NETWORKED ACTIVISTS AND THE MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRACY IN HONG KONG

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2016

Urbana, Illinois

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ABSTRACT

The Umbrella Movement was arguably the largest and longest episode of collective contention in the history of Hong Kong, where political activism for democracy surged when a conservative reform to Hong Kong's electoral system was announced by the mainland Chinese government in late August 2014. Whereas Hong Kong lacks the tradition of radical protests, the Umbrella Movement enjoyed considerable public support, especially amongst the networked individuals whose everyday activities and social relations are intimately rooted in their new media usages. Drawing on in-depth interviews, online ethnography, and archival research, this research examines how the digitally-enabled individuals, who operated outside social movement organizations and political interest groups, came to engage in and sustain the Umbrella Movement. In particular, by integrating Actor-Network Theory and performance studies into social movement and Internet research, it submits a post-structuralist, practice-oriented approach to study how the individual citizens initiated their political activism, how they came together and acted in concert throughout the seventy-nine days, and how their movement involvement interacted with their everyday routines and relations, facilitated by the use of social media and digital technologies.

Throughout this research, I contend that the digitally-enabled individuals' networked activism emerged and evolved as on-going processes of socio-material assemblages, in which the people's activist identity and political action arose within sets of situated, social-technological practices. This research has significant implications for the study of contemporary networked social movements. First, moving away from the common focus on the technical capacity of new media technology, it proposes the concept of hybrid contentious practices to look at how networked activists combine and switch between on- and offline spheres of action, as opposed to the general role of the Internet and its unidirectional impact on collective action. Second, this research orients our attention toward the larger historical-material contexts of and immediate encounters in protest movements, through which the individuals' political subjectivity and activity develop and alter. Lastly, this research transcends the long-standing scholarly divide by showing how people's contentious-political identity and action are simultaneously and mutually constitutive in the unfolding processes of performative doing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

Digitally-Enabled Individuals and the Umbrella Movement

As the first rounds of tear gas exploded in Admiralty, a Hong Kong district better known for its soaring bank buildings and glittering malls, demonstrators armed with nothing but umbrellas and other makeshift defenses – raincoats, lab glasses, ski goggles, milk plastic wrap – defied the fumes and surged forward. The protests, drawing tens of thousands of people from all walks of life, were galvanized by mounting anger over Beijing's decision in late August [2014] to deny locals the right to freely elect Hong Kong's top leader. (*Times*, 2014a)

The experience of the protest is immediate. … I looked to my left as I walked westward on the eastbound lane of Gloucester Road alongside people whom I had never met and faces I cannot recall. I looked to my right into the Government Headquarters plaza and saw more faces I cannot recall … The experience of the protest is mediated. Social media has been the most powerful tool of communication and diverse news source at the moment. Rumors too fly through the ether, including manipulated images of the People's Liberation Army advancing into town … As I look into the screen, onto a back-lit surface on which we swipe out fingers to sift through not only images and text, but also information, knowledge, and emotion. (Wong, 2014)

So much energy has gone into figuring out how to get the protesters off the streets – endless talk about talking with the government, in addition to the actual talking – rather than figuring out how to turn this movement into practical policy that Beijing might consider … Even for Hong Kong residents who support the students' ideals, the lengthy shutdown of major roads and neighborhoods is a significant inconvenience. (*Time*s, 2014b)

The snapshots mentioned above exemplify digitally-enabled individuals' active engagement in the movement for democracy in Hong Kong. They are yet another example of thriving "networked social movements" (Castells, 2012) characterized by loosely connected individual activists and their self-joining efforts. Whereas social movement organizations (SMOs), particularly those adapted to new media environments, still function as important mobilizing agents in mobilizing and coordinating collective action (Bimber et al., 2012; Chadwick, 2007), individual citizens in many relatively advanced societies have constituted themselves as collective actors in experimenting with new information and communication technologies (ICTs).

This in turn leads to the reconfiguration of contentious politics as it is typified by personalized commitments based on ad hoc political actions, rather than traditional organizations and elites mobilizing their standing cadres of supporters (Bennett, 2012; Shirky, 2008). Today, there emerges a growing population of "networked individuals" (Rainie and Wellman, 2012), who become involved in contentious politics around a wide range of agendas and causes. Sometimes with civic and political organizations playing an enabling role, they connect and interact between cyber-space and urban space facilitated by social networking sites (SNSs) and mobile Internet technologies (Castells, 2012; Penney and Dadas, 2014). Rather than a single, top-down movement campaign, a contemporary social movement like the Umbrella Movement should thus be seen as a series of contentious performances by which ordinary people with diverse motivations and contingent commitments make collective claims (Tilly, 2004; Melucci, 1989; 1996a; 1996b).

Yet, while digitally-enabled individuals have been considered at the forefront of the current wave of social movements worldwide, there has been a lack of research on the process by which they come to undertake collective action. This is rather surprising since their movement involvement and its political significance have been widely noted in a large body of work (e.g. Bennett, 2012; Castells, 2012; Gerbaudo, 2012; Juris, 2012; Lim, 2012; Shirky, 2011). As the aforementioned snapshots also suggest, digitally-enabled individuals play crucial roles in the emergence, the persistence, as well as the decline of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement. To date, however, adequate theoretical reflections and comprehensive empirical studies on how these people come to engage in contentious politics have not appeared. While conventional social movement and Internet research stresses the technical capacity of the Internet for recruiting individuals into protest movements discussing its impact from the perspective of SMOs and leaders (see Dahlgren, 2009; van de Donk et al., 2004 for a critique), flourishing new media studies on this topic focus on the potential of SNSs for enabling movement diffusion through computer-mediated personal networks (e.g. Castells, 2009; Bennett et al., 2008; Walgrave et al., 2011) or individual users' virtual activities (e.g. Bennett and Segerberg, 2014; Bimber et al., 2005; Earl and Kimport, 2011). By privileging the Internet as the unifying power behind recent movement protests, these strands of extant literature tend to explain diverse networked activisms with commonly shared languages and vocabularies of digital networks (Shah, 2013). As such, they assign a particular kind of agency to social media and other new ICTs for generating

seemingly autonomous subjectivities (Markham, 2014), and thus take for granted the social processes that lie behind and around networked activism (Couldry, 2015). Only recently have some scholars in the field attempt to push back these assumptions. We have yet to appreciate fully how citizens today variously engage with new ICTs in coming to political activism in order to reveal the new conditions of collective action and the potentials for social change therein.

In this dissertation, I examine how digitally-enabled individuals, who operate outside SMOs and political interest groups, came to engage in and sustain the Umbrella Movement. Hong Kong's "Umbrella Movement," named after a seventy-nine-day, large-scale occupation protest for democracy that the protesters undertook, was triggered by the decision by the mainland Chinese government in late August 2014 that candidates for the post of Hong Kong's chief executive should be selected by a committee stacked with Communist Party supporters (*The Economist*, 2014). Meanwhile, while the movement manifested the contestation of authority with interactions between Hong Kong citizens and the government backed by Beijing, it also captured the deep frustration of Hong Kong people with the so-called "post-1997 governance crises" (Ma, 2007) including but not limited to the rising economic inequality and inflation, soaring rents and housing prices, and the failing attempt to impose the Basic Law Article 23.

In this research, I focus on individuals' paths to networked activism, here intended as a wide range of politically-oriented activities collectively performed by the networked activists with the end goal of achieving democratic political change. Guided by critical ethnography (Madison, 2012), I reconstruct the lived experiences and actual encounters that moved the citizens to take part in the democracy movement – how they initiated and enacted their networked activism, how they comprised critical publics and acted in concert for democracy, and how their movement involvement influenced their own and other people's civic-political consciousness and everyday behaviors beyond the movement field. Rather than falling into the totalizing rhetoric of digital networks as the determining organizational and communication structure, my focus on the activists' situated stories allows me to recognize the digitally-enabled individuals as active political and moral subjects at the intersections of biography, society, technology, history, and culture (Denzin, 2010; Escobar, 2008).

Throughout this dissertation, I argue that the networked activism of digitally-enabled activists emerged as socio-material assemblages – that is, the articulations or enactments of

networked activism amongst a set of social and material agents through embodied, social-technological practices in specific historical moments. This argument highlights the importance of considering contemporary activist identity and political action not as the results of static individual attributes or collective autonomy granted by new ICTs as it is often deemed, but as intense instances of dynamic, on-going processes that unfold in what I call the "hybrid contentious practices" of networked activists (as introduced in the next section). This post-structuralist, practice-oriented approach thus integrates actor-network theory (ANT) (Latour, 1999; 2005; Pickering, 1993; 1995; 2010) and performance studies (Butler, 1993; 1997; 2004; Conquergood 1982a; 1982b; 1983; 1986a; 1986b) into social movement and Internet research. As a general theory, ANT offers a relational and contingent ontology, in which human as well as nonhuman "mediators" (such as technology, values, disciplined practices, and human beings) co-create each other within particular semiotic-material (or social-technological) practices (Latour, 1999; 2005). As such, agency derives from the "dance" between the humans and nonhumans (Pickering, 1995), rather than any primordial node(s). In this view, the networked activism of Hong Kong people would not be considered as a direct outcome of digital networks or a linear consequence of the networked individuals' "agency" or collective "wills" separate from local struggles and power structures, but as a series of "performative engagements" (re-)constituted by both human/social and nonhuman/material constituencies in action (Pickering, 2010).

Moreover, while the digitally-enabled individuals constantly and variously "mangled" with the environment and technology (Pickering, 1993; 1995) in coming to political activism, their lived experiences and actual encounters in the occupation protest profoundly influenced whether and how they (further) engaged in the Umbrella Movement and other related civic-political activities. In this regard, Butler (1993) and Conquergood's (1982a; 1982b; 1983) notion of performativity is particularly useful and relevant, as it highlights the importance of embodiment in human experience within everyday spaces of meaning and action. Above all, it recognizes the embodied practices (or performances) of individual activists as simultaneously constituting the emotion, identity, and action in as well as for their activism within particular historical events (Butler, 1997; Conquergood, 1983; 1986a). Therefore, as demonstrated in the latter chapters, the networked activism of Hong Kong people arose and evolved in dialogue with the people's concrete embodied experiences through immediate social-technological practices that made their political actions and intervention possible.

This argument of the dissertation revolves around two sets of parallel concerns. First, there are my academic concerns about the usefulness of existing theory in conceptualizing the emerging reality of networked activism, particularly regarding the relationship between people's common digital media usages and their participation in contentious politics. Second, there are my practical concerns about the ramifications of Umbrella Movement for the digitally-enabled individuals, especially in terms of their civic and political engagement outside the movement field and in the long-term. In the next section, I further the discussion of these scholarly and practical concerns by elucidating the mainstream frameworks on these topics as well as their limitations. I then explain my attempts to provide a more nuanced understanding of networked activism moving beyond the dominant discourses.

Networked Activism beyond Digital Network Structures

How do individual citizens come to engage in contemporary networked activism? And how should we conceptualize the places of social media and digital networks in these processes? Scholars of social movement and Internet studies typically address these questions in one of three different ways. The standard approach is to examine the role of social media and digital networks under the rubric of social affordance or social capital theory (Putnam, 2000), in which scholars commonly argue that the use of Internet can reduce time constraints and communication costs, thus enabling individuals to stay in touch with more people and more diverse causes for civic-political participation (e.g. Bimber, 1999; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2010). Applying this perspective to social movements studies, scholars have similarly submitted that Internet usages can enhance individuals' engagement in social movements by permitting them to connect to more information streams, and to deal with more interpersonal contacts (e.g. Arge, 2004; Gil de Zúñiga, 2012;). Within this paradigm, the Internet is then seen as possessing mobilizing potential in the sense that it can transform collective action by the influx of new actors who would not normally be part of the movement (e.g. Bennett et al., 2008; Walgrave, 2011). As such, this literature adopts a "liberal-consumer model of politics" (Dahlberg and Siaperas, 2007: 3), whereby new media users are understood and described as ego-centric persons "who seek to maximize their social capital and to actively maintain their social networks through technological possibilities … whether he or she is engaged in organizing or participating in collective action for a political cause" (Willson, 2012: 283-284).

Another way to conceptualize the role of digital media in contentious politics is to see the Internet as constituting a globalizing "network society" (Castells, 1996; 2001), in which the space of flows supported by new ICT infrastructures has become a privileged mode of social organization that has affected every layer of society including social movements in the space of places (Castells, 1996: 415-429). Building on this argument, more recently, Castells (2009) goes so far to argue that social media and digital networks have now offered a form of "mass self-communication," wherein individuals acquire a kind of new creative autonomy to connect to wider movements so that significant political transformations and social change can take place. Similarly, Hardt and Hegri (2004) propose the notion of "multitude" to describe a historical emergence of singularities – differentiated persons who are singularly different but who also share some, at times fluid, communities based on commonly recognized human characteristics, needs, and desires – that enable the "common people" to be identified, engaged with, and enacted politically. Albeit easily dissolved and often ephemeral, such democratic possibilities also rely upon the affordance of global communication systems and configurations that bring the "multitude" – as differentiated from publics, masses, or the individual – into being. As such, these two types of network theory commonly consider contemporary political engagement and movement involvement in terms of creative individuals and their individualistic autonomy granted by new ICTs structures.

In line with these arguments that tend to emphasize media technology infrastructures, a third approach contends that nowadays the traditional logic of collective action is being progressively overtaken by the logic of "connective action" that "does not require […] the symbolic construction of a united 'we'" (Bennett and Segerberg, 2013: 748) for political activism to take place. That is to say, (the formation of) collective action toward a common endeavor becomes "less constrained by the act of working with others towards a common purpose … [but] naturally emerges when large numbers of people do roughly the same thing" (Markham, 2014: 93). Similarly, other scholars also sharply distinguish "logics of aggregation" from "logics of networks" (Juris, 2012), and assert that the Internet has enabled the gathering of (political) actions that come together more or less spontaneously (Bimber et al., 2005; Shirky, 2008). In these views, traditional forms of collective action are increasingly replaced by a vast scale of personal, voluntarily contributed informational goods for public use through the creation of Web content. In turn, these new types of collective (or "connective") action tend to display a

diversity of logics and dynamics that are illustrated by variations in the motivations of people who are involved (Bennett and Segerberg, 2013; Flanagin et al., 2006). The thrid approach thus assumes that collective identity did not constitute any more a central or necessary part of protest movements.

Whereas the three dominant paradigms may be insightful to a certain extent, they commonly prioritize Internet-related individual agency over the social realities and historical events in which they are embedded. While the social capital/affordance paradigm focuses on digital networks as tool or instrument for activating contentious politics, the network society/multitude and connective action approaches take them as an organizing logic or, at least, enabling environment for mobilizing and coordinating social movements. In these mainstream frameworks, social and historical contexts are considered merely as a supplement rather than a necessary constituency to explain how people come to and make sense of their political activism (Couldry, 2015). As such, questions of specificity, context, and historicity are no longer relevant in networked activism which can now be understood outside of both temporality and geography (Shah, 2013). That is to say, popular approaches to the study of networked activism tend to assume social media and digital networks already as "the common" conditions of networked activism, and neglect the vital process of being *in*-common through/with new ICTs (Willson, 2012). By erasing local (action) contexts, they thus run the risk of reducing social movements to their infrastructures (Melucci, 1996a; 1996b), and blind us from seeing "how those potentially involved in contentious-political actions are daily negotiating the material consequences of network logics" (Couldry, 2015: 622). Indeed, we need to "account for the historical and cultural configurations of protest activities that ultimately shape the content and meaning of social media activism" (Gerbaudo and Treré, 2015: 870). Such an investigation would allow us to move beyond the techno-determinist "urge to derive the logics of political action from the structure of the medium" (Bakardjieva, 2015: 989) and reasserts a substantive account of people's lived experiences and actual practices, as well as the collective dimension of contentious politics.

Therefore, the task here is to (re-)investigate the long-term contexts as well as the immediate conditions that constitute and sustain individuals' networked activism. Toward this end, ANT provides a useful ontology to understand networked activism, one which "does not wish to add social networks to social theory but to rebuild social theory out of network" (Latour,

7

1997: 1). As Latour contends, the social should not be perceived as a structured reality that can be studied and analyzed as such, but needs to be understood as "a very peculiar movement of re-association and re-assembling" and "a complex interconnection between human and non-human agents" (Latour, 2005: 7). This alternative emphasis invites us to consider networked activism in relational and contingent, rather than structural and law-driven, at the level of concrete agents and specific situations. It provides an alternative approach to the study of networked activism, taking into account unlimited number of factors – social, cultural, and political – that interact or combine to create new conditions for radical citizen action. By deconstructing the presupposed idea of social media and digital networks being the explanatory factor embedded in much of previous scholarships, it offers a way to envision networked activism not as a conclusion, but as a starting point for considering how exactly it functions within particular material and semiotic practices (Latour, 1999; 2005). As such, ANT helps shift the common focus on the networked individuals as the all-autonomic actor or ICTs as the all-powerful network to one that considers the process of encounters and engagements between individual activists, new media technology, and emergent protest events as actor-networks. From this perspective, the networked activism of digitally-enabled individuals is less about the already articulated digital networks. Rather, they are fundamentally about the socio-material practices of networking, continuously shaped by the contingencies of culture, time, and place (Pickering, 1995). As such, we shall interrogate how the activists' paths to/of networked get formed activism as actor-networks, how they are made to hold themselves together, and how they change or fall apart over time.

While ANT helps decenter social media and digital networks as the universal mobilizing and organizing structure, performative studies help recenter the actual encounters and embodied experiences through which digitally-enabled individuals construct their activist identities and political actions. In particular, Butler (1993) and Conquergood's (1982a; 1982b; 1983) notion of performativity emphasizes the embedded character of human experience, meaning, and action in the day-to-day encounters with other people and the world. Its emphasis on the embodied experiences in direct action shifts focus from collective action frames (c.f. Bennett and Segerberg, 2011; Snow et al., 1986; Tarrow, 1994), identity narratives (c.f. Maxwell, 2002; Pratt, 2003), dissident knowledge and cognition (c.f. Eyerman and Jamison, 1991; 1998; Hossenini, 2010), and activist identification and meaning (c.f. Melucci, 1996a; 1996b) to the specificity of performative doing in concrete everyday reality. This approach thus echoes Arendt's (1958;

1961; 1962) hermeneutic phenomenology which brings to the fore the consideration of how actual "lived experience" (Thompson, 1978; Williams, 1962; see Scannell, 2015) is to be important and relevant in the study of networked activism, as opposed to abstract, rational judgment. To be sure, people's networked activism is often coupled with rational judgments; but as shown throughout this dissertation what most defines the digitally-enabled individual' paths of activism is a constant engagement with the everyday reality grounded in their embodied experiences of the occupation protest in both cyber- and physical spaces. In other words, digitally-enabled individuals did not merely act as detached contributors to public debates on the Internet as some social movement and new media scholars portrayed, but rather arose and evolved as "history in persons" that they are "socially and historically positioned persons [who] construct their subjectivities in practice" (Holland et al., 1998: 32, cited in Escobar, 2008: 217). Therefore, in contrast to the popular conceptualization of the Internet as yet another (online) public sphere allowing for unconstrained deliberation, I contend and show in this research that networked activism precisely requires immersion in the embodied experiences of particular local struggles and constrains in order to be actualized.

To better understand these embodied, socio-material assembling processes of networked activism, I propose the concept of "hybrid contentious practices" as an analytical tool.[1] Going beyond the unidirectional impact of new ICTs on individuals' contentious-political participation, this concept stresses the fact that social and other new media usages in protest movements are often entangled with and in turn shaped by emergent contentious-political encounters and diverse social relations on the ground. It highlights the necessity of considering the substantial interplay between digital media activism and street protests in contemporary social movements. Moving away from the common focus on the technical capacities of ICTs (see Garrett, 2006 for a critique), it refocuses our attention towards the social-technological practices through which networked activists combine and switch between on- and offline contentious activities in transforming social media and mobile Internet devices into their "material agency" (Leonardi, 2012: 37). Besides acknowledging the simultaneous presence and constant intertwinement of on- and offline dynamics and of social and technological agents in contemporary social movements, the concept of hybrid contentious practices, as informed by performance studies, also points to

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[1] Rather than a universal category, this concept manifests the epistemological stance of this research, which seeks to integrate ANT and performance studies into social movement and Internet research.

the social-technological practice as a contextualized and situated process of performative doing. This understanding enables me to focus on how individuals come to networked activism as immediately present, thrown not just into a diagram of interchangeable nodes and transactions as some ANT studies would otherwise assert, but a historical one, full of lived experiences and situated encounters in engaging with humans/others and nonhumans/the world alike.

Lastly, particularly drawing on Conquergood, the concept of hybrid contentious practices recognizes the online-offline practices (or performances) as constituting people's activist identity and political action at the same time. As Voloshinov, (1973) points out, "there is no such thing as experience outside of embodiment in signs … It is not experience that organizes expression, but the other way around – *expression organizes experience*. Expression is what first gives experience its form and specificity of direction" (Voloshinov, 1973, p.85, emphasis in the original). That is to say, performative doing is not simply based on once lived experiences as if it is merely an expression derived the meaning "squeezed out" of past events (c.f. Turner 1982a; 1982b). Rather, it is precisely the "performance that realizes the experience" in the presence (Conquergood, 1986a: 36-37). In this view, activists (in being) make sense of their networked activism (in knowing) as much as undertake it (in doing). This understanding helps transcend the long-standing scholarly divide in the social movement literature between idea and behavior (see Maxwell, 2002), identity and action (see Melucci, 1996a; 1996b), as it considers performative doing as simultaneously a way of being, knowing, and acting. To be sure, individual activists came to networked activism with their own histories and concerns. However, without obeying a single logic, root cause, or feeling, they converged around a "performance of possibilities" (Madison, 2012; 191) through the acts of engaging with others and encountering the world when carrying out diverse online-offline practices. Such engagements and encounters, while providing the "situation" (Butler, 2004) that locates the actors in particular time and space as well as culturally and socially, are nonetheless reciprocally and constantly (re-)defined by the activists (as performers) simultaneously as a way of being in and knowing the world (Conquergood, 1982a; 1982b; 1986a). Therefore, instead of pre-given entities or an explicit set of decisions/emotions, individual activists should be understood as creators of their own history in action (see Touraine, 1984; Melucci, 1989).

Indeed, hybrid contentious practices, when collectively undertaken or performed, are turned into "hybrid movement repertoires." Following Tilly (1986; 1995), I understand "repertoires of contention" as social movement strategies and collective action practices employed by movement actors to achieve broader movement goals. As Tilly originally points out, as "a limited set of routines that are learned, shared and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice" (Tilly, 1995: 26), they can enable as much as constrain collective action, depending upon the socio-political circumstances in which they are played out (Tilly, 2004). Similar to the discussion on hybrid contentious practices, activists' collective identities are formed in (collective) action through the (collective) work of evoking, improvising, appropriating, and refusing participation in these online-offline movement repertoires (see also Escobar, 2008; Melucci, 1996a; 1996b). Again, following my argument above, this is not because these hybrid movement repertoires consist of some ready-made ideologies or common feelings to be absorbed by individuals as such, but because through the negotiation, production, and undertaking of these online-offline repertoires people found themselves collectively involved in the continuous construction of a shared identity of the group (Fenton and Barassi, 2011). By the same token, these collective identities are, more or less, stable and durable not because individual activists own and share essential or primal identities, but because of the multiple action contexts and broader struggles (Escobar, 2008), in which the activists constantly (re-)created (partially) common embodied experiences within these movement repertoires. As such, collective identities are not likely to be focused on identifications *about* these hybrid movement repertoires per se in terms of their corresponding ideologies or rationales, but rather on the shared "experiences-in-common" (Scannell, 2015) that arose *in* these collectively performed online-offline practices. Therefore, I argue, instead of a set of "rituals" or "cultures" that foreground the identity to be shared or learnt by people, (the processes of negotiating and undertaking) hybrid movement repertoires provide the overlapping contexts or opportunities of exposure, in which activists enact (partially) common (yet individually unique) embodied experiences in coming to political activism. This conceptualization thus offer insights into the social processes of networked activism, as it addresses the question of how participating in networked activism brings people together and/or separates them in collective action, and explains simultaneously its personal as well as collective dimensions.

Yet, engaging with other people and encountering the world across online-offline practices and repertoires are not simply acts of freedom but rather inflected by the unequal distribution of power and privilege. Even amongst networked activists themselves, for instance, more powerful or privileged actors may impose constraints on other people's activist acts and suppress their minority voices (Fenton and Barassi, 2011; see also Melucci, 1996a), ironically often through the selective institutionalization of the same hybrid movement repertoires within or across activist groups. Indeed, ANT and other Foucaultian approaches have been criticized for neglecting the relatively stable macro-structures and power actors, may those be social media corporations (van Dijck, 2013), transnational institutions (Gille, 2012), or the state (Bayat, 2013). In the case of social movements, suppressing forces derived from existing social and political institutions such as police violence, family tensions, pressure at the workplace, and conflicts within and amongst activist groups may all come to shape the individual activists' identity and action along the course of their networked activism. Thus, we need to be sensitive not only to the transgressive action of digitally-enabled individuals, but also to the generators of the limitations or constriants of their structural positions and social statuses within the protest movement and how they intersected with the individual's path to/of networked activism. This is particularly important because to neglect such conflicts and other tensions is to assume a generativeness of performative practices and ignores all the other generative structures both inside and outside the movement field (Markham, 2014). However, this does not mean that we shall then examine exclusively, for example, how the nuclear family structure or state oppression conditions people's networked activism characterizing it as yet another extrinsic actor. Rather, we shall focus on the digitally-enabled individuals' actual relationships and interactions with these institutions and forces, as explained further in the next section.

Critical Ethnography as Methodological and Epistemological Orientation

This dissertation sets out to investigate how digitally-enabled individuals became involved in and sustained the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong. Unlike much positivist research that seeks to generalize the "common conditions" of networked activism or the "objective attributes" of digitally-enabled individuals, this research aims to reconstruct the actual practices and lived experiences that moved the people to engage in the networked activism. By recognizing the digitally-enabled individuals as active moral and political subjects, it means to examine the

movement for democracy from the alternative perspective of the networked activists who struggled for social justice and human dignity in advocating for democracy within their own structural locations and local histories. For this reason, I adopt critical ethnography in my methods.

Critical ethnography provides an epistemological ground that calls for "an ethical responsibility to address processes of unfairness or injustice within a particular lived domain" (Madison, 2012: 5). This "activism stance" encourages the ethnographer to "take a clear position in intervening on hegemonic practices and serves as an advocate in exposing the material effects of marginalized locations while offering alternatives" (Madison, 2012: 7). Methodologically, it means "to present and represent subjects as made by and makers of meaning, symbol, and history in their full sensory and social dimensions" (Madison, 2012: 191). By acknowledging the plurality of meanings and actions (Denzin, 2010: 24-25) within concrete movement field(s), such an interpretive approach thus helps challenge the extant social movement literature and new media literatures which tend to erase local action contexts and look at social movements as static and homogenous in the abstract (see Melucci, 1996a for a critique). In this research, I undertake this activism stance by attempting to break through the popular scholarly and media portrayal of the digitally-enabled individuals as either ego-centric or technology-driven, as discussed in previous sections. Throughout this dissertation, I argue for the necessity and usefulness to grasp the historical totality of the various ways in which historical-material processes and the activists' mediation (or "translation" in ANT's vocabularies) of these processes mingled in specific social-technological practices (or "performative doing" in performance studies' language). This core argument is supported and illustrated by the personal stories of the networked activists that focus on their hybrid contentious practices/repertoires and embodied experiences, as demonstrated in the substantive chapters that follow.

Moreover, while this dissertation depicts the networked activism of digitally-enabled individuals through their personal stories, it is at the same time about offering a nuanced understanding of the historical-material contexts in which the Umbrella Movement took place. Indeed, "the expressive and consequential force of an act cannot be experienced or understood apart from the *scene* of its enactment" (Conquergood, 1983: 31, emphasis in the original). Rather than making an independent ego-centric, cost-benefit decision, movement involvement is

enacted (or performed) because the immediate historical events forge a link, for the individual citizens, between their networked activism and a wide range of ethical commitments (Escobar, 2008). However, while activists' (collective) identity and (collective) action emerge through an active (collective) encounter with the social world, they cannot be reduced to such general conditions for the reason that they constantly "involve … [the acts of] selective incorporation of elements, and the concomitant exclusion or marginalization of others" (Escobar, 2008: 203; see also Melucci, 1996b). Therefore, rather than people's isolated movement engagement on the one side and the movement's general conditions on the other, this research is ultimately concerned with at the intersections of biography, history, and social structure (Denzin, 2010) that enacted the activist's networked activism, and how power and culture are negotiated at these intersections (Madison, 2012) to produce activist identities and political actions at particular historical moments. This ontology of critical ethnography, I argue, also echoes the one of ANT (and performance studies) which seeks to transcend the micro-macro dichotomy in "bypassing the distinction between social structure and agency" (Barry and Slater, 2002: 178). From this perspective, the task of this research is then to interrogate how these intersections were experienced and put into (political) actions at each point of engagement and encounter, and how they shape the individuals' further movement involvement and/or future civic-political participation. Importantly, the investigation of such engagements or encounters should not be restricted to the (social media) communication amongst movement actors as new media studies tend to do, but also extended to their embodied, social-technological practices that involved both human and nonhuman agents, as ANT and performance studies would suggest.

In the view of critical ethnography, research should not be restricted to any specific method. Rather, it should be a combination of a range of methods and techniques used for gathering and interpreting empirical materials. Specifically, this research is based on the personal narratives derived from in-depth interviews with thirty digitally-enabled individuals, observations on their on- and offline contentious activities, as well as archival research on the historical processes of the Umbrella Movement. Indeed, if the aim is to understand how digitally-enabled individuals came to engage in networked activism and how their activism evolved through different phases, it is not enough to only study their personal narratives. This would mean to prioritize their interpretation of their networked activism over their actual networked activism. Rather, we need to apprehend how what they thought what they did co-evolved with what they in fact did.

Particularly drawing on Conquergood, this research thus sees personal narratives and performative doing as interconnected and interdependent. As such, it is an interpretation out of the interpretations (and actions) of the people who took part in the Umbrella Movement. The second-level interpretation is informed by the author's own immersion in the political events as well as archival research. It is a critical ethnography and thus intersubjective in that it invites both the author and readers to travel to the world of the subjects so that we can problematize how we (used to) see them (and ourselves) with new insights (Madison, 2012: 194-195). A more detailed discussion of the sampling and research methods is provided in *Appendix A*, while the profiles of all the informants were presented in *Appendix B*.

The Structure of This Dissertation

This dissertation seeks to offer a nuanced understanding of how digitally-enabled individuals come to engage in and sustain large-scale protest movements using the case of the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong. Illustrating with individual activists' stories, it shows how the networked activism of Hong Kong people arose and evolved in conjunction with, and in some cases, in dialogue with, their social-technological practices and embodied experiences that have been intimately intertwined with their social and digital media usages. As I have argued, this focus on the actual practices and lived experienced of the digitally-enabled individuals is particularly important because it provides an alternative framework to rethink and empirical evidence to contest some of the dominant discourses in social movement and Internet research, as well as other popular assumptions underlying the media portray of networked activists.

To illustrate this overarching argument, this dissertation is organized around the trajectories of the individual activities into the Umbrella Movement. As disclosed earlier, the (various groups of) individual activists comprising the movement went through a series of critical stages, as did the movement as a whole. While each of the following substantive chapters deals with a specific scholarly question or debate that requires critical reflection and reconsideration, they are also devoted to different stages of the Umbrella Movement. Yet, before illustrating such attempts, it is necessary to discuss the historical context and case background of the democracy movement in Hong Kong. Indeed, the Umbrella Movement is deeply rooted in Hong Kong's political history both before and after its handover in 1997. In the next chapter, chapter two, I start with providing an overview of the contemporary history of Hong Kong, with a special focus on its protracted

democratization process. I then turn to the close relationship and interaction between the mainland Chinese government and the development of Hong Kong's democracy movement in the post-colonial era. Lastly, I analyze the role played by different major movement actors in the democracy movement in order to situate the Umbrella Movement in a concrete socio-historical context.

Chapter three then begins with the question of how networked individuals became involved in the democracy movement. In this regard, the extant literature tends to understand the role of social media and digital networks in social movements as instrumental, and views the Internet as a viable and vibrant alternative emphasizing its impact on collective action. In contrast, this chapter highlights the importance of considering networked activism as unfolding processes of embodied, socio-material assemblage within historically situated practices. In particular, I show that the Umbrella Movement took place in an online-offline environment, where individual activists engaged in hybrid contentious practices that paved the way for the development of activist identity and political action through their lived experiences of concrete local struggles. In fact, I argue that the importance of embodiment and historicity is more salient, not less, with the rise of Web 2.0 technologies as the use of mobile devices and related apps encourages and facilitates intensive online-offline interactions bridging the two seemingly divided realms.

Chapter four examines the process by which digitally-enabled individuals came together and sustain the Umbrella Movement. It demonstrates how the networked activists, once involved, related to and acted in concert with each another especially in some of the crucial incidents that shaped the course of the protest movement. Moving beyond the common focus on the communicative and representational aspects of collective identity, this chapter highlights the embodied experience and performative doing of networked activists in developing, negotiation, and practicing hybrid movement repertoires in as well as for collective action. Rather than considering collective action as the product of collective identity, it contends that collective action is itself the site of shared struggle for the construction of activist community. Furthermore, while the individual activists that made up the Umbrella Movement agree on a common goal of achieving a free and democratic Hong Kong, various activist groups differ strongly in their considerations of the most efficient and morally appropriate means to achieve the goal, mainly due to their diverse movement experiences derived from distinct local struggles in different

16

occupied areas. Over time, the movement was structured and divided by these differences into separate or sometimes mutually exclusive occupation communities. Explicating how various hybrid movement repertoires were practiced and/or resisted within and across various activist groups thus helps explain the divergent trends within the Umbrella Movement as well as their immediate contentious-political consequences.

Chapter five addresses the last central question of this dissertation regarding the relationships between networked activism and civic-political participation in everyday spaces of meaning and action. Whereas much of prior scholarship tends to consider social movements as instrumental activities and concentrates on their immediate impacts on social policy, I argue that the alteration of meaning, the struggle to define the situation, and the concrete practices carried out within social movements are all themselves major aspects of social change (Eyerman and Jamison, 1998; see also Melucci, 1989; 1996a; 1996b; Touraine, 1984). Examining the fact that most networked individuals were simultaneously ad hoc activists and morally active citizens in other domains, this chapter explicates the ways movement involvement interacts with people's critical consciousness and everyday behaviors beyond the immediate movement field. Indeed, many digitally-enabled individuals, after/when taking part in the democracy movement, reoriented their words and deeds regarding Hong Kong's politics and society, and reorganized their social relations accordingly in massive and sometimes surprising ways. The process of them becoming and being an activist thus does not stop at the end of/outside the protest movement. Rather, their networked activism, as I have defined in a broader sense, bled out into other aspect of the individual's moral and social life.

Re-telling the individual activists' stories in the Umbrella Movement does not just speak to issues related to the movement for democracy in Hong Kong. The insights derived from such socio-historiography forces us to reconsider some long-standing perspectives in social movement and Internet research, particularly concerning the evolving relationship between digital media and political engagement, the nexus between individual agency and collective action, as well as the changing landscape of and boundaries between contentious politics and everyday life. In the conclusion, chapter six, I discuss these emergent research topics with the empirical materials presented in the previous chapters.

CHAPTER TWO – CASE BACKGROUND

A Brief History of Contemporary Hong Kong and the Movement for Democracy

Hong Kong and Its Protracted Democratization Process

Hong Kong had been a British colony since the Treaty of Nanjing, which was signed in 1842 as a result of the (First) Opium War. However, unlike any other former British colony, Hong Kong did not enjoy the privilege to gain territorial independence at the end of British colonialism in 1997. Indeed, for many Hong Kong people, 1997 was just the year when Hong Kong was transferred from one colonizer to another (Chow, 1998). Hong Kong has thus been a unique case in terms of its decolonization without democratization. These processes, however, were no pure accidents but rather the historical consequences of the power struggle and political compromise between the two powers – Britain and China.

As the communist party took power in China after a long and bloody civil war, which was fought between the Kuomintang (KMT) government and the Communist Party of China (CPC) and ended in 1949, Britain actively considered the introduction of democracy in Hong Kong, as it sought to initialize democratization prior to decolonization in the face of Chinese communism (Sing, 2004). However, as some recently released documents in the British National Archives indicate, the communist government of mainland China, who emerged as the winner of the civil war, threatened to take back the city by force if the democratization process in Hong Kong continued (Ortmann, 2015). Worried about the survival of the colony, the British government eventually abandoned its plan to democratize the colony in 1952.

The question of Hong Kong got brought up again when Mao's rule came to an end in 1976 followed by Deng's rule. Deng, the new supreme leader of mainland China, demanded the return of the New Territories, the largest part of Hong Kong, immediately after its 99-year lease would end in 1997. This demand led to a series of discussions that took place between Britain and China to decide the future of Hong Kong. The end outcome of these discussions turned into what has been known as the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration, in which China was clearly able to dictate most of the conditions, likely due to Britain's sinking international influence and military

18

capacity after the two world wars. At the end, Britain could only hope that a democratic political reform could be ensured to be realized after the handover of Hong Kong, as the Chinese government employed rhetoric in the Joint Declaration to show that it would support the democratization process in Hong Kong in the future.

Yet, the worry about a mainland-style communist government in Hong Kong scared off local elites and resulted in a wave of emigration. In fact, many Hong Kong people initially fled from the Chinese rule to Hong Kong decades ago during the civil war in 1945-1949 and the Culture Revolution in 1966-1976. That being said, after China had opened up its economy and experienced rapid growth under Deng's rule, many people had hoped that China could become more democratic and less problematic. However, the violent crackdown of the Chinese democracy movement in 1989, commonly known as the Tiananmen Square protests or the June Fourth Incident, completely destroyed the people's confidence in the Chinese government and feared for the worst. It thus resulted in another large wave of emigration among Hong Kong people in the early1990s.

The crackdown of the Tiananmen Square protests also led the increasing popularity of the Democratic Party (DP) among Hong Kong people. In 1991, for instance, pan-democratic parties won 15 of 18 seats in the direct elections to the Legislative Council of Hong Kong (Ortmann, 2015). Unsurprisingly, however, the Chinese government worried that a genuine democracy in Hong Kong could both reduce its control over the city and could create a potential model for political reform in China that might ultimately threaten the control of the Communist Party, particularly in the aftermath of the June Fourth Incident. China thus became deeply opposed to modest democratic reforms under Chris Patten, the last governor of Hong Kong, who came to office in 1992 (Ortmann, 2015). Later on, in response, the Chinese government promoted a united front that was supposed to create sufficient support in the District and Legislative Councils of Hong Kong after the handover. As part of this strategy, the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) was founded it 1992. And because the democrats had actively supported the Chinese democracy movement in 1989, they were regarded as an enemy by the Communist Party. As such, even though the Democratic Party (DP) enjoyed widespread support from the Hong Kong public, it was not included in any negotiations of post-handover politics.

The Movement for Democracy in Post-Colonial Hong Kong

After Hong Kong's handover in 1997, the Chinese government reformed the electoral system in order to weaken the pan-democratic camp. As a result, while Hong Kong kept its own executive and legal system under the "one country, two systems" principle, by which it retained a degree of autonomy, the handover of Hong Kong did not provide further impetus for democratization. Conversely, pro-democracy politicians commonly regarded the handover as having signaled a setback in the process of democratization (Chan and So, 2005). For instance, in the colonial period, the British government appointed the Governor of Hong Kong, who in turn appointed local elites to sit in the Legislative and Executive Councils. However, after the handover of Hong Kong, only 40 out of the 70 Legislative Council's members are direct elected, while an 800-member election committee mostly from pro-Beijing quarters is given the task of "electing" the Chief Executive (CE) of Hong Kong.

Initially after the handover, there was guarded optimism about the future development of Hong Kong. Unlike the pessimistic predictions, some Hong Kong people were still accorded with high civil and political liberties in contrast to people on the mainland. Yet, only a few years after the handover, they were seriously threatened in 2003, when the Hong Kong government introduced an anti-subversion law that was to fulfill the requirement of Article 23 of the Basic Law. Because many Hong Kong citizens saw in this vaguely formulated law a threat to the city's basic rights in terms of freedom and liberty, a protest was organized on 1 July that year, on the 6th anniversary of the city's handover, which eventually drew about 500,000 people and became the largest protest in Hong Kong since 1989. The massive turnout successfully led to the suspension of the law, which has not yet been brought back to the agenda. In addition, a year later following yet another massive protest against the Hong Kong government, Tung Chee Hwa, the Chief Executive at that time, resigned. Since then, the 1 July protest has become an annual affair, drawing tens to hundreds of thousands of Hong Kong people to the streets. This has also significantly invigorated the democracy movement, which uses the protests to draw attention to its goals and collect donations from ordinary people (Ortmann, 2015).

But that was so much for the democratic supporters in Hong Kong. In 2004, the Chinese government again demonstrated its opposition to the democratization of Hong Kong when it ruled out the introduction of universal suffrage for electing the Chief Executive before 2012. In

2007, it was finally resolved that universal suffrage should be implemented by 2017. However, instead of giving true universal suffrage, pro-Beijing reformers were only willing to allow Hong Kong people a choice between two or three preselected candidates. While this was based on the Basic Law's requirement for the existence of a nominating committee, it ignored the fact that essentially all Hong Kong people should be able to run for office regardless of their political convictions (Yuen, 2015).

The nomination process soon became the focal point of contention. There were widespread concerns that the nomination process will act as a safety valve to screen out candidates regarded unfavorably by Beijing. Fearing that the election might turn out to be a "fake universal suffrage," democracy supporters argued that they have not only the right to be elected but also the right to be nominated, and therefore they deserve a more democratic and inclusive nomination process. At that time, some of democratic supporters in Hong Kong insisted on the introduction of civic nomination, a mechanism that would allow the public to bypass the nominating committee and directly nominate CE candidates, but which has been immediately rejected by the Chinese government as a contravention of the Basic Law. Others would accept a more democratically formed nominating committee, as long as there was reform on its composition and/or a reasonably lower nomination threshold (Yuen, 2015).

Moreover, within the democracy movement, the role of political parties had decreased over the years. Instead of party politics, mass protests had become the main arena in the fight for greater democracy. The most well-known example for such an organization is the Occupy Central with Love and Peace (Occupy Central), which was founded in January 2013 and is led by academics Professor Benny Yiu-ting Tai, an Associate Professor of law at the University of Hong Kong, Kin-man Chan, an Associate Professor of sociology at Chinese University, and Reverend Yiu-ming Chu. Occupy Central carefully planned its nonviolent disobedience movement with workshops and a detailed manual that was posted online. It proposed a large-scale civil disobedience movement, in which participants would block traffic to petition for universal suffrage in the CE election that would comply with "international standards" (Yuen, 2015). According to its final plan, protesters would stage a peaceful sit-in on a major road in Central, Hong Kong's most important financial district, for two to three days until their orderly

removal and arrest by the police – hence the name "Occupy Central with Love and Peace" to mark the rational and non-violent nature of civil disobedience (Yuen, 2015).

This proposal of Occupy Central was at first welcomed by democracy supporters for its spirit and novelty. Yet, its leaders worried about gaining broad-based support, given the fact that Hong Kong lacked the tradition of civil disobedience. Thus, they were very cautious in calling for the illegal activity; and they carefully code-named their first protest a "banquet" and registered the beginning of their occupation with the government on a public holiday, 1 October 2014, which was the 65th anniversary of the People's Republic of China (PRC) – the Chinese National Day. However, this stood in contrast to students from secondary schools and universities, who were much more aggressive in their position, especially after the success of the 2012 Anti-National Education Movement (ANEM) through Occupy Headquarters led by Scholarism – a student social movement organization (SMO) – and eventually became the driving force of the Umbrella Movement.

8/31 Decision and the Siege of the Government Headquarters

To counter the democracy movement in Hong Kong, on 31 August 2014, the Chinese National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee of the mainland Chinese government issued a "White Paper" as a decision on election reform for setting guidelines for the 2017 CE election in Hong Kong, in which it asserted full control over political development as the central government would have "comprehensive jurisdiction" over the city. By claiming that it would have the final say over any political reforms, Beijing declared that the nominating committee must be formed "in accordance with" the existing 1,200-strong four-sector election committee, which had been criticized for over-representing the interests of Beijing. In addition, perhaps more importantly, according to the "decision," the new committee will only nominate two to three candidates for the final runoff, each of whom must secure support from more than half of the nominating committee members – four times the existing one-eighth threshold. As such, the NPC decision gave new impetus to the waning Occupy Central movement and escalated tensions, as democracy supporters saw the decision as a blatant denial of "genuine universal suffrage," although the Hong Kong government urged lawmakers to accept and "pocket what they have" (Yuen, 2015).

Shortly following the issuing of the "White Paper," secondary and university students in Hong Kong, led by Scholarism and the Hong Kong Federation of Students (HKFS), jointly launched a boycott of classes starting on 22 September against Beijing's decision, while a group of professors and university lecturers held a series of public lectures at three sites near the government headquarters in Admiralty. As the week progressed, students gave an ultimatum to CE, Leung Chun-ying, to meet them and to discuss universal suffrage by 25 September. But because there was no willingness to engage in dialogue, students decided to increase the pressure by climbing over the fence to recover the Civic Square, which had been blocked off following the 2012 ANEM. On 26 September, the students attempted to enter Civic Square. However, as students moved forward, they were met with a tough response from the police, who used pepper spray to repel the students. This in turn mobilized thousands of people to join the protest movement. Only then, the organizers of Occupy Central decided to change its plan and to start early the occupation of streets near the government headquarter on the Sunday morning of 28 September (around 1:45 am). As such, it was not Occupy Central but students who were at the forefront of the movement as they became increasingly unhappy with the government's response to their demands.

On 28 September, the massive rally was met with tear gas and pepper spray, which protesters repelled with their umbrellas, thus giving the movement its name. Once the violence had occurred, many more Hong people joined the movement, upset about the violent response to peaceful protests. As the growing number of people participating in the blockade grew on the Sunday afternoon, the police again used pepper spray and tear gas against the protesters. The violent reaction by the police led to a backlash as it led to a massive increase in the number of protesters who began occupying the streets. Eventually, hundreds of thousands of people blocked major roads and the movement expanded beyond the central district. The occupation protest spread from Admiralty to other major commercial districts in the city including Mongkok and Causeway Bay. As such, the 79-day Umbrella Movement, the largest and longest episode of collective contention in the history of Hong Kong kicked off.

CHAPTER THREE – NETWORKED ACTIVISM
AS SOCIO-MATERIAL ASSEMBLAGES

Chapter Introduction

"Take down this telephone number. Send an SMS if you get arrested." Elsewhere, protesters formed human barriers in key areas to prevent more police from entering. As the night wore on, others stepped forward. A call for water was swiftly met. Those outside the square filled a box with their personal supplies and passed it to protestors inside. People got on their phones to tell their friends to bring food, drink and first aid kits. (Leung and Lee, 2014a)

Before police in riot gear fired rounds of tear gas at unarmed protesters on September 28 [2014], few could have expected that the siege of the government headquarters would turn the scripted Occupy Central into Hong Kong's biggest and most unprecedented pro-democracy movement amidst its electoral reforms (Yuen, 2015).

*But then it happened.*In post, we've watched and re-watched *that* moment, debated and analyzed it over and over again. Did we see it coming? *No. Never.* We'd been following activists involved in Hong Kong's struggle for democracy for months. We'd sat in on discussions about civil disobedience and listened to plans to occupy one street in the business district. But not once did we imagine that hundreds of tents would soon fill the roads below us that traffic would stop flowing on some of Hong Kong's busiest highways for weeks that thousands of demonstrators and riot police would face off again, and again, and again in a frightening flurry of tear gas, batons and pepper spray. We never saw it coming – the spark that would trigger the massive protest the world now knows as the Umbrella Movement. (Leung and Lee, 2014a, emphasis in the original)

How did individual activists initiate and sustain their networked activism for the democracy movement in Hong Kong? And how should we conceptualize the role played by social media and mobile technologies in these processes? Conventional social movement and Internet research, which has been dominated by the resource mobilization theory (RMT) (McCarthy and Zald, 1977) and political opportunity approach (POS) (Tarrow, 1996), tends to emphasize on the cost-effectiveness and organizational function of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the mobilization and organization of protest movements. From these perspectives, the Internet allows social movements to reduce and externalize the costs of mobilization (Della Porta

and Tarrow, 2005; Earl and Kimport, 2011), and helps transcend the organizational forms of social movement organizations (SMOs) by altering their external relationships with actors who are able to contribute to their contentious activities (Bennett and Segerberg, 2012; Bimber, 2003). Similarly, research on transnational network activism and anti-globalization movements considers the Internet as a metaphor of new ways of organizing (Bennett, 2003; Kahn and Kellner, 2004; Van Aelst and Walgrave, 2004), nurturing a "logic of networking" (Juris, 2005; 2008) that favored informal arrangements. By providing the backbone for horizontal networks, new media use is said to accelerate the formations of collective action by facilitating the development of weak ties (Walgrave et al., 2011) and imaged communities (Eaton, 2010) among activists even in the absence of traditional avenues for community development. As such, mainstream understanding of new media technology in social movements tends to adopt an instrumental view on new ICTs, by focusing on their technical capacity and unidirectional impact on collective action.

Another dominant way of conceptualizing the relationship between digital media and contentious politics points to the common inner beliefs and values transmitted through computer networks and shared by digitally-enabled individuals as the key to the explanation of networked activism. Such research is usually based on surveys, trying to identify the political motives and mental processes of networked activists in correspondence to the level and/or types of people's digital media usages. This type of private opinion research tends to suggest that the use of Internet can reduce time constraints and communication costs, and thus allow individual users to be embedded in more diverse social media networks making them more "mobilizable" for different causes. Walgrave et al. (2011), for instance, attempt to demonstrate that protest participants using new digital media are more active in a more diverse range of causes. In the same vein, Bennett et al. (2008) submit that new digital media can magnify the capacities of individuals to engage in diverse political networks, and thus become amplifiers in the scale and speed of protest mobilization. In the case of the Umbrella Movement, lately published studies also adopt this approach to look at the extent to which protester's movement involvement was related to their different types of digital media activities, such as online expression and virtual debates (Lee and Chan, 2016). In line with this argument, albeit from a different perspective, radical scholars explore the ways that social media enable wide-scale, relatively un-coordinated contributions to repositories of resources for networks of activists and interest groups, as social

25

networking site (SNS) applications stress the importance of user participation, openness, and network effects in the processes of content production and sharing. In these views, social media and digital networks extend political action into the realm of the private and the quotidian, resulting in a model of flash mobilization in which collective action is so inexpensive that small time and content investments encourage many atomized individuals to spontaneously take part in contentious politics (Bimber et al., 2005; Flanagan et al., 2006; Shirky, 2009).

While these strands of research might provide some insights into how digital media help mobilize and coordinate protest movements, they tend to treat new ICTs as exogenous forces and separated from the social processes in which they are embedded (see Diani, 2011; Langlois, 2009; Schulz, 2007 for a critique). By perceiving the Internet as a vibrant alternative, they look at networked activism comprised of only one type of node – social media and digital network structures – and at most handful relations among these objects. For instance, while a few studies have examined protest ecologies by tracing the hyperlinks that were shared through Twitter hastages (Poell, 2014; Segerberg and Bennett, 2011), others studies have drawn on content analyses to investigate the action frames and interactive features on the websites and SNSs of activist groups (Bennett and Segerberg, 2011; Theocharis et al., 2014). Yet, most of this work did not expand their understanding of mobilization with social media to include the broader landscape of street protests in which their usages were enacted. These dominant propositions thus resemble each other in their understanding of the online as an autonomous and viable space for contention, largely detached from offline space (Gerbaudo, 2012). Moreover, as this conceptual separation persists, "researchers tend to compare online communication practices and relations to offline networks of individuals and organizations" (Pavan, 2014: 442), as if they were in two polarized spheres of action. Despite few recent attempts, there has been meager research examining how SNSs are adopted by mobilizing agents in alignment with their offline contentious activities, and correspondingly, how their SNS usages are entangled with and constituted by political actions on the ground.

Nowadays, however, new ICTs have become interdependent with a wide swath of offline activities, making it difficult to separate people's interactions with other people from people's interactions with the technologies (Contractor et al., 2011). Particularly in contemporary social movements, they have increasingly intertwined with the overall social relations that underlie the

mobilization and organization of protest events, as people simultaneously employ and switch between on- and offline contentious practices by using mobile devices and related social media apps. Indeed, more recently, diverse studies have gathered to explore the complex relationship between social media activism and street protests. For instance, Penney and Dadas (2014) explore how Twitter was used in conjunction with face-to-face practices. They present a typology to show how protesters integrated (re-)tweeting and offline protest activities in building and sustaining an OWS counterpublic. Lim (2012) also submits to understand the networked movement in Egypt as engendering "a complex sociotechnical system [which] was created not only between social media and the more traditional media, but also between mediated and face-to-face networks" (Lim, 2012: 244). Concurrently, Harlow and Harp (2012) surveyed protesters who employed SNSs to mobilize collective action in Latin America and the US. According to their results, activists commonly perceived and experienced that "offline and online actions must be combined to achieve any sort of real social change" (Harlow and Harp, 2012: 210). Instead of new ICTs standing alone, this growing body of work sheds light on the importance of considering how social media use and physical gathering are mutually constitutive in protest movements. A necessary move is therefore to consider the relationship of digital media to other non-media-related elements of contention, as well as the socio-material (or social-technological) nature of networked activism in the contemporary online-offline environment.

Here, I propose the concept of hybrid contentious practices to understand the process of creating such socio-material assemblages for political intervention and direct action among networked activists. Instead of handling new ICTs as support tools/instruments used by movement actors for strategic mobilization and achieving pre-defined goals, I consider how digitally-enabled individuals' activist identity and action are substantially constructed through their engagement in/with new media technology within real-world situations. This conceptualization of hybrid contentious practices thus distances itself from the dominant discourses that new ICTs may enable different communication processes faster and cheaper, or bring people into more social contacts. Instead, it points at hybrid contentious practices – defined as embodied engagements in/with new media technology in protest movements – as the spaces whereby political subjectivity and contentious activities are enacted and sustained by the constitutive entanglement between diverse human/social and nonhuman/techno-material actors. As Latour (1987; 2005) submits, agency is not an essence that inheres in humans, but a capacity

realized through the associations of actors (whether human or nonhuman), and thus relational, emergent, and shifting. In this view, agency for networked activism is not a "capacity to act" resided in individual activists as a priori. On the contrary, it is "the capacity to act" that is to be discovered and enacted among other social and material agents in a certain way (Cooren et al, 2006: 11). In this view, individual activists' paths to networked activism cannot be simply reduced to the fixed essences of digital media usages apart from broader historical and cultural existence; nor are they the direct result of some external categories in common such as "mediation political opportunities" (Cammaerts, 2012) or SNS-enabled "personalized action frames" (c.f. Bennett, 2012; Bennett and Segerberg, 2011; 2013) that mystically turn digitally-enabled citizens into networked activists. Rather, they unfold as ongoing processes of socio-material assemblages that involve people's constant engagements with digital media as well as other related actors. In contrast to the communication-/media-centric understanding of activist media communication (c.f. Downing, 2008; Carroll and Hackett, 2006), this understanding of hybrid contentious practices thus shifts the research focus from analyzing new ICTs as independent subjects with inherent characteristics for creating deliberative autonomy among digitally-enabled individuals, to examining how they are mangle with other persons and things in the online-offline settings of contemporary social movements.

Besides acknowledging the simultaneous presence and constant intertwinement of on- and offline dynamics and of social and technological agents in protest movements, this focus on the hybrid contentious practices of networked activists orients our attention toward the ways concrete engagements and embodied experiences in/with digital media may result in activist identities and actions *in* as well *as* for collective action. This approach extends the concept of performativity (Conquergood, 1982a; 1982b; 1986a), and understands activist identity and action as unfolding, continual processes of performative doing in which they are simultaneously constitutive. Rather than acquiring the autonomous capacity granted by new ICTs to define one's activist identity for movement participation, it contends that activist identity and action are both the product of people's conscious (yet undetermined) activity and self-reflection at the same time in experiencing and encountering the world. Moreover, examining social and movement experiences in/with new media technology does not adhere merely to cognitive reflection and meaning making as extant social movement and Internet research tends to stress (c.f. Eyerman and Jamison, 1991; 1998; Hossenini, 2010; Melucci, 1996a; 1996b). Increasingly, how people

experience their (activist) lives has been inseparable from digital media that "their ways of knowing are often embodied and sensory rather than always linguistic" (Pink and Mackley, 2013, 682), as digital media have become part of the ways that our experiential dimensions and routines of everyday life are felt and experienced (Keilty, 2016). This emphasis of hybrid contentious practices on our real-world engagement with and its transformation by social media thus reminds us that embodied experiences including those in/with new media technology are always entangled with and shaped by the contingencies of emergent online-offline environments; they are therefore sensitive to immediate local events.

Indeed, for robust political subjectivity and action like the kind of individual activists in the Umbrella Movement to thrive and survive, there must be not just one but a series of "turning points" that continuously enact the people's networked activism. As discussed above, these "turning points" cannot be reduced to merely the socio-economic backgrounds or social media usages of individual activists, nor the (media) political opportunities or new media infrastructures in Hong Kong. Rather, they need to be considered as a range of socio-material assemblages in which political orientations and contentious activities are constantly performed and re-performed, rather than predefined. Yet, not all hybrid contentious practices universally resulted in the "turning points" that enabled movement involvement and continued civic-political engagements. This is not simply due to the emergence of counter repressions or other material constrains, but rather because of the failure to develop "accommodations" in response to such "resistances" in order to "circumvent the obstacles that [s/]he had already encountered" (Pickering, 1993: 569). By the same token, "the resistances that [networked activists] encountered in [her/]his practice only counted as such because [s/]he had some particular ends in view" (Pickering, 1993: 577). That is to say, albeit being influenced by broader social structures such as communication networks and the state, the enactments as well as the disruption of networked activism of individual activists emerge in ongoing, situated practices, in which the institutional forces are themselves "*temporally emergent* in practice" (Pickering, 1993: 564, emphasis in the original). In contrast to abstract institutional constructs and patterns of socio-material imbrication (see Callon, 1987 for a critique), I therefore focus on examining networked activists' localized experiences and actual practices around new ICTs as "performed relations" (Pickering, 1995; Latour, 2005), in order to develop a more complex analysis of how digitally-enabled individuals came to engage in the democracy movement in Hong Kong.

29

In the sections that follow, I demonstrate the ways people's activist identities and contentious activities arose in dialogue with their everyday digital media usages and immediate encounters in the Umbrella Movement. Specifically, I aim to show how the analytical distinctive dimensions of the technological and social, the on- and offline, the conceptual and the embodied reciprocally engaged with and transformed each other, each as emergently productive of one another in particular historical moments. With the networked activists' stories, I thus seek to highlight the multiplicity of these socio-material (or social-technological) elements and explain how they are combined to enact and sustain individuals' political subjectivity and action in practice.

The Ethical Commitments among Networked Activists and Their Evolutions

Few had expected the outbreak of the Umbrella Movement, at least not at this time or in this place. The Umbrella Movement surprised not only the Hong Kong and mainland Chinese governments, but even the leaders and organizers of the Occupy Central with Love and Peace (Occupy Central), which has since January 2013 called for civil disobedience if the government did not allow genuine universal suffrage, and had since late August 2014 (after the National People's Congress's (NPC) of the mainland Chinese government announced an extremely conservative reform proposal) been preparing for a "banquet" (code-named to avoid legal action in advance) hinting that the planned occupation protest would take place on 1 October – a national holiday – which they registered with the police (see chapter two).

However, unlike the scripted Occupy Central movement, the Umbrella Movement eventually took place as a result of a series of unexpected contentious activities triggered by police violence and improvised by networked activists. On the night of 26 September 2014, the last day of a weeklong class boycott cum demonstration in front of the government headquarters to demand the withdrawal of the NPC's decision, dozens of students from two students SMOs – Scholarism and the Hong Kong Federation of Students (HKFS) – and some citizens climbed over the metal barriers and stormed the empty forecourt of the Headquarters by surprise, claiming that the space belonged to the public (see chapter two). While some of them were swiftly arrested by the police, the remaining students were surrounded in the Civic Squire. During the arrest and confrontation, some students were injured and shown with blood on their faces, while others were still trapped in the forecourt overnight. However, this move undertaken by the police

dramatically backfired, as it created a "moral shock" (Jasper, 1997) that helped mobilize the first wave of political activism among individual actors who operated largely outsides SMOs and political interest groups. Within a few hours, a few thousands of angry citizens swamped the government headquarters, demanding the immediate release of the arrested students along with those still being surrounded. As two activist reporters who were there on the ground recalled what happened on that day:

> As news of the storming spread, more and more people started pouring into the area. It was clear not all of them were students. The Umbrella Movement has often been portrayed as a youth-led protest. But on the 26th, we met academics and lawyers, bankers and lifeguards, parents and retirees. They arrived almost as soon as they heard the news. (Leung and Lee, 2014a)

Among all the respondents that I had the chance to talk to, Samantha was among the first wave of individual activists, who headed Occupy Headquarters immediately after they got to know about the arrest of the students. But what initiated her prompt involvement were not the ideals of democracy or freedom that she dearly upheld, but rather her sympathy for the students who were under attack. Although Samantha did prefer a more democratic reform for electing the Chief Execution (CE) of Hong Kong, she did not consider herself an activist for the democracy movement back then. In fact, she did not even agree with the political actions of the two students SMOs there. In her view:

> What the two SMOs decided to do and eventually did put the safety of all the other students at stake and thus at risk. It was supposed to be a calm student demonstration. But when they climbed over the fences trying to enter the Civic Square, they engendered everyone there, who might not have expected and prepared for what was about to come. Some of the students and people might just come for a peaceful and legit sit-in demonstration which had already been registered with the police.

Nonetheless, she went to the government headquarters once she knew about the incident. As she recalled in the interview:

> I knew about the class boycott and the demonstration since 22 September, but the arrest of students including Joshua Wong [one of the most famous leaders of Scholarism back then] struck me and encouraged me to go on the streets. I did feel uncomfortable with the 8/31

decision, because it was unfairly dominated by Chinese government. But what "pushed" me was the students' arrest…

After watching the news about the arrest of students and police violence on TV, multiple friends who were already there called for more people to support the students on Facebook and Whatsapp. They told people to bring water, goggles, and plastic wrap to protect themselves from pepper spray…

That was before the idea that we are having a social movement at all. We just went there to help blockade the police from approaching the government headquarters and prevent the students from police violence… They were just student! A lot of them were still in school uniforms!

Samantha's personal experience was not an exception but rather a recurrent theme in many of the interviews. Sally was another networked activist who went there after watching the news on SNSs and Now TV:[2]

Back then, I did not expect a large-scale protest movement to occur. But I decided to go there after witnessing what the students had been through for just demanding a fair and just electoral reform…

I used to be politically apathetic, just like many common Hong Kong people. I rarely paid attention to [local] politics, and I rarely watched news on [local] politics. To be honest, I didn't quite know the details about the students' concrete demands.

It seems that the end goal among the digitally-enabled individuals at that time was to protect the students who were trapped at the government headquarters in the face of police violence. But more than just about the students, it was also about the people who went there to support the students. Vicky went to the Headquarters because one of her friends was pepper-sprayed when he was trying to defend the students by forming human chains outside the Civic Square to prevent police reinforcement from entering the square. As Vicky explained in the interview:

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[2] As acknowledged by most of the networked activists that I interviewed, Now TV was the only TV station back then "fairly" and extensively reported on the movement. Other mainstream television stations, especially TVB – the largest television station in Hong Kong, were repeatedly accused of adopting a pro-government stance and/or later on even distorting some of the facts on the movement in its news editing.

His personal story posted on Facebook that day about the police violence was what triggered my movement involvement…

Why pepper spray! Why pepper spray! They were just sitting peacefully on the ground, so as those students being trapped in the Civic Squire!

I then paid close attention to their updates on Facebook and Now TV, and then I messaged my friend on Whatsapp to ask about their latest situations. The more I knew from them, the more I decided to go there. Otherwise, they would be beaten by the cruel and brutal policemen…

After joining them, I also became one of them as continously posted about my own activist updates on Facebook – Pepper spray, police batons, what have you…

More friends of mine showed up later. They told me that they had read my Facebook updates before they came.

The important remark in the digitally-enabled individuals' initiations to take part in the Umbrella Movement is that the trajectory of the emergence of their agency for political activism does not have its own pure and autonomous dynamics. This is clearly indicated by the fact that many people went to the Headquarters to support the students only after the incidents during and after students entering the Civic Squares on 26 September, although they had long been well-aware of the school boycott since 22 September as well as the students' advocacy for a genuine democratic reform. Thus, neither the material agency of new ICTs nor the user agency is in itself a sufficient explanation to the people's initial participation in the Umbrella Movement, as they both stand in opposition to the real-world events. A more useful way of thinking about their paths to networked activism is to treat them as a set of performative relations and to interrogate how movement agency, itself and as a whole, was "performed" (Pickering, 1995) or "assembled" (Latour, 2005) within the digitally-enabled individuals' social-technological practices, and shifted over time. By the same token, instead of starting with new media users and examining how they appropriate and exploit new ICTs for predefined ends, we need to examine how people's goals and behaviors are themselves enacted through the recurrent interactions with technology as well as with other social actors.

What is also clear from the activist stories above is that the digitally-enabled individuals' paths to networked activism emerged not as calculative, instrumental-rational decisions as

conventional social movement and Internet research tends to submit, but as "deeply commitments to changing a particular situation" (Escobar, 2008: 203). Such ethical commitments that initiated movement participation were not simply attachments to particular political ideologies or principles predefined prior to the protest movement. Rather, they involved and mainly started as ethical principles, and then evolved along with and within their embodied experiences in protest events, often mediated by social and digital usages. Let's turn to Valarie's story of joining the movement for more:

> After the students got arrest, I was talking to a group of friends on Whatsapp that night; we were the members of the same drama group. About ten of us decided to go there at once. I can't speak for the others. But I wasn't thinking about [local] politics or democracy back then. I had admiration for the students. It wasn't supposed to be their duty to "save" Hong Kong. But they did, at least they tried, and they got beaten up by the police. As adults, we then had the responsibility to go protect them…

> There were even reports on various SNSs saying that the students were not even allowed to go to the bathroom and could only toilet in the open area in front of the policemen and other people. That drove us very angry. The government even deprived them of their basic human rights!

In fact, very few networked activists identified themselves on the basis of an ideological choice, clear-cut political orientation, or political interest groups. This was particularly evident when we consider what happened in front of the government headquarters when Occupy Central was announced to begin. On the early morning of 28 September, around 1:45 am, the beginning of Occupy Central was announced by Professor Benny Tai – the co-founder of Occupy Central – due to the students' unexpected protests activities, which instantly aroused an immense support from the general public. Since Occupy Central kicked off ahead of its proposed schedule, its leaders had to modify their plans and were going to join the protestors instead. This was what happened on that day being witnessed and reported by some activist reporters outside the Civic Square:

> "Can we party together?" He [Prof. Tai] asked.

> There was an immediate backlash.

"We came here to support the students, not Occupy Central!" Someone yelled.

Word went round the site that Tai's group was trying to hijack the students' sit-in. Groups of disgruntled protestors started leaving.

It was then that Long Hair – probably one of Hong Kong's most flamboyant pro-democracy legislators – decided to act. He got on his knees and begged the students to stay, to hold on, to not give up. It was an astonishing move, but Long Hair was only partially successful.

By the morning of the 28th, only a few hundred protestors remained. We thought the sit-in would likely end soon. With so few people left, police could easily retake the site. (Leung and Lee, 2014b)

As such, many of the networked activists did not like the idea that they supported the Occupy Central, because, in their view, they went there mainly and merely for supporting the students. Thus, they would not like to tie themselves to such a fixed political agenda, with which, as shown, many of them were not familiar especially prior to their movement participation. Some of them even took off when they found out that they could be seen as "being manipulated" by some formal organizations, particularly Occupy Central, or political parties. And they (re-)converged only when another round of police violence took place in the afternoon of 28 September, to which, again, they responded in ad hoc, direct hybrid contentious practices, as illustrated in the next section.

Hybrid Contentious Practices as Performative Doing

The unexpected mobilization around the Headquarters forced the leaders of Occupy Central to launch the democracy movement not only ahead of its proposed schedule but also at a different location – that is, Admiralty instead of Central (see chapter two). However, what turned the incident at the Civic Square and Occupy Central into the Umbrella Movement was an even more disturbing event on 28 September 2014. As more protesters flooded the roads outside the government headquarters, not as a result of the call for launching Occupy Central to block the major roads and streets but rather the police blockade so that people could only went through the traffic to order to approach the Headquarters (Leung and Lee, 2014c), police officers in riot gear fired 87 rounds of tear gas in an attempt to dispel the protestors. Instantly, through mobile social media and news media, images of protesters hiding behind umbrellas to protect themselves

against tear gas and pepper spray were widely broadcasted and spread rapidly on SNSs as well as on TV, prompting another and even larger wave of angry crowds to take to the streets (Tang, 2014). Within a few hours, protestors self-armed with goggles, facemasks, and umbrellas inundated Admiralty.

In the early afternoon of that day, Eric was meeting a friend in a local restaurant after work. They happened to talk about what was happing at the Civic Square. His friend suggested going there to take a look. Eric did not want to go because he just had a long day and wanted to take a rest at home. But on his way home, two more friends called him and suggested the same. He then changed his mind and agreed to go, since he would be just staying home anyway. But as he stepped outside the Mass Transit Railway (MTR) station of Central what was about to happen dramatically changed his view and action toward the movement since:[3]

> I was attacked by the tear gas immediately when I stepped outside the MTR station. I thought to myself – What the hell?! Why do you do that to me?! I didn't do anything! I am just standing and watching. I didn't even yell a single slogan, or demanded anything. Why did you shoot the tear gas at me?! – I felt very innocent and angry…

> You know, people are moral animals. It wasn't some clearly articulated [civic-political] desires or economic needs that drove people to take [collective] action…

> But you [the police] were treating me unreasonably. I thought to myself – Judging by the way you treated me, shooting tear gas at me even though I did nothing, how dare you be talking about "justice" and "reasons"? There was no warning, no communication, no nothing. They just suddenly shot at us. Very unreasonable!

> Although I had never involved in contentious politics, what immediated came to me was my discontent towards the Hong Kong government, who, in my opinion, always bully the poor and the weak… I started to think that the government only knows how to bully the common people, and please the rich and powerful…

> If you can shoot [tear gas] at me today, then you can fire at me with a tank tomorrow [referring to the June Forth Indecent in 1989]. I believe that was the sentiment that kept me involved…

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[3] According to the Eric in the interview, at that time, the MTR station of Admiralty was closed, as requested by the Hong Kong police.

That was the first night I slept in Admiralty. The next morning I had to go to work. But I came back almost every day since…

Sunny's story also entails a similar path to networked activism:

I went there as an observer. I just wanted to know what really happened at the government headquarters, instead of just watching news from home. Besides, photography is my hobby. I brought my camera that day expecting to capture some rare moments…

But then my intention started to change, as far as I saw how the peaceful and unarmed protesters were beaten up by the police, and as far as the police started throwing tins of tear gas at me. What I saw was that the police intentionally attacked the protestors instead of solely trying to disperse them…

I went back to Admiralty for a few days in a row, until I shifted my participation to the movement in Mongkok. I also began to take record of other activists' contentious activities and artifacts that I found creative and meaningful, and posted them on Facebook for the people in my circle to get to know better about the spirit of the movement. Sometimes, it provoked online debates among my friends… Fortunately, they didn't turn out too ugly.

Apparently, Eric's and Sunny's goals of participation was reconfigured in their immediate encounters in the streets, which then in turn modified or redefined their relationships to and actions toward the Umbrella Movement by extending and/or intensifying their movement involvements. Rather than predefined action orientations and activist roles, it was their embodied experiences in movement participation that altered their levels and modes of involvement, particularly from distanced observers to more active activists.

Albeit in a different context, Fanny, another networked activist, accounted for how her movement involvement was escalated in similar way in terms of how her modes and levels of engagement shifted:

After taking part in the protest for a couple hours, I was on my way home, but the streets were empty, there was no traffic…

Suddenly, I saw a lot of people ran toward me, telling me to leave. They told me that the police fired tear gas and that they might be about to open fire…

37

I didn't believe them. Tear gas? That never happened in Hong Kong before. We only saw that on movies or in the news about other countries…

Then, they [the police] arrived and threw tins of tear gas at us. After that, they charged toward us. But we didn't do anything [aggressive]! I mean most of us didn't even know what to do. So we could just run around to escape from tear gas and the police…

I used my iPhone to take pictures of the police. I instantly uploaded them on Facebook so that other people would know and could avoid them. But for the most part, I think I just wanted to express my anger by showing what they did to us…

Since that day, despite my family's objection, I kept going to attend the protest movement every day for more than two months until the last day – the day of clearance [in Admiralty].

Simon was also among the wave of protesters that stormed Admiralty right before the firing of tear gas. Like many other people's stories we have just heard, he initially sought to support the students and their supporters as he thought that the government would back off if there would be enough people taking in the streets. In the interview, he admitted that he did not know much about the plan of Occupy Central or the school boycott; nor did he try to find out. But his intention and practices transformed in the movement that, again, it has to be understood in relation to his immediate social-technological practices and embodied experiences on 28 September.

At there, we worked with strangers that were around us. We shouted slogans together and we helped transport water bottles to the front. Suddenly the police hoisted the "orange flags" signaling officers to advance on the protesters if they did not move back. Then, it came the tear gas. I had to wash my face, and we kept moving back and forth…

We were being "peaceful, rational, and non-violent" [referring to one of the slogans of Occupy Central] at all time, but they [the Hong Kong Police] turned irrational and violent! So it made and kept us fighting. We must fight back because we were being attack. We then tried to retake the streets…

My girlfriend who stayed at home was operating on SNSs with me. Whenever she found the police fired a round of tear gas, she would immediately call me so that I could evacuate from that areea…

And then, what got my attention and got on my nerves was a photo with captions sent to me via Whatsapp. This picture indicated that the police might plan to surround the protestors by coming through from the MTR station. So as soon as this news was spread on the mobile social media, a large number of people went to seal off the exits of the MTR station. I think it was successful because the police did not show up. I think they eventually gave up the plan…

Soon thereafter, there was another message spread on Facebook saying that the police was preparing to approach from one of the bridge connecting Admiralty and Central. We rushed to the bridge to confront the police… Then there was another round of tear gas fired at us…

We tried to use random metal barriers in the streets in order to stop and drag the police…

After that day, I went to occupation almost every day, and often stayed there overnight.

In the case of Simon, it is clear that his intended goal in relation to the Umbrella Movement, although relatively stable at a particular point of time, was not always fixed but evolved along with and was transformed by his social-technological practices in response to the contingent protest situations. Such transformation in his activist identity and action was chiefly an outcome of the process of "resistance and accommodation" (Pickering, 1993) in engaging with real-world conflicts often by using social media and mobile devise. The movement agency for Simon's networked activism was thus constructed within a set of hybrid contentious practices that were constantly created and developed in correspondence to and during immediate protest situations.

Essentially, much of what the networked activists eventually did that was facilitated by new media technology at this early stage of the movement has to be understood as tentative steps in response to the unfolding protest events that they found themselves were in. More than being articulated through a focused discourse of democracy or by institutionalized form of organization, these hybrid contentious practices were advanced by digitally-enabled individuals through ad hoc, mundane strategies of innovating and changing new media-related protest activities. Moreover, not only were the hybrid contentious practices performative in the sense that their performativity was temporarily emergent and constantly enacted, but also because they are themselves a form of performative doing in that it allows people's political subjectivity to evolve in and along with their embodied experience in action. In this view, activist identity and action for networked activism emerged and evolved out of the concrete performative doing of the digitally-enabled individuals, who reflected on as much acted in the historical moments of the

39

contingent protest events. This conceptualization submitted by this research, on the one hand, highlights the specification of how individual citizens today experience and are linked to structural social injustice in immediate struggles in/through embodied, online-offline practices. It, on the other hand, allows for an understanding of the connection between diverse individual motives and collective action not merely within the paradigm of Internet-granted cognitive thinking, but rather in the framework of concrete performative doing.

Networked Activism beyond New Media Technology

In the course of analyzing individuals' movement involvement in relation to social and digital media usages, conventional social movement and Internet research tends to stress the technical capacity of new ICTs such as cost reduction, speed acceleration, and social network expansion, and neglects critical aspects of how such technological affordances are embodied and experienced especially in relation to other contentious activities and social relations on the ground. Conceptually, it thus overlooks the very fact that the very materiality of new media technology is itself the product of maneuvers among diverse social agents, human or nonhuman, across both on- and offline realms in practice. In this section, I seek to highlight the hybridity of such practices – simultaneously embodied and mediated – and discuss their roles in enacting, sustaining, and disrupting people's paths to networked activism. In so doing, I aim to not only stress the socio-material nature of these hybrid contentious practices, but also explicate the ways the constitutive entanglement between the material and social becomes reciprocally productive for furthering and shaping people's movement participation in practice.

Facebook, as the most popular and widely utilized social media platforms in Hong Kong (Tang and Lee, 2013), has one of the highest penetration rates in the world. As of 2014, the year of the Umbrella Movement, 67.2% of the Hong Kong population regularly used Facebook (Internet World Stats, 2014). However, Facebook should not be simply considered as a pure or mere technology of SNSs, but rather involves multiple social actors that are constantly making choices about its construction and operation. While Facebook helped retrieve and sort both useful and entertaining information by analyzing numerous web and Facebook pages based on users' self-declared interests and Internet surfing habits, the "news feed" of Facebook reflects the choices that people have made in deciding what other web and Facebook pages they want to connect to from their own Facebook pages. It also reflects the relative constantly changing

"social status" of web and Facebook pages in that it weights and links from most visit and popular pages to those that users rarely visited. That is to say, Facebook is not fixed or static, but rather dynamic and relative, depending upon the users' preferences reflected in their new media usages. In this view, Facebook is socio-materially contingent as its performativity is continuously negotiated between its pre-set materiality that pushes and sorts information, and the immediate needs of and choices made by users, whose preferences and operations in turn depend on tens of thousands or even millions of people who are connected to them.

Just like in other contemporary protest movement, networked activists in the Umbrella Movement heavily relied on the use of mobile social media for instant coordination and undertook numerous improvisatory acts. In the case of Hong Kong, Facebook and Whatsapp, especially through their chat applications and photo uploading functions, were particularly suitable for such real-time political actions. In contrast to other online platforms and webpages of Web 1.0 that tend to be centrally created and maintained by activist groups for collective action a decade ago, everyday social media usages and mediated networks could be more easily modified and turned into a significant part of political activism. However, such transformation would not be automatic, but rather involves a constitutive entanglement between the social and technological, the on- and offline. As revealed by one of the networked activists, who went to the government headquarters in an attempt to stop the police from approaching the Civic Square:

> We gathered with strangers, whom we met for the first time; and we started to form human chains, sometimes with the use of metal barriers in the streets, to seal off the roads in order to prevent more policemen from marching toward the students at the Headquarters. At the same time, we employed SNSs such as Facebook and Whatsapp in order update information on the situations at different main intersections with friends as well as with some pro-movement online news media. We instantly uploaded video clips on YouTube, live-reporting from the ground, which then were in turn widely shared on diverse SNS platforms…

> Yet, Facebook and Whatsapp had to be employed in alignment with our offline activities. We were there so that we shall have the first-hand information. The information on the SNSs was instantly updated from people on the ground according to what they saw in the real time. We corrected and modified each other's posts and updates by using mobile social media.

Along with many of the activists' stories we have seen in the sections above, the networked activism of individual activists enacted at the early stage of the Umbrella Movement frequently involved mobile social media usages, as engaged in the people's hybrid contentious practices in the real time. It was not simply a matter of the material features of SNSs in themselves having some politically transformative impacts, or the new affordances of mobile devices making activist communication so effective that movement affordances automatically emerged. Rather, the performativity of mobile social media is itself socio-materially constituted within particular contingent hybrid contentious practices that connect the cyber- and virtual space, as SNSs have become increasingly compatible with online platforms and mobile ICTs.

Some of the contentious-political consequences of such mobile social media usages through hybrid contentious practices best entailed when we consider the network individuals' mediated yet embodied experiences in correspondence to the unfolding protest events. By synchronizing on- and offline spheres of action, they tended to reflect "a sense of urgency," which might in turn bring the digitally-enabled individuals with "the imperative of immediacy" in action (McDonald, 2002: 120). For example, this is how Fanny recalled her personal experiences on the day of firing tear gas:

> The most dramatic experiences I had in relation to SNS [Facebook] usages were indeed about what happen on 28 August. Numerous pictures, status updates, and videos clips all came at once, in which people whom you might know or not suffered from pepper spray and tear gas…
>
> There emerged immediately a sense of hatred toward the Hong Kong Police… To be honest, I could not pay the same respect to policemen like before…
>
> Besides, there was also a sense of emergency that arose in me and that urged me to do something…
>
> Eventually I decided to go there few hours later.

Sam told an identical story about his initial participation of the movement but on 26 September:

> I had another job that night, and I was on my way to work.

I watched the news about Joshua Wong being arrest on both Facebook and online news media using my iPhone. I was particularly attracted by the videos online that live reported from the ground…

They talked about how many students were under arrest, how many policemen were mobilized, and which streets the police tried to blockade, and what the police's tactics were…

The more I read and watched the more I wanted to be there immediately. Eventually I went there few hours later that night. I think if it wasn't because of these mobile social media experiences of mine, I would not be so passionate. And if I wasn't being so passionate, I won't be there, at least not at that night or not ended up staying there overnight.

However, not all of the mobile social media experiences among digitally-enabled individuals were constructive to their networked activism. At times, it broke down one's capacity to verify information sources and led to negative consequences. John had such experience, even though he was right there among the protesters on the ground:

I clearly remember about my mobile social media experiences on 28 September. I was among other activists, and lucky enough I wasn't attacked by pepper spray and tear gas…

Information on the police and the protest was pretty chaotic that day. I remember reading a message on the two SNSs [Facebook and Whatsapp] saying that the police was already authorized to open fire on the protesters…

Another widespread sound track on Whatsapp saying that the police planned on charging into the campus of Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) to arrest the protesters there…

You know, earlier that day, HKAPA declared that it would remain opened for 24 hours and that all citizens could go use its campus facilities. As a consequence, HKAPA had become the place where protesters stored their supplies.

Bur immediately after the sharing of the widespread sound track on SNSs, protesters, especially those of the two students SMOs, were in chaos as they tried to evacuate their tons of supplies as fast as they could…

The sound track was never verified. Until today, we still don't know whether it was real or not. Eventually, this SNS-spread sound track even worried HKAPA as it decided to force citizens to leave and closed early at 11 pm…

Not all participants could stay in the occupied areas for long periods of time every day due to limitations of what McAdam (1986) might call "biographical availability." Social media and digital networks, in this regard, facilitated participants to continue to be part of the movement even when they were not physically present in the occupied areas. Participants who could not spend a huge amount of time in the occupied areas were reliant on mobile social media communication to stay in touch with others and/or to provide immediate knowledge about happenings both inside and outside the occupied areas. In a sense, social and digital media usages might extend participation from the urban space of the occupied areas to the cyberspace, and vice versa.

For example, Vicky went to the protest movement on 27 September but stayed at home the next day when the police fired tear gas. Instead of rushing to Admiralty once again, she decided to stay home and employed both Facebook and Whatsapp to instruct her friends on the ground about the know-hows and about the latest protest information:

> I was crying at home when I saw the firing of tear gas at the protesters. I was ready to go out again. But my friends there told me to stay at home. They said there was nothing I could do. Besides, there was no way for me to approach Admiralty anymore [due to the traffic control by the Hong Kong Police]… The best I could do was to inform them about the latest situations from home…

> Indeed, I had gained much direct protest experiences in the field the day before, so I tried to contribute by teaching people how to undertake protest activities. For example, I posted pictures with captions to tell protestor-friends how to use umbrella to protect themselves from being pepper-sprayed. One of the tricks is to turn your umbrella shield upside-down so that the pepper spray would be reflected outwards more effectively…

Chapter Conclusion

The Umbrella Movement integrated various modes of participation carried out by digitally-enabled individuals, who resisted formal memberships of SMOs and political interest groups but

joined in selective actions. Albeit proceeding by campaign mobilizations undertaken by the two student SMOs, which however had not expected the Umbrella Movement to come so quickly and radically, it chiefly involved manifold waves of digitally-enabled individuals who responded to the multiplication of embodied experiences in diverse online-offline practices. As illustrated above, the networked activism of the digitally-enabled Hong Kong people emerged in a series of real-time social-technological practices, in which new media technology and the actual activities of individual activists were interwoven so intimately that a conceptual separation would not be useful. Rather than new media communication and content converting into activist idea and action, networked activism itself was and becomes a site, in which subjective positions are constructed out of diverse socio-material relations between human and nonhuman agents, and are marked by contingent, local conflicts. A common yet distinctive feature of the people's paths to networked activism is thus that they can no longer be taken-for-granted or conceptualized in terms of its "objective, common condition." Rather, they need to be approached as particular entanglements of the actors' attachments and relationships to in the historically situated protest events in order to enact specific movement involvements. In this view, contemporary social movements, while facilitated by digital media and networked structures, should be considered as fields of action (Melucci, 1996a). They are constantly enacted and actualized amongst diverse actions of different actors within specific movements of mobilization and struggle that transform a potential into visible collective action (see also Tilly, 2004; Melucci, 1989; 1996b). Such a post-structural, practice-oriented approach to the study of networked activism allows us to appreciate the fact that activist identity and action are underdetermined by the dominant discourse on new media infrastructures and media/political opportunity structures.

Importantly, by the same token, it would not be my intention here to privilege the individual users as the masters of new media tools by clearly putting the locus of control in the hands of human actors, as if they would have perfect control of their own political subjectivity and action. This way of thinking about the relationship between individuals' contentious-political participation and their digital media usages glosses over significant ways in which people's goals, attitude, ideas, and behaviors are constitutively entangled through their constant engagement with the (socio-)materiality of social media and digital networks largely rooted in everyday life as well as with the immediacy of local conflicts. Not only would such a notion of networked activism commit the same mistake by overemphasizing one-sidedly the agency of a particular

type of actors, but it also hides the danger of reverting the understanding of the political back to the narrowly individual choices (Mouffe, 2005). As I have contended and shown in this chapter, networked activism, even if it was guided by some commonly shared values about democracy and freedom, was pursued on an emergent basis and only with reference to specific real-world encounters which allowed an immediate yet transitory aggregation for individual citizens to move from general socio-political conditions to concrete political actions. Thus, while the digitally-enabled individuals enjoyed the human/user agency to define themselves with the socio-political environments and their relationships to other human and nonhuman agents in on-going processes (see Escobar, 2008; Melucci, 1996a), it took place in a concrete historical field in which both new ICTs and real-world encounters shaped and were reshaped by individuals' changing goals and actions. To comprehend this is to shift our attention from what digitally-enabled individuals privately hold inside themselves as some sorts of autonomous user agency granted/enabled by social media and digital networks, to consider how citizens encounter and interact with digital media and other social actors within protest events in practice.

Of course, we should not deny the fact that social change is partly driven by nonhuman agents and that their material agency is important to consider in the analysis of historical developments, as different strands of science and technology studies (STS) commonly point out. Yet, while attention to how digital media form part of the experiential (and sometimes habitual) dimensions of daily transactions in social movements allows us to examine the role of digital media in the making of movement participation *in general*, taking part in networked activism however involve a range of embodied, online-offline practices that allow for the development of *specific* movement identity and (further) political action in engaging with immediate protest struggles and mobile social media exposures. As I have demonstrated in this chapter, these hybrid contentious practices linked between personal commitments/ethics and the larger contention/struggle at hand in engendering robust activist subjectivities and contentious activities. These linkages are realized and become explicit only through engaging with other human and nonhuman agents within situated practices that connect personal quests and collective goals. Therefore, the view of "socio-material assemblage" adopted in this research does not privilege either the human or technology, but rather points to "a mangle of human and material agencies" that is temporarily emergent (Pickering, 1993; 1995). By abandoning the attempt to distinguish that which is social from that which is material (Orlikowski, 2007), it considers the affordance

and action and of both human and non-human "actants" as part of a network that is itself an actor – that is, an actor-network (Latour, 2005). By revealing its socio-material nature, considering networked activism as social-technological processes thus helps explain how personal needs and collective action meshed together in contemporary social movements. It offers a nuanced understanding of how individual actors operate largely on their own while maintaining linkages to the social movement, as explained in the next chapter in more details.

CHAPTER FOUR – COLLECTIVITY AND SOLIDARITY OF NETWORKED ACTIVISM

Chapter Introduction

In the next two-and-a-half months, protestors of what became the Umbrella Movement would occupy major roads in the city's busiest district, set up supplies, and protect their territories with makeshift barricades, sometimes, with human chains, to stop police incursion and opposing groups. Across the encampments, they would press on for a focused goal – "genuine universal suffrage" for election of their Chief Executive, the city's top leader – until police officers cleared the last occupied site on December 15 [2014] (Yuen, 2015).

Each occupied district developed its own characteristics: Admiralty for its distinct middle-class character with strong student and civic group involvement, Mong Kok for its grassroots and triad involvement, and Causeway Bay for its popularity with tourists. All of them became self-sufficient communities that protesters referred to as "villages," filled with art installation and makeshift structures such as camps, study areas, and supply station … (Yuen, 2015)

The protest in Hong Kong is in its third week and clashes between the people themselves are beginning to unfold … [E]very day is rumored to be a deadline for police clearance of the Occupy sites. And every night protesters stay on the streets till the sun dawns the next day. (Wong, 2014)

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the key to the initiation of movement involvement among networked individuals in the Umbrella Movement was not the universal democratic principles or certain political values, but rather the emergent conjunction of the personal quests and situated practices rooted in the individuals' everyday digital media usages and the immediate exposures available to them for such transitory aggregation. As such, the conventional notion of activists' identity for political actions based on common interests and social groups that one belongs does not capture this aspect of contentious-political initiatives very well, as it tends to refer to shared ideas and pre-existing relationships such as political values, symbolic symbols, and institutionalized organizations that are stable and external to the subjects and to their concrete activities. While some of the pre-established digitally-mediated interactions and/or partially-shared institutional networks did play a role in the people's paths to/of networked

activism as discussed, their transformation into movement agency was not automatic but rather involved a substantial interplay between social and technological agents within a set of common yet contingent hybrid contentious practices. In this chapter, I further interrogate the articulation of such emergent forms of collective action and organization among digitally-enabled individuals in the movement for democracy Hong Kong. Specifically, I seek to illustrate the importance of considering the networked activists' ad hoc, (collective) direct action within immediate protest situations to the development of movement collective and solidarity. In so doing, I aim to reveal the conceptual limitations of extant scholarship, and offer new insights into the ways activist identity and community emerge in contemporary networked activism.

Existing literature on movement collective and solidarity emerged from two opposing scholarly traditions, namely the resource mobilization model (Tilly, 1978) in relation to political process (McAdam, 1982) and the so-called new social movement theory (Touraine, 1984; Melucci, 1989; 1996a; 1996b). Breaking with a subset of traditional collective behavior models, which had long regarded social movements as irrational expressions of social dysfunction, the first strand of scholarship explored social movement as the rational action of an excluded group seeking to produce political outcomes. It viewed collective action as intended strategy, and claimed that "[c]ollective action cannot occur in the absence of a 'we' characterized by common traits" (Della Porta and Diani, 2006: 87). This academic tradition thus came to approach "collective identity" as either "the shared definition of a group that derives from its members' common interests, experiences, and solidarity" (Taylor and Whittier, 1992: 105) or a functional equivalent of ideology based on shared values and affirmative rituals to which activists adhere (Taylor and Whittier, 1992: 104). By attaching great importance to institutionalized organization, group/community culture, and formal memberships, it understands social movements largely as the results of "claim-making on the basis of shared identity" (McAdam et al., 2001: 134) that "a successful claim of collective worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment brings recognition as a credible political player with the capacity to make a difference in the next political struggle" (McAdam et al., 2001: 147-148). As such, in essentially instrumental terms, this approach, which has since dominated social movement research, conceptualizes (collective) identity as a resource to be mobilized or a factor reducing the costs of organization (e.g. Tarrow, 1994; McAdam, et al., 2001), and explains it mostly as the outcome of such "common traits" (see McDonald, 2002 for a review). In this view, social movements require "collective identity" in that "making claims

about the characteristics of the group is central to the process of identity construction" (Taylor and Whittier, 1995: 173), and that "before individuals become serviceable movement agents … it is necessary that personal identities dovetail with a movement's collective identity" (Snow and McAdam, 2000: 52). These are the core propositions with this traditional school of thought in the social movement literature but, as I shall now turn to argue and show in the rest of this chapter, would not be with contemporary networked activism and particularly, for the good or the bad, the case of the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong.

For this research, the new social movement theory would entail more insights in understanding the current wave of "networked social movements" (Castells, 2012), and has significant relevance to the networked activism in Hong Kong, which to date has been known to lack a coherent collective identity or a strong sense of the unity of its collective action (*Quartz*, 2014a; Sung, 2014). To illustrate, the new social movement theory sets out to critique the reification of "collective identity" and instead proposes a constructivist view of collective action. Above all, it recognizes collective action as a field of tensions where actors confront dilemmas, and where processes of social creativity may occur (Touraine, 1984). From this perspective, rather than defending collective identify and group/community culture/rituals, social movements are precisely where social relationships are contested and remade (Touraine, 1984). Furthering this argument, Melucci has developed one of the most sustained critiques of the notion of collective identity. Refusing to conceptualize social movements as sovereign and coherent collective actors, he contends that activist identity needs to be recognized as relational, contingent, and socially constructed, as opposed to a static notion of resource to be mobilized reducing complex experience to movement framing and strategic calculation. In his view, (the collective identity of) a social movement should not be considered as a unitary or even coherent definition of the group's shared attributes. Rather, it is "always a composite action system, in which widely differing means, ends, and forms of solidarity and organization converge in a more or less stable manner" (Melucci, 1989: 28). Melucci's constructive perspective helps challenge the taken-for-granted assumption in much of the resource mobilization model and political process theory, which claimed that the goal of social movements is the construction of "collective identity," without which social movements are deemed to fail (see Bobel, 2007 for a critique).

Moreover, Melucci's scholarship insightfully points at a dynamic and open-ended process in which "identization" – this is, the interactive process by which "a collective becomes a collective" (Melucci, 1996a: 84) – comprises not only statements about what the group is about but also its common practices that generate such statements. As he submits, "[m]ovements are not entities that move with the unity of goals attributed to them by ideologies. [Rather, m]ovements are systems of action, complex networks among the different levels and meanings of social action. Collective identity allowing them to become collective actors is not a datum or an essence; it is the outcome of exchanges, negotiations, decisions, and conflicts among the actors" (Melucci, 1996a: 4). In this view, people's ways of doing/saying things (the embodied), as opposed to what they do/say (the cognitive), becomes all important in that they considerably constitute people's sense of belonging *in* as well as *for* collective action. This view, as I argue, aligns with the ontology of both ANT and performance studies in that it focuses not on how people's "collective identity" are to be mobilized in relation to Internet usages prior to their collective action, but on how movement collective and solidarity emerge and evolve in people's common situated practices and shared embodied experiences through/in engaging with new media technology. Therefore, as I further submit, the process of identization includes not only cognitive but also embodied components, as it simultaneously involves both collective reflections of the commons and the development of feelings of solidarity in (collective) action.

But even for Melucci, he does not go far enough in showing how digitally-enabled individuals construct activist identity and create movement solidarity in practice. The only thing we can feel sure is that he helps advance social movement research "in terms of a shift from *representation* to *narration*" (McDonald, 2002: 122, emphasis in the original) – that is, from how already existing collectives use new media to communicate with the public, to how activists' (communication) practices constitute themselves as collective actors – but without saying much to reveal how the activists may do so in (collective) direct action, particularly in relation to the role of new media technology. In essence, his notion of "identization" seems to focus on the interactions amongst activists merely in terms of communication and narration that are said to be facilitated by the use of new information and communication technologies (ICTs). To return to his even more controversial thesis, Melucci locates "new social movements" within the rise of a "complex information society" that has increasingly displaced material production from the center of social life, and replaced it with the "production of signs and social relations" (Melucci,

1989: 45). In his terms: "In contemporary societies signs become interchangeable and power operates through the languages and codes which organize the flow of information. Collective action, by the sheer fact of its existence, represents in its very form and models of organization a messages broadcast to the rest of society" (Melucci, 1996a: 9). By implication, Melucci contends that "new social movements" are distinctive in posing "symbolic challenges" to the organizing "cultural codes" of complex, information-rich contemporary societies (Melucci, 1996a; see also Melucci, 1989; 1996b). In this view, networked activism chiefly serves to contest the (dominant) "codes" of communication and culture through communicating and narrating with new ICTs.

Along these lines, unfortunately, recent research on networked activism similarly examine the role of social media and digital networks merely in terms of communication processes that render an aggregation of individuals into a collective actor. For example, Flanagin et al. (2006) seek to "reframe collective action as being constituted by a set of [digital] communication practices involving the crossing boundaries from the private to the public realm" (Flanagin et al., 2006: 32; see also Bimber et al., 2005). Bennett and Segerberg (2013) also locate such social media communications at the center of their new framework of "connective action," which is said to replace "collective identities (and actions)" based on the sharing of easily individualized ideas through digital media usages. In the same vein, Kavada (2015) argues that SNSs have emerged as powerful tools for activists and movements to distribute counter-narratives for mass mobilization. Applying Melucci's theory to examine the Occupy Movement, he considers the process of "identization" to take place in a set of social media conversation that crystallizes in "texts" or "codes" which in turn encapsulate and codify the movement's identity. In these views, SNS-enabled communication processes "amplify the 'interactive and shared' properties of collective action by offering always-on platforms in which [communicative] interaction is practiced on a recurrent basis" (Milan, 2015: 6). By treating social media and digital networks mostly as narrative or discursive weapons, these new media studies tend to focus on the cognitive/communicative dimensions of activist identity, while the embodied/material aspects of these processes are neglected. As a consequence, whether treated as private or social processes facilitated by new ICTs, the "inner" work of identity formation that takes place on SNSs has been prioritized and/or considered prior to that of the "outer" action linked to mobile social media usages. This (over-)emphasis on new ICTs as alternative platforms thus obscures the

importance and increased use of mobile social media for the development of activist identity and community in the real/offline world.

That is to say, the new social movement theory and its "communication approach" (selectively) picked up by much of the flourishing new media studies concentrate too much on the notion of "identization" as merely communication practices and on what people *think* and *say*. They do not attend enough to what people *do* with new media technology in protest movements in practice. Yet, in contrast to much of the new media studies, which (over-)emphasize on social and digital media as discursive or narrative platforms, the tendency in contemporary protest movements has not been for the technological to replace the embodied or the offline. Rather, with increasing interactions between the virtual and real-world facilitated by mobile devices, all social locations embedded in life have become interconnected sites for civic-political-contentious engagements in the real time. As repeatedly demonstrated throughout this dissertation, while social media and digital networks clearly form one of the new arenas of everyday life, they do not become the only arena of civil society and/or contentious politics; nor are they independent subjects existing separately from other spheres of action and social relations. Therefore, if we would pay more attention to not only the communicative interactions but also the embodied practices of networked activists adapted to mobile social media usages, we would not have bypassed the importance of (collective) direct action within immediate protest situations in telling us how they came and held together in the today's online-offline environment.

In this chapter, instead of extensively and narrowly focusing on how digitally-enabled individuals communicated with each other on new media platforms, I examine what the networked activists' did together through/in engaging with social networking sites (SNSs) and related digital technologies, and more importantly, how these acts of the networked activists enables identity building and facilitates community formation in protest movements. Again, I bring back into focus the performative nature of collective action as it helps explain the emergence of both activist (collective) identity and action at the same time. Rather than looking at the individuals' common inner dispositions embedded in pre-existing social groups and structures that they carry with them from one context to another as prior social movement literature tended to assume, I show how digitally-enabled individuals came to develop common,

prevailing online-offline repertoires within concrete protest situations, which in turn created the spaces for the emergence of activist collective and movement solidarity.

The Emergence of Activist Groups in Online-Offline Movement Repertoires

As discussed in the previous chapter, the repressing measures of the Hong Kong police ironically disrupted Occupy Central's original plan of being a highly disciplined and centralized from of civil disobedience. The chaos created by the tear-gas attack on 28 September 2014, in particular, produced a massive wave of contentious activities among digitally-enabled individuals through improvisation (Lee and Chan, 2016). Soon enough, the occupation protest attained a scale and scope much larger than expected after the police fired tear gas into the protesting crowd (Tang, 2014). Within the same day, it spread to at least two other major shopping and commercial districts of the city, namely Mongkok and Causeway Bay. More and more people thus extended the "battlefront" to these two areas, where thousands of protesters launched sit-ins on the main roads so as to distract the police's attention and forces in support of Umbrella Movement.

Among the self-joining activists who took the "battle" to Mongkok, Ken worried that since Admiralty attracted most of the public attention, there might not be enough people to sustain the occupation in Mongkok especially during weekdays,. He therefore kept attending the occupation protest in Mongkok a few days a week in defense of the occupied area, sometimes with a few friends but also sometimes going alone.

> I tended to think that the occupation in Mongkok would be more likely to be cleared by the police. So we wanted to gather more people to lower the chances of police action there…

> It was both exciting and dangerous in Mongkok especially at night. There were constant shouting and fighting between protesters and the police. The police might gather in formation at any time and charged toward the crowds. They constantly sought to clear the main streets in this major area of the city. In response, we had to form human chains immediately to resist the police.

> Of course I was worried. Back then, I saw the police attacked and beat up many of the protesters. It was pure violence. The only thing we could do was to gather even more to threaten the police from taking action. We kept passing umbrellas to the front for the bravest protesters there to protect themselves…

Two other networked activists, Nick and Peter, who got to know each other in Admiralty and shifted their movement participation from Admiralty to Mongkok, also echoed:

Back then, it appeared that something would happen in Mongkok almost every night. The violent counter-protesters, who enjoyed police protection, would come to harass the peaceful protesters. They were the so-called "blue ribbons" [as opposed to "yellow ribbons" which represent the people who supported the Umbrella Movement] …

In the field, we would come to exchange immediate details with other people, whom we met for the first time. We got to know each other this way in Admiralty and then went to Mongkok together. Sometimes, we discussed with strangers about practical issues such as what to bring and what to do in particular protest situations.

[The interviewer: So did you prefer Mongkok to Admiralty? Was this the reason why you two shifted your participation from Admiralty to Mongkok?]

It wasn't about what/where we preferred, but about necessity. More violence acts and wrongful treatments by the police and counter-protesters occurred in Mongkok. We went there because we worried about the protesters there.

In fact, much of this apparent spontaneity was in part fabricated by the use of mobile social media. Nick and Peter revealed how people came to undertake these common contentious activities by exploiting social media and digital networks in alignment with street protests, as joined the crowds in Mongkok.

During our time in Mongkok, we constantly employed Facebook in order to get informed about what was happening in that area, what had happened before our arrival, and where would need more people to sustain the occupation. We would then go and help.

[The interviewer: Who told you about all these and what to do?]

It was the people in the streets there. We didn't know them in person. But they employed Facebook to inform the crowds.

[The interviewer: But if you didn't know them, how did you get in touch with them?]

This is what was amazing about Facebook. You didn't need to know these people. And yet you could still get access to their posts since they were somehow the friends of your friends' friends…

Also, there were multiple pro-movement Facebook pages constantly at work. They were established by other self-joining activists in support of the movement, from which we could also get immediate protest details.

As such, spontaneous-seeming collective direct action like this appeared to explode in all the major occupied areas. The immediately outcome of the practicing of such intensive, ongoing hybrid contentious activities was the production of numerous relatively small activist groups, in which digitally-enabled individuals employed mobile social media to acted in accord with each other. Soon enough, with these small, ad hoc activist groups, such social-technologically enacted movement repertoires become generalized very quickly.

Ellen vividly described how such online-offline movement repertoires became common and repeated hybrid contentious activities:

At that time, a large number of Whatsapp groups were created to collect and filter information from the SNSs of major social movement organizations (SMOs) and activists group such as "Scholarism," "9/26 Citizens at Headquarters," "Occupy Central," and etc., as well as from us – the self-joining activists. These Whatsapp groups were initiated to synthesize and synchronize the information from all these major sources …

On these platforms, there emerged a common "format," according to which people posted and updated the last news and information from the ground. It goes: when and where as the title message, followed by who and what happens, and then what people say and/or do. For example, you posted on Whatsapp as soon as you saw when and where the police brought what types of weapons marching toward which direction. Such is the format that we sought to encourage everyone to follow…

[The interviewer: But didn't the Whatsapp groups only include you and your friends in the group conversation?]

Yes, but each of us had multiple and overlapping Whatsapp groups. Let's say when I was in Whatsapp group A and I saw something important there, I could immediately forward this

information to Whatsapp group B, and so on and so forth. And we are talking about Whatsapp groups that consisted of 20-50 people at and were expanding …

Since there was so much going on the SNS at that time, we encouraged each other to post in the same format, so that people could easily identify the most useful and relevant information, and more importantly, the most updated details about the issue at hand. You know, 30 minutes made a huge difference in the field … The common format that was developed and used on Whatsapp was mainly for this purpose…

Another networked activist supported such views on the development of collective direct action with his own experience in the field, as he observed how the small, ad hoc activist groups emerged across both social media activism and streets protests:

As far as I know, those people who self-mobilized on the online platform – HKGolden [one of the most popular online discussion forums in Hong Kong, which was said to be closely related to many protest events during the Umbrella Movement] – often involved in [collective] direct action; they undertook intensive frontline activities…

They didn't know each other at first. But after getting there, they started to get to know each other. They might exchange phone numbers in the field for imitating a Whatsapp group among themselves. So, on the one hand, they established connections online; on the other hand, they also became familiar with each other in the real world…

Then, they would initiate even more contentious activities in these Whatsapp groups as well as on HKGolden. One of such contentious activities would be to take back the metal barriers that had been taken by the police [mostly in Admiralty]. Back then, since the crowds were thin during the daytime [as the movement prolonged and the people needed to go back to work and sustained their living], the police might try to remove some of the road blocks and metal barriers quietly. The self-mobilized activist groups would try to take back these road blocks and metal barriers from the police in the evening, and to re-blockade and re-occupy some of the main roads.

Eric also shared a similar experience of collective direct action in Mongkok that involved both on- and offline spheres of action:

Back then, I went to Mongkok often in support of the movement. One day in October, I saw on Facebook that a large group of "blue-ribbons" attempted to remove the roadblocks and people's tents …

When I arrived there were like over 200 counter-protesters; I think we were about four times outnumbered by the "blue-ribbon." I immediately joined the other people to form human chains hand in hand in defense of the occupied area. They [the counter-protesters] kept pushing us violently; some of them even used knives to threaten us. The police were there, but they just ignored what was happening. Then there came the gangsters shouting foul languages at us. Many people including students and the elderly among us got hurt…

Still we held the ground, and the stand-offs continued into the evening. After work, more people who got to know about what happened on Facebook and Whatsapp came to join us. Eventually, we outnumbered those gangsters and counter-protesters.

Therefore, the formation of activist groups among the digitally-enabled individuals in the Umbrella Movement was mainly articulated in and expressed a form of joint struggle. Rather than an expression of "collective identity" by the members of the same organizations/social groups, what the people dealt with were chiefly the (partially) shared experiences of practicing common hybrid contentious activities in collective direct action. Taking part in the online-offline movement repertoires thus tended to express the persons embedded within the collective encounters as opposed to the function that they occupied in SMOs or activist groups.

The Development and Negotiation of Movement Solidarity in Direct Action

As a matter of fact, the occupation during the Umbrella Movement was illegal and thus faced constant challenges from the police and counter-protesters. In response, there emerged a wide range of "frontline activism" (Lee and Chan, 2015) that required the collective participation of networked activists who variously appropriated new ICTs in and for these contentious activities. Such practical tasks and/or specific projects of these small, ad hoc activist groups included but were not limited to building blockades, confronting the police, and handling the counter-protesters, and involved intensive mobile social media usages moving across both on- and offline spheres of action. Mainly drawing on direct action, they devoted to confrontations with counter-forces through collectively performed online-offline repertoires so as to create more or less

stable and enduring collectives in key protest areas in order to sustain the occupation throughout the Umbrella Movement.

Jason's activist story of joining the occupation protest in Mongkok offers useful insights into how diverse self-joining activists came and acted together in practice:

> When I went to Mongkok for the first time, it was like a battlefield there. It was a total chaos. People were shouting in foul languages across the streets all the time. Then, I saw some people who were building road blocks by using metal barriers and whatnot. So I joined the other people around these people so as to create a wall-like human chain against the police and counter-protesters, so that these people can continue building the road blocks safely…

> [The interviewer: Were there any direct confrontations? Did you get hurt?]

> There were both stand-offs and direct confrontations like pushing people against each other. I was lucky enough that I didn't get much of the body contacts. But some of the people around me, with whom I worked, did get hurt.

When asked to elaborate how he got to start working with those random people in the occupied area and on such collective experiences, he stressed the importance of embodied, direct action among the self-joining activists:

> [The interviewer: You said you didn't know anyone there. Then how did you get started? How did you get to work with the other protesters?]

> Right, I didn't know anyone there… Ummm… It was subtle… You are right; usually you won't trust a stranger that much, not to such extent… [Pause for a few seconds]

> But you knew whether they were on your side or not, and they also knew whether you were on their side or not. It was strange… How do you say? … [Pause for another few seconds]

> OK, let me put it this way. When you saw someone who were building a road block there, the second person who went to help the first person must be on the same side. Right, that's how you could tell! But if the second person came and attempted to remove the road block, then s/he must be an enemy. That's how you could tell! So by observing what they did, you got to know whether they were on your side or not. If they were with you, then you joined and worked with them!

59

Henry, another self-joining activist also portrayed how he got to work with the other "strangers" in Admiralty in a similar way. He shared his personal experience and feeling about being involved in such collective direct action with the "strangers":

> I think I changed a lot after being involved in the [collective direct] action. After we successfully repelled the police and held our ground for the first night, we developed a tremendous sense of success among ourselves the next morning. The atmosphere among us – the "strangers" – also changed significantly because you just witnessed how much they – they people who just fought with you overnight – loved [the] Hong Kong [people]. They literally used their own human bodies to shield other people from pepper sprays and police batons. You felt like: Ah, it might work this time!

Multiple digitally-enabled individuals that I interviewed commonly labeled the other networked activists with whom they worked as "the strangers." Yet, over time, these "strangers" might not be too strange anymore and become somewhat "familiar" with them. Valerie went to Admiralty after work and camped almost every night. She often worked with other self-joining activists, whom she did not get to know very well. Still, they often work together to help deliver and distribute supplies, they sometimes shared food and everyday commodities with each other, and, above all, they defended the frontline together in collective direct action.

> [The interviewer: How did you self-organize and coordinate among the "strangers" to defend the frontline in Admiralty?]

> Actually, we never self-organized or coordinated among ourselves. Whenever we found the police attempted to make their moves, we alarmed whoever we could see there and went to confront the police all at once. Very naturally, we were all on our feet and we all walked toward the same direction.

> [The interviewer: How would you describe your relationship with the other activists there back then?]

> Ummm … I would say we became "familiar strangers." We were "familiar strangers" because … really, we didn't know each other. But during that period of time, we all came to do similar things and together. In this sense, we were like "friends." But we didn't even know each other's name, although I saw some of these people almost every day…

Christine, a high school girl who went to Causeway Bay every weekend to support the movement by camping there overnight, also described how such relationships with the "familiar strangers" were extended into and drawing upon both virtual and offline worlds.

> Every time after being involved in a [collective direct] action, you got to recognize a few more faces, still not very well though. But you started to pay more attention to these people's SNS pages and joined some of their Whatsapp groups…

> Later on, the first thing I did every day even before brushing my teeth, or whenever I had time, I logged into my Facebook account to see what had happened in the field through these people's Facebook page or Whatsapp groups…

> Indeed, the more protesters I got to recognize, the more Facebook and Whatsapp I used, and in return I got to know even more protesters including those I had never met in person…

> Then, in the next [collective direct] action, you knew whom you might be able to work with by recognizing these people from the SNSs. Sometimes, they came to me and called my name, although we had never met. Maybe we did, but I couldn't remember… Anyhow, the connections with them were just like that…

Thus, the digitally-enabled, self-joining activists felt the bond with others not chiefly because (they came to the agreement that) they shared the same interests through communication practices permitted by SNSs or other online platforms as conventional new media studies tend to suggest. Rather, they made sense of their solidarity in recognizing their common ways of doing activism. As such, what marked "memberships," if any, in these small, ad hoc activist groups was not a set of political ideals or inner beliefs, but rather the actual hybrid movement repertoires developed and embedded in shared, local struggles that relate the individuals to the movement (or the activist groups). Therefore, such movement collectivity and solidarity cannot simply be understood as agreeing on the rationales behind these common repertoires. Rather, they are actualized primarily in the collective performance of collective direct action, in which diverse individuals came to recognize and acknowledge each other as of the same crowds.

Perhaps for the same reason, the emergence of activist groups in the Umbrella Movement also tended to be short-term and contingent in nature, as they drew on personal commitments to engage in specific projects and/or practical tasks through direct action. Indeed, most of them

ceased to exist immediately after some of the key events of blockade and occupation between late September and early October 2014. Yet, they would be reconstituted in different ways and with different people at future actions within immediate protest situations. This is particularly evident when we consider the series of incidents in Mongkok, where networked activists gathered and re-converged for several times in joint struggles in Mid-October and November 2014.

According to the many networked activists that I interviewed as well as diverse online news media, what happened in Mongkok during that time can be summarized by Tony, a middle-aged network activist (who, as he self-described, albeit constantly employing mobile social media was still not very skillful with new media technology), as follows:

October 13 [2014] marked the beginning of the second stage of the movement. There emerged a large group of counter-protesters who violently attacked on the peaceful occupation protesters in Mongkok. It was widely reported and even suspected that these so-called "blue ribbons" were allegedly local gangster who were secretly mobilized by the [either mainland Chinese or Hong Kong] government.

Immediately after these attacks, the police would somehow come to protect these violent counter-protestors and helped them to evacuate from the occupied area.

On that day, according to online news media, over 200,000 people went onto the streets in the evening and at night in order to support and protect the occupation protesters in Mongkok as well as in Admiralty.

Many of them were self-mobilized and organized on SNSs. I sensed that new media technology played a major role at that time. I believed that most of these people, who were not in Mongkok in person earlier that day, learnt about what happened from the online platforms, just like I did.

Valarie also described the protest event in Mongkok and the people's use of social media and digital networks in a similar way:

What happened in Mongkok made us [my friends of the same Whatsapp groups and I] very angry. You know what were disclosed by protesters and activist reporters at that time, right? Both in the streets and on SNSs you could see the police and "blue ribbons" beat up peaceful protesters. The police then protected the counter-protesters, who attacked on the peaceful

62

occupation protesters, by pretending to arrest them but then just releasing them a few minutes later when [they thought] no one could see. Also, the police abused their power by widely using pepper sprays…

That made people very angry. Why the peaceful "yellow ribbons" got arrested for being beaten up by the "blue ribbons" while the "blue ribbons" didn't get arrested after beating up other citizens. There was a huge sense of injustice. The police action was biased against the protesters from the very beginning. It was so obvious.

This view was supported by Ken, another networked activist:

As far as I remember, every time when the number of people rapidly increased in Mongkok was always because of the violent and nasty police actions.

They didn't warn the protesters or tell them to leave before they attempted to disperse them. They suddenly hoisted a red flag, and immediately charged toward the crowds and attacked them with police batons and pepper sprays…

Every day on Facebook and YouTube, you could find videos on the arrests of protesters by the police, filmed by other people from the ground. In these videos, you could clearly see that the persons who got arrested committed no violence or crime, but they got arrested anyway just because they were walking alone in the streets so that they became the easy targets.

Few days later, when you watched the news, you would find them got released by the court as they would be find innocent.

That was totally and merely wrongful treatment! How were the police allowed to do that to the people?! You have been living in Hong Kong for so many years. It had been a common sense that Hong Kong had been a safe place to live. But then you found your lives were endangered, by the police! The police was worse than gangsters. The police couldn't be trusted. You got to protest yourselves and the other protesters.

While Tony, Valerie, and Ken provided an overview of what happened in Mongkok and the importance of digital media in the protest, Gala illustrated with his personal story, which he later on published in an collective volume self-published by a group of networked activists (Lee, 2015), how on 13 October 2014 the networked activists came to re-converge in collective direct action in relation to mobile social media usages in practice:

On October 13 [2014], Gala was on his way back to Hong Kong after finishing his one-day business trip in mainland China. Around 6 pm, he saw multiple videos on Facebook and Whatsapp showing that the "blue ribbons" were attacking the student protesters in Mongkok. Gala did not have enough time to go home to get changed. He went to Mongkok directly in suits to confront the counter-protesters…

According to Gala, at that time, Mongkok was full of angry citizens, who could not stand these impudent harassment and violence, and thus went to support the student protesters all at once. The confrontation continued into the midnight. That night … [as Gala portrayed] "whenever we saw messages on the SNSs saying where would need support, we just went" … (Lee, 2015: 80-83)

Nick and Peter, who went to Mongkok together, also confirmed this portrayal of the protest event with their direct, embodied experiences in the field:

In Mongkok, we literally saw that the police released a person who allegedly attacked on the occupation protestors. Many people were there surrounding the policemen and the suspect.

We felt betrayed by the Hong Kong police. They were supposed to arrest those who committed crimes. They at least needed to interrogate what had happened. However, the police was trying to protect and release the "criminal."

So we joined the crowd and shouted at the policemen as we were closely following them. The policemen just tried to ignore us and quickly departed from the crowds…

This was not a secret. The Hong Kong police had no shame. Few minutes later, you could see that "criminal" coming back to the occupied area and began to attack on other protesters…

From another perspective, Kate described how her friends came to take part in collective direct action in defense of the occupied area in Mongkok in relation to their social and digital media usages:

Many of my friends [in the real world but also of the same Whatsapps groups], who used to be politically apathetic, came to join the movement and took part in direct action, as soon as [they saw] the counter-protesters [whom she suspected to be secretly mobilized by the mainland Chinese government] intended to create troubles in Mongkok.

They [her friends] used to care only about making money, and considered social movements to be useless in changing the overall system and the larger society, even though some of them did considered political reform to be important…

But they all became active participants after they saw what happened in Mongkok either in person or on SNSs. What I knew from them on Whatsapp was that they were trying to protect the help stations in Mongkok and the people there.

They said that as men, they could not just sit at home. The police protected those who attacked the peaceful protesters. The police pretended that they got them arrested, but later on, as filmed and discovered by other people and posted on Facebook and YouTube, released them in the next street. They [her friends] said they knew it was unlikely that the movement would turn into a success. But in that moment, they said they only acted according their conscience…

Apparently, most of the activist groups that emerged in the Umbrella Movement were characterized by their focus on (collective) direct action in conjunction with their mobile social media usages. While they might be sometimes initiated by a few people who self-organized and came to join together, they mainly consisted of people who did not know each other and only converged and acted together in particular events. In short, they are essentially small, ad hoc activist groups that engaged in practical tasks and/or specific projects in (collective) direct action.

The Fragmentations of Networked Activism in the Umbrella Movement

While the Umbrella Movement started largely as an accidental yet unified collective action (see chapters two and three), it eventually fragmented into diverse activist groups and occupation communities, (not as a result of police violence and state repression, which however tended to provoke more collective direct action among those already participating in the protest movement as revealed,) but mainly due to the diverging protest strategies and practices emerged from the local conflicts and immediate experiences in each occupied area. Such differences best captured the networked activists' disagreements on the modes of action for advancing the movement, which emerged when the Umbrella Movement prolonged and dragged on.

While students were no longer in control of the movement as the occupation protest progressed, they were still regarded by some of the networked activists as the main protagonists (Ortmann, 2015). Particularly among those who were mobilized by the acts of students to join

the occupation in Admiralty in the first place and had been since sustaining the occupation with the students over there, they tended to side with the student SMOs' "peaceful, rational, and non-violent" principle (coined by and borrowed from Occupy Central) in the field. Yet, although they practiced and performed the principle of "civil disobedience" in the occupied area in concordance with the two student SMOs (see chapters two and three), their day-to-day activities and operation stayed largely outside the SMOs' influence and enjoyed their own dynamics.

Instead of being organized by formal SMOs or focused activist groups, the activist communities in the occupied areas for the most part drew on the informal supports or personal contributions by the persons who joined them. Tony described how such activist communities emerged and became self-sustained in Admiralty:

After successfully occupying the key area in Admiralty, the occupied site entered a "period of construction and peace," during which self-joining activists built various facilities for running their everyday life, beginning from basically nothing to charging stations to support electronics, study rooms for occupying students, public library, tents for public use, the supply of drinks and dessert soups, and recycling stations. There were many supply stations back then because there were numerous supplies donated by the common people…

One of the most touching senses I witnessed was that an old lady, who lived very far away from the occupied area, cooked and brought food for the occupation protesters almost every day, dragging a heavy cart all the way from Kwai Chung to Admiralty. When she arrived, other protesters immediately came to help deliver and disturb her food in the occupied area…

Catharine, who camped in Admiralty for almost three months, shared a similar experience in the occupied area:

The occupation period was the time that humanity was practiced among activists…

I had lived there for almost three months. I had experienced so many beautiful things. You would not be afraid of thriving there. Everyone looked after everyone else. Everyone tried to contribute in their own ways. People took initiative to clean the public area, to cycle … You couldn't image how clean those public bathrooms were in the occupied area…

In the evening, there were housewives who cooked and brought dinner to the occupied area. There were also the nine-to-five workers bought meals from restaurants for the protesters…

High school students, who came to support the movement after school, studied and did their homework in the streets… All of these exemplified the beauty of humanity in the movement.

Vicky, another "villager" of the occupied area in Admiralty also told an identical story:

Although I didn't really know the people there, we would say "hi" and "hello" to each other. The world, I mean the world there, was wonderful, because people would never mind about the other people's age, occupation, or class background there; you just wanted to show kindness to each other.

We were a kind of "friends." We recognized each other's faces as we ran into each other rather often. So you could more or less tell whether they were the "residents" around there or not…

Once, there was a lady who made a number of LED lamps, which can be used and charged with a USB port, and on which there were beautiful pictures. She intended to distribute them at 3 am, because she said only those who were still there around three or four were the "genuine residents." She told us that the LED lamps were rather expensive to produce; and if she started to distribute them at the midnight they would run out very soon and they would not go to the people who really needed them.

At that moment, I sensed that people there had their own wisdoms and talents. They all contributed in different ways to the "village."

Indeed, the networked activists, tended to describe the self-sustained occupied area as a "utopian community." In fact, the term "utopia" was a common metaphor among the networked activists, particularly those who camped exclusively in Admiralty. Valerie was one of them:

There you would find a utopia. You know Hong Kong people tended to be "cool" [cold] in everyday life. We rarely attended to other people, and we very rarely talked to other fellow citizens in the public. This was not the case with the people there [the occupied area in Admiralty]. Everyone you encountered there would smile to you and cheered you up. We shared whatever we had. People were very generous, although they didn't know each other very well. The whole thing was very utopian.

However, not all the networked activists in Admiralty agreed with such movement logics and occupation practices. Over time, as the government showed no willingness to make any concessions on genuine universal suffrage, other networked activists, especially those who had

directly experienced the police violence in the field, tended to denounce the "peaceful, rational, and non-violent" principle and instead self-organized for more radical collective direct action. Zak was among those who supported more radical direct action for advancing the movement, as opposed to the more conventional movement strategies and repertoires of long-term occupation. According to him:

> It became a kind of "formalism" in Admiralty.
>
> [The interviewer: What do you mean by "formalism"?]
>
> I mean, it wasn't about occupying for the sake of pressuring the government anymore. It seemed that people gathered there just for the sake of gathering. They were just expressing their [political] attitudes. But this actually violated the very principle of civil disobedience proposed by Tai of Occupy Central, who sought to force the government to concede by disrupting the operation of Central…
>
> But now the whole thing had been confined merely in the occupied area. It was no longer capable of impacting the government, nor the other citizens. It seemed that the occupation existed merely for the purpose of its existence. The world kept turning, and the government still did not feel the pressure to respond…
>
> It became a dead end. Every night, people there went on the "big stage" one by one to express themselves. It became confined to something like a scripted performance repeated every day, rather than a protest movement. It was entirely "formalism."

Zak was by no means alone in this respect. For instance, Peter and Nick also shared a similar view on the movement:

> The movement was successful in the beginning all because of its more radical types of direct action, such as the siege of Civic Square and the occupation of Admiralty. But then such direct actions would be accused as violating the "peaceful, rational, and non-violent" principle. Since then, there was no further [radical direct] action. So, it [the movement] turned into a long-term stand-off.

Thus, while the more conservative occupation protesters, who mostly camped in Admiralty, called for a peaceful and non-violent occupation, the other networked activists sought to adopt more radical repertoires of contention, such as occupying major government buildings and

further expanding the occupied areas. Two protest events marked the peak of such radical repertoires in action, namely the Lung Wo Road Incident and the break-in of Legislative Council.

On 14 October 2014, the operation to block the Lung Wo Road tunnel for expanding the protest area was planned by diverse networked activists on the online forum HKGolden earlier that day (Beam, 2014). That night, hundreds of networked activists dragged metal barriers on to Lung Wo Road at the rear of the legislature in Admiralty. They moved in to block the road and reinforced the barriers with cable ties. Police with riot gear then emerged from near the Office of the Chief Executive ordering protesters to disperse. After pepper spray was deployed, protesters used umbrellas to protect themselves as a tense stand-off between demonstrators and riot police unfolded. The stand-off between several dozen police officers in riot gear and hundreds of protesters continued for more than 20 minutes. More protesters began to gather at the west end of the tunnel, leaving the police outnumbered. Protesters then dragged more metal barriers in to the tunnel. Eventually, as the police retreated, protesters celebrated having expanded their occupation area near government headquarters (*HKFP*, 2015).

However, two days later, hundreds of police officers came to clear out the Lung Wo Road tunnel, which was occupied by Occupy protesters. During the operation, the police used pepper spray and forced protesters to retreat to Tamar Park nearby (*SCMP*, 2014a). Also, that night, video footage aired by broadcaster TVB of protester Ken Tsang Kin-chiu being beaten for several minutes while under police custody has since caused outrage (*SCMP*, 2014b). As two activist reporters submit:

> [The Lung Wo Road incident was] arguably one of the most dramatic nights of the Umbrella Movement. Police move in to clear hundreds of protestors occupying a road in front of the Chief Executive's offices. Pepper spray flies, arrests are made, and in a dark corner, seven police officers vent their frustration on a lone protestor. (Leung and Lee, 2014d)

Valerie was there in the field and witnessed the police violence against the protesters that night:

> I was among the dozens of activists assisting in the back. We attempted to pass more umbrellas to the front to resist the pepper sprays and police batons. But very soon, we realized that the umbrellas were useless that night. The police went crazy. Almost everyone in the front was bleeding. Some of them ran backward. Girls, too, were severely beaten by the police and

dragged themselves back from the frontline. The only thing that I was able to do and kept doing was to help those wounded to get to the first aid stations… That was also the first time I got hurt [beaten] in the movement.

Another major protest event of radical collective direct action in Admiralty was the break-in of the Legislative Council. On 19 November 2014, some of the more radical activists broke into a side-entrance to the Legislative Council Complex, breaking glass panels with concrete tiles and metal barricades. A legislator, Fernando Cheung, and other suffragists tried to stop the radical activists, but were pushed aside. However, the protestors were not able to break in and occupy the complex before the police's arrival. The next day, these more radical networked activists were criticized by the major activist groups and legislators from both the pan-democracy and pro-Beijing camps, although the criticism from the student groups was less than categorical. Jason recalled the break-in of the Legislative Council and the role of new media technology as he was among these radical activists in the field:

> I knew that some people might not like what we did. But it was the first step, a step forward, at least. It seems to me that the break-in of the Legislative Council was modeled on the break-in and occupation of the Legislative Yuan in Taiwan's Sunflower Movement [between 18 and 21 March 2014]. I think we were trying to do something similar. However, not only was it a failure [since we did not successfully break in and occupy the chamber], we were also "backstabbed" by the protestors of the "peaceful, rational, and non-violent" principle [as we were criticized by the major SMOs and political parties the next day]…

> For those who took part in the break-in, our only goal was to break through the deadlock [of the movement]. So, we were in fact fighting for all the occupation protestors. But how dared they condemn us as we suffered from a setback …

> Facebook and HKGolden played a role, but it was not the whole picture. First, there were a group of activists who operated outside the major SMOs and did not like what was going on in the occupied area [in Admiralty]. They then came together both on- and offline to initiate [other] direct actions. Other people who thought they could help just came and joined…

> Once it was organized for the first time, a core but loosely organized group was found and people stayed in touch with each other through digital networks. Then, it became much easier to organize for similar [collective] direct action the next time.

70

Therefore, the Umbrella Movement involved diverse and multiple waves of ad hoc activist groups that drew on various modes of direct collective action among the networked individuals. According to Della Porta and Diani (2006), there can be three distinct "protest logics" that activists may ascribe to their repertoires of contention and protest actions, namely the "logic of numbers," the "logic of damage," and the "logic of bearing witness" (Della Porta and Diani, 2006: 170). Among them, the logic of numbers refers to mass demonstrations as modes of social performance to produce spectacles of numbers where dissent can become more visible; the logic of damage (usually to property) aims to make the threats of violence credible, ultimately pushing the authority to implement change; and finally, the protest logic of bearing witness to injustice represents the non-violent tactic of civil disobedience – that is, "knowingly breaking what are considered unjust laws" (Della Porta and Diani, 2006: 175) – which often seeks to personalize the political and/or to develop bottom-up, semi-autonomous zones in which alternative lifestyles and values are created. While these different "protest logics" were by no means mutually exclusive, they to different extents characterize the various online-offline repertoires among the activist groups in the Umbrella Movement, who, while agreeing on achieving a free and democratic Hong Kong, came to prefer and undertake radically different collective direct actions in correspondence to their diverse movement experiences rooted in the distinct local struggles.

Here, it is not simply to suggest that there could be different repertoires of contention in networked activism. Rather, the aim is to provide an understanding of how the construction of the boundaries between and solidarities within different activist groups of the Umbrella Movement was closely related to and constantly performed in their specific forms of collective direct action. While movement/individual actors can be with different kinds of orientations towards protest actions – "those relating to the ends of the action (to the meaning that the action has for the actor), to the means (that is, to the possibilities and limits of action), and to relations with the environment (to the field in which the action take places)" (Melucci, 1996a: 40) – they constantly (re-)negotiate these aspects of their action when they take part in collective direct action. In other words, there were on-going "re-assemblings" between the forms of collective action and the meanings of the collectives through repeated online-offline movement repertoires, which in turn continually provided the overlapping contexts through which networked activists explored their (partially) shared subjectivities with one another.

Chapter Conclusion

Whether in Admiralty, Mongkok, or Causeway Bay, networked activists of the Umbrella Movement actively constructed and collectively realized their activist identity and community in carrying out joint contentious activities, in which they made sense of their political subjectivities as much as undertook their political actions along with each other. Indeed, participation in collective direct action did not mean that the activists all believed in the same rationales behind their common contentious activities; nor did they assign the same level of importance and/or meaning to such actions. Rather than starting with and taking for granted the pre-existing nature of collective identity, I suggest that a more useful way to thinking about the collective and solidarity of networked activism is to return to and expand Touraine's (1984) and Melucci's (1989; 1996a; 1996b) understanding of activist identity as a field of tensions, and to investigate how networked activism as collective endeavor is linked to people's patterns of action and their partially common experiences in the emerging social-technological environments.

Whereas it has been noted in much social movement theory that collective identity and social networks determines the group membership and therefore the political action of the individuals by defining the criteria by which group members recognize themselves and are recognized by each other, I show how movement collective and solidarity emerge and develop with respect to the ways networked activists collectively undertake and perform contentious activities through/in engaging with new ICTs. In this view, networked activism as collective endeavor is less about "the common," whether referring to the globalizing digital media infrastructures, SNS-mediated collective action frames, or common socio-economic backgrounds, but more about the "being *in*-common" (Willson, 2012: 288, emphasis in the original) – that is, the (partially) common exposures and the situated practices oriented toward them – in which activist identity and community reside. Therefore, what the "members" of the same activist group shared were primarily the overlapping experiences of practicing such hybrid movement repertoires at protest events, rather than the guiding movement ideas or political values promoted by social media and digital networks.

Moreover, whereas flourishing new media studies, which (selectively) draw on the new social movement theory, tend to stress the communication practices and interactions permitted by social media and digital networks as primarily important to the formation of (collective

identity for) collective action, I submit that such exchanges for the development of movement collective and solidarity need not be restricted to discursive and narrative processes as it is often deemed. As I have contended and showed in this chapter, movement identity and activist community in contemporary social movements are formed not just in dialogues with other activists, but across common, embodied practices in respond to immediate protest events. As such, the collective and solidarity of networked activism are largely the result of people's emergent "performative engagement" (Pickering, 2010), as they emerge in the process of practicing contentious activities together with other digitally-enabled activists in developing a set of online-offline movement repertoires, associated with which they tentatively include and identify themselves as a group. The practicing of the hybrid movement repertoires – that is, the activists' emergent participation in shared local conflicts – is therefore suggested by this research to be generative of activist collective and movement solidarity. What is at stake here is no longer the value, message, or frame that are mobilized, but rather the mediated yet embodied experiences with which networked activists engage *in* as well as *for* (collective) direct action.

Yet, small, ad hoc activists groups based on common online-offline repertoires and (partially) shared protest experiences were not an absolute rejection to institutionalization or formalization to a certain extent, as they had no such rigid ideology to begin with when they came to identify and organize themselves as activist groups/communities as such. In contrast to the view that networked activism manifests a "culture logic of networking" explicitly upheld by activists (c.f. Juris, 2005; 2008), I thus contend that the "invisibility" of formal organizations or groups among networked activists were largely and at most the organic consequence of their modes of action, rather than a pre-defined goal of or solid belief in horizontal organizational models and decentralized coordination networks. In fact, there did emerge a number of more formalized groups/organizations among the networked activists in the Umbrella Movement, the coordination of which was also facilitated by the use of social media and digital technologies. Over time, many of them came to operate outside the action field of the occupation protest and served more than mere movement goals and purposes. Some of them also turned into long-term civic organizations after the Umbrella Movement ended, as discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE – NETWORKED ACTIVISM IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Chapter Introduction

While the endgame still remains just out of sight, new shades of local color have come into view. On 5 November [2014], a contingent of Cantonese speakers wearing red-tinted Guy Fawkes masks paraded through the streets. The next day, a group of yellow umbrella-bearing secondary students, organized informally via WhatsApp instant messenger, formed the shape of the Chinese character for "umbrella" and sang odes of freedom to media crews. As rain fell on Friday night, middle-class families distributed ginseng tea to occupiers huddled in makeshift but well-stocked supply stations … Sunday ended with a march to the China Liaison Office, responsible for coordinating the policies of the Beijing leadership with the Hong Kong administration, where an estimated 1,000 protesters placed yellow ribbons around the railings. (Rowen, 2014)

Traffic may have returned to the Mong Kok protest zone, but last week's clearance of the encampment has given rise to a new form of protest known as the "shopping tour" ["*gau wu* tour"], with activists taking to the crowded footpaths to convey their political message … Police officers are not amused. Sporadic clashes have broken out when police have singled out group members, subduing them without giving any reason, protesters say. Those singled out "often have quarrels with the cops beforehand, and that's why they are targeted", said Ada Chan, a former bank employee in her 50s, who joins the tour every night. "It's very ugly; they've even given up making up excuses and just take you away without explanation." … Police have taken dozens of people into custody since the *gau wu* tour started last week. But that has not scared away those determined to "shop". "The more protests I attend, the more injustice I see," Chan said. *(SCMP*, 2014c)

A year ago thousands of demonstrators staged more than 11 weeks of sit-ins on busy streets in Hong Kong in the most sustained street campaign for democratic reform ever mounted in the territory. In the first election since then, held on November 22nd [2015], a record 47% of the 3.1m people eligible to vote did so, to choose representatives to serve in District Councils which advise the government on a wide range of issues … About 50 participants in last year's "umbrella movement", as the sit-ins were dubbed (demonstrators used umbrellas to protect themselves from tear gas and pepper spray), were among the 935 people who campaigned for seats. These "umbrella soldiers", as such activists are often described, secured at least eight seats. (*The Economist*, 2015)

While social movements represent an important force for social change, this chapter examines how they can have impacts not only by meeting their stated goals but also by bringing unanticipated civic-political engagement, as well as the role of social media and digital networks in these processes. Conventionally, civic-political participation in relation to digital media usages has been conceptualized by the previous scholarship in certain immediate and direct ways (see Norris, 2002; Wright, 2011; Zoonen, 2005 for a critique), such as the uses of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) by social movement organizations (SMOs) for mass or more recently, so-called "personalized" forms of mobilization at protest events (e.g. Bennett et al., 2008; Bimber et al., 2012), and writing emails to representations to representatives or signing online petitions (e.g. Bimber, 1999; Earl and Kimport, 2011). Much of this extant research remains based on survey data with only limited numbers and/or types of civic-political engagements. It also tends to draw on events too near in time, thus missing formations that materialize over time and the social processes that nurture them in the long term (see Ortiz and Ostertag, 2014; Ostertag and Ortiz 2015 for a critique). As a consequence, the newer forms that resonate with contemporary online-offline environment and relations as well as their long-term impacts have been largely ignored and unrecognized (see also Howard, 2010; Schudson, 2006). To move beyond such shortcomings and their emphasis on quantitative methodologies, it would require an inductive methodology that allows us to discover various forms of civic-political engagement that we might not have noticed beforehand, and the social-technological processes that foster them.

In this research, I consider networked activism as continuums that extend from the level of everyday life practices and experiences to the level of collective solidarity and action. Networked activism, in this view, connotes digitally-enabled individuals' ability and attempt to implement or impact a particular project or practical task for progressive social change. Thus, this research assesses the people's civic-political engagement not only of the immediate outcomes within the Umbrella Movement, but also of that which emerged and developed outside and in the aftermath of the protest movement. As such, it critiques the conventional and insufficient understanding of social movements as complete and closed fields of action (see Diani, 2011; Melucci, 1996a for a critique). Furthermore, the rising popularity of using new ICTs in contemporary networked social movements has complicated this picture. As Theocharis (2015) submits, "[d]igial media have added inexhaustive creative and nonpolitical ways to engage in social and political life that

75

not only often appear to form the basis of political participation but also, in a plethora of everyday context, seem to become embedded into what eventually evolves to become apolitically meaningful act" (Theocharis, 2015: 1). This is particularly so in recent "networked social movements" (Castells, 2012), which consist of diverse self-joining activists and their networked efforts that are derived from and/or draw upon diverse mundane meanings and actions. They may in turn display a diversity of forms and dynamics that are illustrated by variations in the motivations of people who engaged in such collective action (Tilly, 2004; Melucci, 1989; 1996a; 1996b). We have yet to investigate how digitally-enabled individuals nowadays engage with new ICTs in order to reveal the new conditions of civic-political engagement and intervention.

However, in this regard, much of the recent research on the relationship between digital media and political involvement tends to stress the "flash-mob" model by "cartographically explain[ing] the network [but] without actually relating it to the material realities and lived experiences that mark and shape the events" (Shah, 2013: 668). For example, Bennett and Segerberg (2013) emphasize on the empowering potential of social media as "stitching technologies" based on "a set of elemental processes" including the production, curation, and dynamic integration of digital information (Bennett et al., 2014: 239). Similarly, Earl and Kimport (2011) argue that Internet usages may "shift the balance of participation costs downward over time as more and more collective actions are conducted online" (Earl and Kimport, 2011: p.75). These virtual processes are said to facilitate "organizing without organization," as the technical capacity of social media allow for the quick aggregation of public around contentious issues and their potential for flash mobilizations – a type of collective action that requires "only ephemeral engagements from participation" (Earl et al., 2014: 1). Along these lines, Shirky (2008) and Bimber et al. (2005) alike submit a model of flash mobilization, in which collective action becomes so inexpensive that small time and content investments encourage many atomized individuals to spontaneously take part in contentious politics. Juris (2012) also claims that there is a new "logic of aggregation" at work on social networking sites (SNSs) in the Occupy Movement. As such, by "focus[ing] on questions of network structure and some limited measures of short term political success" (Couldry, 2015: 619), recently flourishing new media studies tend to embrace the ontological assumption of the spontaneously emerging digital networks for contentious politics or civil society, triggered by some kind of relentless

connective drive by social media usages (Servaes and Hoyng, 2015). In fact, these views have been criticized by some critical scholars for promoting the illusion of purely expressive forms of digital engagement having a meaningful impact on social change, while they are primarily used for entertainment and recreation (Morozov, 2011).

Indeed, these popular discourses on digital media and civic-political involvement not only obscures the embeddedness of mobile social media in other social relations and activities as repeatedly contended and shown in previous chapters, but it also blinds us from acknowledging the civic-political nature of much digitally-enabled activities and their ramifications for both the individuals and society at large, particularly when they are combined with non-media "mediators" (Latour, 2005) in broader patterns and routines of social life (see also Couldry and Markham, 2007; Moores, 2012). As Wright (2011) submits, "people don't discuss politics in one place or using one technology … the impact of the internet on political communication cannot be determined by studying blogs, Twitter or Facebook in isolation" (Wright, 2011: 254). Therefore, it would not be adequate to suggest that unintended (non-political) digital media usages would somehow accidentally or by themselves become or turn into contentious politics or civil society, as if there is "a particular agency kind of agency associated with social media" (Markham, 2014: 91) in creating a sort of "myth of us" – "a myth of *natural collectivity* whose paradigmatic form lies in how we gather on platforms such as Facebook" (Couldry, 2015: 620, emphasis in the original). Conversely, robust civic-political participation involves specific strategies and projects that are themselves "temporally emergent" (Pickering, 1993) and unfold within historically constituted and locally situated hybrid contentious practices/repertoires (see previous chapters). It emerges from daily (re-)assemblages or negotiations of the socio-material consequences of mobile social media and digital networks (see also Barassi; 2013; Fenton and Barassi; 2011; Markham, 2014), as opposed to network-diffused creative autonomy of individuals (c.f. Castells, 2009), and is thus rooted in and constantly interacting with everyday actions and conflicts.

As I have argued and demonstrated throughout this research, while new media technology forms part of how digitally-enabled individuals conduct their civic-political involvement, attention to what they do with mobile social media and digital networks – that is their online-offline practice/repertoires – bring into focus their performative doings and situated experiences that go beyond attention to the technical capacity of the Internet and online communication

process/content/frame in significant ways. The previous chapters have mainly focused on the movement dimensions of the Umbrella Movement, by explicating the digitally-enabled individuals' paths to networked activism as well as their movement solidarity and activist collectivity. This chapter is now extended into the day-to-day aspect of the movement for democracy in Hong Kong. Again, with the networked activists' stories, it aims to illustrate how contemporary networked activism simultaneously manifests both the more visible forms of protest events and the daily aspects of civic-political engagement. It also reveals how the networked activists (re-)constructed and negotiated their movement experiences and practices in other domains of their moral and social life. Above all, this chapter seeks to provide a more nuanced understanding of the broader and long-term influences of networked activism, one that places it in the context of wider ranges of potential at both the individual and societal levels beyond the immediate protest movement field.

Networked Activism in Everyday Life

As discussed in the last chapter, frontline activities such as building blockades, confronting the police, and handling the counter-protesters collectively undertaken by networked activists were no doubt fundamental to both the creation and preservation of the key occupied areas in Admiralty, Mongkok, and Causeway Bay. Yet, besides "frontline activism," networked activists also undertook diverse "support provision" activities throughout the Umbrella Movement with the use of mobile social media (Lee and Chan, 2015). While many networked activists that were interviewed in this research did frequently cite Facebook and Whatsapp as the crucial new media technology with which they initiated and developed these particular projects in support of the democracy movement, many of these "civic collective actions" (Sampson et al., 2005) were in fact intimately rooted in the routines of their everyday life, rather than spontaneous, unintended online activities triggered by SNSs usages.

As the everyday lives of the networked activists became increasingly entangled with their hybrid contentious practices or repertoires, the linkage between movement networks and day-to-day relationships, especially those mediated by mobile social media, also became blurred. John and Valarie, as mentioned in chapter three, were the members of the same drama group. During the incident at the Civic Square (see chapters two), they went to Headquarters by self-organizing on Whatsapp (see chapter three). After witnessing the police violence against networked activists

on both 26 and 27 September, they promptly mobilized their drama group on Whatsapp aiming to [self-]produce useful protest tools and supplies for the protesters on the ground:

> Our drama group was immediately [self-]mobilized online and decided that we shall undertake our own [civic collective] action. More than a dozen us [self-]organized a first-aid station for injured people who evacuated from the frontline…

> While some of us went online and searched for information about how to deal with pepper spray, tear gas, etc., others came to make masks, bio-saltwater, and towels for the people who were affected by pepper spray… We paid for all these things ourselves.

Yet, there were also some minor setbacks in their civic collective action:

> Of course, not everything was perfect. For example, we learned from the Internet that lemon water was good for relieving the pain brought by tear gas, but the volunteer doctors in the occupied area actually told us that that was not the case. Many bottles of them were then wasted…

> Indeed, there were many first aid stations or other kinds of ad hoc help centers there that they were also instantly set up by self-joining activists like us. But the downside was the fact that we were not well-coordinated with each other, so that many of our services were redounded and thus not very helpful…

Other digitally-enabled individuals, who belonged to or were part of formal non-movement organizations and other professionalized sectors, also sought to employ mobile social to undertake service-based networked activism in support of the movement. Since they found their immediate referent for aggregation in such pre-existing institutions, they tended to alter and/or modify these pre-established real-world relationships in which they were embedded for different types of civic collective action. For instance, at the early stage of the movement, rumors were everywhere on SNSs (see chapter three). A popular Facebook page, named "LIVE: Verified updates," was established by a group of university student who sought to carry out investigative journalism on protest information:

> During the early stage of the Umbrella Movement, Gloria, a student of journalism at the University of Hong Kong (HKU), complained on her Facebook status about the widespread

rumors on the SNS. She commented that networked activists who were at the same time journalism professionals shall step in to help verify protest information for the activists.

Lydia, another student in the same school, sent Gloria a massage on Facebook after reading her status update. Lydia suggested that they as students of journalism could establish a Facebook page to provide such services to the people for the good of the movement…

Within just a few days, the Facebook page accumulated more than 100,000 likes and was widely used among networked activists…

Soon thereafter, more people joined to work for the page including KY and Isaac who then became the key members of the Facebook page. Although they did not mention on the Facebook page… but in fact almost all the volunteers working for the page were Year 1 students of journalism at HKU… (Lee, 2015: 68-75)

In fact, not only did the students activate the pre-existing online-offline networks and relations in support of the movement, their civic collective action also helped alter and/or modify some of the pre-established routines and goals in the institution over time:

Later on, the Faculty knew about the existence of the page and its purpose. They then decided to offer the conference room of the Department of Journalism for the students to set up the news center for verifying protest information for other networked activists… There were as many as forty students working there together at the same time… (Lee, 2015: 68-75)

Another contour of everyday networked activism created from scratch by drawing on both on- and offline civic collective action could be the volunteer driver services provided by a group of volunteer truck/van drivers. Simpson, who, along with several other truck/van drivers, was the key organizer of a group of volunteer drivers in the Umbrella Movement that was based on Facebook and operated outside both SMOs and the labor union. Simpson described how they had come to undertake such everyday networked activism in support of the Umbrella Movement, as well as how this project was derived from their everyday online networks and offline relations, and then became stabilized overtime:

Initially, we were just a group of [truck/van] drivers on the same [informal] Facebook page of our industry. It was the night of 26 September [2014], the night that the students and citizens entered the Civic Square and were surrounded by the police. One of the truck divers [of the

group on the Facebook], just like many other angry and saddened citizens back then, did not want to sit there and do nothing. He then called for people to donate supplies to the protest area at the Civic Square in the [Facebook] group … The next day, we gathered a dozen drivers and three vans for transporting and distributing supplies to the people at the square.

Later on, as we also got in touch with the members of Scholarism and the Hong Kong Federation of Students (HKFS) [the two major students SMOs in the movement (see chapter two)] that day, we started their volunteer driver services on a regular basis. We left our contacts for the people there, and if there would be citizens who would want to donate any supplies, we would pick them up and get them to the sites [in the occupied protest zones]. The peak period would be the first two weeks, during which we helped provide about six tents, 300 boxes of bottle water, and food.

Do you still remember the night that the police released the tear-gas [for the first time]? The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) originally promised to remain 24-hour open for the protesters but had to drive all the people out at the midnight due to the suspected police action to arrest protesters in there. At that time, there were numerous supplied there that needed to be moved to other safer places. It would not be possible without the help of these drivers … (Lee, 2015: 291-293)

Simpson also reflected on how his civic-political subjectivity and action evolved in the everyday networked activism, turning into further and another related civic collective action:

I remember that night. It was too late for me to catch the last train to get home [after working as a volunteer truck/van driver in the occupation protest], so I had to take a minibus from Wan Chai to Mongkok. Yet, the fee was doubled that day, and I had no choice but paid 30 [Hong Kong] dollars for that trip [note: the fee for taking minibus in Hong Kong was supposed to be at fixed prices]. I had even heard that they [the minibus drivers] charged people for 50 [HK] dollars back then.

Later on, since we were so pissed, we tried to drive these minibuses away and even made use of barriers to occupy their parking areas … Although we were the minority among all the van drivers in our industry, we were still able to mobilize around 50 to 60 vans to provide free services for the people. Before the movement, we were far from unified. But because of the occupation protest, we have now gathered a group of passionate truck/van drivers working together. Strong emotions and ties have been created between us. (Lee, 2015: 293)

Switching to another form of civic collective action, as a social worker, Ka-ming has always believed in social justice and fair social systems. However, the violence repression and wrongfully treatment by the Hong Kong police that he witnessed in the protest movement had completely destroyed his dream of a just and fair Hong Kong and had become the procurer of his initiation of an everyday network activism:

> The movement had pushed us to confront the ridiculous status quo. Police officers were allowed to attack protesters who were peaceful and those who already under arrest. They did so without any consequences. Also, the "blue ribbons" could hit random protesters in the streets and threatened them with knives …

> On 15 October [2014], at around 4 am, after watching how a protester who had already been under arrest was attacked by seven police officers in a dark corner [but then filmed and reported by the news media], Kai-ming got so angry and immediately went on his Whatsapp groups to discussed with his social worker friends about how to response to the Hong Kong police. "This is a very serious matter. You can't just shouted a few slogans and let it go. Eventually, we came up with the idea to report to the police." (Lee, 2015: 185)

Ka-ming further explained what this "reporting the police to the police" was about. He shared a similar story of civic collective action for the Umbrella Movement that also drew on professional networks and ties both on- and offline:

> [On the same day] in the evening of 15 October [2014], we [Kai-ming and his friends] mobilized about a thousand of social workers [on Whatsapp] to gather at the Hong Kong Police Headquarters (HKPHQ) in Wan Chai. Among us, about a hundred people were lining up to report the case [of police attacking on the protester who were under arrest] to the police outside the HKPHQ forming a long queue…

> Later on, as more and more people came to join us after work, we gathered over a thousand people outside HKPHQ including the citizens who came to root for us …

> Kai-ming and his friends worked [with Whatsapp] from around 7 in the morning to prepare for the [civic collective] activism. It then kicked off in the evening and ended in the midnight. Eventually, the total number of people who came to join the activism turned out to be a lot more than they had expected … (Lee, 2015: 185-187)

Therefore, the practical re-workings of mundane online networks and offline relations created the socio-material context through which everyday routines and practices became part of the ways in which the digitally-enabled individuals undertook networked activism for the Umbrella Movement. As revealed, their development and continuation largely drew upon the immediate goals and needs that emerged from and were configured in the protest situations in the real time. The performativity of these everyday networked activisms or civic collective actions of networked activists was thus "*temporally emergent* in practice" (Pickering, 1993: 564, emphasis in the original) in that they bound together a heterogeneous assembly of diverse social and technological actors, which for the period of the particular project or task were provisionally enacted and stabilized. Notably, many of these hybrid practices and experiences also, in turn, altered and/or modified the people's contours of civic-political agency along with their everyday routines and relations.

Civic Activist Group beyond the Immediate Movement Field

As discussed in the last chapter, networked activists, once involved in the Umbrella Movement, began undertaking diverse online-offline movement repertoires in correspondence to different modes of protect action in distinct local conflicts. As a result, a sense of collectivity gradually developed through their common ways of doing activism (see chapter four). Over time, some of the networked activists started to establish more enduring networks or even loose forms of organization to facilitate their (continued) civic-political engagement with the use of social media and digital technologies.

The Umbrella Movement brought together multiple waves of digitally-enabled individuals from all walks of life. As Christianity has been practiced by more than one-tenth of the Hong Kong population, the movement for democracy also involved a large number of Christians who took it to the streets (*Quartz*, 2014b). In fact, many of the movement's high-profile activists or leaders, such as Scholarim's conventioneer Joshua Wong and Occupy Central co-founders Benny Tai and Yiu-ming Chu, are Christians (Chu is a also Baptist minister) (*Quartz*, 2014b). Yet, at that time, many of the local churches in Hong Kong had not been supportive for the protest movement in general. In particular, there had been a strong tradition or culture of political apathy in these Christian churches. As Catharine, a Christian networked activist, vividly described in the interview:

Ironically, among all my relatives and friends, I found the Christian fellows in my church the least supportive to and the most distanced from my activism.

We had a Whatsapp gourp in our church, consisting of 30-ish people across a wide range of backgrounds and ages … Indeed, there were a lot of discussions on the Umbrella Movement when the tear-gas attacks first occurred. They soon divided into two groups – the pro-movement people and the pro-government ones. But the pro-movement group soon became the minority, while most of the upper-middle class Christians supported the government and the young, working class people tended to be apathetic about the issue at hand. Only a few people usually at my age [in the early 30s] would really join the occupation protest in support of the Umbrella Movement.

Moreover, as we [the pro-movement Christians] intensively debated with those who supported the government on Whatsapp, people in the church suddenly came to declare that our Whatsapp group was only created for religious matters and should not be used to disucss politics… It was the same when you got back to the church. I felt that people already formed a sort of consensus or unspoken rule that we were supposed to avoid discussing all these controversial issues.

In sum, what I found was that my church was like operating in another world, in which people talked about bibles in the abstract, without any mentioning of the occupation, the gangsters beating up students, or the clearance of the occupation sites.

This continued disappointment among many Christians who joined the Umbrella Movement came to a breaking point with the counter-movement practices of the Kong Fok Church of the Evangelical Free Church of China [a Hong Kong church]. As an upper-class, conservative congregation with many government officials, entrepreneurs, and celebrities among its members, the Kong Fok Church's leadership publicly condemned the democracy movement when it broke out. Besides, during the tear-gas attacks, while a number of downtown congregations welcomed those traumatized and injured protesters, the Kong Fok Church, which is located adjacent to the occupied protest area in Admiralty, posted a sign that banned protesters from using its rest area.

Despite some of the churches' discouragements, many Christian networked activists continued to take part in the Umbrella Movement. Some of them found each other based on the same religious faith and similar political concerns, and came to gather among themselves in the

Umbrella Movement. Unsurprisingly, collectively interpreting and making sense of their collective action against the backdrop of their common Christian values was a major and urgent task among the Christian networked activists, especially in the face of the church's "official" interpretation and opposition. Catharine revealed how she found such her Christian civic activist group and how people practiced such religion-related civic collective action in it:

> In the occupation area in Admiralty, I saw and then walked in a Christian booth for counseling, as I was pretty upset and confused about many things in the movement. Since then, I got to know more people from there, who were in fact all Christians from different local churches but had been encountering the same difficulty – that is, they could not find any or enough support in their own churches. We then came to form a group or, maybe you can say, organization [although not yet officially registered] called the "Christian Social Care Fellowship" [as translated by the interviewer from Cantonese], the operation of which heavily relied on Facebook. We would gather every week to study the bible and to discuss how we could relate our activism to our religion … We would like to act correctly and religiously in the movement, as well as in other aspects of life…

Moreover, as the Christian activists increasingly found their contentious activities resonated with the broader collective sentiments among other non-Christian activists in the same protest movement, they saw it as an opportunity to expand their civic-political activities beyond their Christian community and to serve also the fellow citizens both within and outside the occupied areas. As Catharine continued to explain:

> Our group's activism was extended to other contentious-political issues after the Umbrella Movement and even until today, as we have gathered a pack of [civic-politically] active sisters and brothers.

> More and more, we have undertaken political contention as a group. Whenever there were some "big issues," we would make our stand clear to the public as a group. For example, we published our own statement to condemn the attack on Joshua Wong on a local newspaper [the convener of Scholarism was attacked by some stranger on his way home after going to cinema with his girlfriend in the aftermath of the movement]. We also actively posted on our Facebook page alternative information and discourses on the June 4th [annual anniversary of the 1989 Trainman Incident]. Sometimes, we would also self-organize to participate in other political protests.

Tony, one of the activist founders of this Christian civic activist group, further illustrated how the group/organization was developed and transformed into a large civic-politcal project after the Umbrella Movement, which has aimed to enhance the common people's contentious-political awareness against the undemocratic Hong Kong government and the overall unfair system:

Initially, we hoped to group together different people who were all frustrated with the political apathy in their churches…

Now, in the aftermath of the Umbrella Movement, one of our missions is to establish a sort of "civic supermarkets" in different local districts in Hong Kong. From our own experiences, especially from those that we gained in the movement by chatting with other protesters, while people tended to think that the lower class people like those living in Tin Shui Wai [a district commonly regarded as socio-economically disabled in Hong Kong] would be the "blue ribbons," we found that these people were in fact exploited [by both the government and the capitalists] the most.

We are talking about grassroots people who work twelve hours a day, and could only shop in the only supermarket in the district, which raises the prices for all commodities while claiming that they were "on discount." They [the government and the large businesses co-opting with the government] drove all the small businesses out of the market to create a monopoly. Then, they started selling things 30% to 40% more expansive [than the original small businesses in the local communities] …

So we hoped to accomplish this task. It is through going into the local communities and serving the people directly, we could enhance the civic-political awareness among the general public. For example, we can sell cheaper rice and provide free delivery for the poor working class people. And it is when we deliver the everyday commodities for these people, we would have a chance to get in touch with them. We can discuss with and/or explain to them how unjust our lives have been under the current system…

Now, we have been keeping up to go into local communities every weekend. We already finished the first round of the 18 districts of Hong Kong. Recently, we just started the second round…

While helping the poor and working class to deal with their daily issues such as shopping for cheaper food and necessities, we promote social justice by informing people about the unfairness in the current system. More and more, the "social caring" nature of our "Christian Social Care Fellowship" has been and will be emphasized more than its "Christian" aspect. It is through the means of "social caring" that we expose the political injustice in the government and society at large. Therefore, our goal is to first tackle people's everyday concerns, and then to bring them back to (contentious) politics…

As such, the civic activist group switched its focus from Christianity to providing social caring and supporting services for the common people so as to promote wider civic-political engagement outside the protest movement. Yet, as Tony noted, rather than a long desired project or planned goal, the Christian networked activists came to realize that they had and could create such a network or organization with such an larger common goal only as their civic collective action evolved within the protest movement in the real time.

Of course, the Christian organization was not the sole civic activist group that emerged from the Umbrella Movement. "A Pen, a Chair, and a Notebook" (translated by the interviewer from Cantonese) was another such civic activist group initiated by a few networked activists in the occupied area, who also sought to extend their civic-political engagement beyond the immediate movement field. The initial mission of the group was to report on the other individual activists in the occupied protest site and to tell about their activist stories to the people outside the movement communities. Vicky described how she was incorporated into such network or organization by switching between on- and offline spaces in undertaking the civic collective action:

At that time, numerous [civic activist] groups emerged from the movement. I happened to look at this one on Facebook. And I saw that they were calling for people to join their group to write and produce more activist stories…

So I went to their first gathering in the occupied area [in Admiralty] that night, and there were a dozen of us … Since then, I took part in the group semi-actively, as I was not among the most active ones…

My task was to interview and take pictures of the individual activists in order to write investigative stories about the common people's concerns and efforts in relation to the

Umbrella Movement. I would post these stories on our Facebook group page for the general public … We also employed Whatsapp through which we could discuss in details about how we would do with each activist story…

At the end, I only managed to produce three activist stories by myself. They took a lot of time, you know, from interviewing, composing, to writing and editing … But we had almost twenty people in the group, so we did produce enough activist stories as each of us did our best … It was quite popular back then when we first released the stories [on the Facebook group page]…

We tried to avoid reporting on famous people [such as activist leaders] and focused on the common people. For example, when we saw a girl drawing a pro-movement picture on a wall, we would go interview her. This is the kind of stories we sought to produce. You thought these people were small potatoes, but they were going to tell you very interesting stories…

The civic activist group to which Vicky referred and devoted was an informal yet focused civic activist group, which operated across both on- and offline spheres of action. As Vicky noted, the formulated goal of the civic activist group was to provide a deeper understanding of the individual activists and thus the Umbrella Movement as a whole among the Hong Kong people. Thus, its mission was not to undertake any practical tasks for advancing the occupation protest in the traditional sense of social movements. But rather, it was dedicated to enhancing people's political awareness through civic education with the social movement, particularly among those who were outside the Umbrella Movement and in the society at large.

Collective Direct Actions in the Aftermath of the Umbrella Movement

Towards the end of the movement, Mongkok was the first among the three key occupied areas cleared by the police.[4] After a series of brutal confrontations between the networked activists and the police officers that took place between 26 and 28 November 2014, the government authorities demolished the activists' encampments in Mongkok, tearing down tents and banners, and arrested those who refused to leave (*Quartz*, 2014c). As the networked activists returned to Mongkok as "regular citizens" after the clearance, they saw no opportunities to re-occupy the main streets; and yet they were not willing to give up on their political contention. These more radical networked activists of Mongkok came to change their strategy and engaged in initially

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[4] The last occupation protest site was the one in Admiralty. It was demolished by the police and the authorities on 11 December 2014.

non-violent but later-on confrontational walkabouts in advocating for the democracy movement, code-named "shopping tour" or "*gau wu* tour" in Mandarin.[5] Yet, as this was in part regarded as an attempt to reoccupy the protest site (albeit networked activists might have different interpretations of the practical as well as symbolic goal of the "shopping tour"), it has tested the patience of the police and has resulted repeatedly in violent reactions against participants and even bystanders of these "illegal gatherings" (Ortmann, 2015).

Ellen was among these networked activists when the very first *gau wu* activism took place. When asked about how the (first) *gau wu* activism came to occur, she told an interesting activist story, one which marked the (first) *gau wu* activism as a contingent event that emerged from the ad hoc contentious activities of protestors who had no choice but to act within the constraints of the protest situations:

That day [29 November 2014, the first day after the clearance of the occupied area in Mongkok], we were trying to re-occupy the protest sites in Mongkok. We tried many times but we were outnumbered [by the police]. But eventually it turned into what has been known as the *gau wu* tour...

As the police deployed large forces in the Nathan Road, we were not able to move forward, and we got stacked in the Sai Yeung Choi Street. So we were trying to occupy the Sai Yeung Choi Stree, even though we could not take the Nathan Road. But then, the police got crazy, really crazy. They charged into the crowd beating whomever they saw including those who just stood still aside … They also randomly pulled a certain protestor out of the crowd, followed by a large group of armed police officers who began beating up the single, isolated protester …

So in practice, due to the violent repression, we were not able to re-occupy Mongkok. And yet, as the police kept shouting at us through loudspeakers claiming that we were not allowed to assemble in the streets, we started to pretend and shout back to the police that we were just "walking" and "leaving," as opposed to "assembling." But in fact, multiple waves of us kept walking around in the same streets as individuals so that the streets became congested by us.

Then, the (first) *gau wu* tours emerged. Back then, CY Leung [the Chief Executive of Hong Kong] condemned the Umbrella Movement, saying that the movement had hurt the economy of

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[5] Although people speak Cantonese instead of Mandarin in Hong Kong, the networked activists intended to label the collective action as "shopping tours" in Mandarin so as to subversively presenting the "politically correctness" in mocking the Hong Kong government.

Hong Kong by scarring off tourists and local people, who he claimed would otherwise go shopping for the good of the local economy and businesses. So we were "answering the call" and "shopping" around…

So the term "gau wu" was both what we said to the police in the protest in practice as well as a symbolic slogan that we were shouting loud together.

As Ellen has just explained, instead of a planned collective direct action, the "shopping tour" emerged as the result of improvisations by the networked activists, who were in fact trapped in the historical-material situations in Mongkok.

While the first "*gau wu* tour" would have taken place anyway regardless of the use of new ICTs, this particular form of contentious practice then turned into a larger scale and more organized type of collective direct action and became a rather popular repertoire with the use of social media usages and digital technologies. Let's turn to Ken's activist story to see how diverse networked activists back then began taking part in the networked activism in relation to their everyday social media usages. As he had attended the *gau wu* tours for several times, Ken's experience also helped understand the collective atmosphere and dynamics in them:

There were no particular [movement] organizations. There were simply people getting self-organized on the Internet.

[The interviewer: Self-organized on the Internet? How? And where on the Internet?]

Facebook, for sure. In my own experience, I saw people self-organizing on the Facebook pages of local districts such as "Mongkok" and "Taipo."

There would be messages/posts like: "How about we go have dinner together tonight at 8 pm in somewhere in Mongkok?" Then people would know it would be a call for a *gau wu* tour …

[The interviewer: You said you didn't know these people. Then, how did you join them there?]

Right, so when you got there at 8 pm, you would see a group of random people; some of them would fashioned themselves with certain symbolic items, maybe not, like bringing a yellow umbrella. They started walking together when the time came, and then people would know that they were having a *gau wu* tour …

[The interviewer: What exactly did you do together [in the *gau wu* tour]?]

We just walked along, most of the time. But it was clear to us that by the nature of *gau wu* tour, you had to deny that you were assembling. So you won't be wearing identical clothing, or bringing the same item, so that you can't be accused [by the police] for illegal assembling. We claimed that we were just pedestrians. Yet, we were all walking along as a large crowd in the same direction and occasionally shouting some pro-movement slogans together…

The police would try to separate us from other people and follow us the whole time, seeking opportunities to arrest us…

So part of the mission of *gau wu* activism was to be "legit," so that they [the police] could not obtain any excuses to put a charge against us, while at the same time we were protesting and shouting slogans … We were making visible something by protesting, but we had to make ourselves not being arrested for [illegal] assembling.

Jason, who took part in the "shopping tour" almost every weekend, also witnessed how such a more concretized activist group realized their collective efficacy in a similar:

Yes, I went alone. But when you got there, you would see a group of people standing more or less next to each other. You might even recognize some of the faces that you had seen or briefly talked to in the protest movement in the past two months. Some of them were even you Facebook "friends," whom you had added after chatting them at random protest events but had not contacted since…

On HKGolden [one of the most popular online discussion forums in Hong Kong, which was also said to help mobilize the Lung Wo Road Incident and the break-in of Legislative Council in the Umbrella Movement (see chapter four)], you would find random people called for *gau wu* tours every week …

There were no particular SMOs in organizing the *gau wu* tours. I couldn't identify any particular persons as the key organizers either. But as the *gau wu* tours were repeated for a few times, people who attended the activism started to get to know each other in person. They exchanged mobile phone numbers for establishing Whatsapp groups among themselves for similar activism in the future.

Thus, networked activists discussed the suitable time and place for the "shopping tour" among themselves on Facebook and online forums such as HKGolden. Later on, Whatsapp also became a popular social media among the networked activists, after the networked activists had

obtained more of each other's contacts in the collective direct action. They could then form more intimate, ad hoc activist groups on the SNS. Christine, a high school student, went to join the "shopping tour" by herself after the clearance of the last protest site [in Admiralty on 11 December 2014] after seeing a call for a *gau wu* tour on Facebook. She recalled her direct online-offline experience of the networked activism:

> After the clearance of Admiralty, where I had camped for the past two months, I cried for several times as the police destroyed both my treasurable memories there as well as my high hope for the future of Hong Kong.

> I got to know about the *gau wu* tours, as they were widely reported by the both social and news media back then. I went to join them after seeing a call on Facebook for a *gau wu* tour …

> It was very scary. The police would randomly searched people's bags and belonging in the streets in Mongkok. They would pour everything out from your bags and examined the items one by one. Maybe because I was in school uniform, I was not suspended and searched by the police…

> That day, I saw three other students in school uniforms standing there and waiting for the *gau wu* tour to begin. So we started chatting with each other. This was how we got to be friends, and we exchanged phone numbers and then to established contacts on Whataspp…

> We would use our own Whataspp group to self-organize for the *gau wu* activism within and yet in addition to the larger *gau wu* groups such as those on HKGolden and Facebook. We would immediately notify each other on Whatsapp once we arrived as for providing backup or support. We would also discuss just among the four of us our *gau wu* experiences…

> In the streets, other people would sometimes root for us: "Students, cheer up!" Of course, some counter-movement protestors would insult us in foul languages…

As such, between late November 2014 into early 2015, dozens or even hundreds of networked activists, particularly those who used to camp or base in the occupied area in Mongkok before the police's clearance, frequently initiated and attended the "shopping tours." They did so not only to express their political desires and wills, but also as a practical repertoire in challenging the authority of the Hong Kong government and its strong-arm – the Hong Kong

police – whose violence and misconducts stood out throughout the Umbrella Movement, especially in Mongkok.

Chapter Conclusion

The online-offline repertoires and immediate encounters of the digitally-enabled individuals in the Umbrella Movement were no doubt vital precursors for them to continue and further their civic-political involvement outside as well as in the aftermath of the protest movement. In the previous chapters, I demonstrated how the people's hybrid contentious practices and experiences in the protest movement provided the necessary contexts of extended and heightened practical needs and political concerns. And as such, this chapter has revealed how these crystallized needs and concerns were practiced and performed in other domain of their social and moral life.

This chapter has, again, argued for a post-structuralist, practice-oriented approach to understanding networked activism in everyday life that goes beyond the technical capacity and mere attention to online processes. The core contribution is in advancing the argument that everyday online-offline routines and relations have potentials for contentious politics in that networked social movements are never separate systems from mundane meanings and actions, but rather the crystallizations or, in some cases, the transformations of them. By the same token, digitally-enabled individuals (re-)make and experience the meanings of their everyday lives with social media and digital technologies in engaging in protest movements, in which they (re-)assembled and negotiated their civic-political subjectivity and action in diverse, unanticipated ways. In this sense, social movements are not merely the vehicle, but also the context of social change (Eyerman and Jamison, 1998; see also Melucci, 1989; 1996a; 1996b; Touraine, 1984). And if this is indeed what contemporary networked social movements are about, then it is something that we need to account for in our examination of how they impact on both the individuals and society at large. As I have suggested, a conceptual framework derived from actor-network theory and performance studies serves well the need of a post-structuralist, practice-oriented approach to networked activism that seeks to move away from media-centrism. Precisely, it enables us to attend to social media and digital networks as part of the constituencies of our performative doing and embodied experiences, both as embedded in protest movement and as practiced or performed within the flows of everyday life. It calls attention to the relationship of digital media to other non-media "mediators" (Latour, 2005). In other words, to

situate new media technology in civic-political engagement, we need to examine how new media technology is implicated in the ways people's paths to networked activism (in the broader sense) are constituted. This means to look at the various ways in which new ICTs are inserted in practical activity in the real time, when people shift swiftly between the immediate movement fields and everyday life.

In the individuals activists' stories, social media and digital networked were embedded in their networked activism in different ways. In turn, the impacts of networked activism on the people's civic-political involvements also vary. New ICTs are often inseparable from both the people's engagements in political activism and their continuations in everyday life. Yet, these engagements and continuations were neither fixed nor pre-defined, as if they were simply transmitted/framed by digital media or fully controlled by individual actors. But rather, they were part of the ongoing processes, in/through which the people's subjectivity and action are articulated within concrete hybrid practices/repertoires and immediate encounters. In this chapter, I have considered these social-technological processes across a series of civic-political engagements beyond the protest movement, ranging from support provision activism to the development of civic activist groups and more radical forms of political contention, in order to highlight that they are important and relevant to study. The consistent focus is on how more civic-politically active subjectivity and action emerge in as well as for these activities, and the places of new ICTs as performed relations in them. It is, as I contend, by focusing on these questions, instead of on the technical capacity of new ICTs or their general role as enabling online platforms *per se*, that we can better comprehend the ongoing production of networked activism in everyday life and its potentials for intervention and change.

CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSION

Chapter Introduction

The Umbrella Movement was arguably the largest and longest episode of collective contention in the history of Hong Kong, where political activism for democracy surged since the conservative reform to Hong Kong's electoral system was announced by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC) of People's Republic of China (PRC) in late August 2014 (see chapter two). Yet, whereas Hong Kong lacks the tradition of radical protests and its political culture has not been a fertile ground for civil disobedience, the Umbrella Movement enjoyed considerable public support in the city, especially amongst the emerging "networked individuals" (Rainie and Wellman, 2012) whose knowledge, frames of reference, codes of attention, and leisure time activities are nowadays intimately rooted in new media environments. This research sets out to examine how the digitally-enabled individuals came to engage in and sustain the movement for democracy in Hong Kong. It sought to reconstruct the actual practices and lived experiences that constituted the people's paths to/of networked activism in order to better understand how they initiated their political activism, how they came together and acted in concert throughout the two and a half months, as well as how their movement involvement interacted with their everyday routines and relations, facilitated by the use of social media and digital technologies.

In this research, I have argued that the digitally-enabled individuals' networked activism emerged as on-going, socio-material assemblages, in which the people's activist identity and political action arose through a set of situated, social-technological practices within particular historical moments. This argument has been illustrated throughout this dissertation by demonstrating how the digitally-enabled individuals variously "mangled" with the environment and technology (Pickering, 1995) in coming to political activism. And I have contended that rather than the results of certain common individual attributes or collective autonomy granted by new information and communication technologies (ICTs), their paths to/of networked activism unfolded as a series of "performative engagements" constantly constituted and reconstituted by diverse social and material constituencies in action (Pickering, 2010). As such, the people's actual online-offline practices and embodied experiences at concrete protest events have been

suggested to be utterly important to the development of their political subjectivity and contentious activity throughout different periods of the Umbrella Movement.

The Umbrella Movement took place largely as unexpected contentious activities at the Civic Square outside the Hong Kong Government Headquarters in Admiralty, triggered by police violence and improvised by networked activists. At this early stage of the Umbrella Movement, as I have argued and showed, the networked activism of the digitally-enabled individuals arose in a series of real-time social-technological practices that were temporally enacted in correspondence to the protest situations. Rather than pre-defined action orientations and activist roles, it was their embodied experiences in the movement participation that enhanced or even, in some cases, altered their levels and modes of movement involvement. Thus, much of what the networked activists did at the early stage of the movement has to be understood as tentative steps in response to the unfolding protest events in which they were embedded. Far from being articulated through a focused discourse of democracy or being coordinated by institutionalized organizations, their activist identity and political action were advanced in alignment with their immediate needs for and goals of innovating new media-related protest strategies or tactics, which in turn enabled the evolvement of the people's paths to/of networked activism along with their embodied experiences therein.

And then, the chaos created by the tear-gas attack by the police on 28 September 2014, produced another massive wave of contentious activities among digitally-enabled individuals. It eventually led to the (self-)mobilization of a much larger scale of crowds (It was reported that there were over 200,000 people taking to the streets on that day.), and spread to other major districts of the city, such as Mongkok and Causeway Bay. Many people came to take part in the creation as well as the preservation of the different occupation protest areas, resulting in diverse online-offline movement repertoires, which were derived from the people's real-world encounters and struggles in distinct local conflicts. As a consequence, the formation of activist groups and movement communities in the Umbrella Movement took place as digitally-enabled individuals collectively undertook common online-offline movement repertoires within overlapping protest situations. As such, rather than an expression of pre-defined collective identity by the members of the same organizations or social groups, what the people were

96

dealing with were chiefly the partially shared experiences of practicing common hybrid contentious activities in collective direct action.

While I have demonstrated how the networked activists collectively performed movement repertoires and construct activist community in practice, I have also showed how they extended their movement practices and experiences into their everyday life as well as the society at large. Specifically, I have illustrated how the practical re-workings of mundane online networks and offline relations created the socio-material context through which everyday routines and practices became part of the ways in which the digitally-enabled individuals undertook networked activism for the Umbrella Movement and beyond. Besides, I have revealed how these dynamic processes in turn altered and/or modified the people's contours of civic-political agency along with their day-to-day routines and relations. In so doing, I have explicated how contemporary networked activism simultaneously manifests the more visible forms of protest events as well as the daily aspects of civic-political engagement.

Contributions to Social Movement and Internet Research

In the introductory chapter, chapter one, I contended and revealed that extant research on the relationship between individuals' digital media usages and their contentious-political involvement mostly draws upon one of the three theoretical traditions, namely the social capital/affordance paradigm, the network society/multitude theory, and the approach toward connective action. While the three dominant paradigms may be insightful to a certain extent, they commonly prioritize Internet-related individual agency over the social realities and historical events in which they are embedded. This misplaced overemphasis on the Internet and its disembodied customs obscure the social processes that lie behind and around networked activism, and thus blinds us from understanding how citizens today variously engage with new ICTs in coming to political activism.

Drawing on actor-networked theory (ANT) and performance studies, this research proposes a post-structuralist, practice-oriented approach to account for the ways that agency for networked activism emerges, develops, alters, and/or breaks down in contemporary social movements. Towards this end, I submit the concept of hybrid contentious practices as an analytical tool. This concept, as I explained throughout this dissertation, has at least three theoretical merits to the

97

study of the people's paths to/of networked activism. First, moving away from the common focus on the technical capacity of new ICTs, this concept brings to fore the fact that social and other new media usages in protest movements are intimately entangled with and in turn shaped by contentious-political activities and social relations on the ground. By refocusing our attention toward the social-technological practices, through which networked activists combine and switch between on- and offline contentions, it highlights the necessity of considering the substantial interplay between digital media activism and street protests in contemporary social movements, as opposed to the general role of the Internet and its unidirectional impact on collective action as previous social movement and Internet studies tend to stress.

Second, the concept of hybrid contentious practices considers and recognizes such social-technological practices of the networked activists as situated practices within particular historical processes and material constraints. This understanding critiques the ontological and methodological approaches adopted in much of the flourishing new media studies, which tend to emphasize on network structures and new media content, and examine social media and digital networks in isolation and/or in the abstract. Alternatively, this concept draws our attention to the larger historical-material contexts as well as the immediate encounters, in which the subjectivity and action of digitally-enabled individuals are articulated through their actual practices to correspond to emergent protest situations and local struggles. Through examining the digitally-enabled individuals' concrete online-offline activities and their mediated yet embodied experiences, it can provide a clearer and more holistic picture of the ongoing production of the people's paths to/of networked activism.

Lastly, the concept of hybrid contentious practices conceptualizes networked activism as constituting people's activist identity and political action at the same time. Rather than acquiring the autonomous capacity granted by new ICTs to define one's activist identity for political action (in the short future), this concept considers how people's contentious-political subjectivity and activity are simultaneously and mutually constitutive within the unfolding, continual processes of performative doing. This argument thus transcends the long-standing scholarly divide in the social movement literature between identity and action, while highlighting how embodied contentious-political engagement with digital media may result in activist identity and action *in* as well as *for* collective action. Besides, this understanding goes beyond the common focus in

new media studies on new media communications, online expressive practices, and virtual interactions permitted by social media and digital networks. Instead, it points at the fact that activist identity and political action are formed not just in dialogues with each other in terms of narration and expression, but also across common, embodied practices in participating in protest movements.

I employed this analytic tool of hybrid contentious practices (or, in some cases, repertories) to critically reflect on social movement and Internet research. Specifically, I employed the concept to examine three specific and interrelated scholarly questions or debates, with the case of the Umbrella Movement. The first question is concerned with how digitally-enabled individuals in Hong Kong came to take part in the movement for democracy. Whereas extant research looks at networked activism mainly comprised of social media and digital network perceiving the Internet as a vibrant alternative, this research demonstrated how SNSs are adopted by networked activist in alignment with their offline contentious activities, and how their SNS usages are embedded in and constituted by political actions on the ground. In particular, chapter three illustrated how the people's paths to networked activism emerged as socio-material assemblages. With the networked activists' stories, it showed how they were constantly enacted and actualized amongst diverse social and technological actors within a series of historically-situated events both on- and offline. In this view, networked activism, even if it was facilitated by new media technology and guided by shared values about democracy and freedom, was primarily pursued on an emergent basis and with reference to specific real-world encounters, which allowed immediate yet transitory aggregations for the individual citizens to move from general socio-political and material-technological conditions to concrete political actions.

Yet, in examining the individuals' networked activism, it is not to suggest that their human/user agency should be seen as imperative in itself, as if the human/user actor has full control over the development of his/her political subjectivity and action. Rather, human/user agency should be seen as part of the hybrid contentious practices that were oriented toward immediated situations in the real time. In other words, while the digitally-enabled individuals enjoyed certain human/user agency to define and identify themselves with the socio-political environments and their relationships to other human and nonhuman agents in on-going processes, networked activism took place in a concrete historical-material fields in which both new ICTs

and real-world encounters shaped (and were reshaped by) the individuals' changing goals and actions. This understanding of (people's paths to) networked activism thus situates movement agency with respect to the larger, concrete historical and material fields in which it operates along with their contingent attempts to overcome such constraints or resistance by using new ICTs in these political actions – for example, in the case of the Umbrella Movement, people's tentative goals and acts against police violence and state repression in the protest movement. Such situatedness immediately entails the human-nonhuman and socio-material nature of movement agency, and perhaps more importantly, its temporal emergence as well as performativity in contemporary social movements.

Furthermore, this argument is also different from the conventional science and technology studies' (STS) approach which also seeks to explore the situated-ness of new media technology and its relationship to users. Above all, the research focus and the unit of analysis here are rather different. While STS, particularly those concerned with social movements (e.g. Milan, 2015; Poell, 2014), "zoom in" to examine new ICTs as socio-material *actors* and as research subjects, by analyzing how their materiality may shape and be shaped by social and movement actors *in general*, this research "zooms out" in order to interrogate how people's paths to/of protest movement were enacted as *actor-network* within *specific* social-technological practices in as well as for contentious politics. In other words, rather than investigating the (situated) agency of social media and digital networks and its production *per se* (but see van Dijck, 2013 on this topic), this research instead focuses on people's networked activism *as a whole* and examines how it emerged out of the socio-material entanglement among various techno-material and other social agents in practice.

Secondly, this research examined how digitally-enabled individuals, once involved, related to each another and acted in concert, especially in some of the crucial incidents that shaped the course of the Umbrella Movement. Thus, at the same time, it reflected on the larger scholarly question of or debate on how networked activists came together to form collectivity and solidarity in an age of digitalization. In chapter four, rather than starting with the taken-for-granted notion of collective identity as assumed by prior scholarship, I returned to and expanded new social movement theory's understanding of activist identity as a field of tensions, and investigated how networked activism as collective endeavors is linked to people's patterns of

action and their (partially) common experiences in contemporary online-offline environments. In particular, whereas flourishing new media studies tend to stress social media communications and virtual interactions for the development of collective identity that result in collective action, I showed how movement identity and activist community in the Umbrella Movement were formed across a wider range of embodied practices in respond to the immediate protest situations with the use of mobile social media in the different occupied protest areas in Admiralty, Mongkok, and Causeway Bay.

As such, this research broke with the conventional paradigm of collective identity as a pre-existing resource to be mobilized, and instead examined activist collectivity and movement solidarity in contemporary networked activism as "identities-in-practice" (Escobar, 2008: 218), understood in terms of their shared immediate struggles and (partially) common experiences in action. In this view, movement identity and activist community reside in the practicing of hybrid movement repertoires, rather than pre-existing attributes outside or prior to their movement involvement. They are relatively stable and can be recognized as collective endeavors as such mainly because of the enduring historical struggles that constitute the multiple overlapping contexts within which collective contentious practices and performances take place, and within which interconnected political subjectivities become more developed. That is to say, this research suggested the practicing of the hybrid movement repertoires to be generative of activist collective and movement solidarity. And it stressed the importance of historical conditions of immediate protest events as well as the activists' situated collective direct action in correspondence to these collectively experienced conditions, in explaining the processes of identity building and community formation in networked social movements. Epistemologically, it thus affirmed the ontology of ANT and performance studies that (activist collective) identify and (contentious-political) action are enacted as the active engagement with diverse socio-material (or social-technological) agents.

Finally, this research dealt with the relationships between networked activism and everyday civic-political participation. Whereas existing research tends to regard protest movements as instrumental activities and concentrates on their immediate impacts on social policy, I revealed how contemporary social movements may also have impacts by bringing unanticipated civic-political engagement in everyday life. In chapter five, I considered networked activism not only

101

at the level of more visible forms of protest events, but also as a wider range of civic collective action that are derived from or rooted in the digitally-enabled individuals' day-to-day patterns and relations. Specifically, I illustrated three sets of such everyday-related networked activism in the Umbrella Movement; each of them to a different extent extended from the movement field into the everyday life. Furthermore, while the everyday networked activism was socio-materially constructed and temporally emergent, it may in turn reshape and/or transform the very socio-material relationships in which it was articulated. Thus, I also discussed in chapter five some of these changes in the networked activists' everyday routines and goals, as I sought to provide a more nuanced understanding of the broader and long-term influences of networked activism at both the individual and societal levels.

In the study of the relationship between digital media and contentious politics, a focus on people's hybrid contentious practices, as opposed to the technical capacity of social media and digital networks, was suggested to be a useful conceptual framework to understand their paths to/of networked activism. In particular, this consideration of the networked individuals' actual practices and embodied experiences in online-offline environments allows us to address questions related to contemporary networked social movement and civic-political engagement from a non-media centric perspective. Indeed, some of these research questions would require further research, as discussed in the next section.

The Future of Hong Kong and Further Research

This dissertation examined how digitally-enabled individuals in Hong Kong came to engage in and sustain their networked activism for the Umbrella Movement, which unfolded in a digitalized environment that we have only begun to observe in the recent years. Due to the limited research period, some of the things we discussed here have changed, both for the good and the bad. And some of these changes have particularly regarded the further development and long-term consequences of the networked activism of the democracy movement, and would require further research. Two issues, in particular, seem to be most relevant to this research: First, the growth in more radical forms of collective action for the contentious politics of Hong Kong. Second, the emerging attempts among networked individuals or networked activists to take part in formal politics.

The first issue of the growth in more radical forms of collective action has been increasingly visible in the contentious politics of Hong Kong. Violence has appeared to be borne out of a deep-seated mistrust about the direction Hong Kong is headed, under the leadership of a government hand-picked by Beijing, which brutally suppressed the Umbrella Movement. As discussed in chapter five, *gau wu* tours – a new form of networked activism that emerged from the Umbrella Movement – attracted a large number of digitally-enabled individuals, who became more ready than before to directly confront with the government and police. In the aftermath of the Umbrella Movement, similar modes of collective direct action also emerged in different districts of Hong Kong besides Mongkok. Just like the shopping tours, these ad hoc networked activists went on new media platforms such as Facebook, Whatsapp, and HKGolden to self-organize and initiate collective direct action against political injustice or other social issues. Yet, unlike the shopping tours, while these networked activists also sought to make their protests and demands visible, they were more prepared and sometimes even embraced confrontational contentious activities in their collective action. As a result, more so than in the past, they have been more likely to engage in hostile situations with the police and/or counter-movement protesters.

More recently, the so-called "Fish Ball Revolution" marked the peak of such radical collective direct action. On 8 February 2016, the fighting began after the Hong Kong police tried to issue tickets to unlicensed street food sellers in Mongkok. However, self-organized, ad hoc protesters pointed to the long tradition of allowing unlicensed vendors to sell snacks on the first three days of Lunar New Year. The protest over an attempt to clear street vendors escalated after riot police arrived on the scene with batons, shields, and pepper spray. Immediately, violent clashes broke out between police and protesters, resulting in 44 police injuries and 24 arrests. More straining, two warning shots were fired by police officers after midnight, in a city where police rarely draw their firearms (*Quartz*, 2016). Further research may thus look at how people articulated hybrid movement repertoires in these more radical protest events for political intervention. But such radical collective direct action may at the same time serve the government's political interests, by discrediting protest movements in the eyes of some Hong Kong residents. Portraying unrest as a direct threat to the economic prosperity and social stability of Hong Kong may help the authorities to deter citizens from taking part in political contention and protest demonstrations in the future.

As for the second issue, it appears that some of the networked activists, who once took place in the democracy movement, came to the conclusion that another civil disobedience movement would not be of much help for Hong Kong, as even the 79-day Umbrella Movement did not achieve enough tangible outcomes for greater democracy. In fact, some of the political neophytes, many of whom took part in social movements for the first time, have started to consider participating in formal politics after extensively participating in this unprecedented protest movement. Despite the fact that the electoral system in Hong Kong even for local district council elections has been biased against pro-democracy/non-establishment candidates, many of them would still like to grasp the chance to exercise some influence on the government by, at least, making their voice heard in the local district or even the legislative councils.

This trend was particularly reflected in the latest district council elections in November 2015 as a record number of candidates signed up to represent their Hong Kong fellows (*Time Out*, 2015). While the Umbrella Movement reinforced the fact that political parties and formal SMOs are no longer the central forces in the contentious politics of the city, many of these activist candidates cited their personal experiences during the Umbrella Movement as the main motive for standing in the election. As such, further disenchanted with traditional SMOs and political parties, they have been portrayed as the "Umbrella soldiers" representing a newly emerging contentious-police force in Hong Kong (*The Economist*, 2015). Another line of future research would therefore be to investigate how these networked activists reconsidered their hybrid contentious repertoires and movement experiences in negotiating with top-down organizational structures for participating in formal politics, as well as with other types of political actors such as political parties and NGOs in the long term.

When studying the networked activism and contentious politics of Hong Kong with the case of the Umbrella Movement, this dissertation submitted that a post-structural, practice-oriented approach which integrates ANT and performance studies into social movement and Internet research can offer a more nuanced understanding of how digitally-enabled individuals came to engage and sustain network activism in diverse civic-political activities. Focusing on the people's actual practices and embodied experiences within emergent historical situations can thus be a useful way to further examine how their civic-political subjectivity and action emerge,

develop, and alter in relation to the use of social media and digital technologies for political intervention and wider social change.

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APPENDIX A – METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

This research drew on three sources of empirical material, namely in-depth interviews, online ethnography, and archival research. First I used in-depth interviews to collect empirical material, which consist of the digitally-enabled individuals' personal narratives on their paths to/of networked activism for the Umbrella Movement and beyond. I interviewed thirty networked activists, who were selected because of their self-identified intensive participation in the movement for democracy in Hong Kong, and of their self-identified active use of social media and digital technologies both within and outside the protest movement. I chose the interviewees according to snowballing sampling. First, I contacted some networked activists that I knew personally before the beginning of this research. While some of them were my friends, others were the informant of my research on another social movement in Hong Kong, namely the Anti-National Education Movement that took place in August and September 2012. While I interviewed some of them, others only provided me with names and contact details for other networked activists who would be potentially interested in the interviews. At the end of each of the interviews, I often asked for the contacts of some other potential informant to be interviewed by me. This method was proven to be an effective, as eventually most of the interviewees that I had the chance to interview were introduced by other informants. Twenty of out the thirty informants were men and nine of them were women. While the majority of the interviewees were in their twenties and thirties, some were older and some belong to a younger generation. The table in *Appendix B* also provides the details of their occupations and most visited occupation sites listed in the order according to the frequency of their visits.

All the interviews were conducted in Hong Kong in the summer of 2015. The time of each interview lasted between one and a half hours to two hours. They were in-depth interviews guided by four sets of open-ended questions; and each set of these questions was related to one specific thematic area. But these questions were only suggestive, as some of them were not asked in the interviews if the interviewer found them less relevant to the case of the informant; some additional questions were added and probed further when the interviewer considered them to important and more relevant to the case of the interviewer. First, I asked general questions about the informants' biographical details, and their average social and digital media usages. The second and the most important part of the interviews revolved around their paths to/of networked

activism. The third part of the interviews was about their (changing) activist identity and relationships with other people both inside and outside the occupation protest. The last part of the interviews was concerned with the impact of movement involvement on their (further) civic-political engagement and everyday life, as well as on their interpretations of the consequences of the Umbrella Movement at the societal level. At the end of the interviews, I invited the informant to provide their social media account details. Mostly, I "add" them as "friends" on social media at the end of the interview through a research account for conducting online ethnography afterward. Only when we encountered technical difficulties, the interviewer would then add them to the research account few hours later, such as when having limited internet access (albeit that rarely happened) in the interview locations, and the informants not having the immediate means to make changes to certain settings to allow "friend" searching and adding. All of the interviews were conducted in locations chosen by the informants. Most of them took place in public venues, such as Cafés and fast food restaurants. The notes taken by the interviewer during the interviews were not structured field-notes. The interviewer mainly used them to interpret the people's paths to/of networked activism in the democracy movement in the research, and to complement the other empirical material.

Second, apart from the in-depth interviews, this research also drew on online ethnography to observe and analyze the archived social media material on the networked activists' social media pages. As revealed in the previous chapters, in addition to some online discussion forums such as HKGolden, Facebook and Whatsapp were shown to be the most widely employed social media by the networked activists, often in alignment with the use of mobile device, in the Umbrella Movement. However, Whatsapp has been a virtual platform of instant messaging usually among people who are known to each other in person, because it usually requires inserting people's cell phone numbers in order to form a Whatsapp group. Studying the networked activists' Whatsapp activities would thus involve the personal information and private conversation of those besides the informants. As such, this research only drew on the social media material from the informants' Facebook pages. This was in part justified as almost all the informant identified Facebook to be the most useful and the most often used social media in as well as for their networked activism (except there was one informant who did not have a Facebook account). Interpretations on how the networked activities employed Whatsapp and other digital media were thus derived from the personal narratives of the networked activists in

the interviews. In fact, an analysis on their Facebook pages already helped reveal how they employed other new media technology in the protest movement, as Facebook has been a cross-platform social media to which people linked up other new media content, such as microblogs, YouTube videos, and Instagram photos. Following Kozinets (2010), empirical material gathered from the social media platform was treated as ethnographic field observations. It was read to interpret the lived experiences and actual practices that moved citizens to engage in and sustain the Umbrella Revolution and beyond.

Lastly, I conducted archival research to better comprehend the historical/material contexts and local/political circumstances for the emergence, development, and breakdown of the Umbrella Movement. As Marshall and Rossman (2006) submit, analyzing archival documents and records helps retrace events and their developments. In this research, archival research served three distinct yet complementary research purposes. First, it enabled the researcher to gain background information and historical insights that helped ground the research context. Second, archival research was employed to trace the formation and development of Umbrella Movement, and to reconstruct the evolving collective action sequences of unfolding protest events corresponding to the digitally-enabled individuals' paths to/of networked activism. Finally, in combination with the in-depth interviews and online ethnography, a thorough, systematic review of documents and records provided a means of triangulation that facilitated the examination and interpretation of empirical material observed from these other sources.

Specifically, I reviewed news coverage of the occupation protest by major local as well as international news media on the Internet, such as *South China Morning Post*, *Hong Kong Free Press*, *Quartz*, *Mingpao*, *Apply Daily*, *Time Out*, *British Broadcasting Cooperation*, *The Guardian*, *The Economist*, and *Times*. In addition, I examined the online records of the protest events released by the well-known social movement organizations (SMOs) and/or activist groups of the movement, such as the Occupy Central with Love and Peace, Scholarism, the Hong Kong Federation of Students, Umbrella Parents, and Civic Passion, on their websites as well as on their Facebook pages. Also, to obtain more empirical material and gain more insights into the personal narratives of the networked activists, I drew on the collections of their movement experiences published in the aftermath of democracy movement both on- and offline (e.g. Leung and Lee,

2015; Wong, 2014; Lee, 2015), as well as interviews with the self-joining individuals conducted by the press during and after the occupation protest.

Research analysis drew on empirical material from the three sources outlined above. Rather than looking at them separately, the three sets of empirical material were examined mutually for the reconstruction of the networked activists' lived experiences and actual practices. They were used to complement and contrast each other for interpreting the people's paths to/of networked activism, instead of applying strict coding processes to each set of empirical material in isolation. During this process, a series of key themes progressively emerged. Subsequently, the researcher analyzed and interpreted them to construct meaningful historical discourses for answering the specific questions of this research. In presenting the networked activists' stories, while none of the interviewees requested anonymity, all the names were changed so as to protect the anonymity of the networked activists.

APPENDIX B – INFORMANT PROFILES

Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Occupation	Most Visited Protest Sites in order
Henry	29	M	Filmmaker (Self-employed Freelance)	Admiralty; Mongkok
Vicky	26	F	Executive Officer	Admiralty; Mongkok
Samantha	37	F	Merchandiser	Admiralty; Causeway Bay
Kate	26	F	Piano Teacher (Part-Time)	Admiralty; Mongkok
Ben	31	M	IT Project Manager	Admiralty; Mongkok
Ken	27	M	Senior Sales	Mongkok; Admiralty
Peter	27	M	Taxi Driver (Part-Time)	Mongkok; Admiralty
Nick	27	M	Sales	Mongkok; Admiralty
Fanny	30	F	Screenwriter	Admiralty; Mongkok
Sam	31	M	Clerk	Admiralty; Mongkok
Ellen	24	F	Master Student	Mongkok; Admiralty
Robert	49	M	Stage Performer	Admiralty
Sunny	26	M	Teaching Assistant	Mongkok; Admiralty
Sally	32	F	Merchandiser	Admiralty
Carmen	29	F	Project Officer of NGO	Admiralty; Mongkok; Causeway Bay
John	40	M	Technician	Admiralty
Catharine	28	F	Social Worker	Admiralty
Alan	37	M	Construction Development Officer	Admiralty
Simon	30	M	Teacher	Admiralty
Christine	18	F	High School Student	Causeway Bay; Admiralty
Jason	17	M	High School Student	Mongkok; Admiralty
Mick	26	M	Civil Engineer	Admiralty; Mongkok
Zak	27	M	Lawyer	Admiralty; Mongkok
David	51	M	Environmental Auditor	Admiralty
Jackson	18	M	University Student	Admiralty
Tony	57	M	Businessman	Admiralty
Eric	24	M	Financial Investor	Mongkok; Admiralty
Roy	35	M	Banker	Admiralty; Mongkok
Joseph	38	M	Post-Doctoral Fellow	Admiralty; Causeway Bay
Valarie	22	F	Stage Performer	Admiralty; Causeway Bay
Jenny	33	F	Marketing Sales	Admiralty; Mongkok