



The Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong review and reflections

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Outline

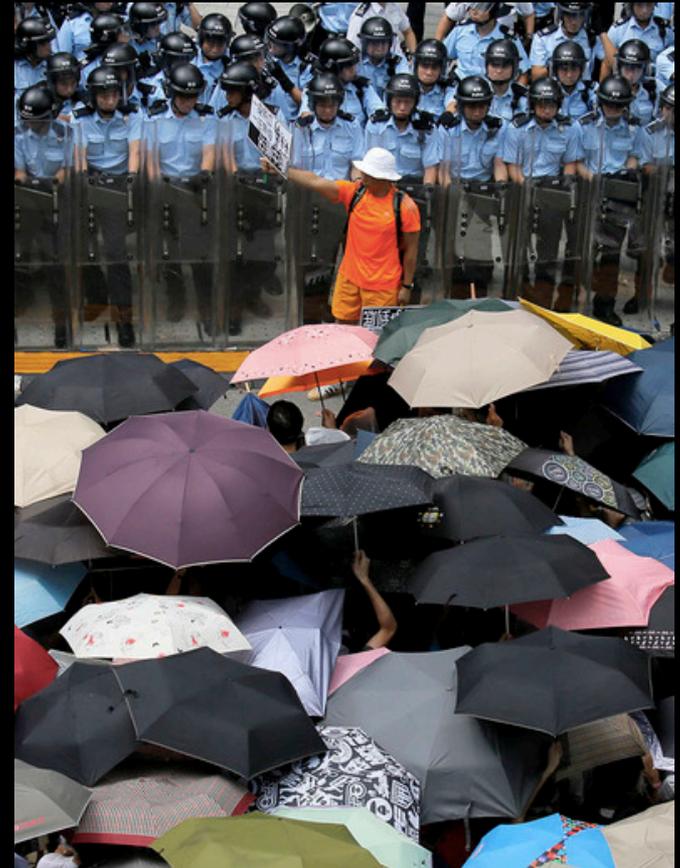
Events leading up to the movement

Who were the occupiers? Why did they join?

What is the extent of public support?

Economic factors

What next?



The largest and longest civil disobedience act in Hong Kong history

- ◆ Lasted for **79 days**
Sept 28 - Dec 15, 2014
(preceded by class boycott Sept 22-26, and occupation of Civic Square)
- ◆ An estimated **1.2 million** joined at some point in support of the Movement
(Source: Chinese University of Hong Kong)



BACKGROUND

★ Basic Law

The Basic Law serves as the constitutional document of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). It was adopted on 4 April 1990 by the National People's Congress (NPC) of the People's Republic of China, and went into effect on 1 July 1997 with the return of the former British colony to Chinese sovereignty. The Basic Law was drafted in accordance with the Sino-British Joint Declaration on the Question of Hong Kong, signed between the Chinese and British governments on 19 December 1984 and provides for the "one country, two systems" policy (first introduced by Deng Xiaoping in the early 1980s) which grants a high degree of autonomy to Hong Kong in its internal affairs and assures that Hong Kong would continue its capitalist economic system and its way of life for a period of 50 years after 1997.



BACKGROUND

★ NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS (NPC) DECISION December 29, 2007 on the election of the Chief Executive of the HKSAR in 2017

“...that the election of the fifth Chief Executive of the HKSAR in 2017 may be implemented by the method of universal suffrage; that after the Chief Executive is selected by universal suffrage, the election of the Legislative Council of the HKSAR may be implemented by the method of electing all members by universal suffrage.”

- Background: Basic Law Article 45 - The method for selecting the Chief Executive shall be specified in the light of the actual situation in the HKSAR and in accordance with the principle of gradual and orderly progress. The ultimate aim is the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures.

BACKGROUND

- ★ Up to now, Hong Kong's Chief Executive (CE) has been elected by the Election Committee
- The Election Committee's membership is renewed every five years upon the expiry of the term of the CE. At the time of election of the current CE C Y Leung in 2012, it had 1,200 members, up from 800 in 2011 and 400 in 2010.
- The members are elected by a range of business and professional groups and political bodies. The electors (a combination of groups and individuals) total approximately 220,000.
- The National People's Congress Decision of August 31, 2014 stated that the Nomination Committee for the CE in 2017 should be similar to the Election Committee

EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE UMBRELLA MOVEMENT



Civil Alliance Against the National Education Campaign July 2012

Followed by:

- “Occupy Central with Love and Peace” proposed early 2013
- China State Council White Paper on Hong Kong June 2014
- China National People’s Congress Standing Committee Decision Aug 2014

Civil Alliance Against the National Education campaign July 2012

- The Education Bureau of Hong Kong proposed a “Moral and National Education” curriculum
- “The China Model National Conditions Teaching Manual” within the curriculum contains a section characterizing the Chinese Communist Party as an “advanced, selfless and united ruling group”, and the Democratic and Republican Parties of the US as having a “fierce inter-party rivalry [that] is disastrous for the people.”
- **Negative reception:** this was perceived as “brain washing” and not teaching students to think analytically.
 - 15 organizations (including Scholarism, Parents’ Concern Group, Hong Kong Federation of Students) formed an alliance. 90,000 protested on July 29.
 - Organizers estimated some 120,000 occupied government headquarters grounds for several days in September.
 - The government delayed curriculum implementation.

Occupy Central with Love and Peace 2013



- Early 2013 Professors Benny Tai and Chan Kin-man and Reverend Chu Yiu Ming jointly proposed a nonviolent occupation protest in the central financial district of Hong Kong in mid 2014 if promises made by Beijing for universal suffrage were not realized.
- June 2014 the Occupy Central movement commissioned the University of Hong Kong Public Opinion Programme (HKPOP) to run a poll on three proposals which involve allowing the public to directly participate in the nomination of candidates for the Chief Executive. 792,808 votes were cast online or at polling stations during 20-29 June; 87.8% agreed with the proposals.
- July-August 2014 a counter movement, the Alliance for Peace and Democracy, launched a signature campaign opposing the Occupy Central movement and gathered over one million signatures

CHINA STATE COUNCIL WHITE PAPER JUNE 2014

Contains the following statements:

- ★ “The ‘one country’ is the premise and basis of the ‘two systems,’ and the ‘two systems’ is subordinate to and derived from ‘one country .”
- ★ “The high degree of autonomy of HKSAR is not an inherent power, but one that comes solely from the authorization by the central leadership. ... The high degree of autonomy of HKSAR is subject to the level of the central leadership’s authorization. There is no such thing called ‘residual power’”
 - **Negative reception:** this violates the “one country, two systems” policy which grants a high degree of autonomy to Hong Kong in its internal affairs

STATE COUNCIL WHITE PAPER ON HONG KONG JUNE 2014

★“...when assuming office, the chief executive, principal officials, members of the Executive Council and Legislative Council, judges of the courts at all levels and other members of the judiciary in the HKSAR must... swear to uphold the Basic Law and swear allegiance to the HKSAR ... All this is necessary for displaying sovereignty, ensuring loyalty to the country by the mainstay of Hong Kong administrators and helping them to subject to oversight by the central government and Hong Kong society...”

- **Negative reception:** this violates the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law which are central to the socio-political values of Hong Kong
- 1,800 lawyers and judges dressed in black marched in protest against this provision on June 27, 2014



March in black, march to the city's Court of First Appeal to defend judicial independence and oppose Beijing's white paper on the "one country, two systems" policy. Photo: K.Y.

CHINA NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS STANDING COMMITTEE DECISION AUGUST 31, 2014

- ★ While calling for universal suffrage, the Decision imposes the standard that the Chief Executive shall be a person who loves the country and loves Hong Kong and requires that ‘the method for selecting the Chief Executive by universal suffrage must provide corresponding institutional safeguards for this purpose’:
- For the Chief Executive election, a nominating committee, similar to the present Election Committee, is to be formed to nominate two to three candidates each of whom must receive the support of more than half of the members of the nominating committee
- **Negative reception:** the nomination committee, which will be similar to the current election committee of 1,200, will have a narrow electoral base and will be easily influenced by the central government in Beijing. Together with the other requirements, this is seen to violate the definition of “universal suffrage” in the ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights), which the Basic Law states is applicable to Hong Kong.

MOVEMENT PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE and extent of public support

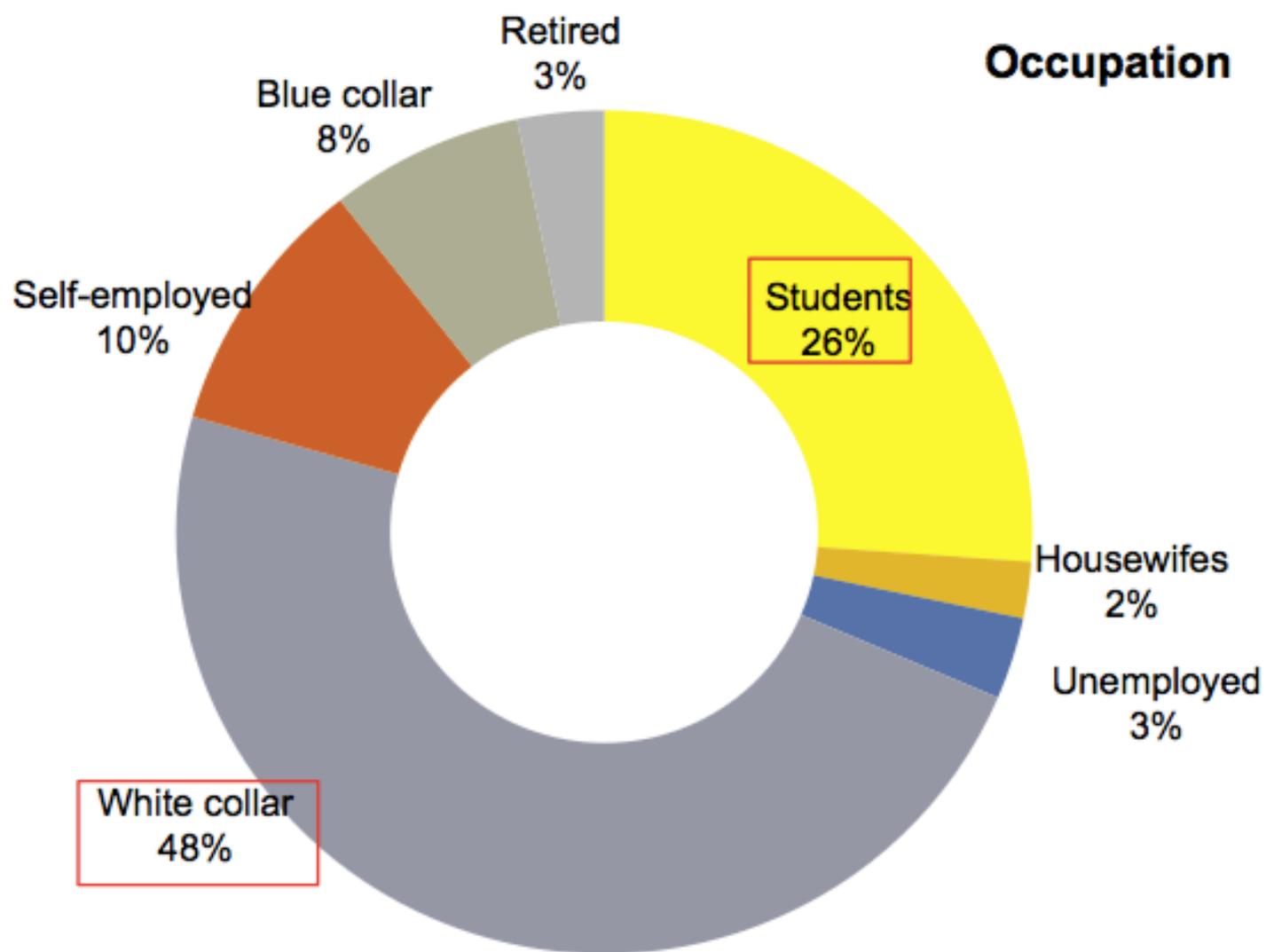


PARTICIPANTS

- Occupation: white-collar workers, students
- Motivation: mainly political
- Identity as “Hongkongers” v Chinese

PUBLIC

- Divided in support for movement
- no majority opinion
- Generation, education divide



Participants Profile:

Mainly white collar workers (48%), and students (26%)

How important are the following factors in motivating you to participate in the movement? 下列那項原因驅使你參與佔領活動?	Very Unimportant 非常不重要	Unimportant 不重要	Average 一般	Important 重要	Very Important 非常重要	Degree of importance 重要性*
Demand genuine universal suffrage 爭取真普選	1%	2%	8%	17%	73%	87%
Feel that HKSAR government has not responded protest demands 不滿特區政府未有正視示威訴求	1%	5%	20%	38%	37%	68%
Dissatisfied with the way the police deal with protests 不滿警方處理示威手法	2%	11%	23%	34%	30%	51%
Agree with the concept of civil disobedience 認同公民抗命理念	2%	10%	30%	35%	24%	46%
Resist Beijing's intervention into HK's affairs 抗拒中央干預香港事務	3%	15%	31%	29%	22%	33%
Create space for public policy discussions 爭取公共政策討論空間	3%	16%	40%	28%	13%	22%
Improve people's livelihood 爭取改善民生	4%	31%	26%	21%	18%	4%

*Degree of importance = (% Very important + % Important) – (% Unimportant + % Very unimportant)

Issues participants consider important:

- genuine universal suffrage
- civil disobedience
- resisting Beijing's intervention in Hong Kong affairs

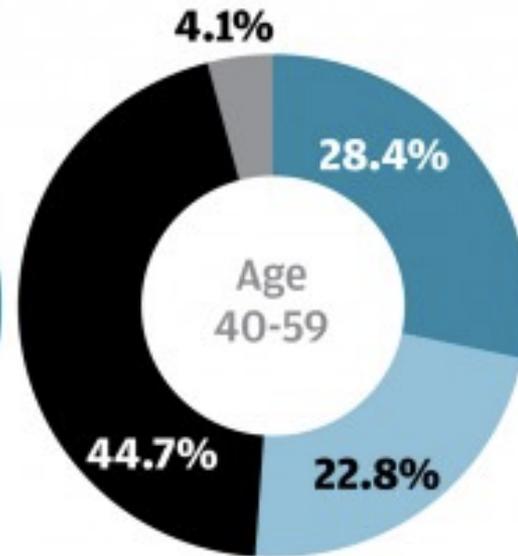
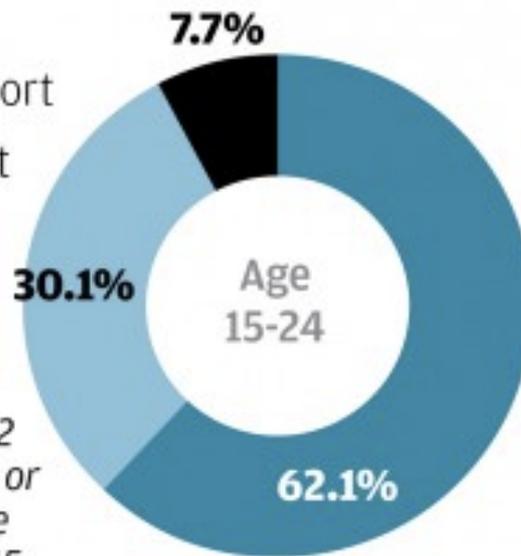
Do you personally support the Occupy movement?

Support

Partly support

Not support

No view



Poll sample: 802 people, aged 15 or above, by phone between Oct 8-15

Source: Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Survey, Chinese University of Hong Kong

SCMP

PUBLIC SUPPORT PROFILE

- support significant among youths
- lack of support among middle-aged or older persons
- divide: nearly 38% of total participants in survey said they supported the movement; 32% said they did not

Table 15: Recently Hong Kong broke out an “Occupy Movement”, do you personally support the movement? Strongly support, quite support, so-so, quite not support, or strongly not support?

	Support	So-so	Not Support	No Views / Refuse	Total	(N)
Sex						
M	37.5%	20.1%	40.2%	2.2%	100.0%	(492)
F	30.6%	18.9%	46.5%	4.0%	100.0%	(538)
Age						
15 - 24	67.7%	24.3%	7.6%	0.3%	100.0%	(144)
25 - 39	36.9%	22.8%	36.5%	3.8%	100.0%	(243)
40 - 59	27.6%	17.7%	53.4%	1.3%	100.0%	(390)
60 or Above	22.1%	16.3%	54.7%	6.9%	100.0%	(246)
Edu Level						
F3 or Below	21.0%	17.5%	55.8%	5.7%	100.0%	(297)
F4 – F.7	32.6%	21.9%	43.8%	1.7%	100.0%	(350)
Tertiary or Above	45.8%	18.9%	32.9%	2.5%	100.0%	(377)

Public support profile:

Support for the movement mainly from younger people and those with higher education (Note: Form 3 = 9th grade)

Age and education stood out as statistically significant in explaining all four variables [(social mobility, trust in Chinese Government, satisfaction with HKSAR Government, support for democracy) in determining the participation in and support for the Umbrella Movement]

- “...the younger the age, the more they tend to perceive a lesser chance of upward social mobility, less trust towards the Chinese government in upholding its key promises, less satisfaction on the HKSAR Government to handle China-Hong Kong tensions and greater support for democracy.”
- “...the higher the education, the lesser trust they have on the Chinese government. Likewise, the more educated they are, the smaller satisfaction they have on the HKSAR government to handle the China-Hong Kong tensions.”
- “...These findings about social bases have vindicated a younger generation having a pervasive skepticism and pessimism towards the Beijing and HKSAR government as well their own economic future. To a lesser extent, the same applies to the more educated ones.

“HONGKONGER” IDENTITY PROMINENT AMONG MOVEMENT PARTICIPANTS

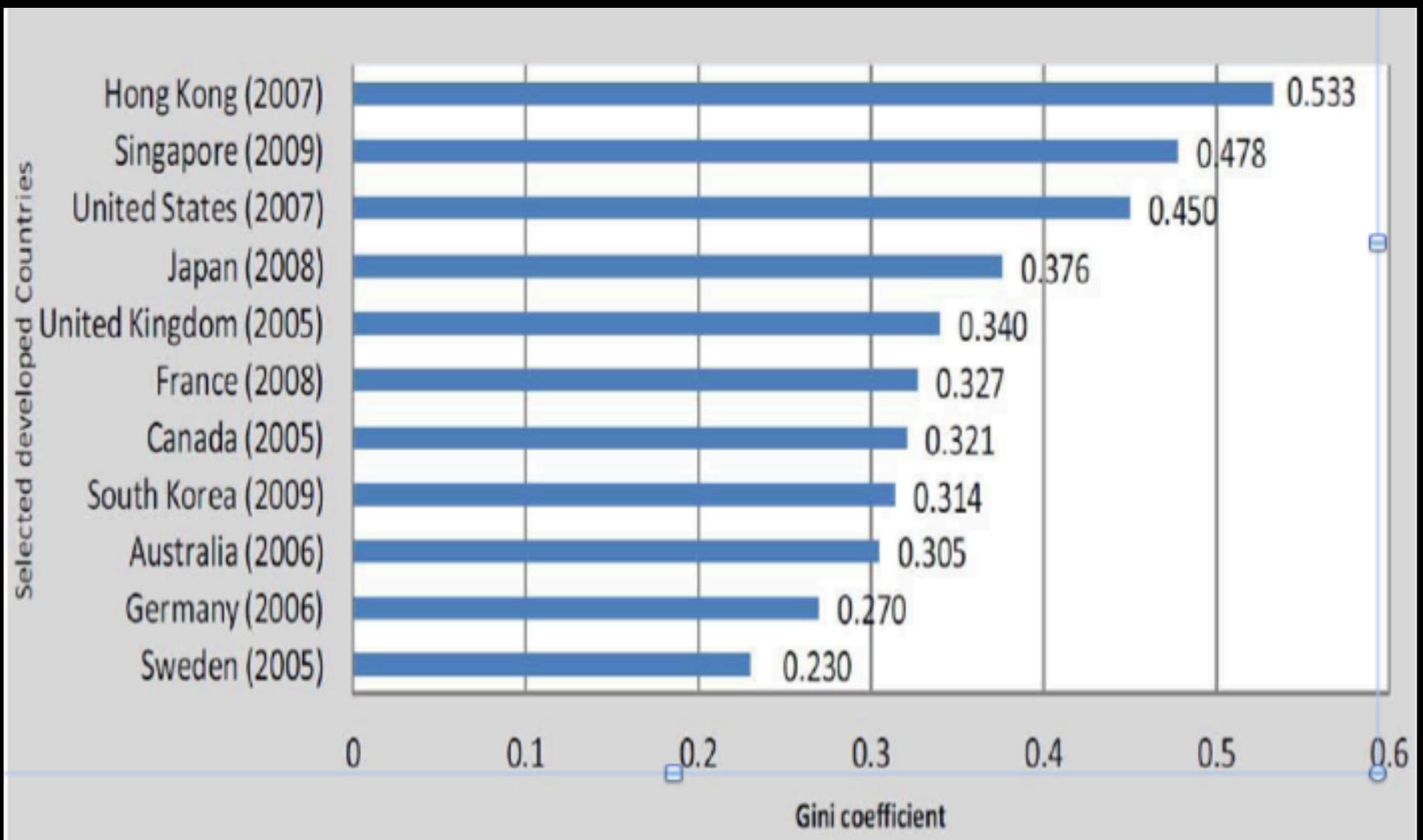


80% of participants identify themselves as “Hongkongers” (compared with 40% for general public), rather than as “Hongkongers in China” or “Chinese in Hong Kong” or “Chinese”

Economic factors

- income inequality
- high property prices
- stagnating income level
- tension with mainland China





- Hong Kong's **income inequality**, as measured by gini coefficient, is high compared with developed countries. It reached 0.537 in 2011

Table 6

10 Least Affordable Major Metropolitan Markets

Rank: Least Affordable	Affordability Rank (Out of 86)	Nation	Metropolitan Market	Median Multiple
1	86	China	Hong Kong	17.0
2	85	Canada	Vancouver, BC	10.6
3	84	Australia	Sydney, NSW	9.8
4	82	U.S.	San Francisco, CA	9.2
4	82	U.S.	San Jose, CA	9.2
6	81	Australia	Melbourne, VIC	8.7
7	80	U.K.	London (GLA)	8.5
8	79	U.S.	San Diego, CA	8.3
9	78	N.Z.	Auckland	8.2
10	77	U.S.	Los Angeles, CA	8.0

Hong Kong had **the least affordable housing** among major international cities for the fifth straight year in 2014

Housing affordability measure:

median multiple = median home price divided by gross annual median household income
ie. average family income growth lagged far behind the increase in property prices

Source: 11th Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey: 3rd quarter, 2014

STAGNANT INCOME LEVEL

AND LACK OF UPWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY

- “...the more the respondents perceived a smaller chance of moving up the social ladder, the greater the level of their backing for the UM.”
- “...despite the dramatic expansion in the tertiary education in the last 2 decades, between 2001 and 2011, the younger generation aged between 15 and 29 has suffered a decline in their real median income relative to the entire population across time.”
- “...government statistics reveal that since mid-1990s, there has been nearly a halt in the increase of managerial and professional posts, and only the posts of para-professionals have got a rise. In fact, between 2001 and 2011, there was an obvious decline in the proportion of the younger generation who had taken up managerial, professional and para-professional posts.”
- “The influx of manpower from Mainland... and HKSAR government’s policy to allow inflow of labor especially from Mainland... have been cited as some of the causes accounting for the less chance of upward social mobility”

SOURCE: “EXPLAINING THE MASS SUPPORT FOR THE UMBRELLA MOVEMENT”,
MING SING, THE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HONG KONG,
CONFERENCE PAPER JUNE 16, 2015

TENSIONS BETWEEN HONG KONG AND MAINLAND CHINA

TENSIONS arising from inflow of people and funds since handover 1997:

- Mainland visitors (reaching up to 70-100 million per year) putting a strain on transportation and raising rentals for the retail sector
- Influx of Mainlanders working and studying in Hong Kong, increasing competition and impacting housing affordability
- Inflow of funds from the Mainland driving up property prices

NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS:

- the Chief Executive mainly serves Beijing rather than Hong Kong
- lack of confidence in the HKSAR Government's ability to handle tensions with the Mainland
- lack of trust in Beijing allowing Hong Kong people to rule Hong Kong with a high degree of autonomy as promised
- erosion of core Hong Kong values, eg. press freedom, rule of law

RESULTS:

- calling for “taking our future in our own hands” - the rallying cry during the student boycott of classes immediately before the Movement started,
- strengthening of the “Hongkonger” identity



What Next?

AN “ENORMOUS CHALLENGE”

“Viewed from the perspective of a mass values approach, support for democracy and trust in the Chinese Government in upholding [a high degree of autonomy for Hong Kong] are found to be statistically significant in explaining the support of the movement. Examining from the perspective of a performance approach, the perceived performance of the HKSAR Government in handling China-Hong Kong tensions, and the perceived economic performance of Hong Kong allowing upward social mobility, have shaped the support for the movement. Moreover, the younger generation are more likely than the older ones to have negative view of the chance of upward social mobility, to distrust the Chinese and HKSAR Government, and to have greater support for democracy. This finding underscores the enormous challenge for Beijing in addressing the aspirations for democracy of the younger generation and their greater propensity in joining civil obedience acts in future.”

SOURCE: “EXPLAINING THE MASS SUPPORT FOR THE UMBRELLA MOVEMENT”, MING SING, THE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HONG KONG, CONFERENCE PAPER JUNE 16, 2015, BASED ON OCTOBER 24-25, 2014 SURVEY

“RUDE AWAKENING”

- “Although the Umbrella Movement started off as a student movement (the class boycott and the occupation of the civic square), it is safe to say that by November the main participants were not students, as testified by most surveys at the sites at the time. Average citizens, with higher biographical availability, young and educated, but mostly working adults, joined the occupation without really having planned for it. Although students no longer formed the main body of the occupiers, the initial motive of ‘protecting the students’ against police brutality still posed a powerful drive for the participants.”
- “Many of the participants were not experienced protesters or loyal followers of political groups. As newcomers they did not feel affiliated to the traditional political groups; no wonder the pan-democratic groups could provide little leadership or influence on the course of action during the movement. These newcomers to movements were more inclined to new forms, which are more egalitarian and less hierarchical, coordinated in a more ad hoc and spontaneous manner. They had relatively few experiences with formal organizations, were not loyal followers of established political groups, and might have little experience in organizing protests. These spontaneous protesters might not have clear and consistent political ideology and detailed plans of action, provoked largely by police violence. This more or less explained the lack of overall strategy or direction at the later stages of the movement.”
- “Triggered by the police brutality, many protesters rushed out without being mobilized by organizations or activists. The relative newness of these protesters formed a ‘micro-cohort’ of protesters who might be a central force for social and political movements for years to come.”

- “One should not underestimate the rude awakening power for this new cohort of participants. What we studied at the site was only the tip of an iceberg, as there is a high barrier to cross to come out to join the occupation movement. There would be a lot more people who were not really politically attentive before, but were awakened by what happened and became more participative in the future. The police brutality made people more determined, and understand much better the political situation of the Hong Kong people. Writing in the summer of 2015, it seems that the Umbrella Movement would not bring any substantial institutional changes. Yet its impact on subsequent political participation and social movements could be substantial.”



SOURCE:

“RUDE AWAKENING: NEW PARTICIPANTS AND THE UMBRELLA MOVEMENT”, NGOK MA, THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG, CONFERENCE PAPER JUNE 16, 2015

BASED ON A STUDY OF 50 “COMMITTED OCCUPIERS” IN THE UMBRELLA MOVEMENT IN NOVEMBER 2014



The Hong Kong Government's proposal for political reform (based on the National People's Congress Decision of August 31, 2014) was vetoed at the Legislative Council on June 28, 2015

This presentation was prepared by Nicole Kwan in July 2015 for discussion purpose for the China Now Teachers Workshop August 2-3, 2015 organized by the 1990 Institute. Please refer to original and updated sources for further details.

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Occupy Central with Love and Peace

<http://oclp.hk/index.php?route=occupy/eng>