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Group identity in Hong Kong; simply 'black' or 'white'?

Narratives of Hong Kong citizens among two generations during the 2019 summer protests

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

During the summer of 2019, the largest protests in Hong Kong's history occurred. The Be Water protests were related to a proposed extradition law, they were also connected to pro-democracy movements in Hong Kong. In the protests, a lot of the slogans referred to a Hong Kong identity separate from a Chinese identity. The two identities seemed to be seen as two contrasting identities and dichotomy, reflecting two polarized views in the Hong Kong society. On one side, one could see mainly young protesters in black fighting for a Hong Kong identity. In contrast to this group, one could see mainly older citizens in Hong Kong wearing white, arguing for a Chinese identity alongside a Hong Kong identity.

This research deals with the case of social identity in the context of the 2019 summer protest in Hong Kong, with the hypotheses of a generational difference and connection of identity and support of the social movement. By interviewing ten Hong Kong citizens belonging to two different generations, narratives about their identity and the Hong Kong society were gathered during field work. These narratives serve as data for analysis of how these individuals understand identity in Hong Kong in relation to other identities. Based on social identity theory and generational theory, this research examined what a Hong Kong identity actually involves for the participants and how 'othering' of a Chinese identity took place.

The case and this research contribute in an understanding of why identity was relevant for the protest, how it connects to generations and political views in Hong Kong. Furthermore, the findings of this research demonstrate the complexity of identity, particularly in a post-colonial context.

Keywords: Hong Kong, HKSAR, Identity, Group Identity, Self-identification, Social Identity Theory, Identity Construction, Hong Kong Identitiy, Chinese Identity, Critical Narrative Analysis, 2019 protests, Be Water protests, Generations

List of Abbreviations

CE	Chief Executive
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CAN	Critical Narrative Analysis
DQ	Disqualified
HK	Hong Kong
HKUPOP	Hong Kong University Public Opinion Programme
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of The People's Republic of China
LegCo	Legislative Council
MTR	Mass Transit Railway
NT	New Territories
PRC	People's Republic of China
SCMP	South China Morning Post
TVB	Television Broadcasts Limited
VPN	Virtual Private Network

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Do you hear the people sing?

Singing the song of angry men?

It is the music of a people,

Who will not be slaves again!

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  Kretzmer, H. et al. (1980)[1]

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[1] From the musical 'Les Misérables', inspired by 1832 student protests in Paris
(At coincidence, also one of my mother's favorite songs)

1 Introduction

Throughout history, numerous protests and social movements have been presented as youth taking to the streets, with an assumption of a generational gap in participation. From the Paris uprising of 1832 and May 1968 to the student protests in 1989. People from the younger generations or those from 'below' demanding social and political change for 'more democracy' and power to the people is not a phenomenon of the past. Nor is it in the case of 2019-20 protests in Hong Kong, also known as the Water[2] movement. In the summer of 2019, Hong Kong citizens took to the streets in political protests. While the social movement[3] in Hong Kong consists of multiple groups, I have chosen to define the Water movement and certain group as part of the movement with the rationale of fighting for more democracy in Hong Kong. The social movement was at the most assumed to be supported by two million people on the streets demanding the withdrawal of the extradition bill on June 16[th,] 2019 (Purbrick, 2019). In the background chapter later on, some of these groups and leading persons will be described. This is described as not only the largest protest in the history of Hong Kong, but also possibly among the largest in the history of the world (Wasserstrom, 2020, p. 24).

In the beginning, the protests were peaceful and specifically in opposition to a proposed extradition law (Purbrick, 2019). Later, the protests turned more violent on both sides, and developed to demand several actions, including independent investigation in alleged police violence (ibid; Wasserstrom, 2020). Media coverage of the Hong Kong protests tend to have presented the protesters as young and radicalized[4]. Dramatic images of young protesters in the frontlines throwing petrol bombs seem to have dominated the news coverage[5].

The summer protests continued into the fall. In 2019 fall semester start, Hong Kong students sang the unofficial protest song, 'Do you hear the people sing?'[6] over the national anthem of China as a form of protest (The Guardian, 2019). A few days later, a protest anthem for Hong Kong, named "Glory to Hong Kong"[7] was released (Tsoi, 2019). "Liberate Hong

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[2]Water refers to term 'be (like) water' and philosophy by Bruce Lee, with adaptability and mobility as protest form. See the same term with a photo of Bruce Lee in Figure 11.

[3] See definition in the conceptual and theoretical framework

[4] For examples see Griffiths, J. & Yeung, J. (2019, December) *CNN*; Jacobs, A. & May, T. (2019, October 27) *NYTimes*

[5] For example, see *The Guardian* (2019, November 18)

[6] Kretzmer himself has commented on the use of the song in Hong Kong and other protests worldwide. For reference see: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7160409/How-humbling-Les-Miserables-hit-helped-fight-freedom.html

[7] 願榮光歸香港（*Yun Wing Gwong Gwai Heung Gong*）

Kong, revolution of our times!"[8] and "Hong Kongers add oil[9]!"[10]were frequently chanted by the protesters dressed in black (Hui, 2019). In addition to these symbolic chants, the protesters were carrying a protest flag. During the protests, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) flag was modified from the color of red to black. Black quickly became the color of the protests, while red was perceived as Chinese and therefore communist (Holland, 2019). On public opinion walls, the Lennon Walls[11], one could frequently read messages related to Hong Kong or 'Hong Kongers'. The feeling of belonging to the territory of Hong Kong and the group of 'Hong Kong people' or 'Hong Kongers' seemed to be important for people in the protests. To counter the Water protests, other citizens of Hong Kong started gathering dresses in white shirts to show support for both the local government in Hong Kong and the central government in Beijing. These protesters were carrying flags of People's Republic of China (PRC) and chanted counter-slogans such as "Hong Kong is China" or "China add oil!" (Al Jazeera, 2019).

While a Hong Kong and a Chinese identity was undoubtedly an important aspect in the case of 2019-20 protests in Hong Kong, how were these group identities perceived from Hong Kong citizens? This research focus on answering this question by exploring deeper in how these group identities are understood by individuals in Hong Kong.

1.1 Research hypothesis, objectives and questions

Based on field work observation and the literature review, a hypothesis connecting the concepts of group identity and generation was developed. On one hand, one could see mostly young people dressed 'black shirts' protesting during the summer of 2019. On the other hand, the 'white shirts' seemed to consist of older citizens, where the rationale of the protests seemed to be closer connected to a Chinese identity. These identities can be understood as reflected in the mentioned flags, chants and position on the extradition law. The assumed dichotomy of black or white reflects the polarized positions in the Hong Kong society during the protests occurring 2019-20. This is what the title of this thesis also refers to. The focus in this thesis when examining identity will therefore be on people from two different generations in the case of protests in Hong Kong from the summer of 2019. The hypothesis of this thesis is how those in the older generation being more connected to the Chinese identity and less supportive of the

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[8] 光復香港, 時代革命! (*Gwongfuk Hoeng gong, si doi gaak min*)
[9] 'Add oil' is a Chinese expression for 'keep going' (both in Mandarin and Cantonese)
[10] 香港人, 加油! (*Hoeng gong yan, gayau*)
[11] The Lennon walls are inspired by the Prague Lennon Wall and appeared in the public spheres across the city, such as at transport stations. It can be understood as a way of anonymously expressing opinions. See examples of Lennon Walls and pieces in chapter 4 and 6

social movement, while those in the younger generation would have a stronger Hong Kong identity and be more supportive of the social movement.

The main objective of this research is to understand how individual Hong Kong citizens made sense of their identity during at the time of protests in the summer of 2019. By gaining a deeper understanding of how they perceive identity, one might at the same time understand the positions related to the society, the protests and choices of participation. Rather than generalizing, the aim is to present and understand the different perspectives from the participants as individuals by studying their accounts. Still, the thesis is based on the hypothesis of a generational gap being present among the participants.

With hypothesis of different views among different generations in Hong Kong and to be able to draw comparisons to some extent, I decided to examine people belonging to the two age categories of a younger and an older generation. I also wanted to seek deeper understanding of why they felt belonging to a certain category and not others. Thus, I formulated the following main research question for this master's thesis:

How did selected Hong Kong citizens from two generations make sense of their identity during the 2019 summer protests, and why did they present it the way they did?

Another aim of the thesis is to understand how these identity perceptions could be connected to the positions on the protests and society, and therefore participation in the social movement. Three sub questions were thus formulated based on the theoretical framework to operationalize the main research question. The different terms and concepts will later be explained in the conceptual and theoretical chapter. The operational sub research questions are the following:

1: How are their 'in-group' and 'out-groups' represented?

2: How did the participants describe the society and the 2019 protests, and can these descriptions be connected to their position towards the social movement?

3: Can any connection be seen between which generation they belong to, their group identity and their positions of the social movement?

To answer these questions, I gathered data through interviewing Hong Kong citizens during the summer protest, from field work in July to September 2019. I then utilized a critical narrative analysis to analyze how the different individuals presented their group identities and their views in relation to the Hong Kong protests of 2019. Other data from field work and relevant previous research served as contextual data to the qualitative interview data.

1.2   Limitations of this research

While the protests continued after the summer of 2019, the time frame of this research is limited to the time data was gathered, between July 20 to August 29, 2019. As identity in this thesis is understood as subject to change, one should also understand the identity presentations in this thesis as temporal. A limitation of this thesis might therefore be how the identities people presented, as well as their opinions, might have changed since the time the interviews took place. Despite this fact, this research gives an understanding of identity and views in Hong Kong during the time of July to September 2019.

This thesis does not seek to define or categorize these identities, and therefore focuses on more general descriptions of identities, namely individual and group identity. Identity, as later explained, have different aspects. The focus of this research is on social and cultural aspects of identity, rather than for example 'national identity' or 'ethnic identity'. The matter of whether the 'Hong Kong' identity could be defined as such is not covered in this thesis.

1.3   Personal motivation

I was born and grew up in Norway with a mother originally from Guangzhou[12] in Mainland China and father from the New Territories area in Hong Kong. Despite being a Norwegian, I do have a strong attachment to these places my parents came from, as my family and I have frequently travelled to visit family and relatives each year. I speak and understand Cantonese almost fluently, the local language of Hong Kong and the Guangdong province in China. I have personally observed the discussions among people in both Hong Kong and Mainland China on several issues, including the political situation of Hong Kong. Within my own family and family friends, I have personally observed several opinions to be present, depending on age and generation. This applied to the situation of post 2014 protests and amid the 2019 protests. The hypothesis of a generational gap in positions in the Hong Kong society was partly based on my own observations over time.

Master thesis topic and time of field work was proposed before the outbreak of the 2019 protests. The thesis was originally proposed to explore differences in views between generations in Hong Kong in a post 2014 protests context. As the scale of the protests increased during the summer of 2019, the political situation and context also changed. The case of this thesis was adjusted accordingly. My researcher positionality, challenges of being both insider and outsider, as well as the methodology will be further discussed later in this thesis.

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[12] Also known as 'Canton', hence the name of the variety of Chinese as 'Cantonese'

1.4 Relevance for Peace Research

While there has been research on identity and generational differences in identity in Hong Kong, the situation of 2019 protests in Hong Kong is still quite recent, and ongoing during both the field work and data gathering for this thesis. There are still not a lot of literature and research on identity published related to the 2019 protests. This is an obvious research gap in research which this research will fill.

Many conflicts in the world are related to identity, particularly group identity. Often, one speaks about these conflicts as inter- or intragroup conflicts. Identity in the case of Hong Kong is also one of a colonial history, of how being a colony has shaped the identities of people in the area, making some feel different from Mainland China, which Hong Kong also belonged to before the colonial times. In order to fully understand the conflict and protests in contemporary Hong Kong and why people resist the governments by protesting, one must also understand how identities have shaped people in Hong Kong and the connection to political views.

1.5 Dissertation Outline

Chapter 1 has provided an introduction to this thesis, presented the hypothesis, research objectives and questions. The chapter also discussed limitations of this thesis, stated my personal motivation and explained the relevance for peace research.

Chapter 2 is the background and literature review chapter, and will present the political situation, historical context, previous research on identity and generational differences in Hong Kong.

Chapter 3 defines the key concepts and theories connected to 'identity' and 'generation'.

Chapter 4 will provide an explanation and justification of the employed methods and methodological framework for this research.

Chapter 5 and 6 presents the data and analysis in the form of narratives and different themes. Chapter 5 is structured around the narratives of the younger and older generation, presented individually. Chapter 6 is structured around the three different themes.

Chapter 7 answers my research questions based on the findings from chapter 5 and 6, as well as presents the final comments by briefly connecting the situation of the case after the timeframe of the research

Chapter 9 summarizes and concludes the whole thesis, based on the previous chapters.

2 Background and literature review

2.1 Introduction

To understand the political conflict in Hong Kong, one must understand the historical and political context and background. In order to situate this research case, an overview of existing research on the topic will be given. For this purpose, this chapter is divided into two main parts.

The first part of this chapter focuses on presenting the context and literature related to the political system in Hong Kong and how the major protests in recent years can be understood as resistance toward the system and the relation to China, as well as resistance towards perceived attempts of changing the 'Hong Kong identity'. The aim is to give a better understanding of the resistance shown by the people in Hong Kong towards the system and why people in Hong Kong call for change in the electoral system, criticizing it to be 'undemocratic'. Furthermore, an introduction of protests preceding 2019 is presented to understand how frustration have been built up among the protesters, affecting the protests which started in 2019.

The second part of this chapter presents a literature review to provide an overview of existing literature on group identity connected to the place of Hong Kong and generational differences in Hong Kong. First, by presenting a literature review in order to provide an overview of existing literature more generally. Then, more specifically in the context of the protests before the time of September 2019.

It must be noted how what I have chosen to present and the way of doing it also can be understood as a political act. I therefore attempt to present the background and literature review from the different sides, without assuming there is only one objective truth of information.

2.2 Hong Kong as a hybrid between 'East' and 'West'

The Hong Kong society is one of a post-colonial context, which in turn have shaped the formation of group identity in Hong Kong. Contemporary Hong Kong society and politics can be understood as highly affected by its history as a former British colony in multiple ways. Hong Kong was for more than 150 years under British colonial rule. Despite being a colony, the territory enjoyed a relatively high level of autonomy, as neither Britain nor China showed much interest in the area (Yep, 2013, p. 110-111). This meant people in Hong Kong were relatively free to develop their own society and culture. In 1984, the Sino-British Joint declaration was signed, and Hong Kong was accordingly handed back to China in 1997, which

is often referred to as the 'Handover' or 'hand back'. Since then, Hong Kong have formally been a special administrative region (SAR) of People's Republic of China (PRC) for over 20 years, with their own local and regional political leaders. The Sino-British declaration[13] and the Basic Law [14] of Hong Kong SAR are two important documents serving as a form of a constitution, outlining the political structure and relationship to the central authorities in Beijing. In the declaration, it is stated that all power in the PRC belongs to the people (Chapter 1, Article 2 of the Basic Law). When people in Hong Kong were protesting in both 2014 and 2020, they did so with the feeling of the need for their voices to be heard as the pro-democracy movement criticized the power not really belonging to the people (Wong, 2020; Wasserstrom 2020). Many felt the 'One Country, two systems' policy from the Sino-British declaration was being violated (ibid).

According to the policy, Hong Kong and China would have a separated legislative and political system. One main difference in the systems often pointed at, is Hong Kong residents' entitlement to multiple political freedoms. Article 27 of the Basic Law clearly states that "Hong Kong residents shall have freedom of speech, of the press and publication; freedom of association, of assembly, of procession and of demonstration; and the right and freedom to form and join trade unions, and to strike." (Article 27, the Basic Law, p. 11). However, the autonomy and Basic Law is by many understood as with an expiration date. In the Sino-British Declaration, it is only stated how Hong Kong is supposed to only remain unchanged until 2047 (Wong, 2020; Wasserstrom, 2020). By some, the expiration date is assumed to also be the end of the level of political freedom people in Hong Kong have enjoyed this far as a special administrative region (ibid).

As many democratic areas, Hong Kong (HK) SAR also consists of three different branches of power: an executive, a legislative and a juridical. However, the political leader of Hong Kong and the Executive Council is nonpartisan and called The Chief Executive (CE). Rather than elected by the citizens, the CE is elected by an election committee, consisting of members of the four different sectors in Hong Kong. According to Annex I of Basic Law, each sector and subsector are delegated a certain number of seats and votes in the selection of the seats. The Legislative branch consists of 70 members in the Legislative Council (LegCo). Half

[13] The Joint Declaration of Government of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong

[14] The Basic Law of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China

of the representatives are elected as Geographical Constituencies directly by the majority of the people. The other half of the members are elected by Functional Constituencies, representing professional or special interest groups, tending to be more pro-establishment and Beijing friendly. Lastly, the juridical branch consists of multiple courts based on the common law system. Additionally, the political system consists of 18 district councils, elected directly by the majority of the votes of the people. While elections by universal suffrage for both the selection of a CE and the LegCo is stated as the ultimate aim in the Basic Law, the elections to the District Councils is the only political body formed by direct elections (Chapter IV of the Basic Law). As this section have presented, one can see that not all political bodies in Hong Kong are elected by the majority of the votes of Hong Kong citizens. This is what many belonging to the pro-democracy movement point on when they criticize this the people not holding the power to elect their representatives or leaders, and also why the local elections and district councils are important for them (Wong, 2020; Wasserstrom, 2020).

2.3   Resistance related to the relation to Mainland China

While Hong Kong SAR officially is part of PRC, many feel a difference from the area and other parts of China under the direct governance of China's Communist Party (CCP). The other area is referred to as Mainland China. This feeling of being different from Mainland had led to the want for autonomy in Hong Kong, and one could thus see mobilization for protests demanding political reforms increasing (Yep, 2013). As reflected in both the 2014 and 2019-20 protests, the demonstrations also involved opposition to closer ties with Mainland China politically and legally.

Already back in 2011 a group of students, among those the 14-year-old Joshua Wong, founded an organization named 'Scholarism' (Wong & Ng, 2020). 'Scholarism' organized civil protests and forced the HK government to retract a plan of introducing "moral and national education" in schools in (Wong & Ng, 2020). The controversy of the new form for education in Hong Kong regarded criticism of being a strategy to make Hong Kong more similar to Mainland China. Among others, the new education was accused of teaching HK students CCP and the one-party system as something positive (Wong & Ng, 2020, p. 25). These movements continued on. In 2013, the law professor Benny Tai announced a campaign called 'Occupy Central'[15]. The goal was to demand universal suffrage by occupying the financial district of

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[15] The Occupy movement was an international movement working for social and economic equality, originally started in New York City, the United States as 'Occupy Wall Street'. For further reference, see Barber (2014).

Hong Kong (Wong & Ng, 2020, p. 68). Soon, 'Scholarism' and Joshua Wong continued this movement, organizing student-led protests in 2014. Since then, Wong has been seen as one of the leading figures for the pro-democracy movement. The protests of 2014 are also known as the "Umbrella movement" or "Umbrella protests", referring to the umbrella's protesters were using to protect themselves from water cannons and tear gas (Loh & Cullen, 2018). The Umbrella movement was a response to the Beijing Government, which in a White Paper announced electoral reform in the HKSAR CE election in Hong Kong by the candidates being pre-approved by the National Standing Committee of China. Many perceived the new selection method as CCP tightening the grip on Hong Kong, due to the politically powerful role of the CE (Loh & Cullen, 2018). For 79 days of 2014, protesters occupied Central and Admiralty - the main finance and governmental districts in Hong Kong. The 2014 protests ended in police forces clearing the scenes. The stated aim of electoral reform was not achieved. Key protest leaders were arrested, prosecuted and later sentenced to jail. As the proposed changes in the electoral system were additionally implemented, the Umbrella movement was by many considered as a failure.

Two years after 2016, there were no major events connected to the democracy movement. During the celebrations of Chinese New Year in 2016, however, unrest once again broke out in Mong Kok in response to the police issuing tickets to unlicensed street hawkers (Dapiran, 2019). The incident is by some called the Fish Ball Revolution in reference to fish balls[16] sold at the streets to celebrate the New year (ibid). Fighting on the streets and the actions characterized by the government as riots were connected to so-called 'Localist' groups. Edward Leung Tin-Kei was seen as one of the leading figures of the incident (ibid). At the time, Leung was a politician advocating for more independence of Hong Kong and leader of the Localist group, Hong Kong Indigenous. He was among the arrested, sentenced to jail and prohibited from running as a representative for the LegCo. The slogan "Liberate Hong Kong, the revolution of our times" was originally created by Edward Leung Tin-Kei as part of his electoral campaign (ibid). During the Water protests, the same slogan was frequently used. The failure of the 2014 movement to stop the changes in the selection of the CE and consequences of the 2016 protest, arresting key leaders in pro-democracy and pro-independence movement can be seen as important backdrop for the 2019 protest. Many in the pro-democracy movement felt increased frustration after these events (Wong, 2020; Wasserstrom, 2020).

[16] Fish is traditionally eaten when celebrating Chinese New Year, thought to bring prosperity in the upcoming year

The frustration and skepticism towards China from people in Hong Kong and the pro-democracy movement are also connected to several cases. Joshua Wong in his book 'Unfree Speech' (2020) points on several cases or situations. One is the disappearance of five Hong Kongers who sold books, linked to a publisher critical towards both the Chinese Communist Party and political elites in China, in terms of writing about rumors (Wong & Ng, 2020). The disappearance led to the suspicion of the booksellers being abducted by Chinese intelligence. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs have denied any alleged actions (Joseph & Hunt, 2016). Another is the situation in the Xinjiang region where China is accused of monitoring and assimilating the minority group of Uyghurs in a so-called 'de-extremification' process (Wong & Ng, 2020; Zenz, 2018). Most Uyghurs are Muslim and speak a Turkic language. Chinese officials have denied any accusations, arguing these simply are education camps (Zenz, 2018).

2.4   From amendment of the law to the 2019 summer protests

The first announcement by the Hong Kong Government on proposed changes to the law came in February 2019. Formally it was named 'The Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2019', but better known as the 'Extradition bill' - which is the name used hereafter. The Hong Kong Government introduced plans for the Extradition bill on April 3, 2019 and defended the proposed changes by pointing at a homicide case. The specific case involved a Hong Kong citizen whom in 2018 allegedly killed his pregnant girlfriend during a holiday in Taipei, Taiwan (Purbrick, 2019, p. 466). The proposed changes were rationalized by the need to close a "loophole" in the system of extradition of suspects in criminal cases to other jurisdictions. As explained previously, the juridical systems in Hong Kong SAR and Mainland China are separated. Being a SAR, Hong Kong could thus not establish any individual agreement with Taiwan, which also is not recognized by PRC as a separated area from Mainland China. Without a formal extradition agreement, the murder suspect could not be exchanged to Taiwan and prosecuted. However, the bill soon raised great concerns by particularly The Democratic Party in Hong Kong, as the law also would open for extradition of Hong Kong citizens to Mainland China. The level of political and legal freedom for Hong Kong citizens were questioned. The critics of the law feared that political dissident in Hong Kong, as well as in Taiwan, could be extradited to China with the new changes in the law (Purbrick, 2019; Wasserstrom, 2020). The concern regarded both dissidents in the past, as well as in the future and current political activists (ibid). These concerns should be seen in the context of alleged disappearance of the booksellers and how many political activists in Mainland China historically have emigrated to Hong Kong (He, 2013).

Soon after the government announced the changes, the group Civil Human Rights Front in Hong Kong started gather to protest the proposed law (Purbrick, 2019). Although there were groups such as this one organizing protests, it soon became a larger social movement organized through social medias. The movement is known as the Water movement, without any official leaders to avoid repeating the arrests of leaders as in 2014 and 2016. Illustrated by the protesters in 2019 carrying umbrellas similar to in 2014, one can perceive the protests as a continuous movement from the 2014 Umbrella movement with the rationale of resisting for democracy.

The first larger protest occurred on March 31, 2019 where the number of participants were estimated to be around 10 000 people (ibid, p. 467). Despite the concerns and scope of the protest, the legislation was submitted a few days later on April 3. On the April 28, the number of people protesting had according to the organizers increased to 120 000, while the police said the number of people were fewer than 30 000 (Wasserstrom, 2020, p. 73). However, the first large mass rally occurred on June 9, where over a million people took to the streets. (Purbrick, 2019, p. 247; Wasserstrom, 2020, p. 74). Soon, the protests spread to several areas of Hong Kong and started turning more violent in the evenings. On June 15, an estimation of two million people took to the streets to protest. This was considered the largest mass rallies in the history of Hong Kong, and probably also one of the largest in modern history of the world (ibid). People in Hong Kong started protesting for five main demands, which were: complete withdrawal of the extradition bill from the legislative process; retraction of protests characterized as a "riot"; amnesty for arrested protesters; establishment of an independent commission of inquiry into police brutality; resignation of Carrie Lam and implementation of universal suffrage for Legislative Council elections and for the election of the Chief Executive (John, 2019).

The most important events and happenings connected to the protests are outlined in a timeline in Table 1 in Appendix B. An incident which occurred on the July 21 2019, hence short name being 721, was one of the most important during the summer (Purbrick, 2019). The event is also called the Yuen Long incident or attack, as the event occurred in Yuen Long, a town in the New territories district. 721 can be described as the turning point of the protests due to at least three aspects (ibid). First, as regular citizens not taking part in the protests were victims of the violence. Both citizens not taking part in the protest and people returning home from protests were attacked at Yuen Long MTR station by the group believed to be affiliated with triads (Wasserstrom, 2020). Second, because the attacking men were dressed in white shirts, it seemingly increased polarization in both the protest and Hong Kong society. Lastly, the event led to increased distrust and dissatisfaction with the Hong Kong police, creating rumors and conspiracy theories of the police colluding with the attacking triad members (ibid;

Wong, 2020; Wasserstrom, 2020). Hong Kong police was criticized for the late response and accused of intentionally arriving late to the scene, 35 minutes after the start of the attack (Purbrick, 2019). The police, however, have explained the late arrival by claiming resources had been dispatched to protest areas and thus unavailable (Leung & Ting, 2019). Since the incident, monthly protests on the 21st were organized in Yuen Long.

2.5   One people, multiple identity categories in Hong Kong?

As outlined, Hong Kong can be described as a hybrid between East and West. This seems to have affected how people feel belonging in Hong Kong, meaning identity is described as dynamic in nature by several authors. Mathews, Ma & Lui (2008) describes the idea of a 'national identity' in Hong Kong as ambiguous due to the situation of Hong Kong neither being simply a city nor a nation. Referring to Ernest Gellner's assumption of how everyone must have a nationality just as everyone has a nose and two ears, the authors describe Hong Kong as lacking "a nose and two ears" (ibid, p. 1). Other authors, such as Loh and Cullen (2018, p. 29) understands identity as an image - being the background, experience, culture and values people have of themselves. They seem to emphasize on the cultural aspect of the Hong Kong identity, linking it to language, or more specifically to Cantonese. These authors highlight how Cantonese is the most spoken form of Chinese in Hong Kong, and connects language and identity to politics, arguing how Mandarin is being perceived as the official Chinese by the Beijing government. The literature generally agrees on people in Hong Kong historically identified themselves as Chinese over the past two centuries, despite variations of the spoken language (e.g. So, 2016; Chen, 2011; Brewer, 1999). So (2016, p. 1) describes the identification coming from an ethno-cultural angle, as over 90% of Hong Kong people are what termed as 'ethnic Chinese' (Chen, 2011). 'Ethnicity' in this context refers to the 'roots' or 'bloods' of people. The term, however, is often criticized for being ambiguous and will be discussed in the next chapter.

After the handover in 1997 and increased interaction with China, several authors describe a shift of the Hong Kong identity. So (2011) describes six different stages of nationalism and cultural identity in Hong Kong connected to the political changes; from Chinese nationalism before 1949, Chinese refugee identity from 1949 to 1960s, the birth of a Hong Kong identity in the 1970s after "denationalization" policy from the British, multi-layer identity between the 1980s until 1997, a rising Chinese nationalism from 1997 up until the Olympics in Beijing in 2008, until the current stage of emerging discourse of a rise of a Hong Kong identity. From 2001 to 2008, Bridges (2013) also describes how major advertisements

prior to the Olympics put emphasis on being 'one country' in Hong Kong, which supposedly have affected people taking more pride in the Chinese association (Bridges, 2013, p. 10-11.). Brewer (1999, p. 193) on the other hand, described how the Hong Kong identity had changed to not be unique compared to the Western culture, but from the rest of China. She described how the identity had shifted from being connected to a Chinese identity to signs of identity conflict as two different identities (ibid, p. 195). Brewer explained the shift by pointing on how Beijing authorities were encouraging assimilation of identities rather than respecting distinctiveness. In other words, Brewer pointed on political changes from Mainland China as the explanation of how identity in Hong Kong had changed (ibid. p. 195-196).

The trends of changes of self-identification related to the group identity in Hong Kong over time have been documented by Hong Kong University (HKU). The HKU Public Opinion Program (HKUPOP) has since 1997 conducted quantitative surveys each half year on people in Hong Kong's identity[17]. Jang, Li and Steinhardt (2018) published an article seeking to measure and explain the identity shift in Hong Kong since 1997, based on the statistics by HKUPOP. The findings of the research support a shift in identity in post-colonial Hong Kong, with the dominant factor being trust in central government rather than structural factors as previously assumed. While the research was published in 2018, it can still be relevant in the context of 2019. The survey from HKUPOP released in June 2019 showed people in Hong Kong identifying as 'Chinese' was the lowest measured (HKUPOP, 2019). One might then assume that the trust in central government from the people in Hong Kong was connected to this identification.

2.5.1   A generational gap in identity

Already back in 2014, South China Morning Post wrote how the 'post-80s' generation were rejecting the old ways of protest in Hong Kong, connecting the protests to a generational gap (Chan, 2014). The article wrote about several aspects. First, how those old enough to be the 'post-80's' generation frequently were asking "What are these young people thinking?" (ibid). Second, Brian Fong Chi-hang from the Department of Asian and Policy Studies at the Hong Kong Institute of Education described the perceived existence of 'two Hong Kongs', where younger generation in Hong Kong was described as more progressive, while the older more conservative (ibid).

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[17] While the English translation of the survey is "Ethnic Identity", the Chinese or Cantonese definition refers to identity in general and does not specify the categories of "ethnic" nor "ethnicity".

Previous research on identity and generational differences in self-identification in Hong Kong agree on the fact that the younger generation in Hong Kong mainly identify as 'Hong Kongers' rather than 'Chinese'. While they agree on this fact, they point on different main factors. Chen (2011) examined the dialectic perspective of cultural identity in Hong Kong through semi-structured interviews of young Hongkongers aged 16 to 32 in the period of 1997 to 2004. The study discovered 'Hong Konger' being the label most of the interviewees identified as, in association with place of living and the biological connection (ibid). A majority of the interviewees did not feel British explained by both not feeling they shared culture nor 'blood'. Furthermore, the majority of interviewees did not identify as Chinese either despite sharing tradition and biology, as the shared feeling of connection to the Chinese seemed lacking. Loh and Cullen (2018) argues for the younger generation in Hong Kong seeing Mandarin as a representation of the mainland system, and thus connecting it to something negative. The younger generation, they argue, "… fear a zero-sum game in which their own local Cantonese language and identity will be lost" (Loh & Cullen, 2018, 33). Jang, Li and Steinhardt (2018) argue for finding a generational difference in political trust as an explanation of the generational gap in identity, and the correlation of the two measures. In their research, socio-structural and socio-economic variables did not show significant effect, or the results could be explained by being connected to the level of political trust. Connecting the research to the social movement, political trust, can then be connected to being pro-government or more critical of the government, meaning more prone to support the social movement or not.

The Umbrella Movement from 2014 is by some authors pointed on as a key factor in Hong Kong youth being more social and political conscious compared to the previous generations (Chan, 2016). Chan (2016, p. 896) also described the younger generation in Hong Kong as more radical, however, a division of more radical and moderate groups of students were described. In the book 'Unfree Speech' by Joshua Wong published in 2020, the controversial Chinese political dissident Ai Weiwei described Wong as representing the new generation of rebel, with the only demand to be freedom (Wong & Ng, 2020, back cover). Other authors, such as Ping & Kwong (2014, p. 1111) describes a generational gap by the older generation mainly being 'democrats', while the younger generation in Hong Kong identify more as Hong Kong people. Their explanation of the identification was their feeling of being alienated by the Beijing and local government (ibid). In other words, the identification of Hong Kongers among the youth was described as a way of resisting to the politics from the governments. The research on identity to this point have mainly been pre- or post-2014, leaving an obvious research gap related to the 2019 protests.

The HKUPOP survey from June 2019 confirmed that 75 percent of those of 18 to 29 years of age identified as "Hong Konger" rather than other categories associated to "Chinese" or "China". On the other hand, older residents identified more with China (HKUPOP, 2019b). In Figure 1 below based on the same survey, one can clearly see the same trend of the majority of how those under the age of 40 in Hong Kong identified as Hong Kongers, while the older generation over 50 years of age tended to identify more with a mixed identity. See the figure below for illustration of these differences. While the HKUPOP statistics shows trends in the Hong Kong society, it was conducted by telephone surveys with only Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong residents. It can therefore be criticized for not taking into consideration how not all people in Hong Kong speak Cantonese. While the HKUPOP statistical data shows a trend, it does not fully explain why Hong Kong citizens identify with certain categories. This thesis will seek to fill these gaps in understanding why people among different generations hold different group identities related to the place of Hong Kong.

One people, two identities
Hong Kong, "How would you identify yourself?"
By age group, % of adults*
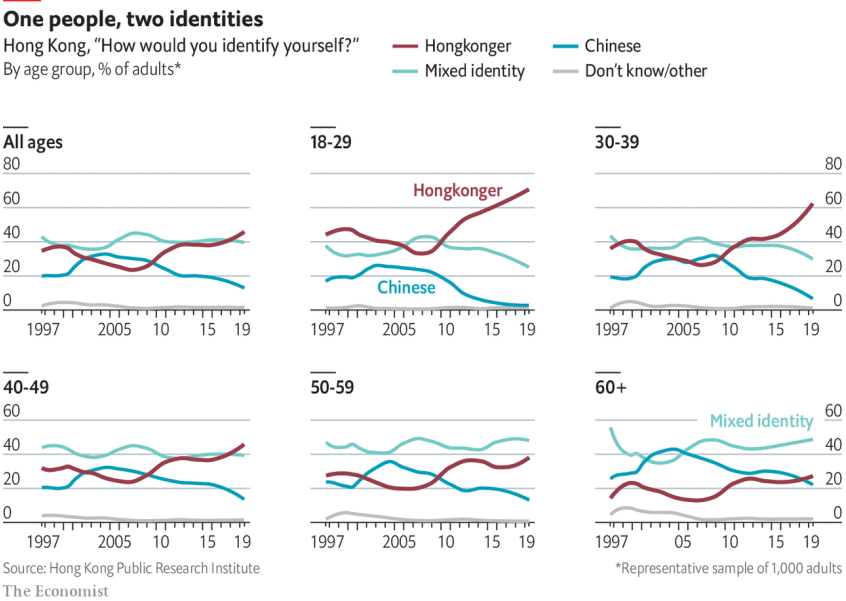
Figure 1. Identification of people in Hong Kong by age group. Source: The Economist

2.5.2 Generational differences in the 2019 summer protests

The generational differences in Hong Kong during the 2019 summer protests could also be seen also reflected on the political level by how the government spoke about the protesters. During an interview regarding the protests in the early stage of the protests on June 12 Carrie Lam, the Chief Executive (CE) of Hong Kong, used a metaphor of herself being a mother raising her sons. Lam's point in using the metaphor seemed to be questioning whether it would be

beneficial in the long term to give in on the protesters demands, as in child raising (Tam, 2019). The analogy of the protesters as children and the government as parents can be understood as labelling the protesters as naïve, in need of correction and guidance. A group of mothers arranged a 'Mothers' protest"[18] in response to Lam and the government's handle of situation, supporting the anti-extradition bill protests and police responses (Ng, 2019). Several other protests have additionally been organized by older generations, such as an elderly march[19] in support of Hong Kong's young protesters (Chung, 2019). These protests suggest the picture in media of the protest movements mainly being carried out and supported by the young people in Hong Kong might not reflect the whole picture.

One of the first released field surveys from the protests, confirmed the general impression of mainly citizens from the younger generation dominating the protests. Nearly 60 per cent of the protesters were younger than 30 years of age and around 60 per cent said they had previously been part of the 2014 protests (Sum, 2019).

2.6   Summary

This chapter have explained the background and relevant information about the 2019 protests, from the political system in Hong Kong to how generational differences could be seen reflected amid the protests. The history of resistance and social movements in Hong Kong have briefly been presented, with more focus in outlining the 2019 summer protests and explaining why people started protesting. With the colonial history of Hong Kong, shaping the political system, one can understand why there are multiple identities in Hong Kong and why identity over time have been dynamic As one can see from the presented literature, people in Hong Kong seemed to traditionally identify as Chinese and the literature generally agree on a shift after 1997 and up until 2008. In the time after 2008, people in Hong Kong have seemingly started to identify more as 'Hong Kongers' as something distinguishingly different from a 'Chinese' identity. The literature agrees on how these differences can be seen across different generations, where the younger generation tend to be more political and connecting identity to political resistance. Previous research confirms the hypothesis of a generational gap being present in Hong Kong before the 2019 protests. The question is, might this also be seen in the 2019 summer protests?

[18] On June 14, 2019. For further reference, see Tam (2019)

[19] On July 17, 2019. For further reference, see Chung (2019)

3 Conceptual and theoretical framework

3.1 Introduction

With the background and literature now presented, one can clearly see the relevance of the concepts of 'identity' and 'generation'. While these terms, such as identity, are used in the literature about Hong Kong and the current publications and media coverage regarding the 2019 summer protests, they are rarely elaborated with a clear definition.

This chapter seeks to outline how these concepts are understood in this thesis by focusing on two parts. The first part introduces the concept of identity and social identity theory, in order to seek to explain how and why people in Hong Kong hold certain views towards the Hong Kong or Chinese identity. As previously explained and argued for, identity seems to have been an important part of the choices of people in Hong Kong to whether participate or not in the pro-democracy movement and protests. These people seemed to belong to age groups, often defined as 'generations'. The latter part therefore presents the concept of generation as a category in the research, but also presents generation as a social category, connecting generational theory to social identity theory. The concepts and theories used in this thesis were derived partly inductively based on the gathered data, but also deductively by building on some existing concepts and theories on generational differences.

3.2 Defining the concept of 'identity'

Hogg and Abrams (1998) defines identity as "people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others". Following this broader definition of identity, the concept is essentially regarding sameness and differences between people in terms of feeling of belonging or not. This research focus on how people in a certain area make sense of their own identity in relation to others, a group or social identity. Therefore, this thesis is built on the premise of everyone holding an identity of some form connected to the place they live in and people's ability to define their own identity.

As presented in the previous chapter, existing theory of identity in Hong Kong describe the identity in different ways. Most authors explain the cultural identity originally coming from an ethno-cultural angle. Ethnic identity is defined by Eriksen (2011, p. 43) as referring to shared ancestry. Others explain identity as a civic identity, connecting it to citizenship and related to one's role in public life and participation (Jackson & Hogg, 2010, pp. 81-83). Identity might also be understood as 'cultural identity' based an anthropological understanding. With a cultural understanding, there is a connection of culture in the specific area, such as linguistics in terms

of the spoken language or dialect (Eriksen, 2001, p. 43). For others, wishing the Hong Kong area to be autonomous, the identity might be described as a 'national' identity, connected to nationalism and citizenship (Erikson, 2001, p. 65).

The Chinese word of identity[20] is often understood as the social or legal status of a person (Coulmas, 2019, p. 33-34). The Chinese word of identity card uses the same characters for identity[21], and is the expression for the official identity document, illustrating the use of the term in everyday life of people in Hong Kong. While the term 'identity' in Chinese often refers to identity in the context of the social and legal status, this is only one aspect of a complex term. Identity in Hong Kong is one of a post-colonial situation. One can therefore at the same time talk about a postcolonial identity, which can be understood as an identity affected by the history as a colony, thus cultural interactions shaping he identities in the society (Radhakrishnan, 1993). This refers back to point previously made of Hong Kong being neither 'West' nor 'East', which can also be related to identity in Hong Kong in a postcolonial situation.

3.2.1 Identity as constructed, dynamic and subject to change

Identity can be described as an ambiguous term. Meaning, depending on the context and scientific disciplines, there are numerous understandings of identity. Some of these definitions will be outlined in this part, in order to clearly present what the different categories mean. However, identity is in this thesis not perceived as a fixed category, but rather perceived as fluid and socially constructed. Taking a constructivist approach, identity is not assumed to be similar or mean the same for everyone in the same group.

The theoretical debates on identity in cultural anthropology can be divided into two conceptualizations of the nature of identity: a primordial understanding versus a constructivist understanding (see Coulmas, 2019) From a primordial understanding, one's identity is given from birth and thus more fixed. A group is then seen as something objective, and identity related to it as singular and fixed with certain social boundaries. On the other hand, a constructivist approach to identity sees identity as something socially constructed through interaction between people (Wendt, 1994). Barth is another researcher, whom after studying ethnic identities argued for identity as flexible over time, rather than fixed (Jenkins, 2014, p. 121). In other words, identity can be seen as transactional and situationally flexible, rather than accepting absolute truths of identities (ibid, p. 126; Eriksen, 2011, p. 62).

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[20] 身份 (*san fan*) This expression for identity is the same in both Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese.

[21] 身份證 (*san fan jing*)

3.2.2   The politics of identity

Identity and the definition of it, holds political implications, in terms of whether an identity is national, regional or local. In recent years, identity and nationality can be described as politized, and thus rising conflicts. For instance, Eriksen (2011, p. 49) describes how the definitions of the differences between political ethnicity and cultural ethnicity affected the war in Yugoslavia, which could be understood as a group conflict. The conflict, he claims, was not in reality over ethnic or cultural identity, but rather limited resources framed by ethnic differences (Eriksen, 2011, p. 49). With this example, one can see the politics of identity being explained and how 'politization' of identity occurred and turned into violent conflict.

Identity can also serve as a factor for social movements when politicized. Historically, examples social movements related to identity politics developed in the 1960s and 1970s, have been related to for example gender, sexual orientation or 'black social movements' (Massoumi, 2015, p. 11). Massoumi (2011) describes how there are various meanings of identity politics, but connects it to the feeling of oppression as a political mobilization factor. In other words, the connection of social movements and identity politics can be described as when people feel their identities are oppressed and they feel the need to resist for social and political changes.

Eriksen (2011, p. 66) in his work on identity and politics, points out how he understands collective identities as constructed, either consciously or not, but argues for paying attention to where these constructions come from. Eriksen argue for both identity politics and states changing historically and varying geographically (ibid). Therefore, he argues one should focus on people and how they make sense of the world (ibid).

If following a more constructivist understanding of identity derived from cultural anthropology, it would not be correct to define identity as simply one category. Identity can be understood as a contextual, contested and subjective concept. Meaning, it depends on the situation and understanding by individuals. As this section have explained, identity is also politicized in situations of conflict. The political controversies of identity also apply to Hong Kong, as presented and explained in the previous chapter. This thesis therefore does not seek to define or categorize the Hong Kong identity, but rather present how identity is understood by individuals or as Eriksen (2011, p. 66) describes it, "make sense of the world". These identities will be explained through social identity theory, leading us to the next subchapter.

3.3   Social identity theory and the process of 'othering'

Social identity theory as an approach to identity was developed through the field of social psychology, aiming to explain how people make sense of who they are is connected to them

belonging to a social group or category (Jackson & Hogg, 2010, pp. 749-753). 'Self-concept' or 'self-categorization' is described as the terms of one's conception of who one is. According to social identity theory, identities can be seen as created and re-created through social interaction. In other words, identification regards both how one identifies and categorizes oneself and others (Jenkins, 2014; Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Hewstone & Cairns, 200,). Social identity is generated by these social categorizations (ibid, p. 115).

Social identity is understood as an individual's sense of belonging to a social category or group, the 'in-group' or 'us' (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Hewstone & Cairns, 2011). Thus, individuals are perceived as able to define themselves and others in groups in a process of 'self-categorization', being cognitive aware of the group they feel belonging to. Jussim, Ashmore & Wilder (2011) uses the example of self-categorization related to a country, such as the statement of "I am an American" and the example of the importance of the group identity as ".., and I am proud of being a citizen of the greatest country on earth" (p. 6). While the group identity can be related to place, there are multiple ways of labelling group identities, such as gender or profession. This thesis focus on the group identities connected to the place of Hong Kong and People's Republic of China.

The way individuals define their identity is assumed to be connected to the need of a positive self-image, or identity. A positive social identity is achieved by evaluating and comparing ones' group with other groups. This is described as dis-identification, describing the other groups as 'out-groups', creating a 'us' and 'them'. (Hewstone & Cairns, 2011, p. 321; Kenny, Whittle & Willmott, p. 15). According to social identity theory, individuals would describe their own group(s) as more favorable compared to the other groups. Jenkins' social identity theory describes the identification as contextual, seemingly in line with a constructivist approach to identity. Behavior toward someone might then be connected to identification. Jenkins (2014, p.7) describes it as "to identify someone could be enough to decide how to treat her".

Hewstone & Carins (2001) argues for "… social identity to help us understand the behavior of those whose identity is perceived to be threatened and whose behavior might otherwise seem quite irrational or pointless" (p. 323). The same authors argue for social-psychological aspects of inter-group conflicts, using the examples of conflicts in Northern Ireland and Rwanda (ibid). In many cases, those who feel the threat of their own identity, can be assumed to categorize certain people into a classification. This classification again, can be seen as something negative. Important dimensions of these classifications can be stereotyping,

meaning the belief of someone belonging to a category would hold certain traits (Jenkins, 2014, p. 155).

The process of othering can be described as one form of such behavior. Othering can be described as a process where individuals and groups are treated as different compared to the dominant group in a society (Griffin, 2017). As a consequence, those being 'othered' might be discriminated (ibid). Sumner (1906) termed the biases seen in relation to othering as ethnocentrism, how one view one's own group as centered and the others in relation to it (Hewstone & Cairns, 2011, p. 320). These processes of 'othering' and speaking of groups of people as 'us' and 'them' is thought to not only contribute to inter-group conflicts, but might also in turn be influenced by conflicts (Jussim, Ashmore & Wilder, 2001 p. 8). Furthermore, addressing issues of social identity and the senses of "us" is pointed on as a way to reduce conflicts by sharing goals and creation a new group identity (ibid, p. 9). The relevance of social identity and group identity in conflicts highlights the political aspects of identity.

3.4   The concept of 'generations', a source for social identity

'Generation' as a term can be defined as a non-genealogical bond among individuals born within the same historical period or with the same age (Lyons et al. 2019). Generational theory was first developed based on research in the context of work situations, aiming to explain workplace behavior. The traditional approach of generational differences categorizes people born between certain years into different generations, aiming to explain differences in work attitudes and behaviors. Despite this fact, the theories can also be used to explain other types of behavior. Generational theory assumes people from one generation to another being different by those within a generation generally sharing the same characteristics (Reeves and Oh, 2008, p. 295). In other words, when one is born can be assumed to be an explanation of certain behaviors generalized within a generation in some contexts. Generational theory assumes people are shaped from how the society is organized, such as the educational system and events making people hold certain views.

Strauss and Howe (1991) considers people born between a cycle of 20-22 years belonging to the same generation. Following the theory, the generations are often labelled with names and year categories, such as: 'Baby Boomers' born between 1943 and 1960; 'Generation X', born between 1960-79; 'Generation Y' or 'Millennials' born between 1980-94 and 'Generation Z' born between 1995-2010 (Lyons et al., 2019). These ways of labelling generations are more fixed, viewing social categories as something fixed. The factors for a shared generation are according to Strauss and Howe generational theory; perceived membership, common beliefs

and behaviors, and common location in history (Reeves and Oh, 2008, p. 297). When speaking about shared membership, common beliefs and behaviors, one might see a connection to social identity and group identity among those being in the same generation. In other words, a generational identity might be present, where people feel belonging to a generation defined as different from another.

Lyons et al. (2019) connect generational identity to social identity theory, in terms of generation as a source for social identity, a group feeling. The authors see generations serving as a way to self-categorize, constructing the labels of 'us' and 'them' by individuals in the same generation sharing certain similarities. This way of seeing generation understands both generations and generational identity as a construction, being subject to change, rather than more fixed as by Strauss and Howe.

Social generation studies have been criticized for mainly focusing on the youth experiences from the perspective of Western society in the categorization, without taking into consideration cultural differences in different societies. For example, the idea of a 'baby boom generation' mainly applies to experiences of Western countries, referring to the generation born post World War II. Some authors, such as Wang and Peng (2015) argues for treating generational differences as series of continuous variables rather than fixed categories. Following this criticism of generational labels, this thesis treats generation categories as more fluid in terms of not pre-defining which generation group people belong to. Rather, this thesis follows the concept of generation as those born in the same period of around 20 years and ideas of generations as a source for group identity.

3.5   Applying the concepts and theories to the case of Hong Kong

In the case of Hong Kong, the 'Hong Kong identity' and a 'Chinese identity' can be understood as different group identities, leading a conflict between these identities in the 2019 protests. Following the definition and understanding of identity as according to social identity theory, it is relevant to examine the self-definition of identity by individuals in Hong Kong and how they describe the in-group and out-groups. The research questions in this thesis have been shaped by the presented concepts and theories, using the terms of 'in-group', 'out-group'.

With the hypothesis of a generational gap in identity being present in Hong Kong during the 2019-20 protests and the research objective of a deeper understanding of individual perceptions, it is highly relevant to understand the views from people who in theory belong to different generations. Based on generational theory, the experiences, history, views and therefore active participation of younger Hong Kongers might be explained by the time they

were born in history. Simultaneously, the inactive participation from other generation might be explained by how they generally tend to hold different views, explained by being formed in another time in history. In this thesis, these assumptions will be explored and challenged.

A limitation of the presented theory is, these being mainly Western understandings of identity based on Western knowledge and science. The case of identity in Hong Kong understood as shaped by Western influence can still be researched with these theories. However, I have attempted to counter these Western theories by also defining how identity can be understood in a post-colonial context, as a post-colonial identity, as well as explaining the Chinese word of identity. By looking on identity as more fluid, one would also be more open for multiple ways of looking on identity, not assuming there are any objective ways to define identity.

4 Methodological approach

4.1   Introduction – a qualitative study

The research can be considered as qualitative in nature due to several factors due to where I stand as a researcher and objective of the research (Bryman, 2012; Yin, 2003; Silverman, 2006). The purpose of collecting the primary data for the research was to understand *why* selected citizens in Hong Kong held the meaning they did towards identity and society at a specific time. Thus, it was important to gather rich, deep data and present these by using words. Opinions and descriptions of identities can be understood as small-scale aspects of social reality, another typical feature of qualitative research (Bryman, 2012, p. 408). However, quantitative data was used to contextualize and support the qualitative data. This will later be elaborated on in this chapter. Both inductive and deductive reasoning were used. It can be considered partly built on inductive logic, as part of the conceptual framework was chosen after data was gathered, building on my data. Form the data, there were also developed more general themes. This research can also be considered as formed by deductive reasoning, as theory and previous research on the topic formed the hypotheses and topic of generational differences in identity before field work in Hong Kong.

The objectives of the research have guided the design and methods for data collection and analysis, such as how theory and concepts were used in connection to the data or the structure of interviews. This chapter is divided into two main parts to present this, where the first part focuses on the research design and approach. The latter part presents the actual data collection during field work and reflects upon my positionality and reflexivity as a researcher. Throughout the chapter, the limitations and challenges of the approach I chose and how these were dealt with will be reflected upon.

4.2   Case study design

While the focus of this research is on how individuals among two groups perceive their own identity and their society, it is specifically in the context of the case of group identities being an important aspect of the 2019 summer protests in Hong Kong. More specifically, these individuals were limited to be Hong Kong residents in two generations in order to pay attention to how historical and political contexts have shaped self-identification and the group identity of people from different generations. Bryman (2012, p. 66) referring to Stake (1995), describes a case study as "…. concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question". In other words, case studies aim to provide a deeper understanding of a case. Yin (2003, p. 13)

has a more technical definition of a case study, describing a case study as "…an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident."

This research is concerned with how selected Hong Kong citizens understand their identity in the context of the 2019 summer protests. The protests related to the extradition law is a contemporary phenomenon concerned with how 'real' Hong Kong residents experienced the situation and identity in relation to the situation. Hong Kong as a place provides a backdrop to the findings but is not the focus of interest. It would be very lacking to examine the identity of the selected Hong Kong residents and their views on the society, without drawing attention to the political situation and major events occurring in the place these people lived in or were connected to. Thus, this research includes many elements from a singular case study, such as not only focusing on qualitative data from interviews. Rather, media reports and my observations and documentation from field work are also relevant data in the analysis, which is more typical for a case study (Yin, 2003). The specific types of data used in this research will be explained and elaborated further in the subsection dealing with other forms of data.

4.2.1 Quality of research

Qualitative studies are often criticized for being too subjective, lack generalizability and replicability (Bryman, 2012; Yin, 2003; Silverman, 2006). This could also apply to this research project. However, as the main empirical data for the research is qualitative and considering the limited time and scope of a dissertation, this research does not seek to generalize the views and perspectives presented in the data. The perspectives from ten individuals cannot be assumed to necessarily be representative of the generation they belong to, and certainly not to the Hong Kong population of over seven million citizens in Hong Kong. On the contrary, they show individual thoughts and deeper understanding of perceptions. Identity and personal views are subjective in nature.

In order to increase the credibility, validity and contextualize the data, literary sources and statistical data gathered in the same topic will be added when presenting the data and under the analysis in chapter 5 and 6. Statistics is one type of quantitative data. Using several types and sources of empirical materials and methods when studying a social phenomenon is described as triangulation (Bryman, 2012, 390, 392; Silverman, 2006, 291), a technique which can be used to increase the credibility of a research in terms of validity in qualitative research. A suggested method to deal with the lack of generalizability and increase the transferability, is

to rather focus on how the data is described through a 'thick description' as Geertz describes it, meaning "… rich accounts of the details of a culture" (Bryman, 2012, p. 392).

4.3   Critical narrative analysis

The objective of this research is to understand how selected participants perceive identities and their society they belong to, not simply the different themes among identities of people. Therefore, an approach both going deeper into the meaning of what my participants told me and how they made sense of it is needed.

The connection of narratives and identity is seen in the work of Paul Ricoeur in terms of a 'narrative identity', meaning how people's personal identities can be understood by how they answer the questions of "Who? Who is this? Who said that? Did that? Who is that? Who are we?" (Pellauer, D. & Dauenhauer, B., 2016). Langdridge (2007) developed a framework of critical narrative analysis (CNA), combining the two different methodologies of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and narrative analysis. While CDA deals with differences in the society regarding power and how they are reflected in language, narratives focus on the personal and everyday understandings (Souto-Manning, 2014). With the combination of these in CNA, one is able to consider both aspects. CNA combines these two methodologies, improves the disadvantages of the other approach. In CNA, phenomenology and critical theory is seen as mutually informing. Meaning, it allows exploring both how participants understands identity as well as paying attention to the power relations in the society and how these affect the discourses (Langdridge, 2007; Souto-Manning, 2014). In other words, how one's gender or social status affects the way one speaks about a certain issue. Language by itself is seen as a form of social practice, as it reflects one's position in the society (Souto-Manning, 2014, p. 161). By being critical to the interaction between social structures and language, one can then discover and challenge the power inequality in societies. Narratives, on the other hand, can be described as stories people tell about their real-life experiences (McAlpine, 2016; Souto-Manning, 2014). When analyzing narratives, one can then gain a better understanding of how people construct themselves and others (McAlpine, 2016). McAlpine (2016) describes narratives as not only incorporating the social context and a temporality, but also making the speaker an active agent in the account. Referring to Riessman (2008), narratives are described as providing a window into how identities are constructed (McAlpine, 2016, 33). In other words, how people construct the stories of their experiences can be understood as connected to their identity. The connection of narratives and identity, as well as a more critical approach to identity makes CNA a suitable approach for this thesis.

4.3.1   Implementing CNA to my case

In order to implement CNA to my case, I used Langdridge's (2007) CNA analysis which involves six different stages. This was applied to the case by the following:

Stage 1. 'A critique of the illusions of subjectivity'. In this first stage, I reflected upon how my own values and my background might have affected the study and where I needed to be aware of putting my own values into the presentation. These reflections can be seen in subchapter 4.6

Stage 2: 'Identifying the narratives, tones and rhetoric's'. After the interview with the participants were conducted, the recordings were transcribed. The 94 pages of transcriptions from the interviews were reviewed to identify narratives within the text related to identity. These narratives were studied to be able to analyze what type of narrative they could be described as by paying attention to the tone and rhetoric's, such as the types of words they used when talking about something and whether they seemed positive or negative, provoked or supportive when talking about the different groups. In the presentation of the narratives in Chapter 5, each narrative is titled as the types of narrative they represent in the Hong Kong society with a brief introduction to each person and narrative.

Stage 3: 'Identity and identity construction' Stage 3 was connected to stage 2, in terms of examining how the individuals positioned themselves towards different groups and the Hong Kong society. For example, the theory was used by paying attention to how 'in-group' and 'out-groups' were described, as well as how they spoke about the society and protests. In this section I payed attention to what they described as significant for the different groups, mainly 'Hong Kongers' or 'Mainland Chinese' and whether there were any traces of 'othering'.

Stage 4: 'Finding the main themes'. Significant patterns within the two generations were noted to identify the different themes, in terms of similarities and differences in what was the most important for them and how they positioned themselves. After identifying the themes, they were compared across the generations to consider the relationship between them.

Stage 5: 'Destabilizing the narrative'. By using a social constructionist, a more critical approach to identity, the different narratives were reviewed and 'deconstructed'. This stage is described as being different to other forms of narrative analysis (Langdridge, 2007, p. 150), in terms of being more critical to what people present as their identities and trying to identify their hidden meanings. In my case, what people actually mean when they describe the different groups, rather than accept the pre-defined assumptions of a 'Hong Kong identity' or a 'Chinese identity'. The identity theory this was based on have been presented in theoretical chapter.

Stage 6: 'Critical synthesis'. In this stage, the different narratives were presented with the key findings related to the research topic. In chapter five, all the narratives are presented with the analysis of how these individuals self-categorized and constructed their identities in relation to their 'in-group and 'out-group'.

I have chosen to present my data and analysis interchangeably in two different chapters. The first, focuses on my participants as individuals and their accounts. These accounts will differ from how they chose to tell me about their stories and what they chose to focus on. A limitation might therefore be inconsistency in what these narratives include. However, they are presented from the perspective of my participants and what they found most relevant to tell me, which might make the data presentation more authentic.

The second part of the analysis seeks to compare the different narratives and identity understandings, based on the identity they felt belonging to or not. Additionally, they were also analyzed based on the generation categories they belonged to. Throughout the analysis, my data will be discussed in connection to the theories on othering and social identity. This leads us to the next part of this chapter regarding how my data was gathered.

4.4. Data collection techniques

My data was collected between July and September 2019 through field work in Hong Kong. The data specifically involves qualitative interviews, as well as observations and documentations from protests (Yuen Long, July 27) and multiple Lennon Walls. The interviews were mainly conducted during fieldwork in Hong Kong. The exception was one interview conducted in Norway with a student studying abroad. Semi-structured and in-depth interviews were carried out in Cantonese with ten Hong Kong residents. Six of the participants belong to the older generation (born 1959-1969), while the other four belong to the younger generation (born between 1982 and 1998). Bryman (2012, p. 470) describes qualitative interview as less structured, focusing on the participants points of views, more flexible and focusing on rich, detailed answers. Strengths of the method is the insight it provides into people's opinions and perceptions and the more direct focus on the topic of research (Yin, 2003, p. 86).

The limitation of interview as a data collecting method can be presence of me as a researcher, as it may bias the responses. To deal with potential weaknesses, an interview guide was made before field work as part of the project proposal. The interviews were also recorded to quote participants correctly. My role as a researcher was also reflected upon in the process. During the interviews, I sought to not ask any leading questions. My role as a researcher is further reflected upon in subsection 4.6.

4.4.1 The interviews

A narrative approach to identity suggests in-depth and loosely structured interviews (Kenny, Whittle & Willmott, 2011, p.14) This suggestion was followed in this research. An interview guide with questions was made before fieldwork due to specific topic being researched, making the interviews partly semi-structured, but also looser. Despite having a guide, the interviews mostly ended up being more open-ended, as they were more conversational, and I mostly listened to or followed up on what they told me. Thus, in most interviews the guide served more as a checklist in the end to see if all my questions were answered.

My interviews started with an open question, simply asking the respondent to tell me about themselves. By doing so, I was able to have an understanding of how the participants viewed themselves based on what they presented. For example, whether they focused on their careers or family history. I could then in the beginning get an idea of how they viewed themselves and the society. With this technique of open questions, the respondents were allowed to tell rather than answering specific questions. The answers were followed up with questions asking to tell more, elaborate or describe. During the interviews it was important to gather as much information as possible about how these individuals presented themselves and the society, and not simply what opinions they held about identity categories or the political situation to be able to analyze their identity constructions.

In some of the interviews, the participants naturally moved to tell me about how they viewed the society and the political situation, as they knew my topic of research before the interviews started. In other interviews, I directly asked them to tell me about their opinions on the society and protests. I focused on telling my participants that they could choose what they wanted to focus on and how everything would be relevant as an attempt to avoid guiding the answers and avoid bias. By asking my participants to tell me about the society, I would also get an idea of how they positioned themselves by paying attention to the way they spoke about different topics. To have a direct answer about identity, I would towards the end show them the graph based on statistical data by the HKUPOP[22]. The statistical data can be understood as a tool in the interviews. Participants were asked about what they thought about what they saw and whether they identified with any of the categories. Although identity, as presented in the previous conceptual chapter, is understood as fluid and contextual, rather than fixed, I had to contextualize it in some way. When I asked my participants to tell about themselves and the

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[22] As also presented in the background and lit.review. chapter

society more open, other aspects of their identities could be taken into consideration in the analysis.

I was able to conduct the interviews in the local variety of Chinese, meaning the participants could express their views from their first language without losing the meaning due to poorer English skills. As the presentation of the data will show, there were a lot of linguistic aspects to pay attention to while translating and transcribing the data, such as word play. In Cantonese Chinese, the words are generally short, rhymes or have the same pronunciation. Particularly in the Hong Kong version of Cantonese, one tends to shorten sentences or words. Without having the cultural and linguistic understanding of the language, I would not be able to present the data without losing the original meaning. Another advantage of conducting interviews in Cantonese was the possibility to include all parts of the society. Although Hong Kong was a British colony until 1997, not everyone in the older generation in the working class are able to speak English. For a more inclusive research, it was important for me that everyone would be able to have their views presented, despite lack of higher education. By conducting interviews in Cantonese, it meant the participants from the older generation could be more diverse on their social background.

4.4.2   Selection of participants

Selection of participants for the interviews was followed by the strategy of purposive sampling, meaning the participants were not selected on a random basis (Bryman 2012, p. 418). Rather, who was chosen to participate was due to certain given criteria. Through the method of purposeful selection of participants, particularly fit individuals for the study were selected (see figure below). In this case it would be those belonging to the relevant category to be researched in relation to the research problem and question, which are belonging to an older or a younger generation and a Hong Kong citizen (criteria i, ii and iii). Furthermore, it would be more efficient to interview participants aware of the demonstrations to be able to express their opinions about them (criteria iv). Through dialogue with contacts, such as family members or family friends, or the participants themselves, it was determined whether the potential participants fit into the set criteria.

The following criteria were finally set for the selection of participants:
i)   The participants should be born either in the period of either a) or b).
a) 1946-1964 (Generation baby boom) b) 1981-1999 (The Millennial generation)
ii)   The participants must be registered as a Hong Kong SAR citizen;
iii) Should have lived in Hong Kong for more than half of their life; and
iv)   The participants must be aware of the anti-extradition law protests in Hong Kong

Figure 2. Participant criteria

I originally set specific years my participants *must* have been born in to decide whether they belonged to a generation or not. The first criterion was later changed to *should* due to several factors as I realized during the field work that such strict criteria did not fit into the case. First, as I read more on generational theory and discovered a disagreement among researchers on the definitions of specific generation labels23. The controversy of the years I chose as criteria for belonging to 'Generation baby boom' or the 'Millennial generation'. The age groups were therefore modified to be those in the younger generation protesting, mainly under the age of 40, and those who could be their parents. By doing so, the more agreed upon definition of a generation understood as a group of people born within approximately 20 years was still maintained. Second, although I wanted to interview two main groups, I realized when reading more on identity theory that if I followed the logic of social constructivism, these generations are also constructed. It would therefore be wrong to be too strict when determining generational belonging. Third, and maybe the most important point, was that the situation changed. The criteria were originally designed before new major protests broke out, and based on my personal observations, the group protesting seemed to also be older than in 2014. Another change was the criterion of what the participant must be aware of (criterion iv), from being aware of the pro-democracy movement as this research originally focused on, to the anti-extradition law protests during the summer of 2019.

Within the purposive sampling, some of the participants were accessed through snowballing, meaning by gaining access from other participants. Some of my first participants were accessed through help from family contacts in Hong Kong, specifically family members or family friends. One of the participants was contacted through social media. It was challenging to a certain degree to gain access, as the topic was highly politically tense during my field work. For example, I had a very interesting discussion over coffee with one person

23 Please see the previous conceptual chapter and subsection on generational theory.

who had been involved in the protests. This person had many interesting points and opinions. Yet, I could not quote them in my research due to this person not wanting to participate nor be recorded. Another important note for data gathering is the fact that my grandmother was sick and passed away during my field work. It was a challenging situation for me personally, but it also led to fewer interviews with family members than originally planned. In the end, only one of the participants is a family member. Bryman (2012, p. 150) warns about taking side with family members in the position when interviewing family members. To deal with the possibility of this bias, I have not presented who this regards among of my participants and attempted to present each as objective as possible.

Topic of research and the criteria were clarified with the participants before the interviews. As some wished to stay anonymous, all participants are anonymized to seek giving equal focus to all participants, both for me as a researcher when analyzing the data, but also for you as a reader. All names are removed, and each participant coded from A to J, chronologically based on interview date. Based on the coding letter, each participant was then assigned a pseudonym. These pseudonyms were drawn from the Hong Kong culture, where the older generation was assigned a common Cantonese surname, while the younger assigned an English first name. In Hong Kong culture, it is common that younger citizens use an English name in everyday life, while older citizens are more attached to their surname. A challenge during field work and collection of data was the constant change in the political situation and evolvement of the protests. Therefore, the content and topic of the interviews differ, based on what had happened recently. Please see Appendix C for the most relevant events and when the interviews with each participant was conducted. Each interview must be understood in the context of when it was conducted in terms of how the political situation changed, protests developed.

4.4.3   Visual data to contextualize interview data

During the protests, a lot of the political opinions were visualized, either on social media by artists or by common citizens on Lennon Walls [24]. Different pieces from Lennon Walls in Hong Kong from three different areas as well as posters around the city were documented by photography during my field work. These pieces serve as a context to the interviews on how identity is understood by some people in Hong Kong. These visual data can be understood as physical artifacts from the field. Examples of physical artifacts are photographs, movies, advertisements and cartoons (Silverman, 2006, p. 243). There are multiple strengths and

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[24] See previous explanation of Lennon Walls in Chapter 2.

weaknesses in using physical artifacts from the field. One strength is the insight into cultural features of the case (Yin, 2003, p. 86). Weaknesses might be selectivity and availability, as the pieces of the Lennon Walls I chose to photograph often were those I personally found interesting or understood. The selected posters and Lennon Walls in Yuen Long, Admiralty and Ma On Shan were also documented by coincidence as I was passing by, making them randomly selected among many in Hong Kong at the time. Furthermore, the Lennon Walls were mostly used as a way of protest, meaning those supporting the pro-democracy movement would be writing on them. They therefore only serve as a visualization of one side of the protests. Thus, they only serve as a context to some of the opinions in the main data derived from the interviews. As the sticky notes on the Lennon Walls often included drawings or quotes, they serve as a physical product produced in the process of opinion making in Hong Kong. By using these sticky notes, one might have a visualization of the opinions my participants talk about in the interviews, given these being perceptions more people share.

Yuen Long, 25.07.2019   Ma On Shan, 20.07.2019   Yuen Long, 27.07.2019

Figure 3. *'Examples of Lennon Walls'.*
Source: The Author

4.5 Ethics, risks, and security considerations

Before field work and data gathering, my project was notified to and approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data. Bryman (2012, p. 135) points out four main aspects to pay attention to in terms of ethics in research; harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy, and deception. Throughout this research project, all aspects were considered and paid attention to. For example, I was in contact with the participants before the interviews and they were given the choice to choose where we would meet. This was important to make them feel as comfortable as possible with the interview situation. All participants received a document with information about the research project and both mine and my

supervisor's contact information. They were informed about the possibility to withdraw from the research at any time and given the possibility of being anonymized when filling out a consent form. A copy of the consent forms was given to my participants, while I kept a copy from each and stored them safely in a locked suitcase while being in the field.

Potential of harm to participants in the context of this research must be taken into consideration due to the political sensitivity of the topic. To deal with both this aspect and invasion of privacy, it was important to highlight the possibility of anonymity. When the participants chose to be anonymized, it was discussed to what extent before the interview started. Specifically, whether it would be only their name, or also other personal information which can lead to identification, such as their profession. All participants were also recorded after giving consent. To deal with the security of potential access to recordings from outsiders, the recordings were stored in a password protected device not connected to internet.

Paying attention to the potential of deception, my personal opinions of the ongoing protests, identity or political situation in Hong Kong were not discussed with the participants during the interviews. On several occasions, my participants would ask me or ask whether I agreed or not. I then focused on telling them my opinions did not matter for my research, and how I rather wanted to focus on them as Hong Kong residents. My participants seemed to respect that and understand my choices of staying as neutral as possible as a researcher. In order to not only present one or two perspectives, I sought to find a diversity in opinions or backgrounds. By doing that, I hope I have been more objective, in terms of not only giving a voice to those I might agree more with personally.

4.6   Positioning myself – reflections and challenges

In this section, my reflections of subjectivity and me as a researcher as part of stage one in the CNA will be presented. With a qualitative study and interviews as main method for data collection, the presence of the researcher can be a challenge. The challenge not only applies to the physical presence in the interviews in terms of how the interviews were carried out, but in the whole process of the research project – from formulation of the research problem to how the data is presented and analyzed. As a researcher, I must be reflexive and of the work in the whole process, meaning being sensitive about how my cultural, political and social status affects the research (Bryman, 2012, p. 393; Silverman, 2006, p. 16).

Even what I choose as a topic and the focus is probably what I would find significant and affected by my own opinions. The responses by my participants during interviews would also be affected by my characteristics, such as my age, gender, appearance. The challenge of

positions can be divided into two different aspects (Woldeselassie, 2019, p. 9-10). The first, is the connection of my personal background and identity vis-à-vis my participants. My background as a second generation Norwegian with parents from Mainland China and Hong Kong, makes me both an insider and an outsider. Having family in Hong Kong and my shared appearance with most citizens in Hong Kong helped in gaining access to participants, making it easier to talk about identity in Hong Kong. My diverse background has affected my identity to be more diverse. It has also affected my views on identity and the methodology – to not make any assumptions on the complex concept of identity and my view on how one can hold multiple identities. I see myself as a Norwegian, but at the same time I also feel belonging to the places of Mainland China and Hong Kong, which probably makes me identify as a Chinese and Hong Konger as well. After all, it is where my heritage comes from and part of my culture.

Although I have visited Hong Kong almost yearly, I have never lived in the society for a longer period of time. Yet, I do feel personal belonging to the place and to Guangzhou in Mainland China, making the protests and case more personal to me. If ethnicity is understood as the appearance and shared 'biological genes', I would look the same as most people in Hong Kong. If language determined where one belongs, I would also be as other Hong Kongers or Southern Chinese with Cantonese as my mother tongue. Despite these 'insider' factors, I will always be looked upon as an outsider as well, being born, raised and living in Norway. While being a proficient Cantonese speaker, I do acknowledge my shortage in language when conversing about politics on a deeper level. Furthermore, how one speaks and use the language would always be different when not living in the area. For example, when speaking Cantonese, I am not using slang or local variations of words like other youth would. My own grandmother often called me a 'banana person', referring to me being 'yellow' on the outside and 'white' on the inside. The 'yellow' referred to the Chinese and 'white' to the Norwegian and Western. Still, I personally feel more attached to Chinese culture than merely by appearance as the term refers to, but I do acknowledge that other people from Mainland China or Hong Kong might have another perception. My background, appearance, local language proficiency and status as a student were factors that made it easier for me to gain access and trust among certain participants, but it was also a challenge in other participants. Specifically, it was easy to gain access among family or family friends, but when snowballing and interviewing strangers, some of them tended to be more skeptical, which leads to the next point regarding power dimensions.

The second challenge of positions to pay attention to relates to the question of my positionality in the context of political issues in Hong Kong, but also power dimensions in the society. As previously mentioned, the topic of my thesis is highly politically sensitive. In such

cases, objectivity is of even greater importance. I have also mentioned how there are different views within my own family. This is not only related to half of my family living on Mainland China, but also relates to different views among family in Hong Kong. By observing their discussions and listening to their opinions, I believe this have helped me to a further extend understand and respect different opinions. Dealing with objectivity in this research, meant not taking sides or expressing opinions related to the sides in the conflict. I have, for example, focused on also presenting how Chinese officials have responded to the criticism on several cases. The choice of not discussing whether the Hong Kong identity or place of Hong Kong can be defined as a 'national identity' or a 'nation' is intended due to the political sensitivity of the issue – partly to deal with objectivity and partly as these were considered not too relevant for the aims of this research. The aims of this research were also chosen specifically to deal with objectivity. Rather than generalizing the opinions, the accounts of the participants were focused on in the analysis. I have attempted to focus on people with different background and different narratives in order to present a diversity of opinions.

Priorities by me as a researcher of what is understood as the most important data might not be objective, but rather affected by my background and studies. However, the choice of presenting all the participant's views is also a choice considering the power dimensions in the society. Almost all participant had received higher education of some sort, at University or taking qualifying courses. This applied to all except one participant who answered shortly and mostly told me they did not feel qualified to answer any questions about politics or the society. In the beginning, this interview and participant was considered to be removed, as they did not provide what I regarded as specific answers to my questions. After some reflection, I realized that the lack of specific answers to questions is also data. I had to remind myself that not everyone in Hong Kong might have a strong opinion about politics and their positions towards the society, although being aware of the situation, hence my criteria iv about awareness of the protests. I also had to remember that it is important to also give these citizens a voice, those who feel they are unqualified to hold any opinions due to the lack of education or power in the society.

We tend to focus on those who scream the loudest and give a voice to those being most opinionated, but are they representative of the people in a society? In many cases, the answer would probably be no.

4.6.3   Notes on translation of interviews

Interviews were translated while being transcribed by myself. However, some of the more complicated words or phrases were translated with the help of my mother voluntarily. It must be noted that my mother, YiBo Li, has experience in Chinese translation professionally for Norwegian authorities. To address this issue of external translation, the participants were notified before the interviews started and consent was given. The importance of anonymity was discussed, agreed upon and signed by translator on a separate contract.

4.7   Summary

In this chapter I have explained the whole research process from how and why different approaches were chosen to how they were implemented. I have justified the choices of a case study research design, explained why and how a critical narrative analysis was chosen as the analysis methodology, and the process of data gathering. Participant selection for the interviews and data analysis have been outlined and rationale for the choices been presented. In the end of this chapter, different challenges related to positionality connected to my role as both an insider and outsider was addressed and reflected upon. The different challenges connected to some of the interviews will also be presented in the subchapter of each participant in the next chapter. With my methods and methodology now presented, I will move on to the second major part of this thesis – the presentation of my empirical data and analysis.

5   Narratives from Hong Kong citizens

5.1 Introduction to the narratives

While identity can be understood in relation to other people, it is also subjective and individual. Therefore, the data presentation and narratives in this thesis is also more personal. Although I have chosen to anonymize certain identifying information to ensure safety of my participants, one should still get a sense of who these people are and understanding of why they feel belonging in the way they do. My participants are presented in the group of their age category and then chronologically from interview time. Depending on belonging to the older or younger generation and chronology of interview, my participants are given a pseudonym, which will be further explained in the chapter (see appendix A).

All the participants are from the New Territories (NT) area of Hong Kong, where approximately half of the population in Hong Kong live. The NT area consists of nine different towns, and all my participants live in or are from one of these towns or nearby villages (GovHK, 2019). Many of these towns in NT used to be traditional market towns before the Hong Kong government in the 70s engaged in developing these areas to provide housing for the growing population (GovHK, 2019). Before the metro station attack in Yuen Long on the 21st of July 2019, the area had not really been affected by the protests, as it can be considered outside the main city center on the Hong Kong island.
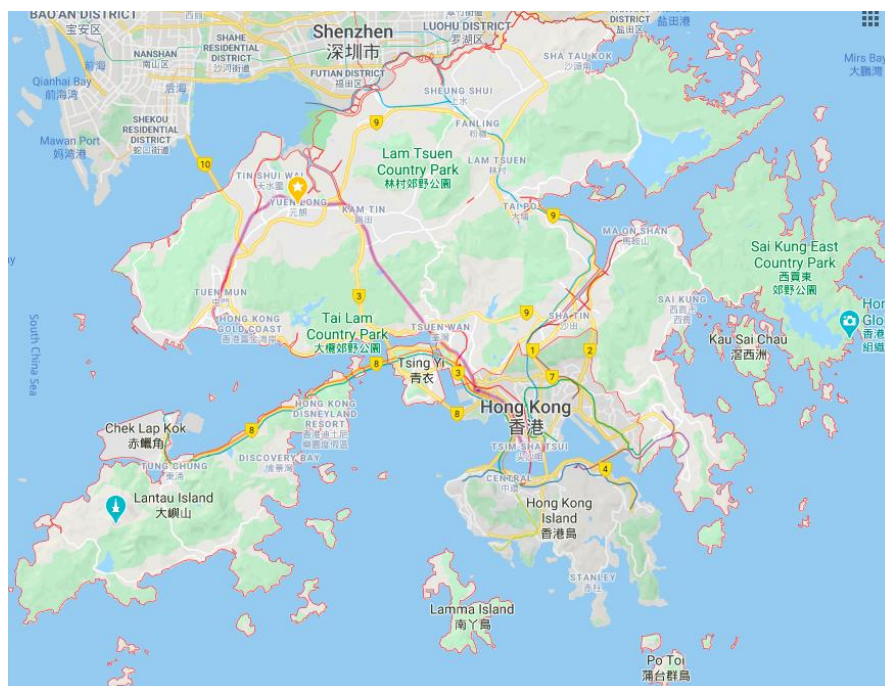
Figure 4. *Map over Hong Kong, indicating the New Territories (marked in red lines) and Yuen Long (yellow pin)*

5.2 Narratives from Hong Kong citizens in the younger generation

In this section, the narratives of those belonging to the younger generation will be presented. The four people in this section were born between 1982 and 1998, assumed to be in the same age group as the majority of those taking to the streets. Based on the Hong Kong culture, all my participants from the younger generation are given a common English name as a pseudonym based on their participant letter. In Hong Kong culture, affected by the British times, it is very common have an English first name. This applies particularly to those in the younger generation. It is common for younger people in Hong Kong to use an English name with friends or at work and a Chinese name at home, meaning they also tend to use more English words in everyday life. As the handover to China occurred in 1997, meaning many of them grew up with Hong Kong being a SAR, one can ask oneself whether this seems to have affected their view on Hong Kong and China, and their feeling of belonging?

5.2.1   Danielle – narrative of desire to obtain freedom

Danielle's narrative was one of being political interested, with desire to obtain freedom and critical of the political situation in China. She was born in 1998 and a philosophy student at one of Hong Kong's universities. Danielle positioned as 'pro-democracy', speaking of the protesters as a 'we', meaning she felt belonging to the group. Her fellow students and friends were among those being fired with tear gas. Danielle had been on the streets protesting herself along with two million people in Hong Kong on the 16th of June 2019.

When talking about identity and who Hong Kongers or Chinese are, Danielle emphasized diversity. She talked about how China not only consists of Han people[25], but of over 50 different ethnic minorities[26], and how China in history had been ruled under different dynasties and even Mongol. Hong Kong residents were also diverse in her view, not only consisting of Chinese and those born in Hong Kong. Hong Kongers in her view could also be those who had experienced Hong Kong education. By highlighting the latter, she acknowledged the culture in Hong Kong being different. In other words, the difference between people in Hong Kong and China were not related to appearances, but rather culture and the society. Although she saw these differences, she did not speak about the Chinese identity as something negative. Danielle had been in Mainland China to visit family and thought the Hong Kong society was much freer in comparison.

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[25] Han is the largest ethnic group in China (Britannica, 2020)

[26] There are approximately 55 acknowledged minority groups in China (Britannica, 2020)

Freedom for Danielle had several sides. She talked about VPN[27] not being necessary in Hong Kong, referring to internet not being censored. Danielle mentioned how one in Hong Kong could criticize the government without big consequences, freedom of press and freedom to assembly. Danielle also told me a story she had heard as an example of less religious freedom in China. The story was about someone in Mainland working for the Chinese government who had to suppress their Christian beliefs in order to become a CCP member. For her, it had been clear that these freedoms were slowly decreasing after nothing really was achieved by the protesters in 2014. Danielle talked about the case of alleged Causeway Bay bookstore kidnappings[28] as an example of how she thought the situation was changing.

These different examples and stories of lack of freedom in Danielle's narrative shows how political aspects are important for her. She thought older people in Hong Kong would identify more as Chinese than those in the younger generation due to less education and viewing identity issues as not that important. By stating the latter, could viewing identity issues as not being as important be another way of describing them as less politically engaged? The following quote was from Danielle when I asked whether why she thought those protesting mostly being from the younger generation:

> "The older generations might just say 'it is just like this. Things will always be unfair'. Us, in the younger generation, think that one should not get used to things happening and will choose to come out. We in the younger generation think the government should put us as the citizens first. Every decision made should put us first." (Danielle, 28.07.2019)

The above quote showed how she thought the older generation generally would be more acceptable of 'status quo', not believing anything could be changed. Danielle had disagreed with her mother the day before on the use of police violence and the protests when they were watching news on the TV. She described those in the older generation as generally wanting a more stable and peaceful life, thinking the youth have not experienced any war or real hard times. Danielle felt like the older generation would be more acceptable of political injustice, as long as they would have food on the table. The situation in Xinjiang[29] was spoken about by Danielle as a 'worst case scenario' of what could happen to people in Hong Kong if they did not stand up for themselves. Throughout Danielle's narrative, one can see how it is important for her to not accept the situation she thought was unfair and the potential of losing all freedom.

[27] Virtual Private Network, commonly used in China to enable uncensored internet networks
[28] [29] See explanations in the background chapter

5.2.2   Eric – narrative of focusing on education

Eric's narrative was one of seemingly being proud of the Western influence in Hong Kong and with a very positive image of people in Hong Kong. Although he supported the pro-democracy movement, he thought they should be peaceful. Eric was born in Mainland China in 1997. Before he along with his family moved to Hong Kong, he lived on Mainland for a few years. Eric was currently studying tourism management in Europe and back in Hong Kong for his summer holiday.

One could have assumed that Eric would identify more as a Chinese, being born in Mainland and growing up in Hong Kong as a SAR. Despite these facts, he did not seem to feel any belonging to the Chinese identity at all. When talking about China, he would say 'they' or 'them'. Eric told me he identified as a Hong Konger, because he grew up in Hong Kong and had been educated there before moving. Eric described the societies in Hong Kong and China as being "like two different worlds", in terms of way of life, education and perspectives. Eric told me about how he thought Hong Kongers would care and act more for the public good or welfare[30] compared to Europeans or Mainlanders. For example, when growing up the teachers would teach them to not litter or affect the society in negative ways. From Eric's perception, education in Mainland would not be as 'modern', resulting in more littering and pollution. Eric mentioned how people would not necessarily care about the environment in many places in Europe either, while one rarely would see a lot of trash or pollution in Hong Kong. By these statements, one can see a clearly more positive description of Hong Kong people, while other people being described as less positive.

Eric thought most people in Hong Kong would identify as Hong Kongers as well, because life for many continued as before after the handover in 1997. However, Eric did acknowledge that it could be different for those in the older generation and pointed on how many moved from Mainland because life was better in Hong Kong. He thought many in the older generation were not participating in the protests either because the policies of national education or extradition law not really affecting them too much. Generally, compared to 2014, Eric told me how he thought many who were not interested in politics or society in the first place now felt solidarity with the protests after the police violence, affecting many in different parts of the society and not only students to join the protests. Eric told me he felt like there were to different groups in the society, those supporting the police and those despising the police.

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30 Eric used the Chinese term '公益心(gong yeg sam), which also involves action and is not simply a principle or 'mantra'

When I asked him to explain why he thought people would protest, apart from the obvious reaction to the extradition law, he said:

> "In Western education, freedom is important. After the 'handover', maybe China thinks the city is theirs and wants to change it to be like another Chinese city and slowly restricting the freedom. But Hong Kongers have experienced Western education for a long time, so I understand why Hong Kongers are so emotional or rebellious now." (Eric, 28.07.2019)

In the quote, one could see him pointing on Western education in Hong Kong as his main explanation of the protests, as it has affected Hong Kongers to emphasize freedom. Eric saw Western education and education in Hong Kong as different from in China. He told me about how there were many religious stories to explain and teach morality in the educational system in Hong Kong. In the Chinese education system, there would not be any stories like this, Eric thought. As a result, he told me many Chinese students were without any religious beliefs, which he thought would make them believe more in themselves or have a high income as their main goal. Another consequence would be caring less about other's feeling, the society or environment. With these descriptions, one could clearly see a more positive description of people in Hong Kong in Eric's narrative, not only compared to people on Mainland China, but also people in Europe. While he seemed proud of the Western education in Hong Kong, Eric also seemed to have a more positive image of people in Hong Kong than in Europe when comparing how people act and take care of the environment. Throughout Eric's narrative, one could see how Western education and education was important for him. He spoke about it as something positive, making Hong Kongers believing freedom as something important.

5.2.3 Jordan – narrative of an emigrated Hong Konger

Jordan's narrative was one of someone who had left Hong Kong but wanted to participate in the protests and take part in the pro-democracy movement. Jordan was in 1995, studying and working in Norway. When growing up, he went to an international school, meaning he grew up in an international environment. Jordan used to be a student in Hong Kong during the 2014 Umbrella protests and simply confirmed when I asked whether he had participated in the Umbrella movement. As he did not seem to want to tell more and elaborate, I did not ask any further for more details to respect that.

Jordan identified as a Hong Konger, but also with some sort of mixed identities. He thought identity was subjective, fluid and hard to determine. Jordan talked about the linguistical

differences in Chinese, English and Norwegian when describing where one comes from[31]. When I asked Jordan about what he identified as, he said:

> "If someone were to ask me in Cantonese or Mandarin who I am, I would definitely say I am a Hong Konger. If someone asked me in other situations, using English or Norwegian, where I come from, I would say Hong Kong. If they asked me if that is China. I would say yes, it is kind of part of China. I would then explain why it is a sensitive question and why I would not say that I am Chinese. I would not 100% deny being partly a Chinese either, because one can argue that in our veins, there are Chinese blood." (Jordan, 29.08.2019)

The quote shows how identity was based on the situation for Jordan, of his identity being more mixed. Jordan talked about how he felt his identity was more mixed now that he lived in Norway. He also held a British passport but did not really feel belonging to the British identity. The quote also showed how he felt less of belonging to China compared to Hong Kong. Jordan felt there were big cultural differences between people in Hong Kong and Mainland China. In his view, Mainlanders and Hong Kongers were different. Cantonese and inclusion of English while speaking by people in Hong Kong[32] was only one of the aspects. Jordan told me how he had seen a lot of negative posts on Facebook about Mainlanders and acknowledged being a bit biased. Examples were posts about how Mainlanders coming to Hong Kong would use the streets instead of toilets. He said he would not generalize them all to the stereotype, but they were different in the behavior, and these things had affected their stronger identification as Hong Kongers. Hong Kongers, he thought, were more educated. They had experienced governance as a British overseas territory, resulting in the way of living being different.

When describing the society, he mentioned how he thought Hong Kong was neither Western nor Eastern[33]. He also used the term K-shaped[34]about democracy in Hong Kong, not following majority rule. Freedom was also important for Jordan, meaning freedom of press and journalists, particularly investigative journalism. Other important aspects for him was fair and equal court and some sort of rule of law. In Jordan's opinion, the 'One country, two systems' policy was good in the beginning. After all, military and foreign affairs did not affect the daily

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[31] In Chinese, both Mandarin and Cantonese, the character of 人 (yan) 'person' is added after the place to describe where people come from. In English it is different, while the same thing might occur in Norwegian. Examples are the word 'nordmann' about a Norwegian, as 'mann' is the Norwegian word of 'man', and a Chinese is in Norwegian being a 'kineser', without referring to the word of a person.

[32] See explanation of the linguistical differences in the background chapter

[33] Using the terms 鬼 (gwai) and 人 (yan). See footnote 20 on page 34

[34] Hong Kong slang for misshaped

life of people in Hong Kong. Jordan thought the situation had changed, and he had considered going back to Hong Kong to 'help', indirectly saying he wanted to go back to take part in the pro-democracy movement. Jordan told me how he had cried for the first time because of the death of someone he did not know, referring to an incident on June 15[35]. Jordan compared it to the situation in Tibet and said the situation of deaths related to the cause had reminded him of the movie 'Ten years' (2015)[36]. Jordan told me he had also cried when watching this movie, because the fictional dystopian society he saw had become reality. These stories in Jordan's narrative shows how he clearly was quite pessimistic about the situation and development of the Hong Kong society.

Because of the situation, Jordan said he understood why people would throw bricks and use violence in the protests. His position had changed from 2014, where he back then supported peaceful and rational protests. This was something he often discussed with his mother, who questioned the use of violence. When I asked whether he thought it was a generational difference, he thought it was just different ways of looking at it and differences in socio-economic background. Despite these facts, Jordan thought the older generation would generally focus more on stability, because they had more to lose. He told me about an older person he knew criticizing the protesters for preventing local business from income when protesting but would accept other more radical measures as long as it did not affect businesses. He also told me about two previous classmates who criticized the use of violence in the protests. Jordan had discussed with one of them, questioning how this person could understand the feeling of Hong Kongers after being away for studies in England for a few years and growing up attending international school. The other classmate had published something about the "rise of the gray shirts". Jordan seemed provoked by what he described as claim of being neutral. Throughout the narrative, one can see how Jordan was quite pessimistic about the Hong Kong society. Although he had wanted to go back, it seemed like he had chosen to stay abroad, telling me about how he thought his job could be helping Hong Kongers coming to integrate into the Norwegian society.

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[35] A protester fell down while hanging protest posters in the public on June 15, 2019. See news article from Time for further reference: https://time.com/5607742/hong-kong-protester-dies-anti-extradition/

[36] A dystopian political movie from 2015 portraying Hong Kong in 2025. See description on IMDb for more information: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5269560/

The same movie is recommended by Joshua Wong in 'Unfree Speech' to watch for inspiration to "(…) join the global fight against tyranny and social injustices" (Wong, 2020, p. 250)

5.2.4   George – narrative of an insider in the protests

George's narrative was as one of someone being politically engaged and an insider in the pro-democracy movement. He was born in 1982 and worked in the banking and finance sector. His mother was born in Hong Kong. His father had immigrated from Mainland China by swimming Shenzhen river over to Hong Kong[37]. George told me his father had experienced the governance of the communist party and fled to Hong Kong. George himself grew up in Hong Kong before he moved to study in Canada for a few years. He told me he had attended many online demonstration groups. George also talked about how some friends were standing quite in the front of the protests, meaning they were quite involved. George spoke about the protest movement as 'we', but also talked about the protesters as 'youth' or 'youngsters'. This can be understood as George feeling belonging to the democracy movement, while not necessarily identify as a protester.

George identified as a Hong Konger. As he grew up under the British times, George acknowledged the British influence, but did not identify as British due to cultural differences. George talked about Cantonese also being spoken in the Guangdong Province, but some the cultural references would be different. He used the example of the 'Be Water' term, derived from the Hong Kong movie culture. The Hong Kong identity did not only hold cultural aspects for George but was also connected to the existence of Hong Kong as a place. He emphasized how there are only seven million people in Hong Kong, and if they did not identify as Hong Kongers there would be no such place as Hong Kong left. These statements can be understood as more patriotic, showing the love for Hong Kong as a place. When talking about attributes of Hong Kongers, George's thought a typical attribute for Hong Kongers was complaining if there was something wrong, but by following the rules and being rational. Hong Kongers would also typically be more compassionate and have more self-control. These examples show a quite positive understanding of people in Hong Kong. On the contrary, George had more negative descriptions of people from Mainland. He talked about how people on the mainland would not have as much self-control due to the amount of people and experience of being poorer.

George was not only generally more negative to Mainlanders, but the political aspects were important for him. He was seven years old in 1989 and remembered the protests in China that year. The events were spoken of as something negative, of how young people used

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[37] This was a common way to enter Hong Kong from the Mainland from around 1950-1970.
For further reference, see: He (2013, January 13), *SCMP*

themselves[38] to stand up to the government. George compared the protesters in Hong Kong to those in 1989, saying he thought the youth was very courageous and how he had never seen such courage before in Hong Kong. George told me how a lot of the youth protesting in Hong Kong were carrying farewell letters, ready to face death as a consequence of protesting. It seemed like he thought the protesters were martyrs who sacrificed themselves to fight CCP. George was very critical of what he described as Chinese interference in Hong Kong politics, joking about me not sharing his interview recording with CCP. Many Chinese, he thought would think CCP was providing them a good life due to China's development the past thirty years, as, only receive one-sided information. Hong Kongers on the other hand, he thought had the capacity to be more critical of information they received. However, from George's view, older people in Hong Kong would generally identify more as Chinese, but not always. The difference, he thought, would depend on people's experience.

Generally, the society had become very bipolar in his view, either 'black or white'. Although the older generation generally would be more pro-government as they had a stronger Chinese identity, he thought more people were now supporting the protesters and pro-democracy movement. Especially after 2014, he thought nothing had changed and the feeling powerlessness increased. George himself was critical of the society and seemed pessimistic about the future, reflected in he and his partner's choice to not have any children. In their opinion raising children in the Hong Kong society was very brutal, and he told me they lacked the courage to do that. He said the following about the Hong Kong society:

> "I think that in the Hong Kong society, one talks about succeeding and making a fortune[39] all the time. It is actually a lie. A lot of problems are swept underneath the carpet, not cared about. The carpet looks really nice, but underneath there are a lot of lumps nobody cares about. But these lumps under the carpets are rotting underneath. In the end, they are now being burst by this group of youth." (George, 28.07.2019)

George's carpet metaphor above, reflects the narrative of someone being frustrated and pessimistic about the society, with low political trust, supporting Hong Kong youth protesting as doing something good for the society.

[38] Referring to a famous photo from Tiananmen Square in Beijing on 4th of July 1989 portrays a student standing in front of tanks

[39] George used the Chinese expression of 發達 (faat daat)

5.3   Narratives of Hong Kong citizens from the older generation

The Hong Kong citizens in this section were born between 1959 and 1969, belonging to the older generation of the two in this thesis. Another feature of Hong Kong culture from the British times, is the commonality of the English titles of 'Auntie' and 'Uncle'. When calling someone older than oneself with respect, it is also common to refer to someone with these titles. Sometimes titles are added before the surname of the person[40]. One could of course argue that these titles are based on a binary understanding of gender, of people being either 'male' or 'female'. These titles are still important features of Hong Kong society, and I have therefore chosen to use them when presenting those in the older generation before a common surname in Hong Kong. Those in this section have lived before Hong Kong was handed back to China and after and experienced the developments over the years. A question for this section is, can one see these facts reflected in the narratives and the way they see society and feel belonging?

5.3.1   Auntie Au – narrative of a non-supporter

Auntie Au's narrative was as one of someone not supporting the protests and democracy movement. Auntie Au was born in Hong Kong in 1959. She owns a shop close to one of the main streets in a town of Hong Kong's New Territory. Auntie Au has been relying on herself economically for many years. The shop is driven by herself - it is her passion and what she does every single day. It was seemingly an important part of who she was, as she spent quite some time telling me about her career and shop.

Auntie Au presented herself with her family name, told me her family are Chinese and which region in China they came from. Clearly, the Chinese family heritage was important for her background. Auntie Au talked about how her father was born in China and they frequently travelled back to his home village during holidays when she was young. It seemed to have affected her identity, not purely identifying as a Hong Konger, but acknowledging her Chinese roots. She emphasized how she had always felt like a Hong Konger, how her work depends on Hong Kong and her customers being local Hong Kong residents. However, she would not deny being a Chinese, because of her roots. If a foreigner asked her where she comes from, Auntie Au said she would say a Hong Konger in China or a Chinese in Hong Kong.

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[40] For instance, Uncle Wong is the name of a person in Hong Kong who have been famous for protecting the protesters. See The Guardian video (2019) for reference:
https://theguardian.com/world/video/2019/sep/13/uncle-wong-82-protecting-hong-kong-protesters-with-his-walking-stick-video

The example of a foreigner asking where she comes from was based on her experience. Auntie Au lived in England for five years while she was studying and working. For a short period of time a while ago, she had also lived in Beijing. Auntie Au therefore compared the three categories when talking about identity. The main difference, in her perception, was how Hong Kongers are more hard working. She referred to how she thought the amount of free time and lunch breaks were higher in both England and China compared to Hong Kong. With this example, a more positive image of Hong Kong people was given, despite not rejecting the belonging to a Chinese identity. Auntie Au acknowledged the similarities of people coming from Hong Kong and those from China in terms of appearances by how they share what she termed "yellow skin". She then talked about the differences in ways of thinking in Hong Kong and China. Auntie Au said the following when describing the way of thinking in Hong Kong:

> "Hong Kong is a bit more influenced by the West. One cannot say it is Western[41], nor Chinese, it is half Western and half Eastern. A lot of Chinese like the HK society. Even though one would be begging for a living in HK, one is still very free." (Auntie Au, 23.07.2019)

In this quote, one can see that Auntie Au as many of the younger people in Hong Kong see the Western influence in Hong Kong from the British times. By saying a lot of Chinese like the Hong Kong society and how it is free, she seems to have a quite positive image of Hong Kong.

Although Auntie Au acknowledged some sort of connection to China or Chinese herself, she thought Hong Kong youth would be less connected to the 'Chinese'. Auntie Au described her generation as more traditional Chinese, not having too many demands, simply wanting a stable life. She thinks the youth today are more materialistic and hold too many demands, describing them in a more negative way. Because of this and the lack of experiences, she thinks they are more easily affected by others to take to the street to protest, which she also spoked about as something negative. Auntie Au used a sickness metaphor when talking about the protests and democracy movement. She talked about how she thought people were acting like a contagious sickness, being infected and spreading the sickness throughout the city for a short period of time. Eventually, Auntie Au thought the protests would end, because what she described no country or city would accept people continuing in the way the protesters did. When talking about the cause of the protests, she did not think they were fighting for anything good, simply killing themselves or the society. Auntie Au criticized the protesters for not seeing any

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[41] Auntie Au used the Chinese words of 鬼 (gwai) and 人 (yan). 鬼 is Chinese slang for Western foreigners with the same character for a 'ghost', hence the other category of Chinese as a 'human' 人

consequences for suffering in the future or those around them, indirectly saying how she thought they cared more for themselves and described them as 'blind flies' running around without any purpose. In other words, she did not support the protesters taking to the streets to protest, and she did not the cause. Auntie Au told me she hoped the contagious sickness would soon be over.

When speaking about the protests, she used 'they' when talking about the protesters. Auntie Au clearly did not identify with the protests nor the rationales behind. In her narrative, Auntie Au focused more on everyday issues when describing the society, such as when she talked about the working culture as an example of people being different. For Auntie Au, it seemed like everyday issues were more important than political principles such as democracy or human rights. As reflected in her description of the Hong Kong society, the Hong Kong society was from Auntie Au's perception already free and she did not see any why it would be necessary to protest in order to protect this freedom.

5.3.2 Uncle Leung – a narrative of someone being 'in-between'

The narrative of Uncle Leung was of someone standing between the two polarized sides. On one hand, he was a former police officer working for the government. On the other, he had children being in their thirties and understands the frustration young people in Hong Kong feel about the society. Uncle Leung was born in 1960, in a small village in the New Territories. He describes himself as a retired person, after a long career as a police officer. His former career seemed to be part of who he is. Uncle Leung told details about his career chronologically from how he became a police officer to his retirement. His job mainly involved patrolling in more rural areas in the New Territories and in the town close to his home village. When the Umbrella protests occurred in 2014, he was still a police officer. Although some of his colleagues were selected to handle the situation, Uncle Leung was not as he belonged to another police district.

Uncle Leung viewed himself as a Hong Konger or a Hong Konger with mixed identity. His perception of identity seemed to be partly what his passports tells him. Due to his former work being defined as sensitive when Hong Kong was still a colony under Britain, he holds both Hong Kong and British citizenships. Uncle Leung elaborated the following on his identity:

> "My culture is from Hong Kong. Not Chinese. Hong Kongers and Chinese are different. Chinese are born in China. We have been governed by the British and influenced by the British. I do not know how to speak Mandarin. Language is one of the aspects. Living standard is another, it is different. Culture is different. Even how we dress are different - we are much cooler. 20-30 years ago, they were not as colorful. Now, we are more similar, but still not as cool as us." (Uncle Leung, 24.07.2019).

This quote illustrates how Uncle Leung seemingly did not feel any belonging to the Chinese identity, because he felt there were so many differences on several aspects. One of the main factors seemed to be due to communication when not speaking Mandarin, making him feel less attachment to people from Mainland China. By saying how he thought people from Mainland were not dressed as cool as people in Hong Kong, Uncle Leung showed a more positive understanding of people in Hong Kong and at the same time a more negative one of people from Mainland.

There was also a somewhat negative way of how he spoke about people from Mainland China behaving. He talked about how people from Mainland often would throw garbage and not follow the rules of the countries they are visiting when travelling. After all, he told me, Hong Kong had been influenced by the British, so people in Hong Kong had been used to not simply doing as they wanted to. Uncle Leung told me about how he had worked for a rich 'Mainlander' after the retirement as a police officer. This Mainlander and his friends, who were also Mainlanders, lived in luxury apartments. Uncle Leung pointed on how these people are pressing the housing market, making it impossible for the younger generation to buy apartments without help from parents. Therefore, he thought many young people would blame Mainlanders in Hong Kong for pressing the market and increasing the housing prices. Uncle Leung talked about how the youth were different than his generation by having bigger hopes for the future. Uncle Leung also talked about political aspects, in terms of the want for democracy and mentioned how three to four people had lost their lives to the protests, sacrificed themselves for what he called "the love for democracy". He also thought that Hong Kong really was governed by China, criticizing the Chief Executive for being a 'string puppet, indirectly saying Carrie Lam simply does what China tells her to do. Uncle Leung described the Hong Kong society as a K-shaped society[42], where housing was one of the most basic issues.

As he is a former police officer, one could have assumed Uncle Leung to take side with the government, but he did not. However, Uncle Leung did have a lot of sympathy for the police in the situation of dealing with the protests. He talked sadly about how the police officers seemed to have lost all the pride he felt himself back in the days when they graduated the police academy. People used to have great respect for the police in Hong Kong, he told me[43]. Uncle Leung asked me if I had seen the videos on social media of police being hit on the streets and

[42] Hong Kong slang for misshaped

[43] For example, there used to be Hong Kong fictional drama series where the police officers were the main characters and heroines/heroes.

being told by people to, in their words, "fuck off". The police were now heavily criticized for their handle of the situation from both sides, of either using too much violence or not being able to stop the protesters. Uncle Leung talked about how being a police officer, one cannot simply act like one wants to but follow orders from your chiefs. He mentioned the events of 1st of July 2019 where the police were criticized for letting the protesters in their view destroying the Legislative Council. Uncle Leung thought the police did not have any choice and were simply following orders. While the stories about the police being hit and shouted on in the narrative of Uncle Leung, exemplifies the polarization in the society, the narrative also shows how the picture might not be as black or white. Uncle Leung had sympathy with the police, but he did not support the government and he understood why Hong Kong youth were frustrated.

5.3.3   Auntie Chan – narrative of a working-class citizen

The narrative of Auntie Chan is one from the working-class of someone who with low education level and not opinionated about politics. 'A working-class citizen' is not a label Mrs. Chan mentioned herself, but a description based on information she gave me. Auntie Chan told me she was born in the 1960s in Hong Kong. Either, she did not want to tell me the specific years or she did not know. Auntie Chan told me her surname when presenting herself, and she confirmed when I tried to follow up by asking her if she was born and raised in Hong Kong. She was currently not working but had previously been helping out in a family business, selling plants and offering gardening service.

Auntie Chan identified as a Hong Konger. She explained it by saying she was born in Hong Kong, of course she was a Hong Konger. For her, identity was as simple as that. Hong Kong was everything she knew, and she had never been outside. Auntie Chan told me she did not know how to differentiate between the identity categories in the HKU survey. She described herself as a 'simple' citizen, not knowing too much about politics or know how to predict the future. It did not seem like she connected identity to politics in the same way many other people in Hong Kong do. By not having been in China and not speaking Mandarin, she did not seem to feel much belonging to the Chinese identity either.

Auntie Chan told me they were not as fortunate as today's children back then. After she finished primary school, Auntie Chan had to start helping her parents out at home. At the age of 16 or 17 she started working in fabric factories until she married her husband. Her husband is a bus driver who knew Auntie Au, which is how I gained access in the first place. She told me the salary as a bus driver was not good, indicating their living conditions. However, Auntie Chan described life in Hong Kong as stable, free and more prosperous than before. Everyone

used to be poorer in the society before, but also willing to work hard, she said. Auntie Chan also said the following about Hong Kong society: "Hong Kong is actually free as well. We already have freedom, what more freedom does people want?" (Auntie Chan, 26.07.2019).

As the quote illustrates, Auntie Chan thought the Hong Kong society already was free enough. She did not see why people needed to protest to gain more freedom. In other words, the Hong Kong society was in her perception already good enough for her.

People in Hong Kong at the time of summer 2019, had become very annoying, she thought, referring to the protests. Auntie Chan told me how she thought Hong Kong youth were just fighting all the time on the streets, not knowing what they are fighting about. She felt like they had lost any reasons for fighting. I tried to follow up by asking whether she was referring to the Yuen Long incident from the 21st of July. Auntie Chan replied by denying she was referring to the incident and said this was also something that happened before. She did not know what they were fighting for before either, not back in 2014 either. By saying that she felt the protesters were annoying and fighting about something she did not know about, it seemed like Auntie Chan did not support the protesters and she did not really understand the rationales behind either. When I asked her about how she then would describe the younger generation in Hong Kong, she talked about how the standard of living was higher. The new generation did not need to "work their asses off" as her generation did, and they had not really experienced any hard work or life. This was another work-related example from Auntie Chan.

Auntie Chan's experiences and narrative could be one of many in her generation; those belonging to the working class in Hong Kong, who have not been outside of Hong Kong, started working from early age and not have any strong opinions about politics. For her and others in Hong Kong, everyday life issues are the most important, not necessarily political principles.

5.3.4   Auntie Fang –narrative of a Chinese in Hong Kong

Auntie Fang's narrative was one of identifying as Chinese, disagreeing in people in Hong Kong not also being Chinese people. She was born in the Southern part of China in 1969, studied accountant at a university in Guangdong, before she moved to Hong Kong in the early 2000s. Auntie Fang currently worked as an accountant in Hong Kong.

Auntie Fang told me she was very confident in saying she was a Chinese and denied any other categories I asked about, such as a 'Chinese in Hong Kong' or 'Hong Konger in China'. Despite holding a Hong Kong identity card, and living in Hong Kong for almost 20 years, she did not identify as a Hong Konger. Auntie Fang told me: "It is a fact that Hong Kong is handed

back to China, then Hong Kongers are actually also Chinese. One should not differentiate by saying Hong Kongers in China. Chinese are Chinese."

As the quote shows, Auntie Fang thought that people in Hong Kong would also be Chinese, and one should, in her view, not try to separate the two identity categories. It seemed to be very personal and important for her to identify as a Chinese and Hong Kong in fact being part of China. Auntie Fang told me about a story she saw on Facebook were the point was that even though Hong Kongers might not want to identify as Chinese, they would still rely on the Chinese embassies for assistance if anything happened to them abroad[44]. Auntie Fang pointed on many young Hong Kongers were being less optimistic about the future as they thought CCP would be governing in Hong Kong in the future. Auntie Fang told me she felt that no matter what was done by China or the Hong Kong government, some people would see it as negative and not want to be governed by anyone. Auntie Fang explained these perceptions by youth in Hong Kong as not having experienced much and receiving information on the internet affected by others. She seemed to indirectly say young people were less critical of information and more easily affected by misinformation.

Hong Kong youth, she thought, were so fortunate that they had too high expectations. She did not think housing prices would be an issue if one worked hard enough, telling me about her child's classmate with hard work was able to buy an apartment without help from his parents. Auntie Fang talked compared today's youth with her own childhood in China. She used an example of them growing up on McDonalds and pineapple buns while her family lived on coupons and often ate rice with only soy sauce for dinner. The economic growth in China was important for Auntie Fang. She was not critical of CCP and the one-party system, because she thought they had brought China through a lot of development and improvement the last 70 years. She told me:

> "One might criticize the one-party system, but I think development might be easier under it. If there are too many people and too many voices, one need to consider these before landing on a decision. Then, in comparison it takes longer time for the government to decide. So maybe because of this, one might act faster. Additionally, I think the system can be considered as powerful. They took 1,4 billion people out of poverty and to the situation we are in now." (Auntie Fang, 28.07.2019)

With the statement above, one can see Auntie Fang not being critical of the one-party system, but rather arguing how it is a more efficient way of governing. She feels the system is good,

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[44] As foreign policy is stated in the 'One country two systems' policy as one of two exceptions being governed from the central authorities in Beijing. See background chapter for further reference.

because it has in lifted people in China out of poverty. Auntie Fang also mentioned how criminality had lowered in China after people started being monitored, albeit some people might criticize it for decreasing privacy.

Although Auntie Fang had a positive image of China and the Chinese identity, she also had a quite positive image of Hong Kong and people in Hong Kong in general. Auntie Fang told me she was happy with her life in Hong Kong but did still not feel the need to identify as a Hong Konger. When she first came to Hong Kong, she felt very safe and Hong Kong as being peaceful, not needing to worry for her purse in public areas. Auntie Fang described people in Hong Kong as sticking more together and showing solidarity by donating money when it would be needed after a crisis. Official facilities in Hong Kong would be more considerate, she told me, with roofs to cover from rain all the way home from transportation stops. Auntie Fang thought it would be different in China, as there were too many people. She also pointed on how the culture in Hong Kong and China was different, affected by the British times and Western education. However, she thought a lot had improved from her own generation, with the younger generation in China being more polite, 'civilized' and educated. Overall, the narrative of Auntie Fang seemed to be affected by her living the majority of her life in China, receiving education in China before she moved to Hong Kong, making her feel more attachment to the Chinese identity and central government in China.

5.3.5   Uncle Hui – narrative of a critical local politician

Uncle Hui's narrative is of one being politically engaged and active, while supporting the pro-democracy movement. Uncle Hui was at the time serving as a nonpartisan district councilor to one of the district councils in the New Territories. He was born in 1959 in Hong Kong. For a short period of time, he had studied in England for a few years, before he moved back and worked in the IT sector. Uncle Hui had been part of the protests himself in 2014, as part of a Christian group. After the election in 2015, he had been working as a full-time politician, or in his words as "being under the service for this area". Naturally, his narrative focuses on politics and political aspects of the Hong Kong society and identity.

When Uncle Hui was studying abroad over 20 years ago, he told me, he would present himself as a Chinese, but from Hong Kong. Now, he would identify as a Hong Konger. Uncle Hui told me he would not tell his own son he is Chinese either, because he was born in Hong Kong and lived in Hong Kong. About why he found it problematic to identify as Chinese, Uncle Hui told me the following:

"Now, the policy in Mainland is like this: being a Chinese and a citizen of People's Republic of China and those living under the CCP is presented as equal. It is often said that if you love your country, you love the party. By saying that one loves the country, there is already a bracket behind, so if you love the country means loving the party. Meaning, you can only love the party to love the country. If you do not love the party, you do not love the country. It is presented like this, and I don't agree. Even if I had to die, I would distinguish between being a Chinese person or a Chinese communist citizen." (Uncle Hui, 02.08.2019)

As the quote illustrates, his main problem was how CCP had politized the Chinese identity. Uncle Hui found it problematic how it was politized to the point where the perception was that CCP, China and Chinese were being the same. Uncle Hui talked about democracy, freedom, the right to participate, to vote and be elected were rights one held in Hong Kong. From his perception, these rights were frequently being denounced on Mainland by CCP. Since the protests on the national education reform plans in 20013, he thought the residents of Hong Kong have been having hopes for democracy and independent policy from the central authorities.

Despite the freedoms he described one had in Hong Kong, Uncle Hui was very critical of the current and previous governments of Hong Kong. He told me Hong Kong had increased self-governance and democracy under the British governance, because the British system was already a democratic system from his perception. After 1997, he thought the power people had to determine those who ruled from the British system had not really been transferred. Uncle Hui told me how many in Hong Kong would think politics and everyday life should be distinguished, but how actually the price of a pound of pork meat also would be affected by politics. He used a sickness analogy by telling me how he thought the current Hong Kong government and previous ones had taken the wrong medicine. A big issue in the government before 1997 was their tax policies. Uncle Hui said people in Hong Kong would often think the government was good, giving them low taxes, while they in reality were paying it indirectly through the housing prices.

Uncle Hui told me how there was a shortage of governmental housings and the housing prices being so high that some people lived in the so-called 'coffin homes'[45]. He described these as bunkers as small as 3,5 square meters – fitting only one bed, with toilet and kitchen at the same place. Uncle Hui told me how families with children not affording anything else would also live in these places. Another important fact for him was how the government had not only

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[45] For further reference, see news article from *Business Insider* (2020) on coffin homes during Covid-19 outbreak, highlighting the issue: https://www.businessinsider.com/hong-kong-coffin-homes-during-coronavirus-outbreak-photos-2020-2?r=US&IR=T

failed in building enough governmental housing, but also by rather focusing on building luxury apartments and selling stores in government apartments to the private market. When the government sold the stores to private investors, the rental costs had increased, resulting in many local owned stores closing down. Now, many of the shops and restaurants in Hong Kong towns would be part of franchises. Uncle Hui did not see this as something positive, as the prices also had increased for the citizens. These were examples of how he thought there was a lot of pressure in the society.

He told me he would not know how to look on the future himself if he was in his thirties. Uncle Hui thought there was no hope and questioned what one should hope for in the society. Uncle Hui said he therefore understood the youth not feeling like they had any other ways to express their political views except by protesting and taking to the streets. He mentioned how Joshua Wong and other younger pro-democracy candidates had been DQ'ed[46] from being candidates in the elections the same fall, seemingly feeling some sort of support for them. Although belonging to the older generation, Uncle Hui's narrative was a political one, supporting democratic principles and critical of both the Hong Kong government and central government of China.

5.3.6 Uncle Li – narrative of a critical adult Hong Konger

The narrative of Uncle Li was also one of being politically engaged, but also more affected by interactions with Mainlanders. Uncle Li was Uncle Hui's political assistant and told me he agreed on a lot of the already presented perspectives before his interview. They shared the same view, the same office and had been part of the same movement. In 2014, they both stayed in Admiralty for more than ten days as part of a Christian group in the protests. Uncle Li was born in 1959 and used to be working in the business sector before he became involved with politics.

Uncle Li identified as a Hong Konger. He told me about how he would carry his backpack stating he was a Hong Konger when travelling to visit family in Canada. It was clearly important for him to express belonging to the Hong Kong identity. In the past, Uncle Li told me he used to be very interested in Chinese history and originally wanted to travel all over China. Uncle Li had been in China during business trips and told me about how he had interacted with young people in their twenties and thirties during these trips. He said they had never heard about the incidents on June 4th, 1989. In these young people in Mainland's view, Uncle Li said, China was the most powerful and thought others were jealous of their wealth and

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[46] Hong Kong slang

possibility to travel abroad. Uncle Li called them 'brainwashed', receiving only one-sided news every single day. He told me about the example of the SARS epidemic in Hong Kong back in 2003, and how they thought China helped Hong Kong to fight it. But in reality, he said, it came from China. These were examples of what Uncle Li described as CCP being the best in rewriting the history. In his view, the CCP was the reason why people did not want to identify as Chinese, by pushing people in Hong Kong away, particularly those in the younger generation.

After the at the time ongoing movements, Uncle Li thought people would be even further pushed away from Mainland and becoming more polarized. Not only was Uncle Li critical of China and the communist party, but also how he thought they were affecting Hong Kong in multiple ways. Uncle Li told me he would get angry himself when hearing Mandarin in Hong Kong, because they often would interrupt by asking about directions when he was busy working while taking the undergrounds. The already full undergrounds were being even fuller with Mainlanders coming to the area. He talked about how people in Hong Kong previously would patiently tell Mainlanders the correct things to do, but had now lost their patience. Uncle Li thought the living conditions in Hong Kong was decreasing and partly negatively affected by Mainlanders He said:

> "The town used to be full of small shops and restaurant with a lot of tasty food. Now, they are full of gold shops and pharmacies[47]. How are the pharmacies? They hire security to guard the entrances to let the costumers share goods. Afterwards, the back streets are left full of garbage." (Uncle Li, 02.08.2019)

Indirectly, the quote above can be understood as putting blame on Mainlanders coming to Hong Kong for smaller shops and restaurants closing down. By talking about the garbage they leave, he also indirectly speak of them as less civilized. There were also other ways of how Uncle Li thought China and Mainlanders were affecting their everyday life. Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB)[48] had also changed to be more China friendly, he thought. Uncle Li told me how he now called it China Central TVB or CCTVB[49]. When some people only received information from this channel, Uncle Li thought they would naturally be more pro-China, resulting in the society being polarized. On one side, he described people willing to take one more look on things. The other side, he described as those pretending not to see anything. Uncle Li told people often came to their office yelling at them for teaching youth the wrong things.

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[47] Gold and drugs are goods Mainlanders often travel to Hong Kong to buy

[48] A major TV channel in Hong Kong, often the default channel when buying TV

[49] CCTV (China Central Television) is the main television network in China and state-owned

Often after talking to them and telling them what was happening in Hong Kong, he said they would often agree that the current government was bad.

Although Uncle Li was part of those being critical to the government and pro-democracy, he seemed to acknowledge the differences being present in terms of increased polarization in the positions. Uncle Li told me about a girl he started conversing with at a noodle restaurant who had gone out when her mother came home early, although most people stayed home that day due to protests. Whenever her mother was watching TVB, she would yell at the young people she saw on TV protesting, and the girl could not stand it. Another case Uncle Li talked about illustrating the increased polarization, was a young man committing suicide after being out protesting and not let home by his parents. Uncle Li thought differences could also be seen among generations, using the examples of his own former classmates. Uncle Li told me he recently cut some old friends due to political disagreements. Uncle Li perceived these people in their sixties as a few years from retiring, not wanting too much trouble in the society. The most important for them, he thought, was the housing prices not decreasing. While belonging to the older generation, Uncle Li could see how many in his generation had a different mentality than many in the younger generation.

5.4   Summary

In this chapter, I have presented the narratives of ten Hong Kong citizens from two generations individually. By doing this, their self-categorization and descriptions of both their in-groups and out-groups have been presented. One can clearly see how all the younger Hong Kong citizens identify as Hong Kongers, emphasize freedom and support the protests. The older generation also mostly identified as Hong Kongers, despite Auntie Fang who emigrated from Mainland China to Hong Kong and identified as a Chinese. However, the older generation generally talked more about everyday issues in the society rather than political issues, except Uncle Hui and Uncle Li being involved in politics. Generally, it seems like the background and experiences of people affect their positions. A very interesting point is how the narratives complement each other, although people being interviewed separately and not everyone knowing each other. For example, the descriptions of the other generation and how they generally would perceive different things often corresponding to how another person from that generation described these things. The next chapter will highlight these similarities and differences by bringing the analysis from a personal level to a higher level, discussing the themes from the narratives among and across the age categories.

6 Main themes and discussion of the narratives

6.1 Introduction

With the individual narratives presented in the last chapter, this chapter focus on the different themes in these narratives. The different themes are the following; identity, values and polarization. Although the participants mainly identified with some sort of Hong Kong identity, they all had in common how they acknowledged people in Hong Kong, or Hong Kongers, as something different than people in Mainland China. The first theme is therefore identity, with the subtitle of 'people in Hong Kong and Mainland China are different'. The second theme relates to the values people felt connected to their generation, ultimately affecting their identities. All of the participants across generations also mentioned how the youth generally wanted 'freedom', while those in the older generation would prioritize 'security', hence, the second theme is called 'freedom vs security'. The last theme relates to polarization in the society, connected to how the participants acknowledge two main views in the society, supporting the democracy movement or not. Thus, the last theme was named 'black vs. white'. In this chapter, these identified themes will be explained, with pieces from Lennon Walls or graffiti to illustrate how these can be understood as general perceptions in the Hong Kong society at the time.

6.2 Identity – 'People in Hong Kong and Mainland are different'

As presented in the previous chapter, the ten individuals had different narratives and understandings of identity in Hong Kong. Most of them identified with the category of Hong Kongers, others with some sort of mixed identity in addition to the 'Hong Konger' identity and Auntie Fang as only the category of 'Chinese'. They all emphasized on different aspects when explaining their identity, such as Western education by Eric or simply by growing up in Hong Kong as Auntie Au. However, almost all ten of the participants pointed on people in Hong Kong and Mainland as different in some way. Auntie Au can be understood as doing it indirectly by identifying as Hong Konger due to being born in Hong Kong and living in Hong Kong. Even Auntie Fang whom thought people in Hong Kong should be categorized as Chinese saw a difference of people in Hong Kong and Mainland China, pointing on solidarity. All participants generally spoke about people in Hong Kong in a more positive tone than of those in Mainland China when speaking about the differences. Many pointed on difference in behavior, while some, such as Uncle Li, also pointed on political awareness. These similarities were seen across generations, despite different life experiences and narratives.

While some narratives described how they over time had become more negative towards Mainland China and the categorization as Chinese for political reasons, Uncle Li also spoke about people in Mainland China behaving different. It should be noted how the political issues some people in Hong Kong had with Mainland China presented in the narratives might be connected to a more negative understanding of behavior of people in Mainland China. Even Auntie Au, whom did not support the protests nor the pro-democracy movement, spoke about people in Hong Kong, the in-group as more hardworking, compared to the other identities, the out-groups. Auntie Au also spoke about other people in relation to her own identity, Hong Kongers, which can be understood as a sign of ethnocentrism. The same sign could be seen in Uncle Leung's narrative when he spoke about how Hong Kongers dressed 'cooler' than people from Mainland China.

The positive way a Hong Kong identity was described in many of the narratives can be connected to social identity theory. In many of the narratives, one can see how these individuals generally talk about their own identity, the Hong Kong identity as the 'in-group' in the majority of them in a more positive way than the other identities, the 'out-groups'. The 'out-groups' were not always a Chinese identity, but as seen in for example Eric's narrative also other Europeans, when he spoke about how he thought Hong Kongers cared more for the environment. These descriptions can be related to some sort of a 'civic identity' by how taking care of the environment is a duty of the citizens. The way other people were spoken of as more negative, could also be seen as in line with the concept of 'othering', of specific traits being generalized to become stereotypes. This could be seen in the way Uncle Li spoke about how even hearing Mandarin now was annoying, as it normally is spoken by people from Mainland China. Another way the process of othering is reflected, is how both George and Jordan in their narratives mention seeing negative posts about people from Mainland China on social media, affecting their perceptions[50]. With these examples, it suggests how these perceptions in the narratives also exists for other people in the Hong Kong society, and how these identities are created as a social process.

During the summer of 2019, the argument of Hong Kong not being China and slogans building on people in Hong Kong as Hong Kongers could be seen. In figure 5, 6, 7 and 8 below, these ideas are illustrated. The main points in these four are cheering for Hong Kong or Hong Kongers, as 加油 can be translated to the meaning of 'keep going' or 'stay strong'. These four

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[50] An example of these types of 'othering' can be seen in the work by the art studio Local Studio HK See article by Merelli, 2015, *Quartz* for further reference: https://qz.com/442887/how-hong-kong-is-different-from-china-in-a-series-of-offensive-stereotype-based-posters/

illustrations show how the feeling of belonging to the Hong Kong identity among the participants and the importance of it existed among many in the Hong Kong society. With these four illustrations the group identity of 'Hong Kongers' as an identity larger than individual identities can be seen, particularly in figure 7 and 8, stating they are 'Hong Kongers'. The term of 'we connect' was first used by Carrie Lam as part of her campaign in running for Chief Executive back in 2017 (Lam & Cheung, 2017). In 2019, it was used related to the anti-extradition law protests ironically in opposition to her, which can be used as the point of how Hong Kongers were connecting by being having a common enemy and case they were working against. As seen in Figure 6, the term was used in relation to a stronger feeling of people in Hong Kong as part of the group identity of 'Hong Kongers'. While the strong group identity of Hong Kongers can be understood as present in the Hong Kong society during the summer of 2019, the narrative of Auntie Au serves as an important counter narrative of identity in Hong Kong. The narrative of Auntie Au shows how not everyone in Hong Kong necessarily identifies as a Hong Konger, but rather Chinese, and is an example of how one of these individuals make sense of their identity. According to the HKUPOP research on people in Hong Kong's ethnic identity, 11% of those interviewed identified as Chinese at the time of June 2019 (HKUPOP, 2019b).

Figure 5. *"Hong Kong is not China, HK 加油" Admiralty, 26.7.19 by the author*
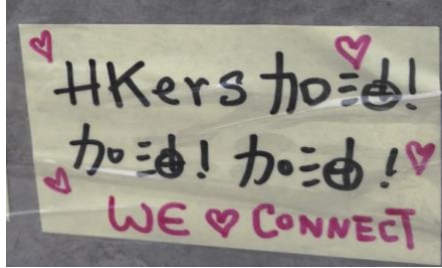
Figure 6. *"HKers 加油! 加油! 加油! – We Connect" Admiralty, 26.7.19 by the author*

Figure 7. *'We are HKer' Yuen Long, 25.7.19 by the author*

Looking back on the literature on identity in Hong Kong, one could see how the existence of a Hong Kong identity was already identified, as well as the perception of people in Hong Kong being different of those in Mainland China. The findings of this theme, however, fills the research gap of how individuals identified during the 2019 summer protests in Hong Kong.

Generally, the theme of identity based on the narratives across the generation categories, does not seem to be explained by merely people's generation. As explained and demonstrated through the presentation of the narratives, the individual among the same generation held different understandings of their identity. However, those in the younger generation seemed to be more similar in terms of stronger identifying as Hong Kongers and supporting the pro-

democracy movement. Those in the older generation were more diverse in their identity and positions on the protests and pro-democracy movement. These differences could be explained by those in the younger generation being more similar, all being University students, except George and Jordan whom had graduated. In contrast, those in the older generation were more diverse in their level of education and thus occupations. If generation category in itself did not seem to affect their identity, what could be? This leads us to the next theme regarding values.

6.3 Values – 'Freedom' versus 'security'

When explaining different behavior in terms of participation in the protests across the two generations, and what being the most important for the participants personally, many of those in the younger generation and older generation emphasized different values. Even Auntie Au, whom said she did not know much about the political situation, mentioned how those protesting wanted more freedom. Those in the older generation, on the other hand mentioned 'freedom' as a value in the protests, but also talked about how security and stability in life was important for them. Different types of security were by several in the older generation connected to why people were frustrated and protesting, connecting it to the housing situation and high housing prices of Hong Kong (see the narratives of Auntie Fang, Uncle Leung and Uncle Hui). 'Security' was also related to stability in living standard, in terms of income and 'food on the table'.

'Freedom' can be understood as a liberal idea, while 'security' can be more connected to a community and values seen in the communist system. By emphasizing 'freedom' one could see the youth generally arguing for how the power should belong to people. The older generation who are more supportive of the government, can therefore be understood as perceiving the power to belong to the system, and therefore provide 'security'.

Even those in the older generation whom seemed to support the pro-democracy movement, namely Uncle Hui and Uncle Li, mentioned the housing situation in Hong Kong or the situation for local stores. Interestingly, those in the younger generation did not mention the housing situation themselves, but rather emphasized how they wanted Hong Kong to remain 'free' as the main rationale for the protests. 'Freedom' for them, involved more than physiological needs such as food and housing in contrast to those in the older generation. For the younger generation in Hong Kong, freedom seemed to involve several political freedoms, such as freedom of speech or religious freedom. 'Freedom' could be seen as connected to democracy, as figure 11 below illustrates. In many of the narratives, Western values such as democracy and freedom were thought to have affected people in Hong Kong, particularly the younger generation. In figure 9 and 10, one can also see how 'freedom' was highlighted in

multiple messages in different parts of Hong Kong connected to the protests during the summer of 2019, illustrating the importance of the values for those supporting the protests.

Figure 8. 'Freedom. Hong Kong' Yuen Long, 28.7.19 by the author

Figure 9. Multiple messages. Admiralty, 26.7.19 by the author

Figure 10. 'Democracy. Freedom' Admiralty, 26.7.19 by the author

In many of the narratives of people in Hong Kong in this research, there were also descriptions about how these individuals perceived the other generation. With these descriptions from the narratives, one could see traces of descriptions of a generational identity being present, as well as connected to the place of Hong Kong. There were multiple stereotypes of how the generations were. Another interesting point for the theme of 'value' is how these descriptions seemed to in many of the narratives fit the descriptions of each other. For example, Danielle spoke about how those in the older generation would describe the younger generation as fortunate growing up in the times they did. This was echoed in the narratives of Auntie Au, Auntie Chan and Auntie Fang. Several of those in the younger generation also mentioned how those in the older generation generally were more supportive of the government, wanting stability as they grew up under worse social conditions.

The narrative of Uncle Li, involving how he had cut out people he used to study with due to political disagreements, emphasizes this theme of different values. As presented in the narrative, Uncle Li described many of those in his generation as wanting stability in terms of

the housing prices not dropping, and therefore not supporting the pro-democracy movement. In this narrative, as well as that of Uncle Hui and Uncle Leung, one could see a form of cross generational solidarity, of how their narratives presented more understanding of the younger generation being frustrated with the political situation, by also focusing on social issues.

In the literature on generational differences in Hong Kong, the focus has previously been on differences in the measure of 'political trust'. Among the participants, one could see how this also applied to some of them. The younger generation tended to be more skeptical of both the local government and central government, pointing on various issues, while some in the older generation seemed to generally trust the governments by being less skeptical. Political trust can also be seen as part of wanting more 'freedom', feeling like the governments are restraining their freedom. While 'security' could be understood as secured by stable governments which could be trusted. These differences might also be reflected in the choices of resisting the political system or not.

Going back to the theory of generations, being born in different times of the history seems to have affected the narratives and political views of these ten persons in Hong Kong. One can also see how their most important values and generations connect to their identity. In the narratives of those in the younger generation, their most important value was generally freedom and they identified as Hong Kongers. While some of these had less ties to Mainland China by being born in Hong Kong, Eric was born in Mainland and Danielle had also been in Mainland China visiting grandparents. Despite these facts, it does not seem to have affected their identity in terms of identifying more with a Chinese identity. The explaining point then, might be education in terms of where they went to school while growing up. George talked about people's experiences affecting their identities, which can also be connected to the concept of generation and how people growing up at different times have different experiences. Auntie Fang, identifying as Chinese despite living in Hong Kong for more than half of her life, had experienced education in Mainland China. Another point related to education, is how it seems like the participants with higher education across generations seemed to be more politically interested and aware, in terms of speaking of political issues in the society, being it connected to 'freedom' or 'security'. Generally speaking, the level of education is higher among younger people in Hong Kong compared to those in the older generation. This is also reflected in the narratives in this thesis, highlighted by the narrative of Auntie Chan compared to the other narratives in terms of depth. Those in the older generation whom focused more on politics and political issues in their narratives, were also those with a higher level of education. The level of education might therefore be a better explanation of different values and identity rather than

belonging to a generation as such. While the existing literature on generations in Hong Kong focus on the different political views, and the younger generation being more rebellious in terms of protesting, they do not seem to have focused on education as an explanation. The next theme focus on how the different values and identities were polarized during the 2019 summer protests in Hong Kong.

6.4   Polarization – 'Black' versus 'White'

The last theme identified in the narratives of the then individuals this research focus on, was the feeling of a polarized society. I have chosen to term this polarization as 'black versus white', referring the dichotomy of views during the 2019 summer protests. Although the narratives were different, including how the individuals positioned themselves in the protests, many of them focused on how the society had become polarized between those supporting the protests and those who did not.

Although the 2019 protest and social movement in Hong Kong is not officially defined as an inter-group conflict, one can see the relevance of group identities similar to the way identity is described in inter-group conflicts (see Eriksen, 2011). The polarization can be understood as between two political systems and political traditions, which in turn different groups feel attachment to. The 'black' and a Hong Kong identity could be seen as connected to the a more 'Western' political system, with democracy as previously explained being the most important value. The 'white' can be understood as connected to the Chinese system, historically being Communist and more 'East'.

In Jordan's narrative, he talked about how some people in Hong Kong claimed to be 'gray', neutral between those being 'black' and those being 'white', something he seemed provoked by. In figure 12 below, one can see the same type of comment on those who claimed to be neutral in the situation, quoting "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.". This quote on a Lennon Wall reflects the polarization of how those not supporting the protests were seen as then supporting the "oppressors". These oppressors were reflected in many of the narratives of those supporting the protests as the government of Hong Kong and central government in Mainland China. Local politicians whom were 'white' and more supportive of the government, were also seen as the other side of those protesting. This polarization can be seen in Figure 13, where red crosses are drawn over the face of a local politician on a campaign poster, with the words 'Devil!' written on.
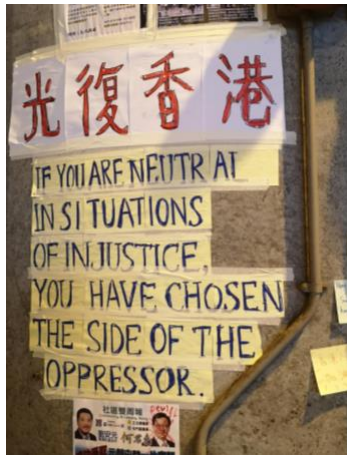
Figure 11. *'If you are neutral…' Yuen Long, 25.07.19 by the author*

Figure 12. *Piece from Figure 11.*

Figure 13. *'Anti-China messages' Yuen Long, 25.07.19 by the author*

Those of a more political narrative, were also those more critical to Mainland China in terms of CCP, and these narratives were also more supportive of the protests. In figure 13 above, one can see the distrust towards China by the national emblem of PRC edited from the stars to surveillance cameras, a tank and hand cuffs as symbols of how some people in Hong Kong perceive politics in Mainland China. The symbol of a tank was for example mentioned in George's narrative. In the same figure, one could see a warning poster of an "important reminder to our ethnic minority friends", referring to the same criticism of the central government marginalizing ethnic and religious minorities as Danielle's narrative highlighted. Moreover, a photo of Hong Kong police being blindfolded by the Chinese flag with the speaking bubble of "I don't see anything", highlights the feelings people held towards the police, of how the police were connected to PRC and therefore connected to the 'white'. Some consequences of these perceptions turning to violence was presented by the narrative of Uncle Leung. In multiple ways, one could see the polarization being illustrated in the figures of 11, 12 and 13, showing how the theme of polarization individuals spoke about in their narratives not only were felt by individuals, but also by others in the Hong Kong society. With these understandings of the Chinese identity, these findings might serve as explanations of why some people in Hong Kong refuse to identify with the Chinese identity, because the Chinese identity was generalized and politicized to mean CCP and thus seen as negative. The Chinese identity coming from an ethno-cultural angle identified in previous research seem to not apply anymore, confirming the assumptions of people identifying more as Hong Kongers as a way of resistance.

While the polarization could be seen in the views among people in Hong Kong, it was also something spoken of as polarization among the two generations. The narrative of Danielle, speaking about how she had disagreed with her mother, or narrative of Uncle Li, mentioning

the suicide of the young man or young woman at the restaurant, one could see the different views and polarization of the society also affecting family relations between those in the younger generation and their parents. However, one cannot assume this being applied to all families. Uncle Leung showed some understanding and inter-generational solidarity towards the younger generation, while Uncle Li and Uncle Hui seemed to side more with the 'black' despite belonging to the older generation. Thus, while a 'black versus white' polarization could be seen as present in the Hong Kong society during the 2019 summer protests, one cannot simply generalize those in the older generation to being 'white'.

The legitimacy of a social movement can be seen as affected by the understanding of why people protest and whom the protesters are. Thus, the power of media representations and discourses should be taken into consideration when studying phenomenon related to protests. The focus of both research and media coverage of the protests in 2019 tended to be from the polarized sides of the protests. While the theme of polarization and conflict among different group identities was present, one could in the narratives see how some people felt like being 'in between' the polarization, such as Uncle Leung. As presented in the literature review, the literature on pro-democracy movements in Hong Kong tend to generalize both the movements and support of these as mainly consist of people from the younger generation, without presenting the narratives of those in between. Thus, assuming there is a present generational gap between the younger and the older generation in political views might not be correct in the situation of Hong Kong, as the narratives of this thesis have demonstrated. In reality, situations might not be as 'black or white' as they seem when taking the first glance.

6.5   Summary

This section has presented the three themes of 'identity', 'values' and 'polarization' by showing examples of both narratives and visual data gathered from the field work. By showing relevant photos from Lennon Walls as illustrations and context to the narratives, one can see how these narratives not simply present the views of individuals, but how the themes identified also were perceptions one can see shared in the society. With the data and analysis of this thesis presented, one can summarize with several main findings from the themes derived from the narratives. First, people in Hong Kong were spoken of as more positive, while other identities were spoken of as more negative. Second, the main values differed between 'freedom' and 'security', where the younger generation generally focused on the first and the older generation on the latter. Third and last main finding, was how people spoke about polarization in the Hong Kong society being present.

7   Concluding comments

7.1   Answering the research questions

In the two previous chapters, I have both presented and discussed the themes within the narratives of ten Hong Kong citizens from two generations. The narratives presented in Chapter five, shows how these individuals made sense of their identity during the 2019 summer protests. These narratives showed how one could see traces of both identities connected to the place and group of people living there, but also signs of a generational identity. These identities seemed to be affected by the values people held, but also level of education. Those with higher education were seemingly more 'political', while those with lower education focused more on everyday issues and societal issues. These differences in values could also be seen among the individuals of this research, depending on whether belonging to the older or younger generation. While those in the younger generation in Hong Kong seemed to focus more on 'freedom', while those in the older generation focusing more on 'security' or 'stability'. By answering the three operational research questions, the main research question will be answered: *How did selected Hong Kong citizens from two generations make sense of their identity during the 2019 summer protests, and why did they present it the way they did?*

The first operational question asked: *How did selected Hong Kong citizens from two generations make sense of their identity during the 2019 summer protests, and why did they present it the way they did?* Generally, one could see the identities the individuals felt belonging to as presented in a more positive way, while those they did not feel belonging to were presented in a more negative way, in line with social identity theory. The specific presentations were presented in the narratives of the individuals.

The second operational question was the following: *How did the participants describe the society and 2019 protests, and can these descriptions be connected to their position towards the social movement.* The narratives of the individuals answered this second operational question, by presenting what my participants focused on in their narratives. Generally, in these narratives, one could see how those who were more critical of the society and politics in Hong Kong and pessimistic about the future, also were those who were more supportive of the pro-democracy movement. On the contrary, those we were satisfied with the society and development, were also those who did not support the pro-democracy movement. This can be connected to the different values of the people presented in the previous chapter, wanting freedom or stability.

The last operational research question asked: *Can any connection be seen between which generation they belong to, their group identity and their positions of the social movement?*. The short answer to this last question is yes. One could in the narratives see how those whom identified as Hong Kongers were also more pro the democracy movement, and thus had been more active in the protests. This was, however, not always the case. Some participants identified as Hong Kongers while not taking part in the protests or agreeing with the rationales behind the protests. One can therefore not conclude with the connection always being present for all people in Hong Kong, while for some of the participants one could see a connection between identity, positions of the democracy movement and participation of the protests.

7.2   Events after fieldwork

After the time of the field work and time frame for the case ended on September 1, 2019, the protests in Hong Kong continued. In the same fall, local District Council Elections were held, where the pro-democracy candidates and parties were described as the winning part compared to those understood as being pro-government or pro-Beijing. The election results could be understood as a sign of the majority of people in Hong Kong who voted supporting the pro-democracy movement (Graham-Harrison & Yu, 2019).

However, the polarization continued between the two different main positions of the society related to the social movement, across the generations. On November 14, 2019, a 70-year-old governmental worker died as a result of a direct conflict between those supporting the protest movement and those being more pro-governments (Wong & Lo, 2020). Two young Hong Kong citizens were later charged of murder and rioting (ibid). While this was individual acts and should not be generalized to the movement, the event illustrates the level of polarization the Hong Kong society had reached, of how the conflicts from the social movement also led to increased violence and deaths. Later, the same year, the protests moved from the streets and universities were besieged by the protesters. Accusations of the police violence continued, while the protests continued in smaller scales.

To this day (June 2020) people have once again been taking to the streets after the protests occurred less frequently due to the Covid-19 situation. New Security laws in Hong Kong have been proposed by the CCP National committee. The law is accused of being 'The death of Hong Kong' (Wang, May & Ramzy, 2020). Increased polarization in the society, relevance of group identity in political protests in Hong Kong can be assumed to carry on.

8 Conclusion

This thesis has explored how ten Hong Kong citizens among two different generations made sense of their identity, perceived the society and political situation during the 2019 summer protests in Hong Kong. By focusing on the accounts of these people in the form of narrative, and through the analysis of Critical Narrative Analysis, one could critically gain a deeper understanding of individual thoughts as well as common themes. Through the presentation of the themes of 'identity', 'values, and 'polarization', one gained a better understanding of how these narratives complemented and contrasted each other. By adding the context of visual data from Lennon Walls in Hong Kong at the same time, one could see how these themes were reflected in opinions shared by other people in Hong Kong.

With the understanding of group identity by social identity theory, one could gain a deeper understanding of how people in the narratives presented their identities or 'in-group' as more positive, and the other groups 'out-groups' as more negative. Social identity theory and the concept of 'othering' also explains why people from Mainland China are spoken of as more negative in Hong Kong. The narratives serve as examples of how these were reflected in Hong Kong and also connected to politics. Generational theory related to how people in different ages would hold different meanings and served as a factor for self-identification. While generational differences explained by the concept of generations could be seen as in line with the active participations of the protests mainly consisting of those in the younger generation, generational theory did not seem to be the main explanation of why the ten individuals in this thesis held different views. Rather, the narratives seemed to be more similar or different depending on the level of education of the participants across generations. How people made sense of their identities were different, although many self-categorized into the same identity category. Those in the older generation whom had received higher education seemed to be more supportive of the protests and focusing more on political aspects. This did, however, not apply to one narrative of a Chinese in Hong Kong, but the explanation could still be education, specifically of receiving higher education in Mainland China.

With the narratives of identity, views on the Hong Kong society and political situation presented, one can conclude by saying neither identity perceptions nor views on the society depending on belonging to a generation in Hong Kong can be simply categorized to be either 'black' or 'white'. In reality, both identity and views are often more dynamic when studying how people actually make sense of them, particularly in a post-colonial situation as the one of Hong Kong.

...

When the beating of your heart

Echoes the beating of your drums

There is a life about to start

When tomorrow comes!

<div align="right">

(Kretzmer, H. et al.)

</div>

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Figures

Figure 1. Identification of people in Hong Kong by age group. *The Economist* based on HKUPOP (2019, 26.08) Retrieved from https://economist.com/graphic-detail/2019/08/26/almost-nobody-in-hong-kong-under-30-identifies-as-chinese

Figure 2 'Participants criteria'. Developed by the author

Figure 3 'Examples of Hong Kong Lennon Walls'. Photographed by the author (Yuen Long, 25.07.2019; Ma On Shan, 20.07.2019; Yuen Long, 27.07.2019)

Figure 4. 'Map over Hong Kong, indicating the New Territories (marked in red lines) and Yuen Long (yellow pin)' Retrieved on 15.05.2020 from Google Maps: https://google.com/maps/place/New+Territories,+Hongkong/@22.3228766,113.8081896,10z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x340400e82572c6b7:0x22fe68b2f10791c8!8m2!3d22.3704243!4d114.1234149?authuser=1

Figure 5. "Hong Kong is not China, HK 加油" Photographed by the author (Admiralty, 26.07.19)

Figure 6. "HKers 加油! 加油! 加油! – We Connect". Photographed by the author (Admiralty, 26.07.19)

Figure 7. "We are HKer". Photographed by the author (Yuen Long, 25.07.19)

Figure 8. "We are Hong Kongers" Photographed by the author (Yuen Long, 27.07.19)

Figure 9. "Freedom Hong Kong" Photographed by the author (Yuen Long, 28.07.19)

Figure 10. 'Multiple messages'. Photographed by the author (Admiralty, 26.07.19)

Figure 11. 'Democracy. Freedom' Photographed by the author (Admiralty, 26.07.19)

Figure 12. 'If you are neutral…' Photographed by the author (Yuen Long, 25.07.19)

Figure 13. 'Anti-China messages' Photog

raphed by the author (Yuen Long, 25.07.19)

Appendix

Appendix A: List of Participants

Code	Pseudonym	Generation category	Year of birth	Background	Date of Interview	Location
A	Auntie Au	Older	1959	Small local business owner	23.07.2019	Hong Kong SAR
B	Uncle Leung	Older	1959	Retired police officer	24.07.2019	Hong Kong SAR
C	Auntie Chan	Older	1960's	Self-occupied/stay-at-home	26.07.2019	Hong Kong SAR
D	Danielle	Younger	1998	Philosophy student in HK	28.07.2019	Hong Kong SAR
E	Eric	Younger	1997	Tourism student abroad	28.07.2019	Hong Kong SAR
F	Auntie Fang	Older	1969	Accountant	28.07.2019	Hong Kong SAR
G	George	Younger	1982	Working in banking and finance sector	28.07.2019	Hong Kong SAR
H	Uncle Hui	Older	1959	Local politician with IT background	02.08.2019	Hong Kong SAR
I	Uncle Li	Older	1959	Political assistant with commercial banking background	02.08.2019	Hong Kong SAR
J	Jordan	Younger	1995	Language student abroad with background in law studies	29.08.2019	Norway

Appendix B: Timeline of major events, field work and interviews

Major events in Hong Kong from June to September 2019, including overview of interview dates and time of field work

Date	Events
June 4	30th anniversary of the Tiananmen incidents on June 4th, 1989. The Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China organizes a candlelight vigil.
June 9	Third march to protest the bill, being the first large mass rally. Organizers claim over 1 million attendees.
June 12	Protesters stopped the second reading of the bill. Police forces fire tear gas, beanbag shots and rubber bullets to disperse protesters, turns into a conflict with protesters. The events were characterized as 'riot'
June 14	Mother's protest to support the youth
June 15	First death directly linked to support of the protests. The bill announced by Carrie Lam to be suspended, but not formally withdrawn
June 16	The Civil Human Rights Front announces that two million people participated in the protest, making it the largest rally in Hong Kong's history and probably among the largest in the history of the world.
July 1	Anniversary of Hong Kong's handover from UK to China. Legislative Council Building of Hong Kong stormed and vandalized.
July 9	Carrie Lam reiterated the bill as 'dead', but still not withdrawn
July 14	Riot police clash with protesters inside a shopping mall, Shatin New Plaza
July 17	Elderly march to support the anti-extradition protests
July 18	Start of field work
July 21	The Liaison Office of the Central People's Government was vandalized, and the emblem of People's Republic of China defaced by protesters. Yuen Long Metro station incident. Hong Kong citizens attacked by a mob of young men in white shirts. (721)
July 22	Fifth suicide related to support of the protest movement
July 23	Interview with Auntie Au

July 24	Interview with Uncle Leung
July 26	Interview with Auntie Chan
July 28	Interview with Danielle, Eric, Auntie Fang and George
August 2	Interview with Uncle Hui and Uncle Li
August 5	First general strike in the recent history of Hong Kong to support the withdrawal of the Extradition bill.
August 7	End of field work
August 11	Protester injured in the eye, becoming a symbol of the protests
August 12-13	Takeover of Hong Kong airport
August 25	Live ammunition fired for the first time by the police against the protesters
August 28	#MeeToo rally to protest alleged sexual assaults by the police during arrests
August 29	Interview with Jordan (in Norway)
August 31	Riot police stormed metro carriage (831)
September 5	The bill is announced to be formally withdrawn by Carrie Lam. However, protests continued…

Based on:

Purbrick, M. (2019) A report of the 2019 Hong Kong protests, *Asian Affairs*, 50:4, 465-487, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2019.1672397

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Appendix C: Interview Guide

Starting questions

- Please tell me about yourself and you as a citizen of Hong Kong SAR?

- Were you born in Hong Kong and how long have you lived here?

- Please tell me about your life in Hong Kong.

- How would you describe the future of Hong Kong?

Topic: generations

- Do you think there is a difference in participations of the ongoing protests?

A. Why? **or** Why not? **B.** What do you think might be the explanation(s)?

- Generally speaking, how would you describe the other generation?

Topic: the perception of identity or identities

- HKUPOP 香港大學民意研究計劃（港大民研）has since 1997 gathered information about Hong Kong citizens' self-ascribed ethnic identity (see reference of HKUPOP 2019a). How do you see this statistic? Do you personally feel any belonging or self-identification to any of these categories? How would you describe this identity or these identities?

- From your perceptions, are there any differences between a person in Hong Kong and a person from mainland China? *(If so, what are these differences?)*

Topic: politics

- Would you like to tell me about how you view politics in Hong Kong?

- Please tell me about how you see the protests in 2014 and this summer. Do you see any similarities or differences?

- What do you understand by 'democracy' in the Hong Kong context?

- How do you view the 'one country two system' policy?

- Have you personally been involved in the democracy movement in Hong Kong?

(In protests or discussions in 2014 or this summer)

If the participant seems comfortable for further questions: **A.** Why? **B.** Why not?

- How do you think the development will be in the future?

(E.g. the current protests, the next 10 years or in 2047