice their grievances in positive ways, do represent an idealism associated with digital natives and their technological innovation. "For centuries, 'Idealist' generations have invariably come of age mounting a highly symbolic attack

against their aging 'Civic' elders-and have later entered midlife engaging in bitter conflict with their 'Reactive' next-juniors (Strauss & Howe, 1991, p. 13). Digital communications technologies have become the platform of idealism for this new generation and "elders" generally attack this element as the key issue plaguing the beliefs of this younger cohort. Many from this older group feel that the younger generation lacks any historical understanding and therefore fail to understand the complexities of the current system. This generational cycle can be viewed throughout the world, but one factor that is unique to Hong Kong's generational cycle is a relationship to sovereignty.

Hong Kong's generations are tied to a sense of permanence. Prior to 1997, it was easier to travel as the citizen of a British territory. In the 1990s, there was a massive migration from the Mainland. Parents feared what China's future would bring in the wake of the Tiananmen massacre and sought to bear their children in other countries to ensure a safer future. While many of these immigrants attempted to secure passage to the United States and Canada, Hong Kong was an easier trip and in the early 1990s, it was still a British territory. In 1991, Emily Lau, a member of the Legislative Council, said: "Most of my parent's generation were refugees and thought they would one day go back to China. Then, when they realized they couldn't, they were grateful to the British for protecting them and looking after them. Many concentrated on making enough money to emigrate, which has always been a Hong Kong phenomenon, and means that nobody ever thinks anything is permanent" (Shipp, 1995, p. 98). Yet this mentality of temporariness has shifted with Hong Kong's younger generations who are beginning to see Hong Kong as a permanent home. The memory of the 1997 transition still lingers for those whose lives have been significantly impacted by the change. Unlike past generations that came

of age during British colonialism, this latest generation born in the 1980s and 1990s grew up in the uncertainty of Hong Kong's future under Chinese rule.

> But of course, 1997 was an important watershed for everything, not just political views, but how one feels about their city and memories and all of that. So, post 1997, if you were born in that time or you were a child at that time, you basically live in a very different world. This generation is marked by 1997, then marked by the Umbrella Movement would be a very different generation also marked by new media. All of the combination of these factors really impacts this new generation in many ways. These are very clear markers.

This view, expressed by an academic, was shared by many in his community when asked to reflect on the significance of the 1997 transition and the connection to the Umbrella Movement. While this younger generation may subscribe to the same collective memories of economic prosperity and the Western/colonial based education as their parents, this generation is living in a very different reality. One participant predicted that the interest in political participation would continue amongst those currently enrolled in secondary school. "And that makes sense, because whatever happens or doesn't happen in this city belongs to their future." This idea of a future is very interesting in relation to the concept of memory and even generational distinctions. "It's their future" is a narrative that seems to remove culpability from older generations for the actions that created the current situation and perhaps this narrative is the reason there may be animosity between the different generations. This narrative is continually repeated and so the political and economic structures that fueled social unrest will remain to become the burden of the next

generation. Unless something is forced, unless there is a constant negotiation between these various groups, there will never be real change.

Even the young professionals I spoke with in their late twenties had already begun to place the burden on those younger. And while each generation was in favor of obtaining a positive outcome for Hong Kong's future, a different approach seemed to color the actions and identity of each group of contemporaries. The younger generation is trying the hardest to hold on to what they believe is Hong Kong, and as such, they tend to idealize. "They give it a name, they set up a society to promote it, protect it. The vulnerability of losing something that this younger generation thinks is unique to Hong Kong, to their identity is what has created these extreme viewpoints in Hong Kong." We see a similar dynamic in the United States, where Donald Trump has been able to amass followers because he "wants to make America great again." Trump's followers hold on to old racist narratives of a great America that was great only for white, heterosexual males. The United States is a diverse country where same-sex marriage and gender equality are becoming more mainstream. These changes threaten the identity of the white males' populace that supports Trump and thus a rise in the noticeability of hate groups like the alt-right and the KKK have become more visual. Those with more power and ability to control media narratives and political influence have the ability to shape and control the narrative construction of a past that fits their own perceptions. In the view of some of the younger individuals who have been attacking Mainland tourists, their perception of Hong Kong is one absent of Chinese roots. These individuals remain fixed to a memory of Hong Kong that does not include Mainland immigration. The construction of identity "involves establishing opposites" and each "age and society recreates its others" (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 1999). Those who grew up in post-1997 Hong Kong do have a different relationship with the Mainland

because the Mainland now has control over the territory, in order to define their Hong Kong identity, many of the young localists have tried to make "Hong Kong great again" by distinguishing themselves as different from the Mainland and seeing those who identify as something different than Hongkonger as the other.

The plight of the younger generation seemed to be a major concern for older participants in the wake of the movement. Many of the comments these individuals said about their younger peers served as justification for why the movement may have occurred without any real reflection or suggestion as to how to change the situation. One older participant said that those graduating now cannot afford housing and that is why they are fighting for their freedom. He went on to paint a bleak future for this next generation citing that unlike his generation, who came of age in the 1970s, there is no opportunity for this group. Another older participant had mentioned that the political system is so poor that this generation does not have a chance, and therefore, resent those who created the system. The younger generation tends to blame China for many of the issues associated with the dour current state of affairs in Hong Kong. To Hong Kong's younger residents, the older generation is connected to the problems they feel are plaguing the territory. One participant said the young no longer find anything "formal that trustworthy." Politics to this younger generation, despite a new attempt to revive the political system by electing former protest leaders like Nathan Law, is deemed ineffective. Those who have been a part of Hong Kong's political system, even the Pan-democrats, "have been struggling for democracy for thirty years and it ends in nothing." The participant went on to say, according to [the younger generation], "they can't wait for another thirty years to repeat. They think that they cannot take it anymore and it is time to take a new path." That path has led to a rise in Localists groups. While some Localists groups are not as radical as others, a tendency to

target Chinese identities is present. One group known as Hong Kong Localism Power is even using the power of commodification to support their message by selling t-shirts that say: 我係香港人, "Don't call me Chinese," which claim to use no Chinese materials or labor. Even those younger residents who do not lean towards more radical views tend to be more supportive of taking a bolder stance with regards to politics. A member of Scholarism, said of his peers, "most students are for social movements. In school, they research and look up a lot of the problems and issues for assignments—many of the teachers and students are pro-social movements because without them, freedom is killed." He then went on to say he believed that Hong Kong should either be a separate country or that they should return to the United Kingdom, "their mother country." Like the former Soviet countries that had to reconceptualize their political identities after the collapse of the Soviet Union, many found it difficult to narrate their past in a way that produced a unifying ideology for the future (Cohen, 1999). Hong Kong's generations have had to deal with varying degrees of Chinese control and British colonialism and for the young, trying to understand their role in Hong Kong's political future in the wake of the Umbrella Movement, it is difficult to understand the past as it is understood by those who lived under British colonialism.

Younger Hong Kong residents who have tried to become more politically involved are seen as lacking credibility. A friend of Joshua Wong and social media coordinator for a local politician brought up one of the challenges facing the young leaders of the Umbrella Movement in the wake of the occupation.

> Joshua Wong is just a kid. He is charismatic and gathered a lot of followers after the movement, but now he almost seems lost to them. Then he was a student, now he is a political party leader.

> He is now criticized because he has lost his purity. This younger group in general does not know enough to play the game. Most key opinion leaders online have this problem. They are disconnected with the realities of how this political system works. Young people are more involved but they do not understand the system. What you actually see at the legislative counsel is different than what you see on the surface.

This comment demonstrates the flexibility and power of identification, specifically among generations. The fact that idealism and being a student is considered being "pure" is extremely relevant to the success of a movement once it is over. As student leaders mature,[44] so does their activism. Their idealism changes to pragmatism and perhaps this is the most important connection to memory. How do you hold on to that memory of idealism so that you do not leave it to the next generation to solve?

The older generations tend to blame the current Chief Executive C.Y. Leung for the "impulsive" behavior of their younger counterparts. "Radicalism and localism have multiplied more rapidly because C.Y. Leung did not provide a good analysis of what was going on in Beijing." One participant even said that this younger generation has been "ghettoized" because of their inability to leave Hong Kong.[45] While there is diversity among generational perceptions, the older generation does tend to believe that Hong Kong's citizens have become more radicalized, and that Hong Kong is now a "social movement culture." One professor said the

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[44] See Wasserstrom's *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China* (1991) for more information on student movements in China. The text provides relevant connections with the Boxer Rebellion in 1919 and the Tiananmen Square Student Movement, thus demonstrating that there is a history of student protests in the region.

[45] The Younger generation can leave Hong Kong and many of the younger participants I spoke with are well traveled. While it is true that there are less economic opportunities for the younger generation in Hong Kong I believe the term, the participant used was a bit extreme; however, it does highlight how divided perceptions regarding the different generations in Hong Kong are.

reason why this may be the case is because the younger generation has shown signs of radicalization as evident by the Fishball riots and the increased harassment towards Mainland visitors.

> [The younger generation] feel that they don't have the political power to say no to anything coming from the central government. The more helpless they feel the more angry they become and the more essentialist they become […] and the more unwilling they are to mingle with the new immigrants and build a multi-cultural Hong Kong, which has been what's happening in the past 100 years with waves of new immigrants. The new immigrants blended in with the old-comers.

The situation described in the quote above is not unique to the younger generation of Hong Kong. Immigration issues have also plagued the United States. Those who feel the most threatened by newcomers and change are the groups that tend to be tied to anti-immigration platforms. In the United States, this group is comprised of lower and middle class whites; In Hong Kong, this group seems to be comprised of younger individuals. These groups and the identities they construct then become the major topic of conversation and concern for other groups, distracting those who could change the situation to one that would benefit everyone. Media tends to aggravate these issues by focusing more on those creating the problem as opposed to those who are trying to develop a solution. The narrative of the older generation seems to be, "this is your future," which puts more of a burden on a younger generation that already feels disenfranchised. The growing amnesia of personal immigration stories in the United States and Hong Kong, both prosperous because of immigration, have been used to divide

and create greater tension in an already strained political and economic environment; however, unlike the United States, Hong Kong cannot exercise these views under a democratic system.

The issue of what constitutes freedom or democracy is another issue that has divided generations. Conversing with the former student and retired teacher made this divide quite evident:

> STUDENT: I think that's the difference between the older generation and the younger generation. I think democracy is something we really need and not just a good leader. What my teacher just said is that most of Hong Kong's people, whenever they have enough to eat or a place to sleep is enough I think that this is a very Chinese way of thinking. Real Chinese people don't care, they're like slaves. So long as they have a place to sleep they are fine. This is a real Chinese characteristic.
>
> TEACHER: I'm not saying that I belong to the old generation, having said that I believe in democracy. I'm just saying that the truth is out there
>
> STUDENT: I'm just saying you're too traditional. I just think this is wrong. Even if a lot of people may agree with this, it's just wrong. We should be asking ourselves for more than just food and some place to live.
>
> TEACHER: Chinese believe in having not just good, but believe in a benevolent, in a smart kind of emperor, like the Roman empire.

> At the time, there was an emperor who was wise. They believe in that, if they have that they're fine.

The memory of control does not seem translatable from one generation to the next. Those who grew up under British colonialism have a different notion of power than those growing up in Chinese controlled Hong Kong post-1997. The individuals who took part in the Kowloon riots of 1966 do not understand what it is like to grow up in today's political atmosphere (Mathews & Lui, 2001). Even though both generations were defined by significant social movements that occurred as the result of economic shifts, one generation was coping with the possibility of having more freedom,[46] while another generation is coping with having less. Yet in this discussion of old and new generations, one age cohort often gets ignored because they seem to be caught in the middle.

Between the old and young, those in their early 30s to late 40s are perhaps the group that has had the most profound impact on democratic change in Hong Kong. A participant, working for Legislator Alvin Yeung, mentioned that it was this age cohort that would show up at court to support young protest leaders like Joshua Wong. The younger group that seemed to be supportive online, the individuals who changed their Facebook post or shared a link to a news story, only showed their support through digital means. According to this participant, slacktivism seemed to define the political actions of the younger generation. However, the participant went on to say:

> If you ask me, what are the impacts of the Umbrella Movement, it's the Facebook culture that really awakes people. I think the middle-aged people are the most affected. I think for the youngsters, I think

[46] Freedom in this context refers to the freedom to consume luxury goods. Which in the case of this older generation, as the children of Mainland immigrants, also alluded to a feeling of more freedom in general.

> they're not thinking about the ideologies of those parties, be it localists or open-minded pan-democrats or separatists…I don't know how you can make it possible to separate Hong Kong from China: it's connected, it's the same land.

The supporters from this age group did seem more reflective and more pragmatic about their thoughts on the impacts the Umbrella Movement had on Hong Kong and how the territory could move forward. Most agreed that there needed to be change, but also knew how important it was to understand their position with regards to China. Many mentioned that radical ideas were not the solution because they knew what China was capable of: they remembered Tiananmen Square, a legacy that will be discussed in further detail later in the chapter. One middle-aged participant said, "I think it's brave and brilliant to join this movement." But this generation also understood that in the wake of the Umbrella Movement, there was no push to move forward, no conclusion. One participant said that while they supported the original movement and agree that change and more government accountability were needed, it was hard for them to support what the movement seems to have become, a push towards radical viewpoints that would not benefit Hong Kong's residents.

This age cohort, often forgotten, is able to understand both perspectives because they have been on the boundaries of both. They are old enough to not be caught up in extreme ideas, yet they understand the value of tradition. Perhaps this is the generation that researchers should focus on in the aftermath of social movements, perhaps it is the generation that can really be the crusaders for change. The younger and older generations are busy fighting and pointing fingers at each other. One older participant felt that the younger generation was trying to change him and change his identity. The younger generation accuses the older generation of being connected

to China unconditionally, not realizing that there is a vast difference between connecting ethnically and culturally than connecting politically. The student from the conversation with the retired teacher said, "I think one of the characteristics of the Chinese people is that they're not willing to fight. They usually obey who is ever controlling them. It's like the Hong Kong people now, they're willing to obey whoever is in charge. This is a very Chinese way of thinking. Our younger generation doesn't want this at all. Whenever they want something that is not democratic or has a Chinese character, we don't want it." However, the reality behind this statement perfectly summarizes one of the earlier comments made about essentializing. It is quite evident that various groups and larger portions of particular generations believe identity is singular, not understanding the complexities and nuances of Hong Kong's own collective memory and culture. The younger generation ignores a part of Hong Kong's immigrant history that is important to the territory's cultural heritage, while the older generation does not understand why the younger generation is upset, or if they do agree with some of the issues addressed, will claim that change rests only in the youth's hands.

Collective memories are used in a ritualistic way and allow one generation to pass their memories to the next, memory has to be made relevant to the current identity formation. Nora (1989) discusses this process using the context of a historical generation: "it is material by its demographic content and supposedly functional-since memories are crystalized and transmitted from one generation to the next—but it is also symbolic, since it characterizes, by referring to events or experiences shared by a small minority, a larger group that may not have participated in them" (p. 19). In the wake of the Umbrella Movement, Hong Kong was often defined in the context of the event, without considering that not everyone participated or cared about the outcome. The younger generation, with their memories of the movement, wanted to construct a

new identity that would represent the "Umbrella Movement Generation." The older generation, with their own memories of what occurred, understood this event in a different context as their memories were shaped by their own experiences and past events like the 1989 Tiananmen Square movement.

The Tiananmen Generation

The 1989 Tiananmen Square Student Movement influenced how different generations saw the outcome and purpose of the Umbrella Movement. For those who participated in solidarity movements that took place in Hong Kong in 1989, the Umbrella Movement seemed like a continuation of a greater fight for democracy. Through this connection, many of the individuals who would reminisce about the 1989 movement did feel connected to the Mainland and the struggle to fight for democratic reform in China. To these individuals, China represented more than an oppressive government, it represented colleagues and friends who also wanted democratic reform. Vivian (2010) said, "We may remember the same events over and over again, but we remember according to fluctuating conditions, in different times and places, in response to changing needs and desires. Acts of recollection invariably transform the nature of memory because the changing incitements and purposes of recollection ensure that we remember in different ways, even if we remember the same event" (p. 115). Older participants who had participated in both the Umbrella Movement and the solidarity demonstrations in 1989 saw connections between the two movements. One spoke of the similarities between the catalysts of both occupations, young students taking to the streets to fight for political freedom. "For those of us who were watching this," said an older professor, "we felt so emotional because these are really young kids, they're teenagers, so why would the government treat them like that. That got a lot of people angry." While obvious connections between art like the Umbrella Man and the

Goddess of Democracy existed, the connection that most of the older participants remembered was watching a student movement flourish.

As it was for the 1989 Tiananmen movement, the strategy for the Umbrella Movement was originally incubated in an academic environment. The idea to protest the decision that would deny Hong Kong residents the right to vote for the Chief Executive was originally proposed in 2013. Academics had meetings across multiple campuses from Chinese University of Hong Kong to Hong Kong University. At first the movement was a whisper, tentative to increase in volume, fearing the central government in Beijing's possible reaction to a massive protest. The older Occupy movement leaders, Chu Yiu-ming, Chan Kin-man, and Benny Tai, recognized the significance of Tiananmen Square as they became pro-democracy activists in the wake of the Tiananmen Massacre when Hong Kong was preparing for a return to Mainland control. In the early stages of the movement, Occupy leaders published an open letter to China's President Xi Jinping asking him to, "honour 'one country, two systems' as prescribed to the Basic Law. Hong Kong people want true democracy" The letter also went on to say, "Don't stage another Tiananmen crackdown in Hong Kong, the whole world is watching" (Wasserstrom & Ho, 2014; Lam, 2014)[47]. When a group of secondary students tried to break in to the Legislative Council building, the generational dynamic with regards to leadership changed and with it an understanding of the role Tiananmen's history would play moving forward.

When younger participants were asked about the movement, it would usually take a moment for them to recall what happened and see the connections; they did not experience the movement first hand. Many also acknowledged that with the exception of the June Fourth vigil, they were rarely exposed to information that referenced the event. "It's really taboo to bring up

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[47] The open letter was published in the advertising space of the *Wall Street Journal* and *Financial Times* according to *South China Morning Post* reporter Jeffie Lam.

Tiananmen in the mainstream," said a professional in their mid-twenties. "I don't think the government would dare to talk about this. I'm not sure the TV commentary talked about this but I know online, some people did talk about Tiananmen." The fact that the open letter to President Xi Jinping was published in Western publications also highlighted the fact that Hong Kong's mainstream media outlets (television and many newspapers) are heavily influenced by Beijing. These publications would not likely discuss the parallels between the two movements because comparisons would undermine the Mainland's ability to establish control and been seen as an act against the standards of state-controlled memory. Another student from Taiwan saw the connections between the Umbrella Movement and Tiananmen Square, but did not understand why Hong Kong's older generation had always felt so connected to the event. His professor answered, that prior to the movement, the Chinese government was more open and there had been more collaboration amongst academics from the Mainland and Hong Kong; friendships had developed and it was those friends who later became involved in the Tiananmen Square movement:

> Imagine if this happened and some of your friends have this personal experience. And then Hong Kong is looking at 1997 so this change…and interestingly 1989 was also affecting the outcome of the Umbrella Movement because Beijing decided there would be no repeat of Tiananmen and this is why you have this outcome. It's not the only reason, but it's a reason so in fact there are historical conditions and developments that are there.

The professor went on to acknowledge that he felt the reason why the Umbrella Movement was able to last as long as it did was because Xi Jinping did not want to deal with the blowback of

another Tiananmen Square-like massacre. For those on both sides of the movement, the public spectacle of bloodshed was not something they wanted to repeat.

The younger generation could only recall Tiananmen Square from a temporal distance; the Umbrella Movement was their event and many saw the involvement of older activists as invasive. One individual recalled, "I think there's a lot of rejection of older people's advice during the Umbrella Movement, it was very blatant. The so-called older generation of people, who have been in movements for decades, they're really experienced and some of them ran the June Fourth movement every year, but their opinions were basically shoved aside by these young organizers." Younger participants, responding to these accusations, would often say that the activist methods utilized by the older generation were not effective. The younger activists would also bring up their feelings with regards to their resentment of the Mainland, often making claims like, "why should we fight for their democracy, we have to fight for ours." Due to mainstream media channels that often aligned with pro-Beijing perspectives and an educational system that did not discuss the event, many of the younger individuals were only exposed to the Tiananmen Movement once a year.

The difficulty with evoking past movements as a point of reference for current protests is striking a balance between acknowledging similarities and differences. Wasserstrom (2014), a prominent Chinese Social Movement historian, wrote:

> As historians of China' revolutions, we suggest that the Tiananmen analogy is powerful, but it is not the only or even the best one to keep in mind. To draw solely upon this one historical example, linked to tragedy, is to take a fatalistic view, that the student boycott and the Occupy Central movement are already doomed. We should

> make room as well for other moments in history—as students themselves now do (Wasserstrom & Ho, 2014).

Wasserstrom goes on to say that Tiananmen itself was only a singular moment in the long struggle of student led-demonstrations going back as far as 1919, thus confirming that these struggles are part of a long process and cultural tradition. Tiananmen was evoked by the older participants because it was a memory they experienced themselves, it was their “lived” account and their emotional connection. Most of the older participants I spoke with said they were reminded of Tiananmen throughout the Umbrella Movement and the memory of June Fourth elicited the fear of a similar retaliation from Beijing. But these views are “fatalistic.” The Umbrella Movement did not end in bloodshed. As Vivian (2010) notes, sometimes “forgetting” can be a way to move forward and for the younger activists, forgetting the outcome of Tiananmen meant that they could still hope for a democratic future.

Since the Umbrella Movement, the June Fourth memorials have struggled to remain relevant in their own right. On April 18, 2016, a “Never Forget: 27km run” was organized to memorialize the start of the 1989 demonstrations. Although June Fourth is the most remembered date from the event because of its connection to the massacre, the student protests had actually begun months before. A Labour Party lawmaker and one of the organizers of the run said, “As you know, what’s most important with long-distance running is the [spirit of] perseverance and determination…and it represents that spirit we possess when we fight for the vindication of June Fourth and building a democratic China” (Cheung, 2016c). Runners ran the designated route wearing t-shirts with the icon of the Goddess of Democracy. On one hand, the run and the various other commodified memorial artifacts, like the keychains, are more acceptable forms of remembrance that seems to be more readily tolerated in an environment like Hong Kong where

the government does have authoritarian leanings, but where economic profits are generally allowed. However, equating Tiananmen to a 27km run does have the potential to undermine the importance of remembering China's democratic struggle which culminated in the loss of around 200 lives. When individuals are expected to "never forget," the action often produces contradictory outcomes, "it can breed ignorance about, or sponsor distortions of, the past—both of which resemble forgetting in its more desirable, unconscious forms" (Vivian, 2010, p. 63). The run itself does evoke the memory of the Tiananmen pro-democracy struggle, but it is debatable whether or not it arouses the memory in a constructive way. For a younger generation that already questions the relevancy of the 1989 student movement, a sponsored run may not be the best approach.

A location of memory is only noteworthy if it is remembered. The run was a last attempt to raise money for the June Fourth Museum. The museum is the size of a New York City studio apartment that had pictures of the movement on all the walls and a multi-media corner that had a skipping DVD of a documentary with a British narrator. The entrance to the museum was unmarked and hard to find as it was on the fifth floor of a nondescript building on a random side-street. The account of the movement was one-sided and the individual working the counter followed me around until I agreed to buy a stack of postcards commemorating the event. I was the only patron the entire time I was at the museum. Memorials and museums "largely depend on their audience's engagement for the meanings they generate" (Haskins, 2015, p. 14). Without an audience, the museum was unable to serve as a marker of the Tiananmen movement and eventually shut down in 2016. The museum is an example that reflection and interest are necessary to sustain certain memories, just because a memorial exists does not necessarily mean it will exist as a resource that supports the original cause or event.

Although the museum was a shallow attempt to commemorate the 1989 Tiananmen Student Movement, the ritualistic vigil of remembrance that takes place very year in Victoria Park is still attended and well-known. One reporter likened the event to a "well-rehearsed concert" commenting on the protest songs that are sung during the event. In 2015, a year after the Umbrella Movement, a song that was associated with Chinese patriotism was replaced by the song *Raise the Umbrella.* The group that organizes the yearly demonstration says that participation in these vigils has gone down (Tong, 2016). Localists and other smaller activist groups that have chosen to focus on other causes have been one reason for this decline. The localists, specifically, feel that Hongkongers should no longer put forward the effort to help those in China fight for their own democratic rights (Ng, Lau, Lam, & Cheung, 2015). Even though participation in the June 4th vigils has gone down, the ritual is still an important form of memory work, especially for those who do see the connection to the two events in light of China's increasing control of the territory. The CCP has done everything in its power to ensure that the Tiananmen movement is forgotten. China's internet censors block searchers for Tiananmen, tank man, and June 4th in the Mainland. For some, forgetting the tragedy opens up a window for hope and a belief that Hong Kong can be democratic, unlike the Mainland, and that holding on to this memory is hindering progress; however, there is a need to remember Tiananmen square in Hong Kong because it is one of the few places where the memory of that event is still preserved in an environment that truly understands China's pro-democracy struggle.

Conflicting memories of past events became topics of resentment across the different age groups. The older generation, who had seen the horrors of June 4th first hand, remembered the event differently because the trauma was real. For the younger protestors, the pain and fear was distant and could more easily be ignored. No overall "historical consciousness" exists in Hong

Kong because so much has happened in a short amount of time. Each generation has their own understanding of various events, and their relationships to power and control, thus leading to the negation of a "shared understanding of history" (Cohen, 1999). But at the same time, memories are pluralistic; even though multiple memories of an event make it harder to construct a shared understanding of history, it does not make the process impossible. Haskins (2015) claims that participatory memories are democratic in that they recognize the importance of difference in identity construction. All of the Tiananmen memories are important, so long as they are not used to insight bigotry. There is a fine line between forgetting Tiananmen because it is "Chinese" and forgetting the movement because it hinders progress.

For post-colonial and post-Soviet countries, forgetting pasts of oppression may help to establish a stronger foundation towards democratic nation-building in the wake of subjugation (Fanon, 1965, Cohen, 1999; Vivian, 2010), but for Hong Kong, who is still struggling with a very different political reality, maybe remembering these past events and more generational collaboration is needed so that Hong Kong is able to heal and move forward with a better understanding for how to cope with China's looming power. One participant said he thought all social movements were connected:

> The social movement serves to add to the formation of Hong Kong identity. For a certain generation, they identify themselves as participants or the witnesses of the July 1st demonstration. To the older generation, they identify themselves as the 1989-generation and now there are people already talking about the Umbrella Movement as the marker of their identity. But all these social

> movements are what we call critical events to the formation of Hong Kong identity.

Predicting how younger generations will be influenced by the Umbrella Movement may be premature, but regardless of how the movement is remembered or even forgotten, some trace of the event will always remain. Many of the younger students I spoke with were unable to see the symbolic connections between the two movements, but the memory of Tiananmen, whether the event was remembered nostalgically or as the fight of another generation, was used to construct a new identity for those who participated in the Umbrella Movement.

Summary

Hong Kong is a cosmopolitan city that thrives on consumption, which is often used to construct the territory's identity (Mathews & Liu, 2001). The memories of the Umbrella Movement have been used to construct the various identities in the wake of the occupation. At times these memories have been marketed or used to construct identities based on bigotry, but they also represent the diversity of a group of people who want to live in a democratic Hong Kong. During the Umbrella Movement, a break with the standard conception often associated with Hong Kong's economically driven identity occurred. People were living in the streets in an environment where money was not important; people lived as a collective. On the surface, Hong Kong's identity as an economic hub has remained the status quo, but the memory of the movement still lingers in the smaller movements and causes that the occupation inspired. Memory and communications are ritualistic and it does take a lot to change the way that past events are conceptualized, but that does not mean that change cannot occur.

Hong Kong's relationship with its past is similar to Vivian's (2010) account of memory in the Gypsy community. To be a Gypsy is to be a member of a group, there is no national

identity or historic memory. "The Gypsie's very lack of coherent and unified historical consciousness (insofar as they claim to be unburdened by the past) enables them to adapt to the burdens of the present" (p. 121). Hong Kong is a diverse territory that has been many things to many groups and Hongkongers have always adapted to these changing power dynamics and structures. Unlike other post-colonial nations, Hong Kong does not have the luxury to redefine its past through the process of nation-building. Remembering the Umbrella Movement in different ways is not necessarily a bad thing as this multiplicity prevents institutionalized forms of remembering that will be counterproductive to the promotion of democratic ideals in Hong Kong's future.

The Umbrella Movement has reawakened a debate about what it means for Hong Kong to have a distinct identity. Although social media did help some groups harbor new forms of resentment for the Mainland, it also helped others to share their stories and their thoughts on what it meant to be a Hongkonger. Hong Kong is more than a brand and the Umbrella Movement allowed the activists to promote their own "Faces of Hong Kong" to the world during the 79-day occupation. The protestors used their new and reclaimed symbol system to construct a political identity that had laid dormant. Although there are generational and ethnic variables that have colored the different memories of the movement, such diversity actually helps promote a more democratic and participatory memory. The biggest obstacle for the activists moving forward is to ensure that these memories are blended and used in ways that promote an inclusive system. The rise of Localists groups is concerning, as memory work that ignores Hong Kong's immigrant roots and failure to acknowledge that the majority of residents are originally from the Mainland, has produced an environment of increased aggression towards Chinese tourists and

recent immigrants. Such hostility could erode the fragile memory of a positive movement, one that the Mainland and Hong Kong government are already trying to undermine.

The movement also helped Hongkongers recognize the importance of Cantonese as a significant cultural memory. Given Hong Kong's lack of recorded identity or history beyond the "fishing village" narrative prior to colonialism, appreciating the organic evolution of their language is a significant identity marker for the territory. Although the acknowledgement and preservation of this language may be the undoing of this *milieu de mémoire*, Nora takes for granted the democratic experiments of Western democracies in his theory of memory. When a culture is under threat, being able to record as much of their history as possible may be the only way to ensure that their way of life can survive. Hong Kong does have an identity that is unique to the territory and economic forces and threats of increased authoritarianism from the Mainland could destroy Hong Kong's cultural ecosystem. The Umbrella Movement is neither the beginning nor the end of Hong Kong's democratic struggle, but the occupation was a significant event and understanding the various complexities of the movement with respects to preexisting identities will help make sense of how the memory of the movement is used moving forward.

How a movement is framed does influence how individuals and groups use the memory of this framing to move forward. The Umbrella Movement was seen by some as a failed protest because there were no immediate results. The next generation may blame Nathan Law and Joshua Wong, who are now more "legitimate" political leaders using the law and political process as a means to further their cause, just as the younger generation blamed older activist for not reaching their goals after the Tiananmen movements. Younger generations often fail to see the connections between a social movement and the political process because when they come across these events online, the pieces are not always put together for them. They see glimpses of

memory and not the big picture; they are temporally distant from the events that have influenced the larger process of democratic struggle. The Umbrella Movement will always be remembered, but the practice of reflection and the transition from social movement to the political arena is often what gets lost in the construction of collective memory. Social movements are events that have the power to disrupt standardized memories and change our views of official historical accounts. However, in the aftermath of these movements, the various groups that attempt to use these memories to construct a new identity often fail to reflect upon the implications that these new memories and new identities will mean for the future of their group and everyone involved.

Chapter 4

Reflections in the Puddles after the Storm: From Occupation to Politics, Depression and Violence, Hong Kong's push forward.

Memories are reflections of past events, active attempts to invoke the past to suit the contingent needs of the current situation. Halbwachs (1992) wrote, "the past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present" (p. 40). The discussions with all of my participants were examples of a "reconstructed" event summoned to fit the circumstances of the current political, economic, and social situation. These reflections did share some common themes, some mediated by social media or mainstream channels, but each of these accounts were also filled with a sense of emotion and at times frustration. Participants discussing the same event would exude different emotional responses. Some expressed anger, while others expressed fear or sadness. In rare cases, two participants were even content with the current political situation. Each response was authentic in the sense that it represented their own understanding of the movement and the perceived outcomes; their memories of the Umbrella Movement were often colored by the current political atmosphere. These ruminations were also tied to the symbols and identities that were constructed during the movement. Such accounts and reflections of mass occupation facilitates a greater understanding of the influence these events have on political, economic and cultural development (Haskins, 2015). Nora (1989) outlines two types of "great events," events that become great at a later time and those that "seem like anticipated commemorations of themselves." A social movement is both. Caught up in the transitional aftermath from occupation to political action, the memory of the movement can manifest itself in unexpected ways.

Zelizer (1998) conceptualized memory as waves of interest and relevance. In her account of the Holocaust, Zelizer outlines three waves of memory: the first involving "high attention," the second, "a period of amnesia" and the third wave being "a renewed period of intensive memory work." Although Zelizer's account of memory work spanned decades, a similar trend has occurred in Hong Kong following the Umbrella Movement. During my first visit, those who participated in the movement seemed eager to keep the momentum of the movement going. The interest in Hong Kong's new found political identity still had an optimistic aura. By my second visit, two years later - the period that will serve as the primary focus of this chapter - people did not necessarily forget the movement, but the desire to do constructive memory work dwindled. The third wave is currently unfolding as pro-democracy groups are trying to once again emphasize the importance of memory work associated with the Umbrella Movement following the recent 2017 chief executive election. And like the photograph's contribution to memory work during the Holocaust, social media helped to facilitate the degrees of collective memory associated with these waves in the wake of occupation.

In the time following the Umbrella Movement, it seems that a variety of issues have been absorbed into the memory of the occupation, influencing how what has happened since the movement has been shaped by what occured during the movement The devaluation of the Chinese RMB became wrapped up in perceptions of the occupation. Newspapers and mainstream media outlets that favored a more pro-establishment view blamed the protest for the devaluation, a media frame that resonated with identity formations emphasizing the economic side of Hong Kong. One participant mentioned that newspapers prompted citizens to view the Umbrella Movement as "causing our economy to suffer." Regardless of whether or not this was the case, these accounts get wrapped up in the collective memories of an event and change the

way an event is remembered. The individual went on to say, “a lot of things are boiled down to the impact of the Umbrella Movement.” And while the missing booksellers or the devaluation of China’s currency may be nominally related to the 79-day occupation, everything following a “great” event seems to get remembered as an outcome.

Individuals at the same event may view and subsequently reflect differently upon the situation depending on unique environmental factors. Burke (1989) believed that universal experiences are shaped by “patterns of experience” which in turn highlights distinct characteristics. Understanding how memory helped to reconstruct particular identities helps to distinguish how these various groups remember the movement during the transition from occupation to future political action. Thousands of individuals participated in the Umbrella Movement, which led to multiple ways to “make sense” of what happened. Some “patterns of experience” may be the same for different groups and individuals, but as demonstrated in the previous chapter, there are discrepancies depending on age and ethnicity. Reflecting on these events is essential as a means to control the narrative of the movement so that the message is not appropriated or twisted by hegemonic forces wishing to return to the status quo after occupation (Taylor, 2012), where differences in reflection could hinder the construction of a cohesive narrative. In his discussion of the red shirt coup and protests in Thailand, Taylor (2012) said that reflecting on the coup allowed activists to “awaken” to the social, political, and economic conditions that sparked the event. The event itself may not immediately change the conditions of the current situation, but the memory of an event does have the ability to “awaken” those who still wish to impart change.

Given the multiple identities that represent and relate to Hong Kong in their own way, as discussed in the previous chapter, one can surmise that groups reflected on the movement in

different ways. Generational differences produced varied accounts of what has happened since the movement and individuals from these groups presented contradicting accounts. A retired teacher recounted a story claiming that the United States and other Western nations had supplied tents and other materials during the occupation. His former student, who was also a part of the conversation, said that his former teacher's memory was wrong and even "warped." The retired teacher also felt that this former student's belief that Hong Kong should push for more violent actions moving forward was extreme and did not represent the "essence" of what it meant to be a Hongkonger. The teacher did not seem optimistic with regards to future political action spurned by the occupation. "This is only a movement, Hong Kong never talked about a revolution. Hong Kong people are not like the black or Arabians, they are so pragmatic [sic][48]. Yet they can get crazy, I guess something must be wrong." He then pointed to his former student and said, "I guess he knows better." When I asked the student if he thought his ideas were contradictory to his former teacher's he said, "maybe a little bit, yes, but they're way too obedient." Both parties saw the Umbrella Movement as a failure, but each group reflected upon the outcome and the next steps in a different way. Measuring what constitutes a successful or failed social movement is also difficult if not impossible; too many variables, groups, and opinions exist that hinder an overall consensus. Yet, the actions and attitudes that persist in the wake of the movement do demonstrate that these events still hold a certain meaning that will influence future political action and outlooks.

At the time of the movement, the participants did not think the occupation was going to be a "failure"—if they had—what would have been the point. As Polletta and Jasper (2001)

[48] The above account is the participant's exact wording. Based on some of this individual's more colorful terminology, the tone of this phrase probably has racist undertones. However, I left this in to demonstrated how various experiences and viewpoints colored the memories of the Umbrella Movement.

state, the point of a social movement is to establish change. However, upon reflection, many mentioned that the movement was unsuccessful. In a conversation with a group of twenty-something professionals a year after the occupation, they mentioned that feelings with regards to the movement were mixed. The general consensus among Hongkongers was that those who participated had not really evaluated what had happened during the movement, but that did not stop people from having strong views on the subject. Reflection is a big part of memory work because it helps to contextualize what happened in a way that frames what comes next. One year after the movement, younger individuals already felt that that movement had been a failure and were moving on without looking back. Reflecting on the movement would hinder progress and stall their momentum to push for democratic reforms. People posting on the anniversary of the movement's start rarely posted about the movement in a positive way. One participant said, "why commemorate something that was a failure." Two years after the movement, participants still felt that no one had genuinely reflected on the Umbrella Movement. "We're at a stage where Hong Kong is figuring out what to do next. People are just throwing out ideas to try to be elected. They haven't necessarily had a chance to go back and look at this in a political sense. Seems to be a failure. We don't want to look back because it's a failure, but I guess it's not really a failure." This participant' wavering view sheds light on the difficulties associated with moving beyond occupation and the role the memory of an event plays in facilitating the democratic process. How does one commemorate an event that represents a continuous struggle?

Vivian (2010) notes that although memory and forgetting are not often seen as antithetical, the two concepts are complimentary. Importantly, he posits that forgetting is not necessarily negative. "By delineating the telling differences between desirable and undesirable

forms of communal forgetting, one also discerns why conventional forms of public commemoration sometimes fail to accomplice their intended, social, political, or moral purposes" (p. 38). When a larger push to publicly remember atrocities or significant events occurs, the lack of reflection often renders such commemorations inept. The extensive campaigns and museums erected to "never forget" the events of the Holocaust did not prevent future genocides in Rwanda and Syria (Zelizer, 1998). Public commemoration of certain events, especially social movements, may seem beneficial at the time, but as was shown with the annual June 4th commemoration, do very little to further the original cause. Younger Hongkongers would even argue that the political climate has gotten worse in Hong Kong despite having a yearly vigil to remember the democratic struggle associated with the 1989 Tiananmen Student Movement. Remembering for the sake of remembering is not always conducive to changing the situations that rendered remembering important (Zelizer, 1998). Since multiple ways of doing memory work exist, determining how the memory of something like a 79-day occupation will be utilized in the future is an important element when determining the success or failure of a social movement or whether or not such determinations are even necessary.

Distinguishing between the memory of an event and reflection is difficult given the subjectivity of what one may consider reflection. Moving beyond the traditional definition or, "a thought, idea, or opinion formed or a remark made as a result of mediation" (Merriam-Webster, 2016), reflecting on an event or act can be viewed as the process of coming to terms with the reality of a memory. Benjamin (1968) wrote, "The past carries with it a temporal index by which it is referred to redemption" (p. 254). A social movement challenges the status quo and the political elite, the movement is a chance to redeem a history of oppression and exploitation. Benjamin goes on to state that the past is viewed as "flashes" that conform to the situation of the

present. As the present is constantly ticking forward, the past lingers in its wake. The moments after a social movement are precarious and without further action, those in power can manipulate the memory of recent civil unrest to suit their needs. "Mediation" is important, but what is the correct method for reconciliation? Who controls mediation? And what is the role of the individual or the group in such a process? One participant believed that those who participated in the occupation had not truly reflected on the influence of the movement because Hong Kong lacked any sense of strong leadership. Many of the recent mass occupations have been remembered as leaderless movements. Occupy Wall Street famously pushed the notion of a leaderless movement and this notion seemed to get incorporated into the narrative of subsequent occupations. *The New York Times* ran an article title, "Hong Kong Protests are Leaderless but Orderly" (Buckley & Ramzy, 2014). Regardless of whether or not leaders existed within the infrastructure of these movements, the memory of leaderless movements persists. Leaders like Benny Tai, Joshua Wong, and Nathan Law were instrumental in organizing and sustaining the occupation, yet very few have acknowledged their ability to lead in the reflection process once the occupation ended. When the participant who spoke about the importance of leadership was asked about media's role in the reflection process, he said "you don't wait for the media to direct the movement. The media plays a role, but not at that level." The narrative surrounding many of these new movements, including the Umbrella Movement, focused on the importance of social media, but if media is not a sufficient facilitator of reflection, what is media's role?

Digital technologies can be efficient transmitters and repositories of memory. In Hong Kong, more traditional media like newspapers and television are seen as favoring the pro-establishment camp, while online sites are seen as having a more pro-democratic slant. Hong Kong has 52 daily newspapers, including many electronic newspapers among Hong Kong's 644

periodicals, which make up the territory's print environment (www.gov.hk, 2016). After the Umbrella Movement, participants stated that online newspapers were becoming more popular sources for information. Sixty-four percent of Hong Kong's population has an active social media account and it is believed that more than half of the population uses Facebook (Social media usage in Hong Kong, 2015). One key area of memory work associated with many recent mass occupations is the dynamic role that social media plays in the experience of events. For example, one of the participants who was abroad for most of the occupation, said he had arrived just in time to watch the police take down the make-shift shelters, yet he felt like he was a part of the movement. His recollection of the movement seemed no different than those who had physically participated. He said he had felt connected through social media. However, another participant[49] essentially summarized Sustein's (2009) theory of selective exposure with regards to social media use during and after the occupation.

> The thing about Facebook is that people are saying it's like a wall, you like the pages you want to see and the voices that you hear are basically the ones you want to hear so that kind of makes it bad. Because you're not learning much and you're not accepting the other opinions. They were saying in the past you couldn't really choose a channel and the channels that you had were free so you kind of had a balance there. So in the past, people were more tolerant to different opinions, but now people are only interested in the ideas they want. Now it's very narrow, people have a channel

[49] Even though I did talk to quite a few academics during the course of this project, this participant was not a student nor had they ever heard of Sustein.

where they can just watch animation for 24 hours and they will not watch anything else. There's too many channels.

Another participant, mentioned that Facebook, because it is a multiplatform service, is constantly being transformed to fit new needs. Individuals would often mention Facebook in their discussion of politics after the first anniversary of the Umbrella Movement claiming that the information disseminated on the site helped to influence them to be more interested in politics. The participant continued by saying, "but no one has really looked at how people have moved on—how it has informed their lives." These two perspectives do seem to support some of Nora's (1989; 1996) concerns with "democratized" memory. Social media has created more ways to store and disseminate various memory artifacts, but if there is too much information, can individuals and groups use these memories efficiently as a way to reflect upon what happened in an effort to move forward? The importance of social media was remembered in relation to the movement, but according to many of the participants and general observations of the period following occupation, it seemed that no time was given to "mediating" or coming to terms with social media's real influence.

Although participants often said that no one was actively reflecting upon the significance of the Umbrella Movement, many would go on to say how the occupation influenced further action. Sometimes reflection is unconscious and perhaps the participants did not realize that their answers and involvement in my project were a form of reflection in itself.[50] During my conversations with participants, multiple perspectives were discussed over the course of the two

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[50] There are elements of the Hawthorne effect in this project in the sense that being asked to reflect on the movement may have made participants more aware of their views and beliefs through involvement in this project. However, the Hawthorne effect does usually change the behavior of those involved because they are being observed which is different than the conditions for this project. Asking someone how they remember a social movement was an essential component of this project.

years since the end of the occupation in 2014, but three positions seemed to be the most common. The first perspective was that current and aspiring pro-democracy political leaders and activists were trying to use the memory of the movement to further democratic ideals within the system. The movement was not necessarily a failure, but the occupation ended and those who turned to politics felt it was time to move to the next phase. Despite the early media portrayals of a "leaderless movement," Joshua Wong and Nathan Law began promising political careers. Established politicians like Alvin Yeung and Leung "Long Hair" Kwok-hung,[51] used the movement to appeal to new constituents who had been influenced by the occupation. The second perspective that was commonly discussed was that Hong Kong was shrouded in a state of depression following the movement. Participants would often say, "the movement failed and there's nothing we can do about it." A middle-aged photographer mentioned that after the occupation, people seemed to give up and just went back to their "regular" lives. He said you do not see anyone trying to demonstrate in the streets anymore.[52] Returning to the comfort of the everyday was perhaps a way to deal with the hopelessness of a failing political system. Similar to the second perspective, the final attitude also looked back at the Umbrella Movement as a failure, but instead of giving up, these participants felt that more violent and extreme action were the solution. Hong Kong would be democratic, even if it meant a violent revolution and separation from the Mainland. These three perceptions employed the memory of the Umbrella Movement in different ways, demonstrating that establishing a singular collective memory of an event as significant as a social movement is more complicated than designating the movement as

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[51] Leung "Long Hair" Kwok-hung got his nickname thanks to his less traditional political look. In addition to having long hair, he often wears Che Guevara t-shirts to LegCo sessions.
[52] The photographer was a photo journalist in addition to taking pictures for souvenirs. He owned a shop near the Star Ferry Pier in Central. Given his views that the Internet was "unsafe" he was not interested in following the state of the movement online.

a success or a failure and moving on to the next phase. Given social media's propensity to encourage users to consume information that adheres to an already established ideology, finding a form of leadership that could push the idea of the movement forward for everyone was nonexistent and the process of reflection was taken up by various groups, who without the presence of an occupied physical space, lost the venue, or perhaps desire, to communicate across the vast spectrum of activists who participated in the 2014 movement.

One of the more visible groups to emerge in the factionalized wake of the Umbrella Movement were the "Umbrella Soldiers," young activists who were inspired to get directly involved with politics following the end of occupation (Kwok & Baldwin, 2015). A participant, reflecting on the movement, believed that the political atmosphere and the upcoming elections were the most impacted by the memory of the occupation.

> Social and political reform [are] still not solved in Hong Kong. After the movement, there was a sense of frustration, a sense that nothing has been gained. The movement got people to realize that if the situation continues, it has to be on all sides. People aren't satisfied with the government so they're trying to paralyze it from within.

Despite the sense of frustration, the statement does support the notion that the political identity Hongkongers seemed to establish during the Umbrella Movement was still present. A number of the student leaders did turn to politics as a way to gain enough power to control the narrative of what they saw as their Umbrella Movement.

From the Streets to Politics: Reflection in the Form of Institutionalized Politics

After the Umbrella Movement, countless articles from Hong Kong's online newspapers and in prestigious Western press published stories about the movement's next step. In one article, Joshua Wong stares out from a photo published in *The Wall Street Journal* standing next to pro-democracy activist Martin Lee. The title of the article reads: "Hong Kong Activist Wong: Work Within the System" (Zheng, 2015). Other article titles included references to many of the occupation slogans that were popular towards the end of the movement like, "We will be back" and "it's not over yet" (Hilgers, 2015; Phillips, 2015). Many of these articles framed the next step for those who claimed they "would be back" as government involvement and for Joshua Wong and other activists, moving forward did mean becoming involved in politics. Wong felt that, "the Legislative Council need[ed] new blood" citing that the average age of a Hong Kong politician was 57 (Zheng & Yung, 2015). For the Umbrella Soldiers who were motivated to become involved in government after the movement, the reality of 2047, when the fifty-year term of "one country, two systems" expires, is not a distant deadline. Older politicians grew up in a different political climate and find it difficult to relate to a younger generation that grew up in a territory controlled by Beijing's government. The memory of the movement and the relationship to the Mainland has created generational divides that extend to the political arena. Wong's generation tends to see the Umbrella Movement as a catalyst or rather a starting point for a new cohort of politicians and political activists to fight for a democratic Hong Kong. Wong told one reporter, "One reason why young legislators are so important is that they will be stakeholders around this time. 'I should not say this, but in 2047, some of the legislators now won't exist" (Zheng & Yung, 2015). As this younger generation matures into more established politicians, the memory of the Umbrella Movement may take on new meaning as this group of

leaders seeks more powerful positions. The memory of an event will constantly evolve as the present transforms the memory's context. Understanding these evolving memories will provide insights for future activists and scholars.

Hong Kong's younger generation does possess a different political memory of Hong Kong, which will influence how they begin to reflect upon the relevance of the Umbrella Movement in relation to their civic choices. In addition to growing up in a post-1997 environment, this younger generation is also the first cohort of digital natives to become politically active. In the introduction to a special issue of *Information, Communications & Society* published one year after the Umbrella Movement, Qiu and Loader (2015) wrote, "we understand that there is always a political dimension in cultural formation, which is often expressed most intensively, creatively, and consequentially, through social media action. The 2014 Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong, like versions of Occupy on other continents, was one such moment when digitally equipped citizens rose up to challenge the dominant powers" (p. 1). The problem that Qiu and Loader do not address is how technology promotes a more democratized memory of these movements, which makes the period following occupation difficult to navigate. Although social media does have the ability to keep the memory of the movement alive, in comparison to the more centralized memory work facilitated by preexisting power dynamics, it is more difficult for the democratized nature of social media memory to further the cause of activists. The young politicians will need to figure out a way to direct the multiple memories of the movement in ways that will lead to real democratic reform.

In the wake of the Umbrella Movement, young activist-politicians like Wong and Law will have to reconcile Hong Kong's past as an economically prosperous city that has historically catered to corporate interests with their fight to achieve universal suffrage. They must do this

while also reestablishing a sense of trust in a political establishment that the Umbrella Movement rose up against. Remembering the Umbrella Movement as an event driven by social media will not guarantee a democratic Hong Kong. Drawing lessons from memory work related to the Holocaust, the atrocity photographs have become a reference marker for new generations to ignore modern genocide. We may say “never forget” because we can look at a picture of these atrocities, but as Zelizer (1998) notes, the prominence of photography as a new way to shape narratives at the end of WWII, deterred our ability to continuously reflect on the horrors associated with the Nazi agenda in a meaningful way. In the case of the Umbrella Movement, will social media, which helped to shape the narratives associated with today’s modern social movements hinder our ability to impart meaningful democratic change? These technologies do allow us to remember significant events whether they convey atrocity or hope, but these technologies do not replace the importance of reflection and coming to terms with the events of the past. The young individuals who emerged as leaders of the movement were able to combine their understanding of the benefits of digital technologies like disseminating messages and coordinating mobilization, but they also understood the importance of directly connecting with people. Young politicians may be the leaders that are needed to help their constituents reflect on what the Umbrella Movement will mean to Hongkongers moving forward; they will have to successfully frame what happened during the 79-day occupation in a way that will help the territory move forward to become the democracy that the Umbrella Movement activists originally wanted.

Leaders and the Leaderless

Memory is important to the preservation of a new leadership just as leadership is important to the work of collective memory. As Tande (2009) notes with regards to the political

situation in Cameroon, a lack of political documentation led to a sense of “collective amnesia” that allowed those in power to remain corrupt officials. Once more efforts to maintain a record of speeches and political correspondence ensued, such actions led to a rise in pro-democracy groups in the country. The primary goal of many social movements involves some level of democratization and as Haskins (2015) writes, “today the belief that ordinary people should be able to ‘put their stamp on history’ reflects the desire and ability of non-elite actors to coproduce narratives of public memory, not merely to experience them as spectators” (p. 3). More voices are necessary to create a more democratic collective memory, but there does seem to be a need to direct these diverse narratives into a cohesive message. Taking a leadership role in the construction of collective memory is not always a job for traditional leaders and can include the efforts of historians, writers, journalists and scholars (Tande, 2009), but regardless of who is in charge, this notion of leadership has been a significant obstacle for pro-democracy politicians and activists since the Umbrella Movement, due to many of the generational divides previously discussed. Older politicians have found it difficult communicating with younger constituents, who believe their tactics are outdated and younger politicians have yet to establish themselves.

A major challenge the recently elected Umbrella Soldiers will face will be renegotiating the original Western media narrative that the movement was leaderless. In the early accounts of the movement, Western publications like *The New York Times* published articles comparing the Umbrella Movement to other recent movements like the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street that were often defined as “leaderless” (Buckley & Ramzy, 2014). Given that state-sponsored acts of remembering generally center around a specific date or leader, defining something as “leaderless” does make it difficult to rally behind a central figure, date, or even cause at a later time. However, the Umbrella Movement had a foundational leadership from the beginning.

Professor Chan Kin-man, Benny Tai, and Reverend Chu Yiu-ming planned the Occupy Central with Peace and Love campaign beginning with lectures and university demonstrations after the original 2013 vote, which denied the territory universal suffrage (Kaiman, 2014). When images of student protesters being teargassed were circulated on social media, Western media became interested in the story and began to make connections to other occupy movements ignoring the involvement and influence of the original leaders. Eventually a new group of young leaders emerged in the Western media narrative, but the Western media portrayal of a leaderless movement created issues for future leadership.

There are advantages of a leaderless movement in relation to democratic principles, but the Western media's original narrative of a "leaderless" movement lacked a clear focus and represented a kind of ambivalent memory work. Western media is influential in Hong Kong given their status as a former British colony; a large number of Hong Kong's residents do speak English.[53] Most of the participants who supported the Umbrella Movement said they often consumed Western media, specifically the prestige press, because they felt such publications were less biased than Hong Kong's television and newspapers. They also felt that the Western media often provided them with a good outsider's perspective. Towards the end of the movement the Western press did begin to accentuate the role of young student leaders like Joshua Wong and Nathan Law, but the narrative of another "leaderless" occupation has been wrapped up in the collective memory of the Umbrella Movement narrative.

[53] There are a number of different statistics on the real number of English speakers in the territory depending on how language proficiency is determined. Some statistics say 46% of Hongkongers speak English, while others put that figure higher or lower depending on occupation, ethnicity, and a number of other factors. All of my participants who supported the Umbrella Movement were fluent English speakers. Most Hongkongers who have a university level education do have some understanding of English as a number of colleges in the territory teach classes in English.

In Hong Kong, the presence of strong local leadership has always been tenuous given the territory's unique situation as both a former colony and as a current Chinese SAR. One academic claimed that to properly reflect on a major event, strong leaders were necessary to help initiate and guide discussion to decide future courses of action.

> Normally if there is a group that finds it is responsible for the whole thing there is a great chance for them to reflect on what is right and what is wrong because they will take responsibility for articulating certain strategies and if you are in a position to lead, then you will take a strong role. But so far, we don't see anyone articulating strategy. It has something to do with the scattered leadership in Hong Kong or what we call the Hong Kong social movement, or self-mobilization. It is very strong that you can appeal to the general public but at the same time it is very weak when it comes to decision-making, the formation of effective strategies. So, these factors contribute to the general absence of systematic reflection.

Perhaps leaders like Wong and Law, among the original organizers of the movement, have struggled to legitimize their role as leaders because the memory of a "leaderless" movement did persist even after the Western press corrected itself. A lack of shared space and growing factionalism may have been other reasons why pro-democracy politicians found it difficult to direct a sense of "systematic reflection" following the occupation. In addition, social media also allowed new groups and individuals to emerge as opinion leaders in the aftermath of the movement.

The dominance of the "leaderless" narrative and the lack of a clear focus following the occupation allowed new leaders, especially those from Localists groups who originally gained prominence online in the period after the movement, to gain more influence. A participant, during my first visit to Hong Kong, said that many of his friends had started following an outspoken Localists on Facebook, but that his ideas were too extreme to gain traction. Two years later, the Localists movement seems to have become more popular and the leaders of these movements are beginning to get more attention (MaCauley & Timmons, 2016). Generally, those who are most vitriolic in online settings do not accurately represent the overall message of the cause. Online personalities tend to be more individually focused and even narcissistic as opposed to focusing on the collectivity of the movement (Beck, 2014). These individuals may do something to preserve the memory of the movement, but it is usually done in their own self-interest. Yet these online personalities tend to get much more interest in the press, which is looking for stories tied to personalities and drama. They make the news, and thus they help maintain and shape the memory of the movement. An overly deterministic understanding of technology's role in social movements has arisen, taking the focus away from the role of actual leadership and the function it serves in preserving memory. As a result, the long-term goals of many of these modern movements are often hard to ascertain and lose momentum once groups begin to focus on other concerns that require strong leadership to "take responsibility." The ambivalent dynamic of leadership in relation to the memory of the movement has made it difficult to facilitate a sense of reflection that could maintain and redirect the momentum of the original occupation.

The memory of a leaderless movement creates a space for individuals to promote their own concept of how the movement occurred and was subsequently led. Given the "decentralized

[and] leaderless nature" of groups that begin online, it becomes difficult to focus on a centralized message that will do more than just disrupt the status quo (Sauter 2014). A participant said that real reflection had been distorted by what he claimed were "contesting forces." The memory of a "leaderless" movement meant that more individuality and "People doing their own thing [and] saying, 'let's make more umbrellas, let's sing more songs,' but this doesn't help advance the movement forward." Other participants expressed a similar sense of frustration with the lack of any clear leadership and direction moving forward. Occupation is an important catalyst for new political ideas, but in the period that followed the Umbrella Movement, a clearer direction seemed to be missing and the plurality of memories actually became a hindrance for some of the Umbrella Soldiers who were trying to translate the essence of the movement into a more focused form of political action.

Reclaiming public space was a significant symbolic action during the occupation which gave the movement consistency and helped it coalesce, but it is a difficult to sustain this coherence with regards to memory work once the group is no longer together in space. Without the connecting factor of public space, new political leaders like Wong and Law, have struggled to propose a solution moving forward that appeals to the majority of those who originally participated in the movement. One participant said that while social media has been widely used to share funny memes and various politically oriented articles, no "real" reflection has occurred.

> Social media stopped short of being a platform for them to reflect systematically on the movement. There are talks about what they did right or wrong during the movement, but so far, I have yet to see how the participants of the movement or the leaders reflect on what they have done in terms of strategies, goals, and the follow-up. It

> seems to me that the leaders and the participants were suffering from some kind of depression or some kind of powerlessness. If anything, the role of social media would have to wait its turn when there is a reintegration of the movement or when the movement takes on a new platform.

Social media was instrumental when people needed to be brought together at the beginning of the occupation, but has not been as effective at keeping the same people together. The individual went on to say:

> Usually in any place, it should be the leaders that should take the responsibility first because the media is more like a platform where they can express themselves and then connect with people…you have to assume the role of movement articulator in order to reflect on it. So far, they don't seem to assume that kind of role. For the opinion leaders, yes, they are doing some of that, but I don't think there's enough. But for the opinion leaders of Hong Kong, because there's a vacuum, the opinion leaders play a role but there are not too many who know the social movement enough or who should be in a position to articulate what's going on. So, I would say there are reflections, but it is still so far scattered and piecemeal and they are not as influential as leaders.

The memory of the movement is still influential in Hong Kong, but it has been difficult for leaders to strategically deploy these memories in a way that has been able to promote the sense of hope and progress that was associated with actual occupation.

It could be that the ambiguous memory of a leaderless movement is especially problematic in a culture deeply steeped in Confucianism. Leadership is central to Confucius teachings and is a part of Hong Kong's cultural history. A passage from the *Analects* reads, "If you try to guide the common people with coercive regulations and keep them in line with punishments, the common people become evasive and will have no sense of shame. If, however, you guide them with Virtue, and keep them in line by means of ritual, the people will have a sense of shame and will rectify themselves" (p. 8). Confucius believed that common people needed a "virtuous" leader to set an example for how to live a moral life. Given the current political turmoil, it would seem that no such leader exists, for the overall territory and even the pro-democracy factions. The occupation was an important process because the "common people became evasive" when the central government failed to show a strong sense of leadership. However, now that the occupation is over, those who stood against an oppressive government feel that they have nowhere to turn or rather that there are too many places to turn. Media without a Confucian scaffold, seems to lack coherence. The Western media used the memory of other movements and assumed that Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement was similar, not understanding the implications of undermining the significance of the movement leadership. Movement leaders may not have received significant media attention in the beginning, but many of these individuals have tried to use the memory of the movement to continue Hong Kong's democratic fight. Leung "Long Hair" Kwok-hung carried a yellow umbrella while he took his official oath of office. Alvin Yeung evoked the symbolism of the movement when he wore a yellow tie to meet with Beijing official Zhang. Many of these activists turned politicians have tried to be virtual leaders, but unlike in Confucius' time, a different balance of power exists. Leaders are not chosen by "heavenly mandate," they are "elected" through a biased system.

Establishing a sense of trust in a system that the Umbrella Movement was essentially against has been a difficult task for the pan-democrats. The movement was meant to break the "ritual" of a political system that rarely gave Hongkongers a voice and while these politicians may try to evoke the memory of the movement to further political goals, it does not always translate to a sense of trust. The memory of an inefficient system is hard to forget.

Establishing Trust

Political leanings in Hong Kong are often related to generational identities, which has made it difficult for young politicians as well as established political leaders to appeal to a wide range of constituents. Many of the younger participants, especially those in their early twenties, tend to support self-determination. Those in their mid-twenties to early thirties support a variety of pro-democracy groups that are often based on their occupational background. While those in their thirties and forties generally supported politicians from the Civic party, which was founded when this generation became politically active and motivated. These observations were generated and confirmed by participants who worked for Hong Kong legislators and had government positions. However, many participants mentioned that these political classifications were based only on pro-democracy parties and that the real political distinction had more to do with whether or not one was pro or anti-establishment. One thing that everyone agreed on was that Hong Kong had too many political parties, which divided loyalties. As mentioned previously, when young political leaders like Joshua Wong and Nathan Law decided to become politicians, they were said to have "lost their innocence." Younger generations have lost faith in the older generation of pro-democracy politicians and activists because they have been struggling to establish a democratic system for the past twenty-years and have seen minimal success; pro-democracy politics in Hong Kong does have a legacy of failure or at least minimum impact.

Although these groups seemed to come together during the 79-day occupation, continuing this sense of political efficacy has proven to be difficult with the rise of new political groups with various political ideologies. Establishing a sense of trust in a political system that has continuously favored pro-establishment and Beijing interests has been an arduous process given the legacy of ineptitude.

One of the major issues currently plaguing Hong Kong's political future is the difference between representative and "functional constituency" officials. In lieu of universal suffrage, Hong Kong is still governed by the legacy of an outdated British colonial system (Loh, 2006). Shortly after the occupation ended, Richard Bush testified before the Senate's Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs with regards to the differences between the two types officials, citing that functional constituencies generally represented economic interests and corporate will as opposed to representing Hong Kong's citizens. "Major economic interests in Hong Kong have been happy with the current set-up because it provides them with privileged access to decision-making and the ability to block initiatives proposed by the democratic camp" (Bush, 2014). Of the 70 Legislative Council seats, 30 are elected by traditional functional constituencies, which tend to favor business interests over the will of the people. Even though Honkongers are able to directly elect 40 of the LegCo seats, the Functional Constituency is able to block many proposals from the pan-democratic faction that would hinder business interests (Loh, 2006).

In Hong Kong, where the territory's governmental identity has always been tied to economic prosperity, rallying individuals around a political idea is difficult. For one, the idea does not have sufficient representation in the legislative branch and in addition, the idea could potentially hinder the illusion of economic prosperity that is promoted by businesses. Many

think, `why change the status quo if it has produced good results in the past?' The memory of Hong Kong's economic prosperity and the narrative of the territory's transition from fishing village to prosperous global city is hard to disrupt. This established narrative coupled with Beijing's increased control on mainstream media and political action has made it difficult for pro-democracy politicians to push for political reform from within. For the past twenty years, pan-democrats (the coalition of pro-democracy political parties) have been unable to push through reforms given the structure of the LegCo. Newly elected officials, who became politically active during the Umbrella Movement, have the best of intentions but given the imbalance of power it will be a challenge for them to establish trust in a political system plagued with power imbalances. Umbrella Soldier politicians may have been inspired by the movement and attempt to continue the cause, but continuing to get public support will be an arduous process if they are unable to push through policies that will favor their constituents and not the interests of business.

Beijing has been able to subvert more control since the Umbrella Movement as a result of Hong Kong's Janus-faced sense of national identity. Even though it may appear like everyone favors political reform in the territory based on Western media coverage, there are still a large number of individuals who do support Chinese sovereignty and elect pro-establishment candidates. The pro-establishment camp, which does have more LegCo seats thanks to the Functional Constituency positions, tends to be more unified. Holden Chow, a pro-Beijing politician said, "I believe that Hong Kong needs the back up from Mainland and the central government. […] We need to have a stable economy, and also we have to maintain our prosperity. It would ruin the city if we go for independence. We have to strike a balance between different interests within the society and we don't want to have too much populism or

simply just to ignore the business interests" (*Economist*, 2017). Chow believes that Hongkongers are Chinese and that so long as businesses are prosperous, the citizens will be happy. The memory of the Umbrella Movement has influenced pro-Beijing parties as well in the sense that the movement signaled a growing factionalism within the territory and prompted a greater push to try to control the narrative of the movement and Hong Kong's political efficacy.

The pan-democrats have struggled to bring the different parties within the coalition together since the movement. While more established politicians like Alvin Yeung and other members of the Civic Party have attempted to work within the system, new political parties that favor separatist policies have taken the ideas expressed during the occupation to an extreme. During a swearing in ceremony, Sixtus Leung and Yau Wai-ching, two newly elected separatists, used an obscenity to describe China during their oath of loyalty. Despite Beijing's general laissez faire attitude with regards to politics in Hong Kong, these actions prompted Beijing to directly intervene in Hong Kong's political affairs. The memory of Tiananmen Square still haunts Beijing's political reputation, especially in places like Hong Kong, where the memory of the event is still commemorated in yearly vigils, so instead of cracking down violently, Beijing intervened legally barring the two officials from being able to take office. China deemed the two young politicians "threats to national security." Although the pan-democrats were essentially unanimous in their abhorrence of Beijing's decision, some did agree that the actions of the separatist politicians were unwarranted (Forsythe, 2016).

Benny Tai, one of the original creators of Occupy Central, devised a plan to bring the various pan-democrat groups together in an attempt to gain more seats in the 2016 LegCo election. Known as the "thunderbolt plan," Tai encouraged pan-democrats to "forge a united front." In an article published by *The South China Morning Post*, Tai said, "I mean all political

parties and groups should do their maths and weigh their chances of winning." Given the different interpretation of what a democratic Hong Kong would look like, whether that be Beijing's approval for universal suffrage or Hong Kong separatism, a consensus has been hard to muster. One lawmaker said Tai's proposal would be "difficult to implement," citing the Umbrella Soldiers and their inability to identify with more moderate democratic ideas (Ng, 2016). Given the actions of the separatist lawmakers, Tai's plan to put forth a united front was complicated by the actions of the separatist politicians who felt that the memory of the movement, and the only hope for a democratic Hong Kong, was to sever all ties with China. Although these ideas are not necessarily incorrect, and the reality of a democratic Hong Kong can probably only be realized if the territory gains independence, it did disrupt a sense of unity in a coalition that was already struggling to garner more power. It is difficult for politicians who run on the momentum of a social movement to shift away from the structure of the original movement. Movements are often remembered as being spontaneous and comprised of bold action, therefore, it can be onerous for many of these young politicians to translate these mentalities into political action at the government level (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 1999; Castells, 2012).

Political mentalities have their own ritualistic approach, which makes the transition from a social movement—with its own ritualistic components—to politics, an intricate process. Even though Hong Kong's electoral system is extremely biased, there is still the essence of a political opposition seen in many directly elected democracies. In Gauchet's (1996) discussion of political divisions in France, he claims that the real "debate" lies between "the proponents of discontinuity, whose attention is focused primarily on the huge shift in the nature of politics over the past 125 years, and the advocates of continuity, who focus more on the perpetuation of

certain regular patterns in the midst of change" (p. 282). Gauchet notes that right and left political ideologies are comprised of their own internal ideological divides and that the system has functioned in France because after the revolution, it "was the only way to establish a government of opinion." These divisions do point to the legacy of most agonistic democratic political systems as they were meant to incorporate as many ideas as possible in a way to represent the people. However, in Hong Kong, this political tradition is not as effective for a political party that has little to no influence as it is. In France, these divisions represent the ritual of choice and deliberation. In Hong Kong, these divisions contribute more to the illusion of choice. Like the promotion of an economic system that created an impression of freedom, the multi-party system has also masked many of the political issues that point to a more authoritarian system. The ritual of the political "back and forth" had worked in Hong Kong during a time of economic prosperity, but now that such opportunity is not a guarantee, many Hongkongers have had enough of these political divisions. Indeed, the process seems to have created even more division. In the period following occupation, young activists have started their own political parties like Youngspiration, represented by the two members who "violated" their swearing in oaths and Demosisto, the political party started by members of Scholarism. The creation of these new political parties is the product of the Umbrella Movement, but it is unclear whether or not they too will be swept into the political ritual that seems to support a hollow sense of choice, or if they will actually be able to muster enough support from the other pan-democrat parties to offer Hongkongers a more representative political system.

The pan-democrats have never been a coalition with a dominant hold of power, and the political divisions within the democratic alliance have made it easier for the pro-Beijing parties to rally their own supporters. One Hong Kong newspaper claimed that "various pro-

establishment and Beijing-friendly organizations have run more than a dozen adverts in local newspapers" (Lam, 2016). The pro-establishment groups were trying to appeal to a greater sense of "patriotism" to garner support against the Youngspiration politicians. Evoking a sense of patriotism is a complicated act with regards to Hong Kong given the divided loyalties and competing identities. The patriotism induced by these advertisements was one that supports Chinese sovereignty and not the identity that was promoted during the Umbrella Movement. Following the Umbrella Movement, both political groups seemed to scramble to redefine the message of their parties to suit Hong Kong's political identity and as such, relied on the myth of choice discussed by Gauchet (1996) with regards to Western democratic nations. These notions are not necessarily universal and for territories like Hong Kong, that are struggling to create their own political identity, such assumptions can be problematic. The East meets West narrative associated with Hong Kong extends to politics as the pan-democrats attempt to adopt the practices of Western style democracies and pro-establishment parties tend to lean towards the Confucian belief centered around the idea of a benevolent leader/power. Each system has its own legacy and while these political heritages are not antithetical, neither party has been willing to cross the divide to work together to create a political system that will be best for the people of Hong Kong. The political alliances even use different technological platforms to communicate with their base, making this divide even more prevalent.

An assumption exists that technology has made the world more homogenous and even though this notion may carry an inkling of truth, political transitions have not been uniform. The pan-democrats have attempted to utilize Facebook to appeal to their base. A number of LegCo employees said that they had to attend conferences about how to effectively use social media to garner political support. Pro-establishment groups have used more closed systems like WeChat

and WhatsApp to inform their constituents and rally support. As a result, it has been simpler for this group, which easily maintains a majority in the LegCo, given the role of functional constituency seats, to control their political message. According to some participants, this message has been one that has painted the Umbrella Movement in a negative light. Given the lack of transparency amongst pro-establishment groups, it was difficult to confirm whether or not the promotion of this negative view of the Umbrella Movement was occurring via WeChat. However, based on the stories and advertisements found throughout traditional media channels like newspapers and television, it does appear that the pro-establishment groups have promoted a more unified message that does not support the ideals of the Umbrella Movement. Comments by pro-Beijing politicians like Holden Chow and the "un-patriotic" portrayal of separatist candidates would seem to support this idea.

It has also been harder for pan-democrats to establish a sense of confidence in their efforts to change the system from within given the lack of patience in the overall process. The revolutions that established many Western democracies are remembered by singular dates and not in relation to the arduous process of war and political negotiation. History books emphasize the importance of July 4, 1776, but the conflict was not resolved until 1781. Technological advancement has warped our perceptions of time and space. News and information is now instantaneous. Carey (1989) wrote that the relationship between communication and space has always been wrapped up in the "democratic migration" of American beliefs. Communications and transportation technologies had always been linked in the past. A message could only travel as fast as the mode of transportation; however, the telegraph changed this system and with it, our understanding of space and time. Memories also take on this vague relationship with time and as time progresses, the past is evoked as a singular day as opposed to a continuous process. For

these modern displays of dissidence on a mass scale for the purposes of political reform, it seems like the luxury of time is not an indulgence afforded to such transitions. A revolution, according to Nora (1996), can invoke a sense of "pure memory" and "abolish a sense of time."

> With the idea of generation one indeed enters into the realm of pure memory—and that is why, in particular, that idea interests us here. Pure memory is memory that thumbs its nose at history, that ignores lapses of time and chains of cause and effect, that forgets the prose of the quotidian and the obstacles to progress. It advances in "flashes," powerful images, jumping from one stalwart mooring to the next. It abolishes time's duration, leaving only an ahistorical present (p. 525-526).

This is often how the American and French revolutions are conceived. We do not think of the process and the struggle, but rather the end result. It is hard for politicians to try to evoke some of the memories associated with the Umbrella Movement because these memories are still fresh, there has been no sense of closure. Many of the participants emphasized that "we're ready for democracy here in Hong Kong," but failed to account that such political processes take time. Young politicians like Wong and Law have begun to look to 2047 as a more realistic timeline for Hong Kong's democracy, but it is difficult to conceptualize such a future when so many other things in life are instantaneous.

It has been hard for politicians to establish trust in the political process after the occupation because the process is ongoing. The notion that a single idea of dissent can grow into an organized movement, which leads to a democratic government, is the narrative legacy of well-established Western democracies. The American political system is not perfect and must

continuously redefine itself based on the social and political issues of the time. Hong Kong is currently struggling to understand the longevity of this process and the difficulties in maintaining democracy now that there seems to be more interest in the territory's political environment. The catalyst is hard to replicate and its memory becomes wrapped up in the ritual of political struggle. One participant mentioned that a greater sense of disorganization has befallen activist efforts. The 79-day occupation was deemed to be an "organized" movement and has not been replicated in the demonstrations that followed.

> There's an existing legacy of the way the umbrella movement operated. It wasn't fully structured in its way of organizing. This legacy is more diversified and not unified. Political organizing in general did change because of the Umbrella Movement. The movement for Zhang's visit that happed over the course of two days was very disorganized. There was a sense of frustration, while there was also a general loss of orientation. One of the reasons these things are so disorganized is because people in these groups have too much distrust for organizational movements.

For those movement leaders who went into politics to change the system, garnering support for the political process has been a challenge because those who favor a democratic Hong Kong are already aware of the inequality of the political system. Movements that tried to rekindle organic political awareness through the work of memory in subsequent demonstrations have become more disorganized as people began to lose faith in those who made the original occupation seem successful. However, the participant went on to say that the lack of solidarity and organization among the pan-democratic coalition may actually be beneficial. The movement might not be as

organized or as strong when led by individual groups, but these loosely connected networks makes it harder for Beijing to silence the larger idea of universal suffrage. Given the increasing power the Mainland has exerted over the territory, this "disorganized" strategy may prove to be a useful approach moving forward.

One reason why people may distrust big organizations, like political parties, has to do with the actors involved in such groups. A LegCo employee mentioned that there is a "bipolar dilemma for politicians. Politicians are expected to engage with their constituents using social media, but it is difficult to balance the persona one depicts online with one's real life image." For millennials, these two identities are blurred, but for older politicians, these identities are generally different (Palfrey & Gasser, 2010). The most successful movements tend to emphasize face-to-face relationships, which encourage trust. Considering that many of today's struggles, including the Umbrella Movement, reflect the loss of institutional trust, demonstrations that are meant to establish change need to re-establish these connections to promote long-term development (Wolfson, 2014). Many of Hong Kong's politicians have yet to establish the proper balance between face-to-face and technological interaction. "I think 90 percent of Hong Kong politicians don't have such awareness of PR crisis coming from behind and this is what I'm worried about," said the Facebook coordinator for a prominent politician. "But for Hong Kong people, how can Hong Kong people recover from this disappointment and depression of the post Umbrella Movement, I guess it really depends on the direct actions from those who are pro-democrats. What you do is more convincing than what you said." The problem for many of these pro-democratic politicians is that they do not always have the power to deliver on some of their promises given the biased electoral system. The use of technology to promote the movement is remembered as an essential component to the movement; however, it has been

difficult to replicate the conditions that utilized both online and face-to-face communications effectively during the original occupation. If technology is to be used to increase the skill of the actors involved, then it is up to these actors to build relationships and networks that move beyond the rudimentary uses of technology (McCarthy, 1987). Many of Hong Kong's politicians have found it difficult to build trusting relationships with constituents online.

Politicians like Alvin Yeung, who posts on Facebook multiple times a day have built a relationship with his constituents online and in person. Yeung told *Hong Kong Free Press* that politicians need to adapt to the growing political interests expressed by young Kongkongers, "You have to speak their language" (Zeng, 2015). Even though politicians like Yeung may be popular amongst younger pro Umbrella Movement activists, his ability to keep the memory of the movement alive is tied to his ability to maintain power, and not just his level of activity on Facebook, a task difficult for many pro-democracy politicians. If China continues to exert political influence over the territory, it will be increasingly more difficult for politicians like Yeung to maintain the memory of the movement in the form of government policy as Beijing continues to strip power away from the pan-democrat coalitions by suppressing the memory of the occupation. For Yeung and other pan-democratic politicians, social media may help them preserve the memory of the movement beyond the state sponsored channels that are known to favor pro-establishment policy and politicians. The more outlets there are to express alternative views, the better the chances that events like the Umbrella Movement will be remembered in a positive light, as opposed to the state narrative that the movement was a disruption. Unfortunately, it has become increasingly difficult for politicians like Yeung to maintain what little grasp on power they have in the Legislative Council.

After Beijing intervened and barred the separatist candidates from taking office after the use of expletives during their oath taking ceremony, politicians like Yeung evoked the memory of Hong Kong's Basic Law. The law was unequally skewed towards Beijing authority, but it did grant Hong Kong some autonomy under the "one country, two systems mentality" (Thomas, 1999; Chu, 2013). "I do not see any reason, rationale, or need for the National People's Congress to interpret the Basic Law to solve problems related to the oath taking furor" Yeung said in an interview after the scandal (Leung, 2016). The Basic Law grants Hong Kong its own Rule of Law. Although Beijing has the authority to intervene if they deem something a threat to "political stability," the Basic Law does grant Hong Kong power over their own legal code (Thomas, 1999). Yeung believed that the Youngspiration politicians did violate the law, but that the matter should be resolved internally. Referencing Article 104 of the Basic Law, Yeung was outspoken with regards to the fact that "when assuming public office, members of the Legislative Council must swear to uphold the Basic Law." He was calling out Chief Executive C. Y. Leung for saying, "we hope it can be solved within Hong Kong's parameters, but we cannot rule out the possibility" (Leung, 2016). Although Yeung did not directly evoke the memory of the Umbrella Movement, he tapped into the same emotional connection to a political identity that was established during the movement. The Youngspiration candidates did break with tradition and violated a legal policy; however, Hong Kong's legal system should define their fate as opposed to the central government in Beijing.

Hong Kong's legal system has helped to support Hong Kong's new-found political identity in the wake of the Umbrella Movement. Three years after the Umbrella Movement, seven police officers were convicted of assault and could face up to three years in prison. A television crew captured the assault of demonstrator Ken Tsang (Wong, 2017). The video

depicted Tsang being kicked and beaten by five of the police officers while two others observed. The conviction of the officers was a small victory for the Umbrella Movement, as it demonstrated that there was some accountability for the actions of the police officers. The original video was filmed by TVB, a television station that usually favors pro-government views, but the video of the beating was eventually shared through social media sites where it outraged pro-democracy demonstrators. The video became an important location of memory, which in the wake of the Umbrella Movement, prompted the police to promote a campaign to help bolster their reputation (Bradsher & Forsythe, 2014). Figure 4.1 was a photo taken of a police advertisement in the metro, a place where during the movement, protesters would use the

Figure 4.1: *Photo of police advertisement taken in Tsim Tsa Tsue Metro Station during my first trip to Hong Kong in August 2015.*

the advertisement display cases to showcase art crated during occupation. The police photo was displayed in every advertisement case at that particular metro exit. A few of the participants I asked about the photo said that the police were trying to rebrand their image after the Umbrella Movement, but most agreed that the abundance of the advertisement was a frightening prospect

as the authorities attempted to reclaim the visual symbolism of physical spaces. The conviction of the police officers in 2017 seemed to re-establish trust in Hong Kong's legal system, while at the same time re-establishing a lack of trust in Hong Kong's police force. Sites of memory change over time, but they still represent the emotional connection to a political system that has continually failed to represent the views of the Hong Kong people as opposed to business and Mainland interests. Despite the police's best efforts to promote a more positive image after the Umbrella Movement, the memory of Tsang's beating was more powerful.

The memory of control in the wake of the occupation has been a significant theme leading up to the 2017 Chief Executive election. From an increased police presence during Chinese official Zhang's visit, to the barring of Youngspiration politicians, the memory of political efficacy evoked during the Umbrella Movement has been hard to sustain under this environment. Prior to the barring of the separatist politicians, Edward Leung, a prominent pro-independence leader was denied the ability to run for election. Like other politicians running for office, Leung signed a declaration stating that he viewed Hong Kong as an "inseparable part" of China, but despite this act, the commission believed that such actions did not provide sufficient enough evidence that Leung had changed his position on independence. One article stated that, "the decision has incensed the city's pro-democracy politicians and activists, with many—including Leung himself-saying the independent electoral agency is being 'manipulated' by the Hong Kong government and is conducting a 'political screening of candidates" (Iyengar, 2016). Similar stories about political situations in Hong Kong were spread through social media. Even though these stories were not directly related to the Umbrella Movement, they were a big part of how "what happened next" has been framed. The Umbrella Movement established the memory

of a politically motivated Hong Kong, and the sharing of these types of stories helped to preserve that consciousness.

Although many individuals were inspired to become more interested in politics after the Umbrella Movement, a sense of political apathy was still prevalent. Even if the pan-democrats managed to portray a united front or had the ability to gain more political power, getting the average Hongkonger interested in politics would still be a challenging enterprise. Political apathy seems to be a social phenomenon that plagues all generations. A retired teacher said:

> If you ask normal people if they care, most of them will say they don't talk about politics. This is a standard answer. If you ask people, 'have you voted' they will say yes, but they don't know anything. 'I'm just told by people to vote this; I don't really know about this candidate or their policy.' They just want a good leader, this is the Chinese way. They don't mind who is in charge so long as they have a place to stay and food to eat.

The retired teacher told a very different story of Hong Kong's political interest than the one remembered through media portrayals of the Umbrella Movement, which depicted Hong Kong's citizens as a united front, wishing to have a louder political voice. However, he did point to a political apathy that did not get media coverage but was also echoed by his former student demonstrating that such political sentiments did seem to span multiple generations.

> In the local political culture, Hong Kong used to be a very economic city. During the colonial times, Hong Kong was very depoliticized. This thwarted people's desire for Hong Kong, but this political culture actually influenced some of the younger generation so that

> when there's a trade-off between economic prosperity and democracy, they'd choose economic prosperity.

Political apathy is deeply rooted within Hong Kong's political culture, given its Confucian and Taoist roots, and while these feelings did not get the same political attention as stories related to issues of control and political interest, they were still a part of the emotional response to the period following the occupation.

The Umbrella Movement ended without any true resolution. Demands set by leaders were unanswered by Beijing and given Beijing's increasing control on Hong Kong's political system, a generalized suspicion now plagues many of Hong Kong's political institutions. The climate of political doubt was common among many of those who had participated in the Umbrella Movement. Many felt that they were powerless. It was hard to change the memory of Hong Kong's past political culture, where it was uncommon to talk about politics. The sense of political apathy could easily be a symptom of the depression many felt after the occupation. The political leaders who claimed to represent the ideas of the movement had little power to change the system from within given the pro-establishment's control over the Chief Executive vote. Speaking in response to the upcoming election one participant said, "If you're nominated by communists and only elected by the minority, then they don't need to be accountable to the public, they only need to be accountable to the people who gave them power. The system is a very poor system. That's why the Hong Kong people, especially the younger generation see their future as thin, so that's why they fight." Some politicians are well-liked by their constituents and have established a sense of trust in their ability to govern, but not the ability to change the entirety of Hong Kong's political system. Without universal suffrage, very little can be changed from within. Although the memory of a new political identity is still prevalent

throughout Hong Kong's social media sphere, it has been difficult to preserve the memory of the recent political efficacy throughout the actual political system based on unequal power dynamics. With the election of Carrie Lam, it is likely that more political power will be stripped from the pan-democrats, and with it, the trust they were able to build up after the movement.

A Cloudy Day in Hong Kong: Depression and Hopelessness in the Wake of the Umbrella Movement.

The lack of political change transformed collective memories of hope to ones of depression and resignation. Protestors found it difficult to come to terms with what happened during the occupation in relation to the territory's current political situation. None of the participants gave a real answer as to why the movement "failed" but two years after the occupation, this was the most common way to describe the outcome of the movement. Individuals felt that political involvement was ineffectual and those who were considered leaders, with the means to facilitate the post-movement discussions, failed to reach a consensus of what the Umbrella Movement represented with regards to Hong Kong's future. A political science student said there had been reflection after the first occupy movement, which had been an extension of Occupy Wall Street, and that the leaders from this event seemed to learn from their mistakes.

> Before occupy was here, there was actually the occupy central movement 1.0 in the year 2008 at the headquarters of HSBC so I think people, they had the experience to organize another movement. I guess people learned that 1.0 wasn't successful because it was a really small scale and it was just a copy of Occupy Wall Street. I think what people learned from the experience was that the

> movement needs to be large scale so it catches the attention of the authorities and media broadcasts.

The Umbrella Movement, which the student referred to as "Occupy 2.0," did attract the attention of authorities and media thanks to the sheer scale of the event, but unlike its predecessor, the movement's leaders failed to learn how to reflect on what went wrong and thus adapt their efforts to be more successful in the next phase of political action. The scale and duration of the movement was both overwhelming and impressive. The communal atmosphere that accompanied the occupation was inspiring and often romanticized when participants would recount their experiences. When faced with the prospect of Beijing's increasing power on the territory, however, the nostalgic feelings of elation associated with recollections of the movement, often turned to feelings of despair and hopelessness.

Sturken (1997) claims that in the process of remembering significant events it is common to focus on the positive to "find meaning in the suffering [these events] have produced." Stealing a term from Michael Kammen, Sturken looks at nostalgia as "history without guilt." Nostalgia produces a longing for better times, ignoring many negative elements. In breaking down the forms of nostalgia associated with the memory of the Vietnam War, Sturken outlines the role of various actors including those who participated in the war as soldiers, the reporters and the media, and those who "were too young to experience" the event. Although it is too soon to discuss the last category, those who took part in the Umbrella Movement and the media personnel who covered the event, often discussed the Umbrella Movement under the veil of nostalgia. Journalists who covered the Vietnam War felt that they uncovered true stories about the everyday struggles of the Vietnamese people and the U.S. soldiers fighting the war, while also exposing the deceitful tactics of the Pentagon and U.S. war machine. These individuals

were nostalgic for a time when they gave people a voice and felt like they were doing something productive. Despite the negativity and controversy associated with the war itself, journalists recounted their experiences in an optimistic manner (Sturken, 1997). Accounts from Western sources that discussed the Umbrella Movement also recounted the movement in a positive light Although Chinese media channels focused on the Umbrella Movement as a seditious act, the general consensus for the global community witnessing the event was that the occupation encapsulated an atmosphere that was "raucous and festive" and that the artistic environment associated with the occupied spaces, "reflect[ed] a collective spirit" (Pollack, 2015; Hilgers, 2015).

Although nostalgia is often associated with a sense of positivity, not all forms of nostalgic remembering are encouraging. Kaplan (1987) claims that nostalgia encompasses warm "elated" feelings, but recognizes that, "nostalgia also entails the recognition and acceptance that this past can never return" (p. 465). The occupation had a nostalgic aura of positivity, but the aftermath of the movement was fraught with the feeling that the atmosphere of collectivity and hope would not return. Although nostalgia often carries a degree of optimism, Kaplan defines pathological nostalgia as a failure to accept the past as over and often produces a sense of sorrowful reminiscence. Since nostalgia is often associated with memory, it too is subjected to various waves of recognition and emotional response that frame and color how the event is remembered in the moment. During my first trip to Hong Kong, the occupation was generally remembered in a positive light, people recognized that the movement was in the past, but there was still a sense of hope associated with how Hongkongers were moving forward. People still talked about the art and the sense of creativity associated with the Umbrella Movement, and believed that these elements would persist. However, during my second trip to Hong Kong these

elated feeling of nostalgia transformed into something more akin to pathological nostalgia. Most of the participants did "accept the past as over," but many of the reminiscences describe during this visit were those colored by sorrow and frustration as the sense of possibility felt initially began to fade.

The participants who took part in the movement would often begin their accounts of the occupation by discussing the camaraderie and connectivity. Most told stories about how clean the bathrooms were and how different groups took responsibility for distributing food, setting up homework stations, and first-aid tents. They talked about their fellow demonstrators as if they were a family comprised of like-minded individuals. These accounts were generally told with a tinge of reminiscence of a hopeful time that was better than the present. However, when asked about the state of Hong Kong since the movement, this gleam faded. One participant felt that the feelings of elation during and immediately following the movement were hard to maintain because the actual occupation was exhausting.

> Participants overexerted themselves during the Umbrella Movement. It was something unexpected and then the Hong Kong citizens had gone beyond everyone's imagination in extending this protest. But the young they persisted for three months and it came to a peaceful ending. So many people felt that they had failed and this result in a strong sense of powerlessness and you can't do anything about it. This lingers on and that's why, as I mentioned, both the leaders and the participants were at a loss, in a state of depression.

Many of the participants felt that it was hard to maintain a positive memory of the movement because the demonstrators had put forth so much effort during the occupation and saw only

minimum results. The occupation itself was an impressive feat and for three months, the demonstrators persisted, buoyed by a feeling of potentiality and hope. If individuals could get along and govern these spontaneous communities in a peaceful manner, then the idea of a democratic Hong Kong was also possible. When nothing tangible came out of the occupation, people lost hope.

Feelings of hopelessness among the participants were often related to a loss of trust in the political system. One participant said, "I think there's a problem of political efficacy. Even though there is a referendum, it carries no political weight. I mean there was no binding effect for legislation. So even if it worked, things wouldn't change much." The lack of official political action centered around the unofficial vote was one of the early sparks that fueled the Umbrella Movement. Prior to the occupation, approximately 800,000 Hongkongers voted to have a democratic Hong Kong with 42% demanding that the public should get to nominate the next Chief Executive in a direct election (Chan & McKirby, 2014). One activist felt that the movement was doomed from the start, "even Occupy Central isn't useful to be honest because we are facing the PRC." Given that the Chinese government declared the referendum to be an "unlawful" action and often framed the movement as a "riot," it was understandable that the movement, having no immediate results, was often viewed as a failure. Like most authoritarian regimes, China is notorious for controlling national memories. Mainland Chinese residents are unable to search for information with regards to Tiananmen Square online. Symbols and phrases associated with dissident actions are filtered by the "Great Fire Wall" (Engle, 2014). Although residents know that an "incident' took place, during the three years I lived in China, I was amazed by the number of times Chinese friends and colleagues would ask me about June 4th, knowing that as a foreigner I had more access to information. For those who participated in the

Umbrella Movement, a fear of increased Chinese control has mingled with the depression of the movement's outcome. The fact that images and accounts of the Umbrella Movement are still searchable online means there is hope for the preservation of memory work; however, for those who wanted to live in a democratic Hong Kong, this detail does not seem to be enough. Connecting the memories of the Umbrella Movement to social movements in China sets a low bar for expectations with regards to Hong Kong's future autonomy.

Social movements are often discussed in terms of emotional responses, but the emotions Castells (2012) and others tend to emphasize during occupations are hope and exhilaration. When individuals reflect on these positive emotions, in current political environments that have not improved, hope and exhilaration turn to disappointment. For many of the participants, coming to terms with the memory of the Umbrella Movement often meant accepting a reality where pro-democratic leaders had little say in Hong Kong's political affairs and the realization that China was not likely to grant Hong Kong universal suffrage. Different generations did seem to have varied views with regards to Hong Kong's future based on their past experiences, but most acknowledged the sense of resignation following occupation. The lack of any real outcome after the occupation seemed to exasperate feelings of despair. The streets were cleared with little fanfare. Those who did see connections to the 1989 Tiananmen pro-democracy movement were thankful that the Umbrella Movement did not end under similar circumstances. But this lack of closure was also difficult for individuals to comprehend. Activists went from a collective environment that embodied hope to a sense of nothing. "I feel sad about how it ended," said a young professional, "because there was no exit point, it just ended. I don't know how you could have coordinated it better so it could have ended better." Another participant said, "I don't know, it just disappeared, which is a bit sad because I think we should keep doing something.

It's really important to Hong Kong and our lives, it shouldn't die down." Hamber and Wilson (2002) claim that nations do not have the same capabilities as individuals to process trauma. Given the multiplicity of ideas and views that are encompassed by the nation, it is difficult to seek answers that will allow the healing process to commence. Older participants did not necessarily view the Umbrella Movement as a failure, but saw the event as a continuation of past struggles. These older participants often felt sympathetic to the depression experienced by younger participants, but did not necessarily experience the same emotional response of resignation as their younger counterparts. "I can certainly sympathize and empathize with the young people's sentiments because the power is up there and they feel like they are at the mercy of political power and they don't feel like they have any power to resist." Many older participants who supported the democracy movement expressed similar gestures of sympathy and empathy. Another participant mentioned that the older generation had already been through so much so the impact of the movement was not as significant. The depression associated with not having closure was more prominently expressed by younger participants.

When Western mainstream media outlets like *The New York Times* followed up with the progress of the Umbrella Movement after the occupation, publications would inevitably run "where are they now" type stories focusing on former movement leaders like Joshua Wong and Nathan Law. Edward Leung and Ray Wong also became notable figures thanks to their rise as Localists leaders. However, the average movement participant was left alone. Social media was an important component of the occupation as evident by the number and popularity of charging stations found throughout the occupied areas. One estimate said that some stations would serve approximately 600 protesters every day (Lam, 2014). Once the movement ended, people continued to rely on social media and mobile devices to stay connected; however, these

technologies failed to afford the same levels of connectivity without the occupation's physical spaces and face-to-face interaction. The link between depression and social media use is unclear, but studies have found evidence that those who frequently use multiple social media sites do exhibit higher levels of depression and anxiety. Despite being connected to millions of people, social media can make individuals feel more alone, exacerbating feelings of depression (Primack, et. al, 2017). The feelings of nostalgia expressed by many of the individuals seemed to be a longing for the human interaction associated with the occupation. The online communities were fragmented and many of the communications channels broke down, thus severing the sense of connectivity felt during the movement.

Participants felt that they were "lost" because no one seemed to directly reflect upon the movement. A feeling that the occupation had failed left the movement in an undefined limbo and sense of ambivalence as to what was actually achieved during the 79-day occupation. People were unsure if more protests needed to be planned or if a new course of action would be more effective. "Everything was blurry," said one participant, "so we avoided talking about it." Another participant added, "We stopped seeing the yellow universal suffrage banners. In general, the sentiment and collectivity of the movement is gone and we don't know how to protect Hong Kong against the government." During the movement, extensive mainstream media attention and social media feeds were bombarded with news relating to the Umbrella Movement, but the constant attention seemed to exhaust those involved and "facilitated a partial undoing of memory" (Zelizer, 1998). So much information existed that it was difficult to remember significant details making it a challenge to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the movement in an effort to move forward.

Zelizer's (1998) first wave of memory established the role media played in laying the groundwork for the continuation of memory work connected with the Holocaust. At first, there was some skepticism associated with "the photograph's documentary capacity," but eventually this medium became one of the most notable means of preserving the memory of Nazi atrocity. In time, Zelizer wrote "as the story moved on into memory, then, the glory associated initially with having borne witness to the camps was not always upheld; rather, it gave way to a certain amnesia surrounding the issue of Nazi atrocity" (p. 153). During the second wave of memory, classified by a sense of "collective amnesia," photography "displaced individual memories." One year after the occupation, the mainstream press was still covering the movement and a sense of hope that the world was paying attention was still present. Stories were still being shared on social media and participants would often show me their own personal pictures of the occupation. Two years after the occupation, with very little mainstream press coverage referencing the Umbrella Movement, the second wave of memory began. Participants rarely showed me images during this phase. Politicians would use the Umbrella Movement narrative to suit their own political agendas, but people in general began to reference the movement less often. The first response participants would often give with regards to the movement was as Zelizer puts it "formulaic." When pushed further, participants would often say they were unsure how to view the Umbrella Movement given the current political situation:

> I think in general the whole society is still in a kind of depression post Umbrella Movement. Because it's the largest movement in the past ten years in Hong Kong. During the 79-days, everyone did whatever they could do, there was still no change. They can't see any hope for the future, they can't really understand or release the

> anger or disappointment and they are getting very rigid towards everything. And on the other side, they're going so passive towards everything.

The individual representations of the movement became more generalized and lost that sense of personality. In some respects, the memory had become too collective. The increased social media presence, like the abundance of photographic images, removed the "varied representations that could move collectives into taking responsibility for what they saw" (Zelizer, 1998, p. 162). The depression experienced during this second wave of memory in Hong Kong was marked by a sense of amnesia where many people either forgot or just gave up.

The lack of a tangible outcome that ensued after the movement ended led some people to lose hope, but for others, the lack of closure motivated other activists to resort to more extreme measures to maintain the memory of the political identity established during the occupation. Wong, a leader of the Localists movement said in a video podcast, "I took part in many other social movements. The more I participated, the more I felt powerless. Every movement I joined was a failure" (SCMP.tv, 2016). Eventually, Wong resorted to more extreme measures to facilitate change and was charged with inciting a riot after he participated in the Fishball riots. Another participant said, "I think Hong Kong people are still not strong enough to handle the depression. You can see why the so-called localists have mushroomed everywhere." Although not all of the Localist groups that have emerged since the movement resort to violent action, with some like Youngspiration attempting to enter politics, others have claimed that they will stand up to Beijing using any means necessary.

Violent Storms: The Violent Strategy of the Localists Movement

Fanon (1965), when speaking of post-colonial revolutions, described "armed actions" as "inevitable.". Like Zeilzer's (1998) notion that memory work constantly evolves, Fanon saw revolution and the struggle of the colonized as a process. Even though Zelizer and Fanon use the "wave" metaphor to describe different concepts, they both understand the importance of conceptualizing memory and revolution as continuous. Although the waves of revolution discussed by Fanon that occurred at the ends of WWI and WWII have passed, and the post-colonial struggle has taken on new meaning, Hong Kong is still caught up in the more traditional web of colonial power, it is now merely a different colonizer. "In the initial phase," wrote Fanon (1965), "it is the action, the plans of the occupier that determine the centers of resistance around which a people's will to survive becomes organized" (p. 47). For Hong Kong, that action was denying Hongkongers the right to vote for the next Chief Executive. The Umbrella Movement was framed as a peaceful protest, but when the demands of the movement went unanswered, some participants felt that it was time to resort to a different plan of action. Framing the occupation as a peaceful event, led to a more violent course of action for a few of the groups who were not content with the way the original occupation was remembered. Localists groups who wished to pursue more violent action began to grow support online and eventually used that support to pursue nonpeaceful ways to express to China and Hong Kong's government that they wanted to control their own Hong Kong narrative.

Since the signing of the Joint Sino-British declaration in 1984, China has slowly tried to exert their cultural influences over Hong Kong, from the cultural campaigns to the reconfiguration of Hong Kong's history so that all forms of culture would favor a more pro-China narrative. Fanon's (1963; 1965) discussion of colonialism discusses countries like

Algeria, that had their own traditions and history before the authority of the colonizer; however, as scholars like Abbas (1997) point out, Hong Kong had no sense of cultural identity prior to becoming a British colony. Fanon's colonial experience was one of exploitation based on race and culture, but the majority of Hongkongers are ethnically Chinese. Nonetheless, China is still viewed as the colonizer or oppressor by many of those who participated in the movement, specifically those who favor separatist views. Despite the ethnic connections, events since the Umbrella Movement have followed Fanon's (1965) perspective that when "traditions" are threatened by the colonizer, the colonized will react violently. Violence can manifest itself in many ways not always resulting in forms of physical violence. It can be emotional, economic or spiritual. The amount of time and effort that went into maintaining the 79-day occupation made the lack of a tangible outcome more discouraging. "I don't think violence has to be a war or a battle, it can just be riots," said one participant. "It doesn't have to be that violent, just something more violent than a protest." When asked if the participant was advocating for a more violent solution he said, "I wouldn't say violence, I would do whatever is logical to do. Of course, I don't want to see violence but if it's the only effective thing to do, I will do it." This conversation took place before the Fishball Riots broke out in February of 2016. As it became more evident that the Umbrella Movement was not going to induce political change, the Localists agenda became more popular.

The Fishball Riots have become the most notorious of the Localists movement's actions. "The Hong Kong government should tread carefully," one article exclaimed. "After all, the American Revolution began with a riotous tea party" (Moss, 2016). Like the temporal problems associated with invoking past democratic revolutions, such statements also undermine the implications of violent measures. Today's social movements, the Umbrella Movement included,

have grown beyond the scope of traditional social movement theories. Although "violent" and "disruptive" social movements are not new, traditional theories, like mobilization theory, have downplayed the "spontaneity" often viewed as a shocking outcome as opposed to a more common function of frustration (Lievrouw, 2011). Today's movements combine identity politics and "community" that link cultural demands and state power and suppress, generally in a violent way, public space and social movements (Touraine, 1992; Lievrouw, 2011). Hong Kong authorities, reflecting on their own role in the Umbrella Movement, realized that restricting space was a relevant way to disrupt social action. The Umbrella Movement was successful in part because of the occupation of city centers. When police decided to crack down on unlicensed food stalls during the Chinese New Year celebration, they restricted access to a public space that was iconic to Hong Kong's culinary culture. Although many publications described the riots, talking about blood, arrests, and destruction, very few acknowledged that the Localists movement saw their actions as a response to the growing gentrification of Hong Kong and the inability for working class Hongkongers to make a decent living (Moss, 2016). Violent actions are often remembered as a one-dimensional conflict as opposed to a more nuanced expression of frustration.

Those involved in violent action often fail to acknowledge the violence enacted in pursuit of their own cause. In an article published in *China Daily's* Hong Kong edition, Rachel Cartland, a Westerner who has lived and worked in Hong Kong for decades, wrote:

> First our police should be taking a critical look at what went on and where they will need to do better. Both the "[F]ishball riot" and the "Occupy" movement of 2014, seemed, to an alarming extent, to come as a surprise to the forces of law and order. I do not mind if it

> is done in private so long as it is done, but the police should surely be reviewing their sources of intelligence, the importance of social media in starting riot situations and then inflaming them, as well as the actual tactics that they use once violence is upon them (2016).

China Daily is a well-known mouthpiece of the Chinese government, and despite being written by a Western civil servant, the article fails to acknowledge the violent acts of police in inciting the Fishball riots. Putting the blame on social media also potentially normalizes media censorship, as is the case with the Mainland. Although Hong Kong still has relative freedom, these subtle tactics are often forgotten and eventually these ways of thinking become more common. Social media helped to preserve the memory of violence for all actors involved. It was instrumental in spreading images of the police teargassing and beating protesters, just as it was instrumental in bringing like-minded localists together to take part in the violent skirmishes of the Fishball Riots. Vivian (2010) writes that during Nazi rule, remembering and forgetting were "both sources of evil" because they represented an element of Nazi authority. Public forgetting "can assist in producing and productively altering symbolic forms of memory" which was the case during the occupation when protestors were able to create their own political narrative. But public forgetting can also erase state-sponsored violence, "suspension of laws, or rights, and other non-rhetorical, oppressive measures" (Vivian, 2010, p. 176). Although violent acts perpetuated by the localists were often played up by the media, it is still important to record all acts of violence as they are part of Hong Kong's political narrative.

Localists often countered their own acts of violence by citing their acts as a form of retaliation. In a podcast, Edward Leung, a Localists movement leader said:

> I was in the fourth year of my university when the Umbrella Movement happened. The movement made me come out and stay in the frontline. On November 20, 2014, we went to surround the government headquarters on Lung Wo Road. This made me less confident in non-violent protests. Some of my classmates were arrested by the police. Two of them were beaten on the head by police with blood covering their faces. They were arrested, Policemen pointed at them and called them 'rubbish." From then on, I would never forget those movements and scenes (SCMP.tv, 2016).

Social media did allow more of these violent acts to become a part of the collective memory of the Umbrella Movement. Given China's reputation as a nation that controls and blocks any dissident information, these accounts of police violence were another element of Hong Kong's new political memory. Hong Kong is often viewed as a cosmopolitan city and yet, these accounts do mirror the conditions that Fanon discusses with respect to other colonial uprisings.

The Umbrella Movement motivated residents to redefine and remember a Hong Kong identity. Despite having no pre-colonial history, Hongkongers have tried to hang on to cultural elements that are unique to the territory from language to the culinary culture localists believed they were fighting to preserve during the Fishball Riots. Abbas' (1997) claim that culture is disappearing because spaces are becoming more corporatized, seems to be the justification for many of the localists' actions. One professor said, "if young people feel they are being internally colonized, then they can react violently to it, whether it's symbolic violence or physical violence, whatever resources they can pull together…it's not a good thing to see." This violent response does seem to be unique to the younger generation that has grown up in the post-1997 transition.

Hong Kong's cultural memory prior to the transition was that of British colonialism. Cartland's (2016) article claims that the quality of life in Hong Kong is still good and that Hong Kong's younger generation fails to acknowledge that life under British rule was also plagued by inequality. Although this may be true, such perspectives do not deny that China's authority is any better. Many of those from the younger generation see British authority as Hong Kong's traditional culture and China as the colonizer. Hong Kong became an economically prosperous region under British rule and although Hong Kong is still relatively prosperous, opportunity and equality have declined under Chinese sovereignty. To be sure, protests and violent disruptions happened prior to the 1997 transition; but for the localists, China is viewed as the oppressor and as Fanon (1963) stated, "decolonization is always a violent event" (p. 1). Many of the older activists acknowledged that the 1966 riots were violent; however, the British colonial government tried to accommodate the demands of the protesters, China has yet to do so (Chu, 2013).

With respect to China's role as a more authoritative oppressor, the memory of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre is the most salient. Activists across multiple generations cited the image of the tank man and the harrowing tales of the Red Army shooting into crowds of peaceful protesters. Now that violent action seemed to be more common, owing to the media attention focusing on the actions of the localists, some of those who took part in the 79-day occupation were worried about being involved now that certain movement actions had escalated. "I remember that picture of the tank man," said one participant who had seen the picture circulating at some point in the period following the 2014 occupation. "I don't want that to happen to Hong Kong." For those in favor of escalating movement actions in an effort to see change, the violent acts of the Chinese government are further reason to step up more aggressive protest methods.

The memory of Chinese state-sponsored violence prompted some to enact their own form of resistance, possibly realizing that violence is often what is remembered. Although mainstream media channels did cover the story of police teargassing protesters at the beginning of the of the occupation, other acts of violence carried out by Hong Kong's police have been largely ignored.[54] One Scholarism student, who advocated for more extreme measures, showed me a picture he had on his phone of the police taking away a woman covered in blood. He said the police had beaten her because she "hit them with her boobs" when she was peacefully demonstrating. The violence of the Fishball Riots was highly publicized by Western, Hong Kong and Chinese press, but these smaller acts of police brutality rarely received media attention. Social media was one of the few places where these stories were told and thus preserved as important elements of the movement's collective memory. Another protester believed that the reason the police had teargassed the protesters in Admiralty was because the protesters were "too unified and they wanted to divide the group." Such actions would have favored the conditions that Fanon (1965) had described as bringing groups together. "In stirring up these men and women, colonialism has regrouped them beneath a single sign" (p. 120). Unfortunately for those who do want change in Hong Kong, violent action has not been that "single sign" and China has continued to use the media to divide the different factions as opposed to uniting them.

Media attention is more interested in what is deemed shocking and violence is entertaining. Talks across party lines and movement ideologies have occurred, but these stories often get overlooked for content involving violent or extreme action. Alvin Yeung met with

[54] One notable exception has been the conviction of the seven police officers in the beating of an occupy protester. However, participants did say that they had heard a number of stories of police brutality and very few were covered by the media or held accountable.

Wong, a Localists leader, in an effort to connect the various pro-democracy groups. According to a university professor, the Chief Executive even attempted to appeal to student activists. The professor said:

> Despite the language being used, there is a deliberate attempt to be less hostile in all of these groups. The sense of hostility is played up by the Beijing press. Leung actually addressed the separatist idea after students published an article in HKU's magazine. They were using scare tactics, but they didn't work. You see this with the Fishball Riots. It's hard to pinpoint what is a separatist, what they actually want. It's this local identity and this local interest that's contextually significant as this dichotomy/binary with Hong Kong and China; everywhere in the world you kind of have this. China is buying up all of this real estate and this triggers this larger picture of being against the Chinese regime. China through more official encounters with their SAR is trying to prove they're superior.

The media has played up these violent actions making it more difficult for groups to move forward and stay connected after occupation. The Fishball Riots were touted as the reason for the extreme security measures taken during Zhang's visit. To local authorities "radical localism" was the same as international terrorism (Cheung, 2016a). Many of those who were interviewed by major publications claimed to "condemn the violence" perpetuated by Localists groups. *The South China Morning Post,* framed the narrative of the riots from a position that the police were restrained in their actions.[55] *Apple Daily*, a publication well-known for their critical stance

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[55] *South China Morning post* was recently acquired by Alibaba and is considered to have ties to red money. They still tend to have a more moderate stance in comparison to other media outlets in Hong Kong given that the paper is

towards China, reported that one of the major issues preventing Xi Jinping from sending in the military to quell the violent protests, was avoiding the potentially negative consequences of another Tiananmen-like crackdown. Regardless of how the news media focused on violence, the topic drew attention away from the subtler ways China and the Hong Kong government controlled the narrative of the movement and Hong Kong's political future.

The context in which certain events, especially those with a violent element, are remembered is integral to how the movement will either help or hinder future political progress. The memory of Tiananmen Square created a chilling effect in the sense that all parties seemed to fear the potential outcome of how a mass movement would end. However, these fears did not stop Chinese officials from referring to the rise in violent actions like the Fishball Riots as those enacted by "radical separatist forces." Even remembering the certain events as a riot, movement, protest, or occupation has implications. After the Fishball Riots, the HKSAR government made a statement claiming the "riots in Mong Kok" were different than those that took place in the 1960s. The 1966 Star Ferry incident was most commonly referred to as a riot until the events that took place in February of 2016. The events that took place in the 1960s would now be referred to as a "commotion" (Wordie, 2016). The term revolution also has significant implications. For many, movement and revolution are simply synonyms. Reporters would often call the Umbrella Movement the "Umbrella Revolution" and even referred to the more violent Fishball Riots as a revolution on occasion. Such wording can change the way different generations view more radical action like violence. During my first visit to Hong Kong, prior to the Fishball Riots, a young student said with regards to the prospect of more violent action: "I wouldn't say it's violence because there haven't been riots in Hong Kong. I mean in Western

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published in English, but the perspectives do tend to be on the more conservative side. That being said, they did provide an outlet for Localists leaders to express their thoughts in one of their online video podcasts.

countries riots are a normal thing. I don't know why you say this is radical. In the United States, there are lots of riots."[56] To which his former teacher replied:

> I'm saying violence in terms of comparing to the past. All these rebellious areas. I'm not comparing to overseas standards. I'm saying that you can't compare that with overseas because people here are conservative, they're not politically oriented. You know Chinese is the easiest type of people to govern and manage because they are not like Western people and the blacks[sic], they don't fight.

Different contexts will produce different memories. Depending on what media is consumed, what historical understanding or generational perspective one has, such factors will provide a different context for the act of remembering. Nora's (1989) assertion that technology erodes memory fails to look at how other conditions influence memory. In authoritarian contexts, technology may be the only way to preserve the memory of those who are oppressed. The conversation with the teacher and student went on to shed more light on how different generations contextualized the role of violence in relation to their current situation. After the student said that violent action was Hong Kong's only hope if the government failed to recognize democratic rights for its citizens, the retired teacher said:

> Revolution means the end of my security, my family, my wealth. Hong Kong has a lot of middle class who are secure and they don't want the young people to disrupt these existing benefits. The middle age will not support this. Hong Kong has decent security and proper housing and a lot of people want to immigrate here because we have

[56] I asked if the student was aware of the 1966 Star Ferry Riots and he said he knew about them but did not view the event as being relevant to our current discussion.

> a lot of social welfare programs. The majority will not support radical action.

The retired teacher could not get passed the memory of his own experience. The security and wealth experienced by the retired teacher's generation is fading as China continues to drain resources and monopolize real-estate in the territory.

The localists have resorted to more violent means because they feel that the current political situation in Hong Kong is oppressive and violence is their only option. Describing the psychology of the colonized, Fanon (1965) wrote that, "the same time that the colonized man braces himself to reject oppression, a radical transformation takes place within him which makes any attempt to maintain the colonial system impossible and shocking" (p. 179). This younger generation does have less economic opportunity and though China may not be to blame for all of Hong Kong's woes, the current political relationship does set up a power dynamic that does not differ with Fanon's concerns with traditional colonialism. However, defining democracy for any nation or group is difficult in today's global world. Even well-established democracies are struggling with the prospect of providing "security and stability" over democratic ideals (Hardt & Negri, 2004). The Umbrella Movement was remembered in the frame of a peaceful movement and when no positive outcome arose in the wake of the occupation, some believed that they needed to drastically alter past approaches. The violent skirmishes that have happened since the Umbrella Movement have received the most media attention since the 79-day occupation. Although more participants said feelings of depression have been more common since the movement, violence has gotten more media attention and will most likely be remembered as the more significant form of reflection.

Increased political involvement, despondency, and even violence were all important acts of reflection with regards to the movement and some will be remembered more so than others given the prominence of media attention. Sturken (1997) claims that certain memories can be cathartic and help certain groups heal. While Sturken specifically talks about "cultural reenactment," political involvement, admitting defeat, or using more violent methods to have a louder voice can also be viewed as a form of catharsis. The demands of the Umbrella Movement were not met and many of those who participated, even those who were against the movement, needed an emotional release in order to move forward. Describing the stages of memory work, Zelizer's (1998) third wave centers around the idea of "remembering to remember." It is a matter of moving "from what we know of the event to how we remember it" (Langer in Zelizer, 1998, p. 171). The most memorable demand of the Umbrella Movement was universal suffrage. Demonstrators tried to preserve as much as possible through social media shortly after the movement in the hopes that this conservation would help fuel the movement after occupation. When more time passed with no resolution, participants tried new methods. Zelizer notes that as more information was stored, the less people witnessed. With the election of Carrie Lam, a prominent supporter of Beijing's policies, it will be even more important in this third wave to remember for the sake of remembering, so that China and the new Chief Executive cannot distort the memory of Hong Kong's political identity.

Cloudy with a Chance of Sun: Moving Forward in Hong Kong

The memory of the occupation is still fresh and it will take time to come to terms with what happened in a way that will be conducive to shaping what comes next. This ongoing process of active remembering will be different for various groups and generations, but as time moves forward, these periods, where the narrative of the movement is more malleable, are

important to document. Sturken (1997) wrote, “memory often takes the form not of recollection but of cultural reenactment that serves important needs for catharsis and healing” (p.17). The yearly June 4th vigil allowed those who related to the fear of Chinese oppression to publicly commemorate the event as part of the act of healing for their compatriots who could not do so in the Mainland. In many respects, social movements themselves are a ritualistic form of healing the wounds of a broken political system. These political upheavals conjure past memories of oppression or better times in an effort to change the current political situation and the way these events are remembered will serve as a foundation for future movements either consciously or subconsciously.

In the wake of the Umbrella Movement, social media continued to be used as a significant tool for memory work. Sites like Facebook facilitated both forgetting and remembering. Forgetting the importance of connectivity to further the movement and remembering the movement as a failure because demands were not met. But social media also allowed various groups to remember the importance of maintaining a political identity that represented Hong Kong’s inhabitants. Technology was a tool that both facilitated and hindered memory work in the period following the occupation (Carey, 1989). Facebook still seemed to be an important venue for discussing Hong Kong’s political future. One participant said, “Facebook is multi-platform so it’s always collapsing into other and new forms or modes.” She went on to say that after talking to people, following the first anniversary of the occupation, it was interesting to see how people said the movement had changed them. The movement encouraged people to go into politics and go back into communities, “to be a part of democracy.” But very few really reflected on how people had moved on or how Facebook had informed their lives. Even though the Umbrella Movement was heralded as another social media driven

occupation, very few individuals directly commented on technology's influence in their recollections. People were using social media to continue to disseminate various memories, but they were also using other avenues to heal through discussion and sharing stories after the emotional surge of the occupation ended.

Building on Sturken's (1997) work on cultural reenactment as catharsis, I use the term "mnemo-therapy healing" to refer to the role memory work plays with regards to coming to terms with a traumatic event. Given that there has been little written on memory work and social movements, this term is meant to provide a framework for future scholars who wish to examine the role memory work plays in the period following mass occupation. I view "mnemo-therapy healing" as the act of sharing stories and artifacts of social movements or other significant events as a way to cope with the chaotic political environment that often follows mass occupation. Social movements are not afforded the same avenues of "healing" as tragedies such as war or terrorist attacks, which are events that seem to warrant state-sanctioned acts of commemoration. The participants of social movements also need an outlet to express their various emotions and "mnemo-therapy healing" offers an informal outlet either through social media or community involvement for activists who need to come to terms with the upheaval of a social movement. "Mnemo-therapy healing" provides the catharsis that allows individuals to come to terms with the emotions and outcomes associated with a social movement in the hopes that such cathartic acts will help activists redirect the messages of social movements in more constructive ways moving forward.

One of the problems with solely relying on technology for "mnemo-therapy healing" is the lack of context. Technology does not always capture the emotional component associated

with social movements, whether that be hope for a different political future, depression, anger, or frustration. A professor said:

> This kind of contextualization is hard on social media. It's not really a medium thing. In cultural studies, we talk about text and context and its possible still in the nonintellectual circles to be contextualizing. Think about art or entertainment and good storytellers, but it's difficult now because you are conditioned by the format available on these new media platforms. I'm not saying they won't change or become more sophisticated, but right now we don't see that.

A graduate student replied, "People on Facebook create a very a-historical concept of the event." Although little context and history was provided, Facebook still helped disseminate the symbols and themes of the movement so that they could be conjured again in smaller protests or acts of dissidence. The second "We Want Real Universal Suffrage Banner" hung from Lion Rock during Zhang's visit or the I.C.C. Countdown projection were public acts that allowed individuals who were not a direct part of these subversive exploits to partake in the catharsis of these actions via social media. In the immediate wake of the occupation, the movement did not need context because it had been directly experienced by those evoking the memory. The Umbrella Movement was still remembered via a sense of "lived" memory, but through external locations.

Many common protest tropes are a-historical because their mnemonic device is easily adaptable to various situations. Forgetting context may help to connect these social movements so that they are seen as part of the ritual of political progress that all nations and people

experience. During the Umbrella Movement, Robert Darden, a Professor of Journalism and gospel music expert, wrote in the *Huffington Post* that he was waiting to hear the demonstrators sing "We Shall Overcome" and other famous gospel songs because they had been heard during the Arab Spring and Tiananmen Square in 1989.

> According to Zora Neale Hurston, these songs were first spread by High John de Conquer, the African American mythic spirit of survival and defiance. From slavery to the civil rights era, High John sped along the mystic grapevine of black America, spreading courage and hope. Today High Johan is spread by social media (Dardon, 2014).

Dardon continues in his blog by citing a Facebook post where someone had encouraged Umbrella Movement demonstrators to "hear the stories and learn the freedom song of the American civil rights movement." Communication is ritualistic and technology has not changed this process, it has just changed the mode in which these protest messages are passed along from one group to the next. These songs and messages are a-historical in some respects, but they are important locations of memory for global protest movements because of their ability to adapt to different contexts. Forgetting the context overtime, allows for this adaptability and regardless of whether or not the song is passed down orally or through social media, these songs, and music in general, are forms of "mnemo-therapy healing" both during and after occupation.[57]

For some participants commenting on social media was a chance to heal after the failure to achieve universal suffrage. A communications professor at a Hong Kong university said:

[57] During the June 4th vigil in 2016, songs from the Umbrella Movement were sung as way to connect the two events.

> There's an intimacy involved with social media comments. Comments are a visual response, we need to respond, it's a need, but why do we do this. Because responding on Facebook represents intimacy. Social movements are an excess of emotion. Documenting was the need to communicate and relieve the emotions. People in Hong Kong are actually less cosmopolitan than they think. Think about the nature of social networking. Instead of face-to-face communication, they use Facebook to communicate.

For many, social media was an outlet and means through which to remember and to continue to stay connected to the movement through shared mnemo-therapy. Though individuals may have stopped commenting directly on the Umbrella Movement, commenting on political stories and sending political memes was a product of the political identity established during the occupation. In a territory, where there is little hope of changing the political system given China's power, social media did function as a venue for discussion and catharsis. This outlet was also a part of Hong Kong's technological identity and the ability to freely access and comment on Facebook, could also be seen as an act of continued dissidence given the Mainland's propensity to control online information.

In addition to social media, a number of online publications also emerged in the wake of the occupation. Hongkongers saw the importance of having their own media outlets free from Chinese influence and investment. Participants often referred to the concept of "red money," an allusion to the red envelopes that are given during special occasions, when referring to Chinese investment in Hong Kong's media companies. One participant said he was always cautious of who was investing in the various online publications. Hong Kong's press system is extremely

polarized and influenced by a variety of regional players. Taiwanese media tends to be "gossipy and superficial," said one participant, while Mainland Chinese media is blatantly controlled by the CCP. Many of Hong Kong's domestic media channels have also recently been bought up by Chinese companies. "The Alibaba Group, the Chinese Internet giant, is making an ambitious play to reshape media coverage of its home country, taking aim at what company executives call the "negative" portrayal of China in the Western media" (Barboza, 2015). Alibaba's most significant "play" was purchasing the *South China Morning Post*, a paper that in the past, was known to publish articles critical of the Mainland government. Although the newspaper still publishes critical articles, even providing an outlet for Localists leaders on occasion, Hongkongers were still weary of China's ability to influence Hong Kong's media narrative. Online publications like *Initium, Apple Daily, Stand News,* and *Hong Kong Free Press* have given those who fought to establish Hong Kong's political identity a platform to continue the conversation beyond the influence of Chinese control. Many of these online publications also run stories that reference the Umbrella Movement to provide context to some of their political stories.

The majority of Hong Kong's online news platforms have provided an outlet where those who supported the Umbrella Movement were able to frame the movement in their own terms in an effort to continue the territory's democratic struggle. *Initium*'s Editor in Chief said, "we aim to respond to the entire nexus of China-Hong Kong-Taiwan relations. Since Xi came to power, changes in China have unleashed changes in Taiwan and Hong Kong. If you only look at local events, you cannot make sense of what is happening" (Speelman, 2016, para. 7). One-hundred thousand people have downloaded the *Initium* app and shortly after its launch, the app was blocked in the Mainland hinting at the news app's content. Although the app has some

investment ties to China, it has been a platform for those who live in the region and those who want democracy (Speelman, 2016). Corporate and state-owned media shape collective memory especially in times of turmoil (Vivian, 2010), and the proliferation of online news outlets allowed Hongkongers to have a greater say in the construction of the Umbrella Movement narrative as the territory reflected on the state of Hong Kong politics.

Despite the lack of political power for the pan-democrats, the state of depression, and the push to take more extreme actions to further the cause, there were also positive moments of reflection. One participant said that the movement had created a context for flourishing media literacy as Hongkongers sought to maintain their sense of identity tied to memory:

> This is something that we've learned because of the movement. To really think twice before you believe something that was said on Facebook and not panic as much when you first see something that may seem ridiculous. But the bad thing is, even Hong Kong in general, even in the mainstream media, they still rely on a lot of anonymous sources. They say 'some people who are connected to the government said there will be a clearance tonight' something like that and that's really annoying.

Perhaps the most significant outcome of the Umbrella Movement occupation was the creation of a political identity and the skepticism expressed above helps to preserve that identity as the movement moves forward. Even though these technologies did provide an outlet to preserve and construct the memories that would be important for the continuation of Hong Kong's democratic struggle, as one participant emphasized, "you don't wait for the media to direct the movement. The media plays a role but not at that level." Technology was an essential tool in the healing

process and the preservation of the movement's goals, but it is still up to the people involved to move beyond the second wave of memory and into a more constructive phase of the mnemo-healing process.

Beyond the Technology

Even throughout the second year of political struggle, characterized by depression and acts of violence, some of the individuals involved in the movement found constructive ways to heal and move forward. Many of the university students I spoke with said they had started reading groups where they would discuss political theory. Others said they had heard of individuals canvasing throughout the various communities.

> Some groups are moving and organizing themselves into the community. They realized that as Occupy dragged on to later months/weeks that there were conservative views in the community and the mainstream. So they realized there are still people who may not share the cause and they come up with a really negative view of it.

According to participants' self-reporting, these individuals went door to door talking with various community members in the hopes of starting a conversation. They wanted to reconstruct the narrative of the movement in a way that was not mediated by media and technology but rather human interaction. Those who had not been involved in the occupation remembered the movement as a nuisance. Streets were blocked and it was hard to get around. Coupled with the mainstream media coverage that tended to favor pro-establishment views, these individuals were isolated from the political identity that had been established during the occupation. Instead of

further alienating these individuals by retreating to polarized online environments, demonstrators decided to get directly involved in their community.

> For some taxi drivers, they were very angry about the movement. You can imagine that. So, it's unlikely that there will be copies of occupy wall street, these actually have direct social impact so it's not surprising that there was some opposition. After the movement, people realized there really is the need to reach out to more people who may have different views or perhaps are indifferent. There may also be a lot of people in the local communities who may not be staying on the web 25 hours a day…so how do you address them too? I think there are examples of this happening.

Another participant added, "I think we're at a moment politically where we're searching for a particular model of governance, both from the more conservative side and those who are trying do things from the sideline." Part of preserving the memory of the movement was coming to the realization that a democratic Hong Kong had to include all perspectives and not just those expressed by the movement participants. This perspective has the potential to preserve a more positive collective memory of the movement, one that could facilitate a democracy based on multiple ideas. Even though multiple participants brought up the grassroots canvasing campaign, no one seemed to directly know of anyone who had taken part. Yet, it had become a common theme in the narrative following the wake of the occupation and provided a window of hope in the midst of depression and extremism.

Memory work actively creates meaning beyond the more finite narratives of historical accounts (Sturken, 1997). Unlike the linear narratives of written history, memory is plastic and

can be adapted to present situations. The memory of the movement did help to shift the ideological spectrum of Hong Kong's political belief system. One participant mentioned that the views of the more traditional pan-democrats, like those from the Civic Party, did not seem as extreme now that more radical political parties had emerged in the wake of the movement:

> During the Umbrella Movement, as the social movements in Hong Kong generally unfold, they find that in fact maybe radicalization on the part of the young would provide them with great impetus for democracy because with the rise of the radical young, now the democrats in Hong Kong can find that they are not that radical in the political spectrum of Hong Kong. Originally, they were considered to be very radical, very oppositional and then, now you know with the rise of the independent movement and other radical movements, they are becoming somewhere in the middle. The Beijing government will find them to be more tolerable and acceptable, maybe that explains why the Beijing leaders will extend their hands to the democrats at this movement and this juncture. So, the old democrats have learned something from the young. On the one hand, they had to be sympathetic to the radical young, but at the same time they benefited politically because of this relocation of the ideological spectrum.

The "relocation of the ideological spectrum" was also prevalent in Hong Kong politics following the 1966 riots and the demonstrations that occurred during the SARs epidemic in 2003 (Chu,

2013). The outcome of the movement may have seemed dire to some, but it does seem that it has also become part of the larger ritual of political and ideological restructuring in Hong Kong.

Unfortunately, political shifts in Hong Kong have always been dependent on outside authorities. The British government accommodated the 1966 protesters by directly involving them in the political process. During the 2003 SARs epidemic, China remained distant and allowed the territory to express their grievances with little recourse (Chu, 2013. Recently, China has been more involved in Hong Kong's political process, even violating the "one country, two systems" policy set forth in the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration. Part of the healing process following the occupation has been coming to terms with China's authority. For some, the future under Chinese rule seems dire:

> PARTICIPANT A: I don't think Hong Kong will be democratic. As long as the Communist Party is in charge of our affairs we won't have any hopes for democracy. The Communist Party is an authoritarian regime. So, if Hong Kong had a democratic tradition it would be contradictory. Universal suffrage only works when there's rule of law and there's not rule of law in China. The Chinese authority or the HKSAR regime, they only use the law for their own benefit. They don't have any genuine respect for the law articles.
>
> PARTCIPANT B: I'm really pessimistic about this. As long as China and the government are here, Hong Kong won't be autonomous. It's impossible to be an independent country. The only way for Hong Kong to have democracy is to be independent.

> But in Hong Kong many people are actually against independence so it would be a hard thing to do.

Another participant was more optimistic with regards to Hong Kong's economic future, but feared China's legacy of censorship:

> Obviously, we don't think China has been able to increase that rapidly, but it's still a rich country, we're not going to suffer. I don't see there being too much of a lack of confidence in the economy yet. But there's still a lot of information censorship, even about the Tianjing blast. All of that information is gone. I think more people are more concerned about this side.

This perspective highlights the increasing importance of memory work in Hong Kong, especially as China seems to be a more influential force. As another participant said, "even if you're in a bad position, you still have to do this. It's like a soccer match, even if you know you're going to lose, you still have to play the game." Those who participated in the Umbrella Movement did not get universal suffrage. One could even argue that Hong Kong lost some of its autonomy in the period following the movement, specifically in light of the recent election of Carrie Lam and the arrests of the Umbrella Movement leaders following the 2017 Chief Executive election (Chappell, 2017). If Hong Kong's citizens take an active role in preserving and maintaining the memory of the Umbrella Movement in a way that responds to the contingent needs of the present, participant comments like, "all of this needs time; you need to get the ball rolling and eventually this will roll into a bigger snowball and then maybe next time we'll be more prepared for change," will prove prophetic.

Summary

All waves of memory from the initial sense hope to the primary focus of this chapter that emphasized the second wave categorized by governmental upheaval, depression, and violence may not have been ideal forms of memory work on their own, but all are a part of the ritualistic process of remembering. Hong Kong's second wave of memory was generally categorized by a lack of political trust and efficacy, depression, and extreme views. But even these forms of remembering are better than not being able to remember at all, a prospect that has become a realistic possibility following Hong Kong's recent election. Nora's (1989; 1996) critique of *lieux de mémoire* as not being as vibrant as "real" memory is viable because the sites in France he was discussing were not threatened given the democratic environment where they were allowed to thrive. Some memories may be lost as a result of more democratized memory work, but some forms of forgetting are a necessary function of progress (Vivian, 2010). For those living under an authoritarian regime, preserving any aspect of memory is essential for the survival of their identity.

The Umbrella Movement came to define a moment that went beyond the scope of occupation. In the period following the occupation, individuals did remember and reflect upon the movement in a variety of ways through their own form of "mnemo-therapy healing." Media may have "accelerat[ed] history," and while Nora (1989) claims that this process takes away from "real" memory, media was still an essential tool for preserving and creating a collective memory unique to Hong Kong, whether that be in the form of online news content or a Facebook post that called on individuals to take more radical action. Media helped to make the injustices of police brutality more widely known, while also enabling a sense of depression. For a society like Hong Kong, unaware of its "primitive culture," these technological tools helped to provide a

very "real" sense of memory for those who participated in the movement. The frustration, sorrow, and anger experienced during this wave of remembrance was a form of memory because it bore a sense of "life." The fact that there was such a strong emotional component to this phase, meant that people were not just trying to "reconstruct what is no longer" but instead trying to create something new despite the political obstacles set forth by China. More people did get involved in politics, even if their ideas were blocked higher up in the political ladder. The sense of depression and the acts of violence were also unconscious forms of reflecting.

Hongkongers may never have the opportunity to let the ritual process of remembering occur given the current state of affairs following the recent Chief Executive election. The Umbrella Movement was unique in that there were major archiving campaigns in an attempt to preserve the art in both physical and digital forms. Professional and amateur archivists knew this was an important moment that needed to be conserved for future generations. It is unclear what will happen to the movement artifacts stored in physical and digital archives, but as one participant mentioned with reference to the various political factions, the more that is out there, the harder it will be to control. In Zelizer's (1998) third wave, official commemorations became a part of Holocaust remembrance, but it seems unlikely that public commemorations of the Umbrella Movement will occur in Hong Kong's near future. The fate of the movement's artifacts and locations of memory under the prospect of Chinese authority is unknown, but at least for now, they are preserved.

Chapter 5

Archives: Saving the Rain in Case of Drought

Zelizer (1998) argues that the extent to which photography was able to record and preserve the memory of the Holocaust actually led to remembering for the sake of forgetting. Public commemorations of trauma, tragedy, or significant events in general, can lead to the mass forgetting of important cultural nuances (Vivian, 2010). An overabundance of information and commemoration of events can turn living memory into fixed history. “Museums, archives, cemeteries, festivals, anniversaries, treaties, depositions, monuments, sanctuaries, fraternal orders—these are the boundary stones of another age, illusions of eternity” (Nora, 1989, p. 12). In nations and territories where memory is not as under threat, idealistic notions of the snares of preservation may be justified; however, given the current political situation in Hong Kong, an abundance of information may actually be beneficial. As China exerts more control over the territory and attempts to reconstruct and fix the narrative of the Umbrella Movement to suit their own purposes, the dystopian future depicted in films like *Ten Years* does become a strong possibility. Therefore, even the shallowest attempts to preserve counter-hegemonic memories in an external form are important for dissident events.

Nora (1989; 1996) argues that archival memory is constructed and fixed through communication technology, starting with the written word. As Nora was not a part of “peasant culture, that quintessential repository of collective memory” his idealism of this time falls into the same trap of his views on history, “the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer” (p. 8). The reproduction of original work or stories via social media does have an interesting connection to what is often perceived as “lived” memory. Benjamin (2008) notes that technological reproduction may not capture the authenticity of the original, but it

makes the content more accessible. "These changed circumstances may leave the artwork's other properties untouched, but they certainly devalue the here and now of the artwork" (Benjamin, 2008, p. 22). Instead of Nora's disregard for technological influences in memory work, we need to think about how memory's capacity to be shared across a broader spectrum of society, rather than the oral cultures of old, is increased through communications technologies. Digital archives do allow the storage of artistic works and dissident slogans to be recalled at the click of the button, accessible to anyone with technological resources. Perhaps the most unique aspect of today's modern movements, specifically the Umbrella Movement, is the fact that extensive efforts to archive and preserve the memory of the occupation were even possible in the first place.

For many past social movements, the symbolism of particular icons and slogans had to possess a more generalized meaning in order to be more easily recognized and recalled, thus erasing potentially important cultural nuances. Iconoclasm was essential if a certain symbol would be externalized and remembered beyond the time frame of a particular social movement. Well-known symbols and songs were often borrowed from other movements or ideological backgrounds because they were pre-established messages that would resonate with more individuals. Adapting these external memories into a site of remembrance, particular to the cultural nuances and messages of a given social movement, was once one of the greatest challenges for activists before the spread of digital communication technology. The Goddess of Democracy statue, created during the 1989 Tiananmen Movement, borrowed from the democratic symbolism associated with the Statue of Liberty. The monument itself resonated with China's communist legacy of preserving revolutionary ideals through monuments and it was a combination of these elements that made the statue a memorable symbol (Wu, 1991).

However, the ritualistic evocation of these symbols during social movements does seem antithetical to the notion of the revolutionary ideas expressed during these events, but considering the long history of revolution, these ideas are part of the larger process of change:

> The very concept of "permanence" seems so alien to the idea of revolution, which, after all, means to rebel against supposed "permanence." The construction of such monuments, therefore, announces the end of revolution and the beginning of a "permanent" order. The statue of the Goddess of Democracy is different because what it intended to invoke were not memories of the past but memories of itself; and to leave such memories to the future, it was prepared to be destroyed (Wu, 1991, p. 113).

Memories associated with social movements have always been "lived" in the sense that they are preserved through the shared experience of political struggle. There are no monuments to visit, because the struggle is never over. Wu (1991) writes, "the Goddess of Democracy became a 'martyr.' But unlike those murdered demonstrators, her image could be replicated and through replication be reborn" (p. 113). The replication of these symbols is foundational to most social movements and even though the Goddess was physically destroyed, her image was preserved in photographs; these photographs thus became a part of preserving the "lived" memory of a social movement as an external form.

The dislocation that marks the end of occupation can be disorienting and even violent, but the Umbrella Movement ended in what seemed like an anticlimactic departure to this social movement trend. Many of the participants talked about receiving messages warning protesters that the occupied sites were to be cleared. Knowing when the occupation would end ahead of

time allowed individuals to begin efforts to record and preserve the art and symbolism associated with the occupation. The Goddess of Democracy became a memorable symbol of the Tiananmen movement because it was destroyed, but images of the statue also helped to externally preserve the memory of the movement, which given the CCP's efforts to erase the memory of the event from China's collective memory, may have been an important location of memory in its own right. Although images only provided a "partial picture of an event," (Zelizer, 1998) they do help to facilitate a discussion; a discussion that can also be recorded and archived through social media. However, as Zelizer (1998) notes, the act of "remembering" or having a conversation about the past does not necessarily help alleviate similar acts of oppression in the future and may actually serve as a distraction and excuse to not react to similar forms of oppression unfolding in the present. Yet given the amount of time that has passed since the Umbrella Movement, it is too early to tell if the extensive archiving campaign has fallen into the realm of Zelizer's "remembering to forget." Disseminating images of trauma or mass occupation through newspapers and magazines, and now social media, not only facilitated a conversation, but also provided an archive to show how the movement was initially recalled by those who directly experienced the event (Zelizer, 1998). These photographic locations for memory can provide an interesting window as to how certain events are remembered over time and perhaps facilitate a better understanding of the life cycle of a social movement.

The Umbrella Movement did seem to shift away from a lack of permanence with regards to revolutionary memory due to the extensive archiving campaign that took place shortly before the end of the occupation. An archived memory is by its very nature external, but given the lack of permanence of revolutionary thought, removing a temporal context may make these external locations of memory more valuable to future movements since they are easily adaptable to fit

various situations. The importance of remembering the Umbrella Movement symbolism was not that it created a new symbol structure, but rather that Hongkongers discovered their own voice in the construction of their own narrative. Nora (1989) wrote, “there is no spontaneous memory that we must deliberately create archives, maintain anniversaries, organize celebrations, pronounce eulogies, and notarize bills because such activities no longer occur naturally” (p. 12). The spontaneity that Nora associates with lived memory was enacted through social media, and this non-institutionalized cultural practice has allowed individuals to take a more active role in the conservation of memory. Such participatory forms of preserving memory have the potential to democratize memory in a way that is more inclusive than preservation methods of the past, but it can also lead to political fragmentation (Haskins, 2015).

Participating in the archival process of an event does seem to favor the memory of the individual and yet the artifacts that are preserved generally point to a sense of collectivity. Zelizer (1998) noted that many of the images that came to represent the Holocaust portrayed group dynamics. “In each case the framing of the depiction as an act of collective, not individual, contemplation reflected a need to collectively address and understand atrocities” (p. 114). Although many of the pictures of the Umbrella Movement were disseminated via individuals on social media, the images often depicted an expansive group shot showing that there was a sense of collective reflection with regards to the political situation in Hong Kong. It was a way of situating a person’s individual memory with that of the larger movement. Figure 5.1, shared by the “Umbrella Movement Art Preservation” Facebook page, is one of many of the group photos of the movement shared and thus preserved online

Figure 5.1 *Group image taken from the "Umbrella Movement Art Preservation" Facebook Archive highlighting the symbolism of the group over the individual*[58]

Sharing more individualized images and messages via social media also occurred, but the sense of collectivity seemed to be what was maintained the most. Even the slogans that have been preserved and recalled allude more to a collective, rather than individual memory like the use of "*We*[59] want universal suffrage" and *"We* will be back"

Preserving what happened during the movement through various archiving projects will potentially influence future generations. The previous chapters focused on the recollection of "lived" memory, especially considering that those who took part in the occupation are still involved in the maintenance of these memories. But as Vivian (2010) writes, "life, in this conception, is an exercise in immediate data storage and retrieval, of ceaselessly accumulated digital memory from which nothing is omitted" (p. 36). This chapter looks specifically at the

[58] Image retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/umbrellamovementartpreservation/photos/a.843042765836985.1073741883.457678241040108/843042879170307/?type=3&theater
[59] Emphasis added by author to make a point about preserving a sense of collectivity.

role new technologies have played in redefining the nature of archiving, specifically with regards to social movements, where memories were often passed down using more traditional methods because physical locations of memory were often destroyed. Social movements are not memorialized in the same way a tragedy or political victory is commemorated since there is no clear ending. The content that was stored online and in physical warehouses does bring to question the importance of context with relation to memory. Art was symbolically important to the creation of a Hong Kong political identity and much of the art produced during the movement has been stored; however, the sheer amount of the works that were rescued has overwhelmed those who have struggled to categorize these various artifacts in a meaningful way. Sharing images on Facebook automatically becomes part of a digital archive that can be easily recalled. In the past, history was written by those in power, but social media has created an opportunity that allows everyone to record their own history. Even though these new technologies offer hope for communities that have been unable to preserve their own narratives, there is still a reason to be troubled if memory is only stored digitally. Understanding the implications of archiving the materials produced by social movements is complicated. On one hand, these archives only store memory in an external sense, which removes the responsibility to actually remember. However, on the other hand, given China's reputation for controlling historical narratives, any documentation of dissident movements may be an important tool to preserve the memory of occupation in the face of increased oppression.

The Materiality of Memory

Nora (1989) believed that today's memory is based on materiality and that memory work is produced for the purposes of being archived. "It relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image" (p. 13). One participant expressed

concern with the amount of content that was preserved through social media during the Umbrella Movement:

> Look at the materiality of memory; how do you even position these movements? This notion of external hard drives that we all have and taking photos of life events—we're immediately processing the memory of a social movement as a life event. But we're also always archiving the ordinary. How do we mediate memory? How do you select the images you want to immortalize as an act? At the end of the day this was compromised activism. You or your group had one Facebook page out of zillions; it was just a part of oblivion.

This participant recognized the confusion and complexity of context. Traditional archives are generally site or content specific, but "Facebook archives[60]" blend the personal with the collective. You may announce your engagement on the same page where you preserved images and recollections of the Umbrella Movement. Facebook presents a venue where you are bearing witness to major events and your personal life in the same space.

In Zelizer's (1998) account of Holocaust memory waves, she discussed the first wave and the importance of "bearing witness." Zelizer notes that various factors like the need for average citizens to bear witness, in addition to the difficulties the media profession experienced with regards to covering the Holocaust, contributed to a complicated first wave of remembrance that subsequently influenced how the trauma would be remembered for decades to come. Memory is malleable with regards to time, yet preserving certain artifacts does connect the materiality of

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[60] More with regards to the complexities of Facebook as an archive will be discussed later in the chapter. For now, I have chosen to place the term in quotations because as will be discussed in more detail, Facebook was not designed as an archive even though sometimes it does seem to function as one.

that preservation to a sense of time that is hard to reconcile. There were so many pictures if the atrocity presented with little reflection. Zelizer writes "the unwillingness to believe in part stemmed from a lack of context for understanding what had happened" (p. 144-145). Preserving memory artifacts like pictures will contribute to a sense of remembering, but does not necessarily facilitate reflection. As discussed in the previous chapter, media did not help to facilitate the leadership needed to lead reflection. Like the media professionals who struggled to make sense of the atrocities of the Holocaust, while simultaneously figuring out the roll photography had in the construction of collective narratives, the Umbrella Movement participants also struggled to reconcile the difference between technological traces of the past and the memory that lives beyond the technological remembrance of the event.

In the past, the material preservation of an artifact was a process and connected individuals to the act of preservation. Physical materials like the fabric of a quilt or the paper of a journal or letter decay over time. The panels of the AIDS memorial quilt were continually being replaced as old panels deteriorated and in the process, helped those involved in the project reflect on the fragility of the disease and memory itself (Hawkins, 1993; Haskins, 2007). However, the materiality of technological memory has a different relationship to the preservation of memory in time. Huyssen (1995) writes:

> Both personal and social memory today are affected by an emerging new structure of temporality generated by the quickening pace of material life on the one hand and by the acceleration of media images and information on the other. Speed destroys space, and it erases temporal distance. In both cases, the mechanism of physiological perception is altered. The more memory we store on

data banks, the more past is sucked into the orbit of the present, ready to be called up on the screen (p. 253).

Since we are now able to recall a memory at the click of a button, we do not conceive of memory's mortality. "If archival preservation and retrieval are not balanced by mechanisms that stimulate participatory engagement, electronic memory may lead to self-congratulatory amnesia" (Haskins, 2007, p. 407). The preservation of Umbrella Movement artwork and messages was often depicted as a positive act. However, this sense of positivity distracted many from the fact that with so much stored information, the Facebook pages where these memories were stored were sometimes taken down or forgotten in the rush to conserve the next big event.

Although some participants felt that the overabundance of information was good because it made it difficult for the Hong Kong or Chinese governments to pinpoint and control all dissident information, a few did recognize the problem with preserving all of the materials produced during the occupation on online sites like Facebook. One participant said that many of the pages she had explored during the movement are now gone, but very few realized this as they rarely went back to look at what was posted in the past. The participant recognized that even though we may preserve the past, it is useless if we do not know if it has been erased. Another participant said, "my concern is one day Facebook will be closed down and everything will be lost. Where does this stuff wind up? All of your notes and diaries on Facebook, what would happen?" The ability to preserve more thanks to digital technology is often taken for granted. The Hong Kong government or Beijing has already begun to "erase" some of the memories of the Umbrella Movement and only one out of over fifty participants expressed concerned or even an awareness that this was going on. What began as a cathartic act of pouring out photographs into the cloud, a ritual sharing, ends by making it easier for the state to suppress what has been

externalized. The idea that an external hard drive is now a metaphor for memory is worrisome for those who realize the importance of dissident memory. If that hard drive is lost, will the individual be able to recall the materials on those disks in the same way as their predecessors who remembered knowing that the material would be destroyed? "Preservation of large quantities of digitized materials does not translate into a usable past" (Haskins, 2007, p. 419). Although social media allowed for a more diverse range of materials to be preserved, an oversaturation that leads to a collective amnesia of an event, like the one that occurred following the Holocaust may occur. Preserving more information is not inherently harmful to the preservation of a constructive movement memory, but there is always a need for reflection because if not, memory work is conducted only to be forgotten.

No clear limit exits as to the amount of data a digital archive can accumulate. In the past, archives were limited by a very real sense of space. You could only store what you had space to store and thus had to be selective about what was saved. Generally, that meant that the works of "important men" were saved emphasizing a knowledge of history based on power relations, not inclusive of all narratives. Social media does allow a more diverse range of voices to record their own stories; however, with so much information is it even possible to construct a coherent narrative of an event, one that will be remembered throughout time? The etymology of archive refers to the Greek conception of the domicile of high-ranking magistrates who housed official documents (Haskins, 2015). Digital archives are not confined to the limitations of physical space and raise the question of whether or not "digital memory" serves a different function than "lived" memory. Haskins (2007) writes, "'digital memory,' more than any other forms of mediation, collapses that assumed distinctions between modern `archival' memory and traditional 'lived' memory by combining the function of storage and ordering on the one hand, and of presence and

interactivity on the other" (p. 401-402). When storage space is limited, the question of "which past is identified as worthy of remembrance" (Haskins, 2007) is more salient. Now that the storage capacity for memory work seems infinite, there is less need to be selective of what gets saved to the point where now everything is essentially stored; however, there is always a possibility that the act of externalizing such memories thoughtlessly can potentially lead to a kind of amnesia

Most participants were unable to share a story about the movement without showing me an image on their phone or Facebook page. The memory "lived" in the images that triggered it, and without these external mediators, may not have had as much power in the consciousness of the participants. The only participant who did not show me something on a mobile device said that they had lost the content pertaining to the Umbrella Movement when their phone died. This example did offer hope that individuals could remember aspects of the movement without the use of an external device; however, if the Chinese government does step in to control Hong Kong's social media, as it does with the Mainland, will those who do rely on technology to remember be able to recall the messages of the movement as the time from the actual event grows more distant? This issue is especially crucial with regards to social movements that have always relied on the transmission of lived memory to sustain future activism. In the past, preserving physical locations of memory was virtually impossible, especially if power returned to the status quo once a protest, march, or occupation ended. The memories of these movements were passed down through easily remembered mnemonic devices like songs and slogans. There is a reason "We shall overcome" is often sung during displays of dissidence or why you will often see protesters wearing Guy Fawkes masks (Dardon, 2014). They are symbols that are easily remembered and recalled. If technology takes over our ability to remember, even the

simplest of songs or symbols may be forgotten if we take for granted the storage capacity associated with digital locations of memory. If these digital spaces are eliminated or shut down, what will happen to these memories? Haskins (2015) wrote, we "cannot ignore that today's memorializing occurs in a climate of rapid obsolescence and the disappearance of historical consciousness, that much of computer-mediated communications serves commercial and entertainment purposes, and that interactivity can nurture narcissistic amnesia no less than communal exchange" (p. 50). Social media did help preserve the memory of the Umbrella Movement in the short term, but what will be preserved for future generations? Will this generation be able to remember what happened if they do not have their phones around?

Although Nora (1996) claims that modern memory is "already history" there is still something spontaneous and natural with regards to how the Umbrella Movement has been remembered up to this point. Abbas' (1997) belief that Hong Kong's identity is on the verge or disappearance changed in 2014, when Hongkongers reclaimed and rearticulated a new political identity that represented the inhabitants of the territory and not outside interests. The language and symbols that were disseminated online as well as in person have helped to preserve the memory of the movement. One could argue that there is too much stored online to be "remembered." Vivian (2010) writes that more systematic forms of commemoration and memory can result in the overlooking of minute details. Nonetheless, writing about the memory culture of Gypsies, Vivian (2010) states, "for the Gypsies, forgetting is a productive activity that defines their responses to, and degrees of agency within, their immediate past—the one within living memory" (p. 179). Hong Kong's living memory has been defined by outside sources; therefore, forgetting may actually be helpful in the process of forging and maintaining an identity that does represent the territory and not the interests of corporate players or the Chinese government. So

long as the essence of this new identity is not lost when stored online, online archives may actually help those who took part in the movement move forward in more productive ways.

The archiving efforts that took place at the end of the 79-day occupation was uncommon for social movements of this scale and duration. In addition to collecting and documenting the art and various projects online, many of the physical works were also collected and stored in various locations. Oscar Ho Hing-kay, a former director of the Hong Kong Arts Centre in addition the founding director of Asia Art Archive, said:

> What's happening now with this Umbrella Movement is that you start to see among the younger people a collective obsession with Hong Kong, a Hong Kong identity, which is very unusual for Hong Kong. In the past, when they see something troubling, their first reaction would be emigration. But this is something new. We say, 'We stay here, we fight.' This is total freedom to voice our discontent (quoted in Pollack, 2015).

The archiving methods may not have been ideal, but the fact that there was such an interest in the preservation of the art produced during the movement did signal that there was a desire to maintain this political identity. A sense of agency was at least maintained, even if other materials were not as easily recalled due to the volume of the project's preservation methods.

Lost in Space: The Preservation of Umbrella Movement Art

Knowing that the occupied locations were going to be shut down, professors, artists, community members, and various organizations, feeling that the art created during the movement needed to be preserved, began an extensive campaign to either collect or at least document the art that had been produced (Pollack, 2015). The artwork that these groups collected currently sits

in storage wrapped in plastic. At first, those involved in the collection campaigns believed that it would be easy to maintain an archive of the various pieces. The atmosphere at the end of the movement seemed to suggest that the energy behind the protest would continue; however, that was not the case and has led those in charge of these collected pieces to ask: what do we do next?

One proposal has been to send the artifacts to museums, but this suggestion brings forth the importance of context. The curator of "Disobedient Objects," at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London has said, "protest objects are particularly tricky because they are part of unfinished debates, and the objects still live in that sense. The challenge is to find a way to present them on their own terms" (Qin, 2016b). The meaning and interpretation for many of these pieces lies in the context for which they were produced. Taking them away from the streets of Hong Kong and the atmosphere of the movement does have the potential to change the pieces' meaning. Art created during the movement had a function; it was not necessarily created for the purposes of being persevered once the occupation had ended. For those who collected the art after the movement, the goal was to be able to use the work to rekindle "the movement's spirit" (Qin, 2016b). Museum exhibits in London or the United States would not necessarily help this larger endeavor.

Museums serve a different memorial function than archives. A Hong Kong art archivist said:

> When you talk about museums, you compare what we do with what the museums do. One of the major differences is they are looking more at the end product of creation. We are looking at the process of art creation. And also in the usage we're very different from a museum because in the museum there's always an object to display

> that they are expecting the object itself to carry a lot of narration, I mean carry a lot of meaning, which they narrate through the exhibition. For us, we also have a curatorial vision and creating documentation, but then we are not just looking at the end product or expression. So the interpretations actually have to merge with research efforts, otherwise what we present would be out of context. Only through research, we have people who know about the relationship between the content, then we can illustrate the meaning more accessibly.

In this respect, the content that has been preserved still seems to highlight the importance of the process itself. However, herein lies the dilemma with commemorating social movements: is there ever an appropriate time to display art and content from a protest in a museum? In the past, very little of this content remained; the art preservation campaign that took place at the end of the occupation is uncharted territory.

Memorials, monuments, and museums are created as places that aid in the process of "mourning" as they provide a venue where the burden of the individual memories is transferred to an institutionalized space (Zelizer, 1998). Although it may be difficult to equate mourning with remembering a social movement, there are still connections with regards to the act of general reflection. Zelizer (1998) writes, "bits and pieces of the story needed to settle before being processed into the kind of memories that could work as a collective means of representation about the past (p. 169). In the immediate wake of the movement, as evident by the emotional responses discussed in the previous chapter, the importance of some of the artwork or content that has been preserved may not yet be realized. In the context of mnemo-therapy

healing, uploading photos of the event could be part of the mourning process, which like all mourning necessitates a kind of forgetting. In some respects, memorials and monuments dedicated to a specific protest movement are inappropriate because they "signify an end product." Wars are ended when a treaty is signed and peace is declared; however, for those who took part in the American Civil Rights marches of the 1960s, few who participated would say the struggle was over when Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act in 1964 (DuVernay, 2016). The push to memorialize the movement using the art created during the occupation has good intentions, but could signify an end or the transformation of a movement during a time where recognizing that these protests are part of a continuous struggle is critical.

The objects that are preserved may one day serve as an important reminder of a significant turning point for a continuous struggle or come to represent new meanings, but given the novelty of the Umbrella Movement's preservation situation, it is unclear how such a project will manifest itself. Martin Luther King Jr. memorials and street names do symbolize the Civil Rights struggle evoking the collective memory of the movement through the tragedy of King's assassination (Gallagher, 2009). Like any *lieux de mémoire*, monuments or works of art have an adaptable meaning (Joutard, 1996). The officials or organizations that fund and organize the commemoration of a certain person or event cannot completely control how the memorial will be interpreted. Monuments or works of art produced during a significant time period or event are often seen as representing a fixed moment. Speaking on the "relationship between the timing and the placement" of a monument, Wu (1991) writes, "the precise timing signifies an attempt to put a punctuation mark in the flow of history, to separate the past from the present" (p. 100). But as Wu goes on to state with regards to the Communist memorials placed in Tiananmen Square, these symbols still represented the revolutionary struggle, but instead of the communist

revolution, represented the democratic struggle of 1989. The appropriation of older symbols was necessary because very few physical remembrances of these movements generally remained. Statues and street names are commemorations produced after the fact and not during the actual event. During the occupation, Hongkongers did appropriate Lion Rock, which could be seen as a natural monument, but moving forward, it is unclear if the art collected during the movement will symbolize a fixed point in time or represent Hong Kong's continuous democratic struggle.

Given the unprecedented situation with regards to the archiving efforts that took place at the end of the 79-occupation, perhaps the closest parallel would be the preservation of street art. The differences between street art and graffiti are subtle as one "offers less offense" and "is more integrated into its surroundings" as opposed to something that "serves to provoke" is subjective (Verlag, 2009). Street Art, like occupation, is a way of reclaiming public spaces in a subversive way. Generally, those from marginalized or suppressed subgroups rely on street art as a way to express counter-hegemonic ideas. In many respects, street art was a precursor to social media in the sense that it gave individuals and groups a voice beyond state-sanctioned information channels (Cowick, 2015). Prior to the proliferation of digital media, it was harder to preserve these dissident displays because they were painted over or hidden just as fast as they were created. During the Tunisian revolution and the Arab Spring, for example, the messages written on the walls of public squares were an important communicative devise. "Wall graffiti can, in fact, bypass the immediacy which characterizes Twitter feeds and Facebook messages. It resists the limitations of time and space and can have a more lasting effect in reaching out to a wider public" (Miladi, 2015, p. 135). Street art created in the aftermath of the Arab Spring helped to preserve the dissident messages of the movement once authorities began to more heavily regulate public space after the occupation. Messages that were hard to erase or hide, thus remaining in

view to those who knew of their existence, were important locations of memory for those who participated in the occupation (Miladi, 2015). However, the preservation of street art in its physical location, as opposed to preservation through digital media or photographs, are not necessarily the same even though both are now common.

Street art is a provocative location of memory because of its adaptability and temporality. Using the street as a canvas is often described as "ephemeral" and thus preserving such works of art digitally does change the significance of the message (Cowick, 2015). In an interview with *Art Radar*, an "independent online news sources writing about contemporary art across Asia," Wen Yau, a well-known archivist of the Umbrella Movement art said:

> The life of the protest object is indeed destined to be destroyed somehow, and our task is to document it as it is, and save it as much as we can […] we try our best to identify the producers and communicate with them about their intentions of saving [their works]. Generally, I don't even consider these objects as 'art' per se, but representations of the people's voices and their creativity and imagination of their use in public space.

Wen acknowledges that there is a "risk of de-contextualising protest objects from their original sites," but believes that given the significance of the Umbrella Movement, such work should be preserved for "the purposes of research, documentation, and historical legacy" (Art Radar, 2014). The popularity of photographing and documenting the presence of street art does seem to support Nora's (1996) belief that "modern memory is archival." He writes, "We cannot know in advance what should be remembered, hence we refrain from destroying anything and put everything in archives instead" (p. 9). But in authoritarian spaces, the ability to preserve any dissident

message is significant because those with power do tend to destroy what does not conform to their historical narrative. Given Hong Kong's current political situation, preserving as much of the movement as possible will make it harder for Beijing or Carrie Lam's new government to destroy counter-hegemonic memories.

Like the street art that continued to emerge in public areas after the Arab Spring, street art could still be found throughout Hong Kong. In addition to finding street art from well-known artists like Space Invader[61], pictured left in Figure 5.2, I found works that were still relevant to the Umbrella Movement. The image on the right of Figure 5.2 was taken in a stairwell near Central one year after the occupation. When I went back during my second trip, the image was gone. I showed a few of my participants the image and no one knew the artist, but many felt that

Figure 5.2: *Photographs of street art taken during both of my visits to Hong Kong.*

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[61] Invader, the artist behind the pixelated alien featured in Figure 5.2 is a self-proclaimed "Unidentified Free Artist." Their work can be found in a number of global cities. The artist claims that their installations are "first of all about liberating Art from its usual alienators that museums or institutions can be." They go on to say that the project also "frees the Space Invaders from their video games TV screens and to bring them into our physical world." These pieces though not directly linked to the Umbrella Movement show the interconnectivity of online and public spaces and the social and symbolic significance of street art. Locating a Space Invader in Hong Kong also demonstrates the city's position as a global urban environment.

its message evoked the symbolism of the Umbrella Movement. They felt that the image represented a "protester that had been attacked" and "the oppression of the Chinese government." After the Arab Spring, street art that promoted Islamic slogans helped to facilitate the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood. Although this may not have been the ideal political situation, it still demonstrates the significance of these public spaces as venues for the oppressed to express themselves (Miladi, 2015). Even if social media sites are shut down, there will always be an avenue to preserve the visual images of these mass occupations.

In addition to collecting many physical works of art, the preservation campaign also conserved the visual symbolism of the movement by photographing many of the pieces. The environment in which these works of art were created was integral to the pieces' meaning and many felt that without this spatial context, the works of art would be less consequential. Benjamin (1964) believed that reproductions were disconnected from the original's position in "time and space," but his theory offers a potential half-way between archival and living memory. More people can experience a reproduction and in the case of street-art, and protest art in general, disrupt the aura so that those who are not able to view the physical artifact are still able to take part in the experience and the creation of meanings afforded by such works. For example, a participant who was abroad during the occupation claimed to feel connected to the art that was produced in the streets of Hong Kong and shared online through photographs despite not being in the physical location. One participant said of the preservation efforts, "I think in terms of artwork, so many are site specific. When you take them out of the streets they're kind of meaningless." Another participant responded, "that's a lot of people's argument. What's the point of these virtual forms if you take them out of context. So even taking photos of them may be a better option than preserving them." Benjamin (2008) believed that our modern perception

of art was tied to economic structures and that the "aura" that surrounded original pieces dissipated when reproduced. The aura helped to situate that piece in time and space and reproduction destroyed the ritual of the pilgrimage to the original and the process of contemplation. But Benjamin also saw hope in new technology as they made art more accessible to the general public. He saw film as a way for society to construct meaning together and recreate new meanings in new contexts. Taken out of its original spatial context, some work may not be as easily rearticulated into new forms of meaning. The various shelters and barriers that were preserved may not continue to be effective locations of memory for the Umbrella Movement because they had a very specific function. They may have been innovative with their use of design or materials, but beyond the context of space, carry very little meaning. However, other works of art became online memes, demonstrating the various reconstructions of meaning that could be easily remembered and adapted to new contexts as the movement progressed.

The Power of Pixels: Preserving the Art of the Movement Online

Facebook became a popular venue to preserve the art and images of the Umbrella Movement. When the art or symbol was reconstructed into a meme or a profile picture it was able to adapt to a new situation, environment, or individual, while also evoking a sense of collective memory. Yet not all of the visual icons were repurposed once stored online. "The Umbrella Movement Art Preservation" Facebook page, one of the more prominent sites devoted to art conservation, was established for three primary reasons: to serve as a platform for people to share photographs of the artwork they created during the movement, a storage space for larger pieces once the movement ended, and a place to share art for the purposes of archiving pieces for later use. The photography section of the page listed a number of different categories from "leaflets and posters" to "workshops" and "plants." The majority of the art found on the site was

intended for display; therefore, the works' role as artistic expression seemed to be an appropriate artifact to be included in a digital archive. Nevertheless, as one scrolls through the various categories like "gears," a photo collection of hardhats and masks, it becomes apparent that there is less scrutiny as to what is considered art within the context of digital media's unlimited storage space. These categorizations did seem to point to the archive now, to preserve for the uncertain future mentality discussed by Nora (1996). Yet these sites can become active sites for rehearsing memory, especially if they are used by people scrolling through and recounting, unfortunately it is difficult to tell how often such scrolling actually takes place. Along with what one could argue to be an oversaturation of artistic works, digital media archives like the "Umbrella Movement Art Preservation's" Facebook page lacks a lot of the context and "aura" surrounding the original work of art. These archives are able to provide an unlimited space for more individuals to be able to preserve the works they felt were relevant, but the downside to these affordances is the potential ambivalence to what is actually being stored. A picture of a hardhat with no relevant caption does not seem like an external memory that will continue an ongoing narrative that protest art has the potential to facilitate. The last post of the Umbrella Movement Art's page was January 1, 2015, demonstrating that this digital space and much of the work exhibited on the site has more or less been disregarded.

The content that was preserved was often a repetitive variation of a common symbol like an umbrella, a common slogan, or popular song lyric. The abundance of what was preserved was overwhelming, but it does make it harder for those with power to track down and control everything that was archived during and after the occupation. For every Facebook page with Umbrella Movement art stored somewhere in a designated album or newsfeed that is shut down, there are thousands more, pointing to Innis' (1951) belief that preservation is created through

mass distribution, which he attributed to democracy. "It is clear then that the collective memory, however it develops, can be formed only imperfectly through imperfect individual memories" (Carbonnier, 1996, p. 355). Since collective memory is a reconstruction of the past that reflects the situation of the present, collective memory is essentially always imperfect; therefore, so long as the most poorly constructed social media platform with any of these images exists, someone will always be able to sustain the visual memory of the movement. The Goddess of Democracy was destroyed, but her picture remained and became an important location of memory that was replicated in the Umbrella Man almost 25 years later (Wu, 1991). China may have been able to destroy the statue itself, but it was unable to destroy all traces of the symbol's existence.

Preserving the art online, even with the use of photographic representations, thwarted power dynamics in more ways than traditional political hierarchies. The Invader, the street artist behind the Space Invader street art featured in Figure 5.2 chose to display their work illegally in public places to liberate the work from the confines of a museum. Museums and state sponsored memorial projects have more power to conserve the meaning and significance of a piece through the description and placement of the piece itself. Given the CCPs push to control the historical narrative of Hong Kong through various museum exhibits during the 1997 transition (Chu, 2013), it is unlikely that museum curators and archivists would have the authority to display the Umbrella Movement art in a manner that would pay service to the message of the movement. In the wake of the Umbrella Movement, even public art installations have been under threat as evident by the cancellation of the 2047 countdown clock that was projected on the I.C.C. building. The art scene in Hong Kong is a prominent global "art trading hub," unfortunately there seems to be a dwindling sense of artistic freedom.

> Meanwhile, the city's wealthy landlords and managers of public spaces are increasingly funding art projects to dress up their malls and apartment buildings, and creating their own arts foundations—but most remain heavily beholden to Beijing because of their vast commercial interests in Mainland China (Chow, 2016).

Art was a symbolic component of the Umbrella Movement and the preservation and display of such creative works seem to have less of a place in the city's art scene. Even though the 2047 countdown clock was not displayed for the originally intended duration of the project, images of the "Countdown Machine" were preserved online.

The art of the movement represented Hong Kong's new identity and many felt that saving the art would also help to preserve the memory of the movement itself. The editor of the Hong Kong theatre portal HKELD, who was one of the individuals behind the large-scale preservation efforts, told *Coconuts,* a Hong Kong news site, "The purpose isn't to see the art for profit or desensitise the issue by hanging it in a gallery, but to preserve the pieces for a worldwide audience and future generations of Hongkongers." (Wilde, 2014). Shortly before the end of occupation the individual went on to say:

> It is unknown what will become of Occupy Central in terms of its political aspirations, but I think it has definitely succeeded in changing Hong Kong's viewpoint on what art is and how art can be viewed. Art doesn't have to be hung on a museum wall or cost thousands of dollars to be good. It just has to inspire, and the art at Occupy Central has certainly done that (Wilde, 2014).

Given the number of participants who showed me the pictures of the art they had taken during the occupation during my first trip to Hong Kong in 2015, it was clear that the art had been inspirational. Although they were showing me images of the art on mobile devices or Facebook pages, the sense of these pieces' inspirational power was still apparent. During my second visit, when discussions of depression and anger were more common, very few participants showed me photographs or discussed the art. However, that does not mean that these digital locations of memory are gone forever, rather the relationship to these *lieux de mémoire* had merely changed.

Haskins (2015) writes that "online memorializing" is democratic in that it is able to "translate" various artifacts into digital code and preserve alternative voices beyond those from mainstream media sources and political or powerful entities.

> Formerly limited in time and space, ephemeral gestures can be preserved in still and moving images, ready to be viewed and replayed on demand. Previously banished to dark storage rooms, mementos left at memorial sites can be displayed for all to see. The boundaries between public and the private, the permanent and the evanescent will cease to matter, for all stories and images will be equally fit to represent and comment on the past (Haskins, 2015, p. 49).

The Umbrella Man may be stored in a warehouse collecting dust, but its image is easily stored and accessed online as a series of zeros and ones. Unlike the art of the past, all works of art, big and small can be preserved, accessible to anyone who has technological means. Given Hong Kong's level of connectivity, a majority of the population is able to explore these works, to be inspired by the creativity of the movement at any time and to connect to their Hong Kong

identity from anywhere. Abbas (1997) was concerned that Hong Kong's culture was disappearing as corporate entities became more prevalent features of the city's skyline, but the Umbrella Movement helped to reestablish a new identity and prevent such disappearance. Hong Kong's creativity has always been an essential component to the territory's identity, and the Umbrella Movement facilitated the renewal of this identity, while also establishing a new political interest. The photographic representation of these works of art may only be fragments of the movement's narrative, but the massive preservation effort shows that this creative identity is still important to Hongkongers and even though it may be difficult to express themselves in physical spaces, they have the ability to do so online.

The art and visual symbols were integral to the occupation and many felt that they were important to preserve. Instead of reflecting on what pieces warranted preservation, in the rush to preserve as much as possible in the commotion of the forced vacancy of public spaces, individuals and groups tried to preserve everything. Some of the work was repurposed to represent new locations of memory that were more conducive to surviving in online environments, while others became obsolete and forgotten the moment they were archived. The relevancy of the content of these physical and digital archives may also fluctuate depending on the waves of collective memory. It is easy to argue that the Umbrella Movement archives are just another example of the problematic nature of storing everything, making modern memory superficial; however, as previously stated, Nora and other Western theorists take the legacy of a democratic political system for granted. In the case of Hong Kong, the more that is stored now, the harder it will be to destroy if China does decide to take a more active and forceful role in constructing the territory's narrative. Like the street art that can transform public spaces, social media is also fast to adapt to threats of control.

Digital Archives: Technological Remembering

The storage capacity of digital technology has essentially made it possible to preserve anything imaginable. Digital media has changed the power dynamics associated with storing and recording information. A professional archivist, talking about the role of the Internet in today's information consumption culture said, "if it doesn't exist on the internet, it doesn't exist." Often, what is remembered today is what can be conjured with the click of a button or a Google search. The Internet has become an essential component of how we receive information and thus, how we construct collective memory. Alongside official accounts disseminated by mainstream media and government, personalized stories can now become a part of the evolving tableau of public memory The archivist went on to state:

> Now the dissemination tools are true IT technology, so the push does not come from the archive, it comes from the technology. Technology changes a few things. I think the main thing is the push from the user because when the user can Google something more easily, in the archives it's still hard to find something easily, you tell them which way is better…so instead of telling them you show them. You have to make it easy for them to access.

Technology has changed the way we consume information. Categorization is now based on an algorithm and not the most appropriate or efficient way to store information. Digital media has the potential to democratize our historical narrative, but only within the confines of the technological structure itself (Haskins, 2015).

Digital archiving projects, like the 9/11 digital archive, are faced with the possibility that in addition to preserving valuable information related to the tragedy, they are also preserving

falsities and rumors (Haskins, 2015). Algorithms favor the content that was most widely circulated, not the content that was the most accurate. While there does seem to be more structure to digital archives, with the sheer amount of information, it is difficult to know how to favor more precise information. Many of my participants did mention that they eventually became more aware of the possibility that some authorities were spreading rumors in an effort to disrupt the movement, but now that the occupation is over, are these same scrutinizing perspectives still there? Rumors and falsities have become incorporated into our historical narratives in the past; however, given the perception that social media gives more people a voice, there seems to be a greater chance that more false narratives may become incorporated as it becomes harder to fact check the amount of information circulating online (Haskins, 2015).

Archives of the past have tended to favor the national memory of “elites” who had the power and money to preserve their memories in a way that became the memories of the collective. This was also true in Hong Kong when China invested money in reshaping the territory’s historical narrative during the 1997 transition period (Ren, 2010; Chu, 2013). Even though digitalization may provide a space that includes more voices, money and access are still a factor. An archivist at the Asian Arts Archive in Hong Kong referenced the influence money still plays in sustaining even a digital archive:

> But we have to see if we have the financial support to fund that operation. Because for example digitization, you have to employ a lot of people who can scale and annotate and then submit it to our system. Then we have to have to make sure the meta-data is up to standard and things are coherent. The whole operation demands a lot of manpower in the process and knowledge as well.

The democratizing potential social media has for the construction of collective memory is a significant factor, but it should not take away from recognizing the limitations of these sources. In a tumultuous political environment such as Hong Kong, any avenue that preserves multiple voices is important, but not all digital environments are created equal. Unlike the 9/11 digital archive that was constructed and maintained by trained professionals, much of the art that was preserved online was done so using Facebook, a site that has the potential to serves as a pseudo archive, yet such purposes are not the site's primary objective.

Facebook as an Archive

Facebook was an integral tool that helped to connect people and disseminate information during the Umbrella Movement occupation. Given the site's structure, all of the communications that took place on these sites are now saved as a crude digital record of the event. To understand social media, one must first realize what these sites are always storing information. Unlike most traditional archives that store materials that help to construct the meaning of a particular object, person, or event, social media essentially "archives human relationships" (Richardson & Hessey, 2009). Although Facebook is public, security settings allow most users to share their information only with friends. One participant had mentioned that she had initially posted about the occupation on Facebook to educate her friends. She was surprised by the number of Facebook friends who were blue ribbon supporters.[62] As time progressed, and Facebook posts and conversations became more volatile with these individuals, the participant mentioned that she wound up "unfriending" many of the individuals who did not share her views. When account settings, like friendship statuses change, much of that information is lost or hidden to the average viewer. On one hand this means that there is less

[62] Blue Ribbon supporters were against the Umbrella Movement occupation.

information stored than many perceive, but it also means that what is saved captures only a snap shot of these online relationships; a snapshot that could lead to further fragmentation as new generations and groups reflect on the movement using only these external sources of memory.

Although Facebook may accommodate more voices, the construction of collective memory using this system may not be as encompassing as some would believe. One participant familiar with Facebook's unofficial archiving role said:

> But these are for personal memories, it's to remember your presence at the movement rather than do a more objective or comprehensive…well what we would understand as an archiving function. But it's what the algorithms setting of archiving does for us. Automatically we have a timeline and all of a sudden it shoots to 2014 like nothing happened. You don't have a life outside of Facebook. You actually haven't had a life with Facebook. So what's is really doing for you? It only archives.

Another participant raised the question of "who is archiving for whom" on Facebook. Professional archive curators conduct research to provide context for the objects that are preserved, but such considerations are not taken into account on Facebook. Of commemorating, Nora (1989) writes, "but who, today, does not feel compelled to record his feelings to write his memoirs—not only the most minor historical actor but his witness, his spouse, and his doctor. The less extraordinary the testimony, the more aptly it seems to illustrate the average mentality" (p. 14). This is doubly true in the age of digital archiving and sharing. Yet one could argue that following the spirit of democratization, the goal is to create a more inclusive collective memory. Facebook's focus is not on a specific event, but rather a specific person or groupings of persons;

therefore, using this site to document something as complex as a social movement does present a challenge. Nonetheless, understanding these affordances may help scholars and researchers, who do understand the importance of collective memory in the preservation of dissident mentalities, focus more on a period that is largely ignored in social movement research: how the movement is remembered by the average person and how this individual memory contributes to a collective understanding and future political action.

Even though social media may help to preserve more voices that may contribute to the historical narrative of a particular event, the idea that "if it's not online, it doesn't exist" does offer some concern if China does begin to more heavily censor the Internet in Hong Kong. One participant said of Facebook:

> Once it's closed down, Facebook retains it for two years and then they trash it. So that means all this kind of information may not be retrievable in any way. So that is exactly the vulnerability of these digital resources, they can disappear without a trace sooner or later. So if you want to preserve these kinds of transient or short life material, then you have to put forth extra effort to organize them. But at the moment, I don't think there's a very systematic way or model that we can follow to capture them. We can only handle them case by case in context.

The fact that Facebook is not organized like a traditional archive does present a problem for those who do wish to use the information stored on the various pages. Archiving like all acts of remembering, must be actively maintained and it will require political and collective will to maintain these archives. As a professional archivist noted, "Probably, you cannot archive the

whole Facebook timeline. You can only section it or select part of it and describe that subject per subject." Haskins (2015) writes specifically about the challenges faced when relying on social media sources to serve as external sites of memory:

> To remain relevant, they must strike a delicate balance, as it were, between a desire to accommodate as many different voices as possible, on the one hand, and a responsibility to provide a common ground for this diversity on the other It is one thing to collect, digitize, and preserve large quantities or memorial artifacts, it is quite another to display them in ways that stimulate meaningful participation and interaction (p. 52).

Given that a number of participants said they do not often go back and look at their old pages or posts because they would think they are stupid or silly, one even going as far as saying they were "embarrassed" by old pictures and comments they had posted, it is hard not to consider Facebook's role as an archive as another form of slacktivsm. And yet, even slacktivism is a form of social movement memory that deserves at least some recognition. Clicking like does build a sense of awareness (Vie, 2014) and a few participants acknowledged that they knew a number of people who were only involved in the occupation via their social media feeds. Even the smallest sense of awareness does help to preserve these movements especially if China cracks down. The image of the tank man at Tiananmen Square or the Goddess of Democracy are important sites of memory because a few people were able to preserve photographs of these images and disseminate them beyond the state control of China's restrictive narrative. Given that Facebook is a global site, if the Internet is censored in Hong Kong, at least these images will be preserved somewhere.

Despite not being a traditional archive that organizes and collects data for research purposes, Facebook has recently tapped into the appeal of promoting memory. Users will often sign on to see a message that says, "We care about you and the memories you share here. We thought you'd like to look back on this post from [insert number of years here] years ago." Facebook decided to delve into the realm of nostalgia in the hopes that people would return to past images and generate content, which would then engage others with theirs or others "timewall"; however, as expressed in Chapter Four, nostalgia does not always evoke positive responses and could possibly bring up feelings of depression and anger that have since subsided, potentially undoing or reversing the influence of mnemo-therapy healing Artie Konrad a Facebook researcher told *Business Insider,* "we need to be mindful that we're not just stewarding data. We're stewarding personal memories that tell the stories of people's lives." Konrad went on to say that the method that decides what memories will show up on any given day were based on "interesting, and important life moments that one might not take the time to revisit." Facebook searches for comments like "miss," while avoiding swear-words, sexual content, and food (D'Onfro, 2016). Most "memories" posted about a social movement would not likely fall into these preferred "memory" categories. The feature was designed to make it look like Facebook "cared" about their users, focusing on the individual and not the collective; however, it was more about making Facebook seem more appealing than making users remember the past. Engagement leads to the ritualization of Facebook, so Facebook makes its technological affordances promote engagement of any kind.

Those who helped to design the feature said they were inspired to capitalize on Facebook's potential as an archive because it was a venue where people recorded their lives. Howell, a UX research manager said "whenever we talk about memories with folks, people are

saying ‘I don’t even print photos anymore. They say, ‘All of my memories are on Facebook now for the last couple of years.’ For some people, if they didn’t have these products, they would never see this stuff again” (D’Onfro, 2016). Although being able to easily access these memories is at times helpful, it does seem to negate the importance of forgetting and the process of moving on. Vivian (2010) wrote that forgetting was an integral part of national memory. Given the emphasis on the individualized memories promoted via Facebook’s new feature, what may potentially be forgotten is the sense of collectivity that was integral to the original occupation. Facebook capitalizes on the ability to curate our own lives. One Hong Kong professor said. “I think we’re more sensitive about our roles as curators because we are curating all the time. Even on Facebook we are the curators, we’re the archivers, we’re the documenters. It’s all representational, it’s all about how you curate and aggregate.” Facebook does not actually care about preserving the memory of the Umbrella Movement. The company cares about preserving the happiness or positive affect of their users so they continue to use the service. Nostalgia is not always happy, and like the users who have complained about Facebook dredging up memories about tragedy like the death of a friend or the loss of a home, social movement memories are not always something that will evoke a positive response (Dzieza, 2015). Being forced to remember the Umbrella Movement may make Hongkongers even more frustrated and angry given the current political situation. In addition to creating features to evoke memories, Facebook has also capitalized on producing “Live” content.

Facebook Live: Remembering the Now, Later

There have been some recent developments with technology since 2014 like the introduction of Facebook “live.” But even in 2016, most participants still said Hongkongers used Facebook “just to check statuses and pictures.” Facebook Live has been an integral tool in

exposing cases of police brutality (Stelter, 2016; Ingram, 2016). But like the possibility of censorship, the unknown legal parameters of Facebook Live has the potential to erase these external memories from a digital archive. Facebook Live is perceived by some as a violation of privacy and violates anonymity, a feature that is important for the safety of certain activists. In the United States, Live streams have been removed from Facebook because they have violated copyright laws (Brogan, 2016); however, it is unclear how the service will be impacted by Hong Kong's privacy and copyright laws under the new administration of Carrie Lam. In addition to the legal issue, the notion of watching something that was designed to be "live" at a later date, does offer some interesting thoughts with regards to the future of memory work.

The original video of the police beating of an Umbrella Movement protestor was filmed by a television crew, but was later disseminated via social media. For those who do not feel that mainstream media channels have fairly represented their voice, Facebook Live does offer a platform that can be controlled by anyone with a mobile device. Shortly after the video was shown on-air, it was stripped from subsequent broadcasts and the video only survived online. But Facebook Live also seems to fall into the trap of promoting individual memories. The Facebook coordinator for a prominent Hong Kong politician said, "I think Facebook Live is definitely coming up because everyone can do live broadcasts and this is like the very personal point of view so you can see this in the scene." She went on to say that people seem to watch them as they happen, but rarely go back and revisit the videos. Although she did not give a reason for why she thought individuals did not go back to look at "live" content, it could be because of the never-ending flow of the present to react with social media. If the past is not produced and shared as present content, it becomes buried under the weight of the present. For countries with oppressive regimes, political freedom is more important than considerations of

how these tools will impact memory work. In Ghana, Facebook Live has helped to facilitate a stronger interest in government. Lucy Quist, CEO of Airtel Ghana said, "the majority of people in Ghana found out about what was going on with the elections on Facebook." She went on to say that Facebook is often the only platform that consumers use to access Internet content. For the first time in Ghana's history, citizens knew what was going on in the electoral system thanks to a live stream on social media (Johnson, 2017).

Facebook's ability to preserve certain memories, even those that were originally streamed live, do seem to be a popular feature for Hongkongers. One participant said, "I hate Snapchat, you don't have any memories. You can't record what you've done." Given that none of the participants spoke about using Snapchat during or even after the occupation, this view seems to be relatively common. It is important to remember how what happened during the 79-day occupation was framed, especially for Hongkongers who cultivated their own cultural identity during the movement. Preserving artifacts from the movement was also important because what happens next, can easily distort the frame in unexpected ways using it for nefarious purposes to exert more control. In many respects, the relationship between technology and memory have not changed, but in others, it has given people more access to the preservation of their own stories. Facebook and social media in general, has allowed average citizens to record their own memories of mass events. It is unclear what will happen to all of this stored information in the future. New algorithms may make it easier to connect to these externalized memories so that they can be more easily recalled in ways that facilitate a lived memory of the event. The more that is out there, the harder it is to control. Had Hong Kong been granted universal suffrage, arguing on the merits of an organized and sufficient archiving system may have been warranted, but given the current political situation, perhaps the overwhelming amount of information may

actually help preserve the memory of the movement for the next generation who did not directly experience the event.

Summary

It is difficult to tell what the true impact the archiving efforts associated with the Umbrella Movement will have. Three years have passed since the occupation and those who participated in the movement can still rely on their lived experience of the occupation in addition to the external locations of memory preserved in archives. Unlike national tragedies or events like 9/11, social movements do not seem to get as caught up in the rhetoric of "never forget." In many respects, there seems to be more of a push to forget, especially by those who wish to maintain power. Archiving does not necessarily lead to the creation of collective memory:

> Cultural memory exists in two modes, the first mode of potentiality for the archives whose accumulated texts, images and rules of conduct act as a total horizon, the second mode of actuality whereby each contemporary context puts the objectivized meaning into its own perspective, giving its own relevance (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995, p. 130).

Just because these materials were stored, does not mean that they will be able to conjure a sense of meaning if they resurface years later. Reflection is still a necessary component required to create a cultural memory surrounding a particular event or object.

Looking at the long-term impact of relying on social media as an archive for social movements is as overwhelming as sorting through the sheer amount of digital information that has been stored with regards to the movement. On the one hand, it has allowed Hongkongers to preserve the political identity created during the 79-day occupation in the midst of increased

control from Hong Kong's Chief Executive to the Chinese central government in Beijing. On the other hand, it has the potential to erase the collective identity created during the movement by emphasizing the importance of individualized memories. The amount of protest material that was archived in the wake of the occupation is unprecedented, while some artifacts have remained from past social movements, there has never been a preservation effort to such scale. Given the sheer amount of information that was collected, it may function in the same way as memory always has, some things will be remembered and others forgotten; there is no way that all of the information that has been preserved will be remembered, but has that ever been the case?

After my second trip to Hong Kong, I ran a few theories with regards to the impact of technology and memory by a cultural studies professor at a Hong Kong university. He said:

> We're in a time where you cannot cover anything up and this is the culture and technology, but on the other hand it may also facilitate the losing of long-term memory, not just memory but this historical perspective on issues. We don't remember everything, things don't happen in our lifetime alone, but you have to pick up those links in order to find out the conditions of possibility then and now in the future. I'm sure that in the movement people are not doing their Ph.D.'s and thinking of this. So now it's a different era and China is telling you it has a dream.

When the individuals who participated in the Umbrella Movement posted material to Facebook, they were not looking at this information in relationship to memory work. One participant said she felt social media use was conducive to occupation because it gave you something to do while you were out in the streets. People were not always clashing with police on the front lines, most

were hanging out with friends in camp sites. Their way of life and future were being threatened by outside sources and they wanted to be a part of something. Social media is not just a meaningless repository for memory, technology is a part of our every day and the content that is preserved on social media is a function of that experience.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

When this project was first conceived shortly after the Umbrella Movement ended in 2014, the sense of hope expressed by the mainstream media with regards to the occupation made it seem like Hong Kong would soon have a democratically elected government. Such assumptions often permeate the narrative of these mass occupations in the immediate wake of such events. However, given the recent election of Carrie Lam, Hong Kong's democratic future seems more distant than ever. Researchers and journalists tend to focus only on the catalyst and the occupation, ignoring what happens next; the period where these movements seem to be most vulnerable to opposing forces. The memory of the early stages of these events is carried into what happens next without really considering the impact. How the movement is framed as it happens does influence how activists move forward. Memory work should be an important component of social movement literature.

On March 26, 2017, Carrie Lam was elected Hong Kong's new Chief Executive. She will be sworn in on July 1st by Chinese President Xi Jinping to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the transition to Chinese control. Of Hong Kong's 3.7 million registered voters, only 0.03% were allowed to vote for the Chief Executive. Michael Tien[63], a pro-establishment lawmaker told *The Guardian*, "for the few that could vote, a lot of these people are professionals and businesses, they may actually believe Lam will run Hong Kong better in terms of their interests." (Haas, 2017). On the surface, the economic identity that has consistently been Hong Kong's status quo seems to have been prioritized and solidified. One day after Lam's election, nine of the Umbrella Movement leaders were asked to turn themselves into police custody

[63] According to the article written by Benjamin Hass of *The Guardian*, Tien voted for Tsang not Lam.

(Chappell, 2017). Yet the symbolism of the Umbrella Movement was still remembered as activists took to the streets and social media to express their dissatisfaction with the election results. Hongkongers shared photos of police tearing down yellow banners that said, “Against Beijing’s appointment. We want to pick our own gov,” an homage to the yellow “We want real universal suffrage” banners that became popular icons of the Umbrella Movement. Individuals also took to the streets carrying yellow Umbrellas. In reaction to the election outcome Nathan Law said, “This result is a nightmare to Hong Kongers” (Haas, 2017). But despite what seems like a dire situation for the possibility of a democratic Hong Kong, the memory of resistance and the political identity that came to define the Umbrella Movement still seems to be present.

Lam’s swearing in ceremony on the eve of the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong’s return to Chinese sovereignty will most likely be a media spectacle steeped in Chinese symbolism. An effort to continue perpetuating the view that Hong Kong is a part of China, a narrative that the Chinese government has attempted to control since they put up a countdown clock in Tiananmen Square in 1994. However, the legacy of “one country, two systems” set forth by the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration is finally being questioned. The current political system might not be ideal, but doubting the efficacy of the “one country, two systems” policy highlights that the memory of resistance that came to define the political identity established during the Umbrella Movement is still influential. Democratic Party lawmaker James To Kun-sun said:

> “[The central government] has hoped to prove to the world that the ‘one country, two systems’ model is successful, as the city celebrates the 20th anniversary of the handover on July 1. The election result will tell not only the international community, but

> also Hongkongers and Taiwanese whether the model is a success or a failure" (quoted in Lam & Ng, 2017)

It will take time to really determine the apparent success or failure of the "one country, two system's" model, but most activists who had hoped that the Umbrella Movement would lead to universal suffrage will likely view the election as a failure. In an unprecedented move, pan-democrats rallied behind John Tsang, the former finance minister in the hopes of at least electing a more moderate candidate, who in recent months, expressed a platform more favorable to average Hongkongers. Even though Tsang is a member of the pro-establishment camp, Lam was the candidate Beijing preferred, and she was the candidate that won (Lam & Ng, 2017). However, amidst the differing views of pro-democracy parties, they did manage to come together to make a decision in the hopes of securing a better future for the city.

Although many Hongkongers seemed to be okay with the economic identity expressed by corporate entities and the Hong Kong government since the 1997 transition, memories of past acts of resistance managed to remain salient from the yearly Tiananmen June 4th vigil to the 2012 National Education protests (Chu, 2013; Bradsher, 2012). The Umbrella Movement was different than these former acts of dissidence because the occupation received extensive global media coverage. It was often viewed within the larger context of global democracy movements and not within the territory's own political, cultural, and economic legacy. Older participants would often say that these acts of defiance were not typical for Hongkongers who tended to be passive, citing Western media stories that highlighted the influence of Occupy Wall Street and the Arab Spring. These participants seemed to forget about the 1966 riots or the various other political demonstrations that have occurred throughout Hong Kong's history. When younger generations spoke of the movement, they would often say that this was a movement for

Hongkongers fought by Hongkongers, claiming that the movement was organic and not influenced by outside forces. For this younger generation, the economic stability experienced by older residents was not a reality they would know. Regardless of these varying views on influence, dissident memories always seem to survive despite how they may be recalled or remembered.

Media will continue to influence the way we remember certain events, but remembering the technology itself as a location of memory ignores the cultural nuances that sustain these movements as a form of "lived" memory. The Umbrella Movement is still a part of Hong Kong's lived memory because those who experienced the movement have the ability to recall and frame the occupation based on their own experiences and particular needs. People may forget some of the pictures that they posted on Facebook, but the symbolism that came to define Hong Kong's political identity in 2014 is still apparent despite the current political situation. Outside forces like Western media and the Chinese government will continue to try to influence and shape the memory of the Umbrella Movement, but the activists who took part still have agency with regards to the movement's message. Western media will most likely continue to unintentionally homogenize the memory and China will either try to erase the memory entirely or continue to paint democratic activism as a subversive act. But the symbolism of the movement has continued to emerge in new ways preserving the memory of a political identity and the sense of creativity that was instrumental during the 79-day occupation. Benjamin (2008) wrote that works that are transformed and not just reproduced possess their own value. The symbols may not always appear in the same form or medium, but such acts of repurposing make these older symbols like the Goddess of Democracy relevant to a new generation. The adaptability of these dissident symbols shows that such locations of memory will continue to be

important. Localists activists were seen wearing Guy Fawkes masks during many of their demonstrations, for them it is a symbol of their resistance and not one man's attempt to blow up the parliament building or even a character from a graphic novel.

Media does have the potential to exasperate political divides, but it also helps to disseminate and store key memories that help further the cause of the movement. Carey's (1989) view that technology is just a tool should help scholars and journalists move beyond the emphasis of technological advancement to look at the role people play in using it ritualistically. Technology will continue to fascinate and influence the way we communicate and even remember; this narrative has been around for centuries (Eisenstein, 1979; Carey, 1989; Darnton, 2000). It is easy to idealize the nature of "real" lived memory (Nora, 1989) or the role technology plays in social movements (Castells, 2012), it is part of modern society's ritual of progress (Benjamin, 1968; Carey, 1989). There is real fear that democratic values are on the decline based on the election of Donald Trump, the political referendum that grants Turkey's Erdoğon more power, and the failed democratic governments of Russia, Hungary, Thailand, and the Philippines. Recent mass occupations like Occupy Wall Street and the Arab Spring also saw the rise of nationalist politics promoting racist and sexist views of nationalism. But the fact that there are still these movements and that people are still taking to the streets means that individuals still remember the importance of democratic values (Remnick, 2017). Social movements have always been a part of the democratic process and it seems they will continue to be a part of these power dynamics even if the global political environment looks bleak.

Looking beyond the technological narrative that often over-determines the accounts of recent social movements, the Umbrella Movement seemed to embody a sense of collective identity that represented Hong Kong's inhabitants and not outside forces. So long as the memory

of this resistance and political identity persists, there is always hope for agonistic democracy. Although Castells (2012) taps into the importance of this sense of hope, he fails to recognize occupations as part of a continuous process, which like waves of memory, will continuously fluctuate depending on the circumstances of the present situation (Zelizer, 1998). Zelizer was afraid that the images of the Holocaust and the call to "never forget" facilitated the process of "remembering to forget." However, even though social movements are extensively documented, they are not remembered in the same manner as national tragedies. There are no monuments or museums[64]; the memories of these events are commemorated by the ongoing and democratic process of communication. In the years following Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution, which occurred in 2011, the country has had two successful multi-party elections and written a new constitution. There have been ups and downs including terrorist attacks and the rise of Localists politics, but on the whole, Saif (2016) writes: "Tunisia still faces huge challenges. But with the constitution in place and responsible political leadership guiding the process, all is by no means lost." Castells (2012) credits Tunisia with being a "seed of social change that [was] spread by the winds of hope to other contexts" (p. 21), without considering what these "other contexts" entailed. Although many of these movements are connected, there are also different cultural legacies that this view does not take into account.

The Global Connection

Technology does shorten our perception of time and space. A social movement in Hong Kong is now the front-page news of a Western publication in a matter of minutes. We are more connected than ever, regardless of the globalist pushback from the rise of nationalist politics.

[64] There are museum exhibits that focus on social movements, but it is uncommon to see entire museums and monuments dedicated to these events as is the case with the Holocaust or other tragedies like 9/11.

Even the growth of nationalist politics is a global trend. Hardt and Negri (2004) conclude their theory of the multitude:

> We can already recognize that today time is split between a present that is already dead and a future that is already living—and the yawning abyss between them is becoming enormous. In time, an event will thrust us like an arrow into that living future. This will be the real political act of love (p. 358).

That notion and time, according to Ohmae (1995), may already be occurring as he sees the role of the nation-state as one of decline. Capital, corporations, consumers, and communications are the new rulers of the economic world, and the "region-state" is Ohmae's new unit of power concentration. The "region-state" creates an improved quality of life for its inhabitants. He even goes on to cite Hong Kong as a successful example of this trend. However, based on the scale of the Umbrella Movement, an identity based on economic and corporate principles does not seem to actually satisfy many Hongkongers. The nation-state may be in decline, but Hong Kong is a prime example indicating that an economic-based identity is not going to be this "living future."

Recent social movements and mass occupations seem to be a global trend from Occupy Wall Street to the Arab Spring. Some of these movements focus on universal causes like human rights as evident by the Women's Rights marches or Black Lives Matter, while others tend to focus on more relativist issues like dissatisfaction with current political and economic conditions. Even though there are obvious cultural nuances, there always seems to be a sense of connectivity and hope during the preliminary stages, the stages that get the most media attention. However, there is very little follow up once the initial appeal of these movements dies down. It is rare to hear stories about the period of depression or frustration that may follow these movements. Yet

there is no rule indicating that the media must only cover sensational events; it is up to the activists involved in these movements to keep the narratives and memories of these events flowing. The global world that tuned in during the height of the movement remembers these events as hopeful and thus fails to continue to offer support once these movements enter the next phase. In the wake of the Arab Spring, Egypt is now on its second dictator. Abdel Fatah al-Sisi gained power in 2013 in a bloody coup and is credited with being "the most authoritarian leader in the Middle East" according to an opinion piece published in *The Guardian* (The Guardian view on Egypt's dictatorship, 2017). Israeli (2013) writes that instead of the democratic ideals expressed by the Arab Spring, the Middle East is now plagued in the authoritarianism of an "Islamic Winter." The media only gives us a brief snapshot of these events, and only while they are in their sensational phase, making it difficult to see these power struggles as part of an ongoing process as opposed to the isolated events as they are often depicted.

Media does tend to homogenize the way we remember these events. The speed at which we currently process information is worth consideration when we think about how these global events will be remembered and how the memory of these movements will be utilized moving forward. The Facebook coordinator for a prominent politician said in answer to the question of whether or not there's hope for Hong Kong's future:

> I think they're just catching up with the wave of communications but not really very advanced, it's just like catching up. Because if you see what happened with the Taiwan presidential election, they are really leading the trend of how to reframe or shape different small groups and how to gain their trust and win their hearts. But in Hong Kong it's like having good communications is lagging behind.

> Not many politicians in Hong Kong is handling such things up to standard.

The individual went on to say that Taiwan's presidential election was a great example of a successful social movement because the newly elected Tsai Ing-wen had supposedly announced that the leaders of the Sunflower Movement would be pardoned. A story confirming this account was posted to a Hong Kong online news site the same day of our interview (Cheng, 2016).

Many parallels between Taiwan's Sunflower Movement and Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement exist. Participants would often bring up the Sunflower Movement as being an influence, though they would always emphasize that the Taiwanese were actually allowed to elect their own leaders. Some participants also brought up Occupy Wall Street. One student told a story about the planning stages of Hong Kong's occupy movement. There were plans to invite leaders from Occupy Wall Street to teach Hong Kong activists the dynamics and importance of communication. However, these plans fell through when organizers realized that "the dynamics were quite different" understanding that Hong Kong's movement needed "to develop and construct a community" for themselves. Another participant said, "the Occupy movement in the U.S. has inspired a lot of these events happening around the world. At some point, we should stick together. This is collective and fragmented at the same time." The connections between these global movements are a lot like collective memory, simultaneously "collective and fragmented." The global community tends to remember these events as snap shots represented by popular slogans and various symbols like "we are the 99%" or a fist risen into the air. Yet these memories are not necessarily as homogenous as they may seem and may point to a global collective memory that supports the idea that resistance is always possible. A snapshot is better

than nothing, especially given the rise of authoritarian leaders and nationalistic politics. Certain symbols will reemerge in other movements and others will be forgotten; some are universal, while others are more culturally specific. Nora (1989) saw external memories as being outside the realm of "lived memory" but the adaptability and perseverance of some of these symbols like a protest song or an iconic image are adapted in ways that become part of a new generation or a new culture's lived memory. Lived memory, following Benjamin, meets mediated memory "half-way."

Managing Multiple Memories

Social media does help to connect and transmit many of the various memories associated with a social movement. One participant talked about the global attention that is paid to events like the Umbrella Movement and the role technology played in allowing him to feel connected to his community despite being abroad:

> I found out about all of this on Facebook. I was in Chili at the time and the Chileans all knew what happened and everyone I met kept asking me if I knew what was going on. They were watching BBC news, they were live broadcasting the protest, it was a big thing. And then my host was like, yea we support you.

Technology helped this individual feel connected and his account of the movement echoed many of the same sentiments expressed by those who were in Hong Kong at the time. The comment also highlights the sense of global connectivity. Mainstream media may homogenize certain aspects of the movement, potentially narrowing the perspectives remembered with regards to these demonstrations, but any act of solidarity is essential for the survival of the global

democratic process. Individuals in Chili felt connected to the democratic struggle of those in Hong Kong.

Groups and individuals will always remember events differently based on age, gender, socio-economic status, and a variety of other factors. Remembering the various nuances of a social movement in a way that also constructs a sense of collective memory for a movement is similar to Hardt and Negri's (2004) multitude: a collective of various ideas that helps us realize the importance of unity. The different memories that were recounted during this process were all part of the larger narrative of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement. Participants recounted stories about the importance of the various symbols and art, the role different perspectives and identities played, and the feelings of hope, depression, anger and frustration that were felt once the movement ended and universal suffrage was not granted. These stories were different, but demonstrated that these various memories do help to contribute to our larger understanding of an event. Hong Kong's democratic fight is not over because the Umbrella Movement ended, it is part of a larger and continuous process. If we continue to view and remember these events from a single perspective that focuses only on the height of a movement, it will be harder to make progress. Chileans and various other global entities may have voiced their support during the occupation, but it is just as important to continue to show support after the excitement of these events during the wave of depression and frustration that follows.

During the Umbrella Movement, Hongkongers realized the importance of establishing a political identity, one that was defined by the people who lived there and not by China or corporate entities. Despite the current political situation and the various groups that have emerged in the wake of the occupation, from the localists to the Umbrella Soldiers, this political identity still seems to be what is remembered most and is the most alive. Even if the various

groups have a different way to recall this memory, this political identity bonds the people of Hong Kong. There are no national symbols to rally behind or to serve as external locations of memory recognizable by residents and tourists alike. Abbas' (1997) idea that Hong Kong's culture was disappearing was not unwarranted as the city's status quo always seemed to be defined by an economic identity as opposed to the one that represented the needs and everyday lives of those who actually inhabit the island. Hong Kong does not even have its own anthem. During global sporting events like FIFA qualifying matches, the Chinese national anthem is played (Tong, 2017). Even though Hong Kong is allowed to compete as a separate entity, these Chinese national symbols have made it difficult for Hongkongers to claim an identity that has been their own. Although the theme song and content of *Beneath the Lion Rock* may have been appropriated by Beijing officials, it also characterized the memory of the Hong Kong experience, one that represented what it meant to be a Hongkonger and a song that became the city's unofficial anthem.

While concentrating on the variety of different memories associated with the movement is important, forgetting certain aspects also helps propel these movements in different, and at times, more productive ways. The younger generation of activists felt that the older forms of political activism, which tended to be subtler given the legacy of the Tiananmen Square massacre, outgrew their tenure. Secondary students opted to take a more extreme approach by occupying city centers and storming the LegCo building. It was this action that sparked the Umbrella Movement, making the three-month demonstration a global story. However, there are certain aspects that should not be forgotten. Ignoring the immigration narrative that is true for all of the city's inhabitants has created a xenophobic atmosphere that counters the collectivity of the Umbrella Movement memory. Other aspects of the movement may be remembered in waves,

becoming more significant as the present political and economic situations change. The one thing that is certain is that Hong Kong cannot forget the importance of resistance, 2047 is a finite deadline and hopefully the future depicted in *Ten Years* will not become a reality.

The Umbrella Movement was similar to many of the other recent global occupations in many respects, but the archiving campaign does seem to be a unique element. Archives should not just be a meaningless repository for memory and given the sheer amount of what was saved online and in various warehouse, this may be a possibility; but it is also a repository for potentiality, for marshaling the affective charge that directed the movement It is true that saving without reflection can distort memories or even lead to overlooking certain valuable elements, but participants conveyed the importance of these *lieux de mémoire* in maintaining their own relationship to the past., Given the fact that many of the icons of the movement seem to have been repurposed in a variety of ways in the demonstrations and online posts since the Umbrella Movement, it seems clear that the affordances of the technology can be used to overcome potential factionalization and disengagement. Finally, the sheer number of images, memes and stories archived in a plurality of locations makes it the harder for China or Carrie Lam's new administration to erase the memory of the movement and construct their own dominant narrative.

Technology is a part of the way we remember certain events, but people still have enough agency to control these memories for their own purposes. Mainstream media channels generally push people to remember in a singular way, but there are always multiple memories of an event. Although this may be chaotic, the concern for activists, scholars, and journalists should not be to focus on constructing a singular narrative, as this would classify the event as historical and therefore stagnant. Instead, the movement should be remembered as a demonstration that represented a variety of different people and interests; the memory of which should pay respects

to the event as a process. Social media does give average individuals a way to record their own memories, making the process of constructing the narrative of these events more democratic. The Umbrella Movement meant different things to different people and these memories are important as Hong Kong faces an uncertain political future. Hong Kong may not have been granted universal suffrage, but the Umbrella Movement spawned a new generation to become involved in the political process and to care about the territory's political future in addition to their economic prospects. Understanding these multiple memories is an important part of the process of framing what happened so that it will be a useful tool in shaping what happens next.

Of the 1, 194 votes cast by the Chief Executive committee, Carrie Lam won 777. Immediately after news of the election tally broke, a number of new memes surfaced.

Figure 6.1: *Designer Steve Lee created this particular meme to by "Blending simplified Lam Cheng characters & #777. The Meme was featured by "Hong Kong Free Press"*[65]

[65] This meme was shared via Twitter and other social media sites. Image retrieved from https://www.hongkongfp.com/2017/03/26/777-chief-exec-elect-carrie-lams-vote-count-inspires-obscene-cantonese-puns/

Three sevens in Cantonese is slang for penis. The memes were a great example of how the memory of creativity expressed during the movement was still prevalent despite the less than ideal political outcome. The memes also demonstrated the importance of Cantonese slang to Hong Kong's cultural identity. Hongkongers may not have been granted universal suffrage and it is increasingly more apparent that China will continue to violate the "one country, two systems" policy as they exert more power over the territory. However, one thing is certain, Hongkongers will most likely remember that the pro-establishment biased election committee chose a "柒" to be their leader.[66]

[66] This Cantonese slang term specifically refers to a flaccid penis and is generally used to describe someone who is therefore useless or stupid.

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