Hong Kong pro-democracy 35 plus movement: How different types of polarisation shaped the deliberations

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To Hongkongers

I confirm that the work submitted is my own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

This research reconstructs the deliberations of Hong Kong's pro-democracy 35+ Movement in 2020 and aims to discover the occurrence of different types of polarisation, namely positional, affective, interactional and interpretative, unfolded in the deliberative process. Using process tracing, the research interviewed participants who attended three separate series of deliberation meetings. This research also found out what issues were at stake and how various kinds of polarisation shaped the deliberative process inside and outside the meetings. The research discovered the possibility that positional polarisation can serve as a trigger for a group to adopt a more radical measure after moderates or dissidents exit from the deliberative process. It enriched the existing group polarisation literature by describing the types of polarisation in the deliberative process and opened a possibility for future research on the role of other types of polarisation serving as a trigger in the same manner.

Keywords: Hong Kong pro-democracy movement, deliberative process, polarisation

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List of Abbreviations

ADPL	Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood, Hong Kong
anti-ELAB	anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill
BL	Basic Law, Hong Kong
CE	Chief Executive, Hong Kong
CP	Civic Party, Hong Kong
DC	District Council
DCII	District Council II Constituency
DPHK	Democratic Party, Hong Kong
EC	Election Committee
FC	Functional Constituency
GC	Geographical Constituency
HKI	Hong Kong Island, the Constituency
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
HQLR	Hare Quota and Largest Remainder Formula
IWR	"Resolute Resistance, Inked without Regret", the Declaration
KLE	Kowloon East, the Constituency
KLW	Kowloon West, the Constituency
LegCo	Legislative Council, Hong Kong
LSD	League of Social Democrats
NPCSC	Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China
NSL	National Security Law, Hong Kong
NTE	New Territories East, the Constituency
NTW	New Territories West, the Constituency
OCLP	Occupy Central with Love and Peace
PfD	Power for Democracy
POPCON	Public Opinion Program CON Platform, University of Hong Kong
PR	Proportional Representation
UDHK	United Democrats of Hong Kong
UM	Umbrella Movement

Introduction

In July 2020, the pro-democracy camp in Hong Kong held the unofficial primary election for the city's legislature, with over half a million Hongkongers casting their ballots in makeshift polling stations across the city (BBC, 2020). According to the 35+ Movement founder Benny Tai, who is also a legal scholar, the primary election was part of the Movement, which aimed to achieve a pro-democracy majority at the Legislative Council (LegCo) (Yuan, 2020). The pro-democracy camp has never controlled the city's legislature since Beijing took over sovereignty in 1997, and the success of the Movement would also put pressure on Beijing and Hong Kong authorities to respond to the protesters' demands in the 2019 anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill (anti-ELAB) Movement. The anti-ELAB Movement was transformed into full-scale pro-democracy protests later that year (Ming Pao, 2020).

The 35+ Movement originated from Tai's vision after the camp's landslide victory in the District Council (DC) Election 2019. He believed that the pro-democracy camp should be able to become the majority of the LegCo through cross-faction coordination, public participation through voting, and candidates' pledges to suspend the campaigns if they were trailing behind the opinion polls on the eve of the general election (Tai, 2020b). In March 2020, Tai launched six series of group-based enclave deliberations with potential candidates and their campaign team members representing different factions. The deliberation series was co-organised by Power for Democracy (PfD), the pro-democracy camp's coalition specialising in organising deliberations and primary elections. However, what happened in the series was little known by the public at the time until the Hong Kong authorities put the organisers and candidates of the primary on trial.

Six months after the primary was held, fifty-two pro-democracy primary candidates and organisers were arrested for inciting subversion, a crime under the National Security Law (NSL)[1], in January 2021. Among them, forty-seven were prosecuted by the Hong Kong authorities a month after the arrest, and most of them were remanded without bail. They have been described as the Hong Kong 47[2]. The

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[1] The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC) enacted the NSL on 30 June 2020 and made it applicable to Hong Kong by inserting the said Law into Annex III of the Basic Law (BL)

[2] Hong Kong Free Press and South China Morning Post used such a phrase in their news reports to describe the defendants. Refer to the reports by Ho (2023a; 2023b; 2023c; 2023d), Leung (2023) and Wong (2023a; 2023b)

main trial commenced in March 2023 after two years of pre-trial procedures and the case was heard by Beijing-handpicked judges.

News reports of the trial, such as Ho (2023a;2023b;2023c;2023d), Leung (2023) and the Witness (2023a; 2023b; 2023c; 2023d; 2023e; 2023f; 2023g; 2023h), mentioned testimonies given by deliberation facilitators and activists who joined the series. Those reports revealed details of the 35+ Movement, including interactions in different deliberation meetings, and several defendants representing the resistance faction expressed dissatisfaction with established pro-democracy parties in the deliberation meetings. Candidates representing the resistance faction viewed politicians from these parties as conservative and not committed to honouring the anti-ELAB Movement demands[3]. Conversely, Andrew Chiu, the facilitator of the deliberation meetings representing PfD, expressed discontent over the "hijacking" of the primary by Benny Tai and the resistance faction[4].

Despite news reports revealing some of the episodes of the 35+ Movement, two questions remain unanswered. The first question is how the deliberations could lead to the decision to hold the primary despite the camp being polarised and fragmented. Deliberation is a process of communication where people "carefully examine a problem and arrive at a well-reasoned solution after a period of inclusive, respectful consideration of diverse points of view" (Burkhalter et al., 2002, cited in Gastil, 2008, p.8). The analytic process of deliberation follows "rational ideal to a degree" (Gastil, 2008, p.19), and the social process means ensuring participants have adequate speaking opportunities, mutual comprehension of arguments, consideration of other ideas and experiences and respect among participants. (Gastil, 2008, pp. 9-10). The argument for the deliberative process in social movements is that decisions should be based on horizontal consensus, which could achieve a communitarian identity (della Porta, 2005a). Even if the consensus was not made in a horizontal decision-making fashion, the social movement should also emphasise diversity and respect and improve mutual understanding (della Porta, 2005a). However, from the news reports, the 35+ Movement deliberations were far from achieving such an ideal.

Strategically, primary elections might also disadvantage candidates who run as independent or representing small parties, as the Proportional Representation (PR)

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[3] Owen Chow, one of the defendants who pleaded not guilty, expressed the rationale behind the Resolute Resistance, Inked without Regret (IWR) Declaration. Refer to the news report by Ho (2023e).
[4] Refer to the news report on Chiu's testimony by Ho (2023a).

electoral system in LegCo's Geographical Constituencies (GCs) election favours independent or alternative candidates (Cheung, 2018, p.98). Nevertheless, among fifty-one candidates, twenty-nine were activists representing anti-China localists and progressive localists in the 2019 DC Election, and most were new or little known in the pro-democracy camp.

With the pro-democracy activists representing small political groups defying findings by Cheung (2018) and joining the primary, it is academically relevant to investigate what happened during the series of enclave deliberations that facilitated the polarised and fragmented pro-democracy factions' participation. Neither news reports nor academic papers have attempted to reconstruct the deliberations on this aspect.

The second question consists of two parts: Has polarisation occurred during and after the deliberation series? If yes, what types of polarisation were they? According to media reports (The Witness, 2023a; 2023d; 2023h), at least one activist and one DC member who participated in the series bypassed the primary and opted for the main LegCo Election directly. This case follows Sunstein's (2009, pp.44-45) exit-type group polarisation. Furthermore, the IWR Declaration, co-published by two anti-China localist candidates and one progressive localist candidate to show commitment to veto the government's budget over moderate candidates who refused to make such a pledge, demonstrated signs of the bandwagon effect - another type of group polarisation (Hogg and Vaughan, 2022, pp.362-363). The endorsement of the Declaration by primary candidates from other factions also displayed the characteristics of reputational cascades, as described by Sunstein (2002, pp.175-176). Still, the primary election was held as planned, and candidates remained committed to the plan. Such commitment defied the tendency stated in established studies, in which agreement was hardly achieved if the group was polarised in time-limited deliberations (Schkade et al., 2007). Such a phenomenon needs to be explained.

The remaining part of the second question is about an issue with the established group polarisation theories. Group polarisation can be regarded as the phenomenon at the end of the deliberation, while the process that triggered such an outcome falls short of an explanation. Concepts such as exit and bandwagon effect may have explained what may happen in the deliberative process, but there is no clear chain of causation to group polarisation. The assumption that the occurrence of certain behaviours, such as exit, will lead to a polarised group overlooks what makes the participants diverge and leads to possible outcomes of group polarisation. In this regard, literature on affective polarisation (Iyengar et al., 2018; Druckman et al., 2020;

Gidengili et al., 2021; McWilliams, 2021; Orhan, 2022; Törnberg, 2022; Torcal et al., 2023), interactional polarisation (Yarchi et. al, 2020), positional polarisation (Yarchi et. al, 2020), and interpretative polarisation (Kligler-Vilenchik et al., 2020) provide potential analytical enrichment for distinguishing connections between the deliberative process and the outcome of group polarisation. For instance, the exit of participants or the bandwagon effect of the deliberation may trigger any, some, or all types of polarisation, resulting in group polarisation.

This research carries its significance as it attempts to reconstruct episodes of the Movement, a significant series of events in the history of the democratic struggle in Hong Kong. After the arrests and prosecutions of the organisers and candidates of the pro-democracy primary, the whole camp has been facing unprecedented persecution from the Hong Kong authorities. Former and current faction leaders who had sent candidates representing their groups to contest in the primary were interrogated, arrested, and prosecuted by the Hong Kong authorities, accusing them of violating the NSL, seditious intent and other miscellaneous offences[5]. With at least ten factions and parties disbanded, the pro-democracy camp has been nearly extinguished (CIVICUS, 2023), and the civil society which once supported the pro-democracy movement has also been dismantled (Mo, 2022). Therefore, the reconstruction of the episodes of Movement events will provide a piece of the puzzle to document what happened before the persecution of individuals and organisations related to the pro-democracy primary.

As a pro-democracy politician who participated in one of the 35+ Movement deliberation meetings, I was, and remain, critical towards the decision-making process of the primary, mainly about its effectiveness. The electoral system of the LegCo GC election at the time, which was the PR system with Hare Quota and Largest Remainder Formula (HQLR), would barely yield disproportion representation in favour of the pro-democracy camp, irrespective of the format or whether the primary was held. Ma and Choi (2003) and Choi et al. (2021) studied the HQLR PR system for over two decades, and they rarely saw disproportion representation in GC. Therefore, my view at the time was that the camp should have maximised seat gains in the Functional Constituencies (FCs) strategically by contesting as a camp or forming a coalition with non-allied candidates to assert control of the LegCo. I also had little faith that leaders and candidates would adhere to the Movement's plan, which they eventually did not.

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[5] For instance, unionist Leo Tang was arrested for seditious intent in 2022. His group has sent Carol Ng, then union chair, to run for the primary. See Ho (2022) for Tang's arrest.

Nevertheless, my presence in one of the meetings did not give me the privilege of knowing more about deliberative processes in other series back in 2020. Setting aside my position and involvement in the Movement, this research maintains its significance in discovering how the deliberations pulled the fragmented and polarised camp together and adopted the one-round primary.

The main argument of this research is that at least one type of polarisation that occurred in the deliberation of the 35+ Movement contributed to the decision to adopt the primary election. By using process tracing, this project attempts to answer the two aforementioned research questions. Data collected from news reports of the trial of Hong Kong 47 have been utilised to reconstruct the deliberation series, which led to holding the primary election. and data from interviews unveiled how different kinds of polarisation occurred in the episodes of the 35+ Movement.

In Chapter 1, I will give the background of Hong Kong politics and the pro-democracy movement since the 1980s, followed by a brief on the 35+ Movement and my detailed position on both the pro-democracy camp and the Movement. In Chapter 2, the Literature Review, I will go through the concept of deliberation and different types of polarisation, the development of these concepts, their relationship with each other, their relationship with the concept of social movements, and the gaps in these theories and concepts. In Chapter 3, Methodology, I will discuss the use of process tracing to study the 35+ Movement deliberations, followed by episodic interviews with participants of the deliberations and news reports to complement reconstructing the episodes of the deliberations. In Chapter 4, the Findings, I will present the 35+ deliberation timeline and events based on collected data and the moments of different types of polarisation, specifically positional, interactional, affective, and interpretative, based on interviews. Finally, in Chapter 5, Discussion, I will account for how different types of polarisation occurred in and outside the deliberative process. Moreover, I found the role of positional polarisation in the established group polarisation literature. Lastly, there will be a reflection on using interviews as data to discover polarisation in the deliberative process, with suggestions on improving data collection to better capture polarisation moments.

Chapter 1 - Background of Hong Kong politics, pro-democracy camp and the 35+ Movement

The 35+ Movement was a continued struggle for Hong Kong's democracy after the gradual demise of the anti-ELAB Movement. The city's democratisation and its failures have long been found since the post-war era (Tsang, 2014; Ortmann, 2016). Nevertheless, political development in the post -1997 Hong Kong has been regarded as a stalemate (Cheung, 2018), triggering fragmentation and polarisation of political parties (Ma, 2018), the rise of right-wing localism (Ip, 2018), and thousands of protests, mostly self-initiated and mobilised (Lee and Chan, 2018). The 35+ Movement is the pro-democracy camp's response to the decade-long underdevelopment of the city's political system, which lacked a roadmap and timetable to achieve universal suffrage. It was the last episode of struggle before the crackdown of the whole pro-democracy camp and the dismantlement of the city's civil society (Mo, 2022).

This chapter starts with an overview of Hong Kong politics and the pro-democracy movement since the 1980s, including the divide of the pro-democracy camp in the mid-2010s. It then follows democratic backsliding since Beijing took over the city's sovereignty in 1997. After that, I will summarise the 2019 anti-ELAB Movement and the 35+ Movement in 2020.

Hong Kong politics and the pro-democracy movement between the 1980s and 1997

To begin with, the term Hong Kong's pro-democracy camp refers to a network of activists who have been campaigning for democracy since the late 1970s instead of those who made similar demands between the 1950s and early 1970s.

In the early days of Sino-British negotiations on Hong Kong's future, pro-democracy camp leader Szeto Wah and the activists who formed the group Meeting Point in 1983 subscribed to the idea of "democratic reunification" with China (Fung, 1990), as Britain was backed by Hong Kong's business elites in attempts to maintain the status quo (Johnson, 1984, p.898). In return, Beijing invited pro-democracy leaders to participate in the BL Drafting Committee after the Sino-British Joint Declaration was signed in 1984.

The approach to ally with Beijing to achieve democratisation beyond 1997 was stalled after two events – The Hong Kong authorities, because of a deal with Beijing, refused the demand by the pro-democracy camp on direct elections at the city's LegCo in 1988 (G. Cheung, 2016). The second event was the crackdown on the pro-democracy movement in Beijing, which Hong Kong's pro-democracy camp supported.

After the Tiananmen Massacre, Szeto Wah and pro-democracy LegCo member Martin Lee withdrew from the BL Drafting Committee (Szeto, 2011), and the Hong Kong authorities re-oriented to a more progressive pace of democratisation, such as introducing direct elections to LegCo in 1991 and produce all LegCo seats through direction election in 1995.

The pro-democracy camp benefited from such rapid, top-down democratisation. For instance, the United Democrats of Hong Kong (UDHK), formed by Szeto Wah, Martin Lee and others, won 13 out of 60 seats in the 1991 LegCo. Months after UDHK and Meeting Point supported Patten's democratisation proposal in 1994, both groups merged to form Democratic Party (DPHK).

In response, Beijing abandoned the arrangement to allow all LegCo members to continue their term beyond 1997. Instead, it formed the Provisional LegCo with all appointed members (Rabushka, 1997). All DPHK LegCo members, along with other pro-democracy lawmakers representing 123 Democratic Alliance and Christine Loh, have lost their seats since Beijing took over the city's sovereignty in 1997, as Beijing did not appoint them. They yielded mixed outcomes in the first LegCo Election under Beijing's rule in 1998, in which DPHK gained nine seats in GC and four seats in FC, while 123 Democratic Alliance lost their only battle in the New Territories West (NTW) constituency. Loh won a seat in the Hong Kong Island (HKI) constituency representing the Citizens Party but decided not to seek re-election in 2000 and focused on her research centre (Bloomberg, 2000).

Post-1997 politics and the pro-democracy movement

According to the BL of Hong Kong, the "mini-constitution" of the city, the Chief Executive (CE), the head of the executive branch, and members of LegCo can be eventually elected through universal suffrage. Article 45 of the BL states that

> *"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".*
>
> *(National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, 1990, Basic Law, Article 45)*

For the LegCo, the BL also states that

> *"The ultimate aim is the election of all the members of the Legislative Council by universal suffrage".*
>
> *(National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, 1990, Basic Law, Article 68)*

Despite these promises, the progress of democratisation post-1997 in Hong Kong was sluggish. Only the Election Committee (EC) members, elected through sectoral elections or selected by lottery, had the right to nominate and vote for the CE. Moreover, the BL only guaranteed to phase out all EC member seats in LegCo by 2004, and half of the LegCo was formed by FCs, which remained to be elected by business elites and professionals through sectoral elections. The remaining half of the legislature was elected under universal franchise. Seats were divided into five GCs and elected through PR with the HQLR system.

More importantly, the BL limited LegCo's function in progressing universal suffrage. To amend the election rules and composition stated in the BL, only the executive branch of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government, the State Department of China, and the NPCSC have the power to present the proposal. LegCo members can only vote on the constitutional package presented to the LegCo, and the passage of the reform package requires two-thirds of the majority. The HKSAR Government presented a Beijing-approved proposal in 2005 but was criticised by pro-democracy lawmakers for not having a roadmap and timetable for universal suffrage (To 2005, cited in Kootnikoff, 2005). The LegCo has vetoed the proposal as it failed to secure two-thirds of the members who voted for the package.

The absence of a roadmap and timetable leading to universal suffrage had then been articulated by the pro-democracy camp for their advantage in LegCo elections. Candidates representing the camp marketed themselves as advocates for a greater degree of democratisation, contrasting their pro-Beijing counterparts who did not make such pledges. Such tactics can be found as early as the 1998 LegCo platform of the DPHK (1998). Other pro-democracy parties formed in the 2000s, such as the Civic Party (CP) and League of Social Democrats (LSD), incorporated the pledge for campaigning for universal suffrage in their manifestos[6]. Another tactic the camp used was vowing to veto the Beijing-approved political reform package should the camp felt was not progressive enough. As the camp held more than one-third of the seats in LegCo before 2020, the camp held decisive power in deciding the fate of each reform proposal.

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[6] CP and LSD were formed in 2006. For their manifestos, refer to the Civic Party (2008) and League of Social Democrats (2007).

The democratic camp's division in the 2010s

The dynamics of the pro-democracy camp have changed dramatically since 2010. In that year, the HKSAR Government presented another Beijing-approved constitutional reform proposal. Similar to the one in 2005, the package did not come with the timetable and roadmap for universal suffrage of CE and the LegCo. This time, however, factions reacted to the proposal differently. Ma (2011) described that moment as "Hong Kong's Democrats Divide".

In 2010, factions in the pro-democracy camp failed to reach a unified response to the constitutional reform package. Ma (2011, p.60) categorised the camp into two groups, namely hardliners and negotiating factions. On one end, the hardliners, consisting of three LegCo GC members from the LSD and three from the CP, triggered the territory-wide de facto referendum by resigning their seats in the legislature and running for their resigned seats in the subsequent by-election, with a unified platform calling for universal suffrage. Conversely, the negotiating faction, with LegCo members and scholars from the DPHK and Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood (ADPL), did not participate in the by-election and negotiated for a better proposal with both Beijing and Hong Kong authorities. Without the mobilisation effort by DPHK and ADPL, the by-election attracted around only half a million voters to cast their ballots, with the lowest-ever LegCo election turnout rate of less than 20%.

Such division continued after the de facto referendum. Beijing accepted the demand of the negotiation faction and revised the constitutional reform package days before it had been put to a vote in LegCo. The revision allowed registered voters without a vote in the FCs to vote for candidates in the newly created District Council II (DCII) constituency, in which the candidates were nominated among elected DC members. DPHK and ADPL voted for the package, while lawmakers representing hardliners and other parties voted against it. With the support of pro-Beijing parties, DPHK and the APDL, the package reached the required two-thirds majority to get passed in the LegCo.

Pro-democracy factions went beyond positional differences in the 2010 constitutional reform. Lawmakers, party representatives and their supporters representing hardliners displayed an increase in negative affects against negotiating faction and vice versa. For instance, LSD heads described the reform package as "'secret deals' with Beijing and the 'betrayal' of the democracy movement" (Ma, 2011, p. 65), and their supporters joined forces with activists who were disappointed with the negotiating faction and launched attacks against the DPHK and ADPL. New political

groups were also formed soon after the division on the 2010 reform, such as NeoDemocrats, People Power, and Civic Passion, which competed against DPHK and ADPL in the DC Election in 2011 and the LegCo Election in 2012 with platforms attacking traditional Democrats. Labour Party was also formed by pro-democracy lawmakers representing unions and civil society groups who voted against the reform proposal.

The 2010s also marked the rise of localism in Hong Kong (Kaeding, 2017). Hongkongers were dissatisfied with their Chinese identity, and the majority of those between 18 and 29 identified themselves as Hongkongers only (Public Opinion Programme at the University of Hong Kong, cited in Kaeding 2017, p.168). The rise was also a reaction to China's greater intervention and involvement in Hong Kong's economy, such as the presence of parallel traders and mainland Chinese giving birth to their babies in the city's hospitals to gain Hong Kong residencies (Kaeding, 2015). Increasing focus on using Putonghua over Cantonese in schools has also triggered resistance by students (Gao et al., 2010, cited in Tsao et al., 2021). Scholarism, the secondary-students group which successfully campaigned to shelve the government's Moral and National Education curriculum in 2012, also reflected the anxieties of Hongkongers held over the mainlandisation of the city (Kaeding, 2015, pp. 212-213)

From 2014 to 2018: Failure of the Umbrella Movement and exacerbated divide

Another moment that further fragmented and polarised the camp was the failure to push for democratisation with the 79-day Umbrella Movement (UM) held in late 2014. Pro-democracy protesters, along with politicians and activists, peacefully occupied major roads of the city to demand universal suffrage, but both Beijing and Hong Kong authorities responded with denials. Pro-democracy supporters, particularly younger generations, then blamed veterans for their "30 years of failure" in struggling for democracy (Ma, 2018, p.149), and yielded a rapid rise of support for localist factions, consisting of what Chen and Szeto (2015) described as progressive localists and anti-China localists. The progressive localists faction consisted of Demosistō, which were formed by leaders of Scholarism, a loose network of activists involved in the anti-Express Railway Movement, such as Chu Hoi-dick, and prominent activists in the UM, such as Lester Shum and Lau Siu-lai. Meanwhile, the anti-China localists consisted of Youngspiration, Hong Kong Indigenous, Hong Kong National Party and several district-based community networks.

UM has also triggered the split within the traditional Democrats, in which moderates have left their political groups. For instance, Tik Chi-yuen, the co-founder of DPHK, quit the party and formed the Third Side, attempting to capture the middle voters (Zeng, 2015). On the other hand, Ronny Tong withdrew from his co-founded CP and resigned from LegCo, which triggered a by-election in February 2016. Tong also found Path for Democracy at the same time, which aimed to promote centrist politics (Lo, 2015).

Irrespective of the split of traditional Democrats, both localist factions articulated support from pro-democracy voters, and each won five seats in the 2016 LegCo Election. Together with two seats gained by candidates representing People Power and Civic Passion, traditional Democrats such as DPHK and ADPL were experiencing a "severe limitation or even constriction of political space, with encroachment from the state and challenges from pro-Beijing parties [and] challenges from new civil society groups or more radical groups who seek to replace their political positions" (Ma, 2018, p.150). Nevertheless, structural limitations and constrictions have existed since Beijing took over the sovereignty of Hong Kong, and the pace of democratic backslide has been exacerbated since the 2010s.

Democratic backsliding in the post-1997 Hong Kong

Apart from the rising fragmentation and polarisation of the pro-democracy camp, Hong Kong's political system also displayed signs of democratic backsliding.

Democratic backsliding refers to the decline in democratic characteristics of a political system (Carothers and Press, 2022). The violation of democratic norms and political institutions, such as free and fair elections and peaceful transition of power, leads to backsliding (Rocha Menocal et al., 2008). Other acts of backsliding include weakening the judiciary and civil service and over-emphasising national security (Huq and Ginsburg, 2017). Bermeo (2016) defined democratic backsliding as "state-led debilitation or elimination of the political institutions sustaining an existing democracy". Huq and Ginsburg (2018) developed the concept based on Bermeo's work, stating that constitutional retrogression, which this thesis regards as a synonym for democratic backsliding, has the following characteristics.

a) Formal constitutional amendment to disadvantage political opponents.

b) Elimination of institutional checks, such as reducing the capacity of checks and balances among branches of the government.

c) Centralising and politicising the power of the executive branch.

d) Degrading the public sphere, such as the extensive use of detention powers, side-lining or forcing down media and non-governmental organisations.

e) Eliminate political competition.

What happened in Hong Kong's political development matched all characteristics of democratic backsliding, especially the fifth, the elimination of political competition, which occurred on an unprecedented scale after the end of the 35+ Movement. Both Beijing and Hong Kong authorities also declared the "patriots ruling Hong Kong" doctrine in 2021, effectively barring dissidents from running for LegCo and DC elections (Mo, 2022; Mo, 2023). Nevertheless, these events occurred after the Movement's primary election was held. Therefore, I will first explain the events that matched the first four characteristics related to political backsliding before the 2019 anti-ELAB Movement in this section.

a) Formal constitutional amendment to disadvantage political opponents

The first legal amendment to disadvantage opponents in elections occurred in 2012, in which the Hong Kong authorities amended the law to prevent legislators who resigned from running for office again for six months and to stop the pro-democracy camp's de facto referendum held in 2010 from happening again (HKSAR Government, 2012). The second occurrence was when the chairman of the pro-independence Hong Kong National Party was disqualified from running for LegCo in 2016 (Tsang and Cheung, 2016), and was forced to be disbanded by the Hong Kong authorities (Cheung and Tam, 2018). The most significant one before the anti-ELAB and NSL regime was the "Oathgate" in 2016, in which two anti-China localists, three progressive localists, and one LSD lawmaker were disqualified from assuming their LegCo office for taking their oath of office as they deemed disloyal to the BL and HKSAR Government.[7] It was the first time for NPCSC to mandate allegiance to the BL as a requirement for holding public office, although the judge at Hong Kong's High Court viewed that the

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[7] Two anti-China localists lawmaker-elect were disqualified after the first judicial review concluded. See Ng et al. (2016). Meanwhile, the other four pro-democracy lawmakers were disqualified after the second judicial review. See Lau et al. (2017)

disqualification of two localist lawmaker-elects was irrelevant to the ruling (Au, cited in Ng et al., 2016).

Although the Hong Kong authorities at that time did not force most pro-democracy candidates out from running for the legislature, it added the submission of the optional confirmation forms to declare their allegiance to the Hong Kong authorities in election nominations[8]. It demonstrated that the city's executive branch intended to have means to disqualify dissidents if necessary and gain permanent advantages through changing electoral rules. Meanwhile, Beijing's strict interpretation of the BL in the "Oathgate" reflects they were increasingly intolerant of the pro-democracy camp, especially on its more localist-leaning trajectory. The room for the pro-democracy camp to challenge the allegiance requirement in LegCo and other elections through legal means was significantly reduced as the judgement of the final appeal of the "Oathgate" reaffirmed the court's role "to enforce and interpret the BL" (Cheung, 2017).

b) Elimination of institutional checks

The decision to expand the power to expel lawmakers from the LegCo committee chair in 2011 (Legislative Council of Hong Kong, 2011) limited the ability of pro-democracy lawmakers to protest or conduct filibusters in the legislature. The decision demonstrated the intention of the executive branch and pro-Beijing lawmakers to eliminate institutional checks. Ironically, LegCo members representing DPHK and CP, among other moderate pro-democracy independents, supported the amendment, and their successors were the ones who suffered, as they were expelled from committee meetings in the following years.

c) Centralising and politicising executive power

The first term of the HKSAR administration disbanded the popularly elected Urban Council and the Regional Council with the claims that municipal matters could be handled by government departments more efficiently (Review of District Organizations, cited in Lo, 1999). The creation of new governmental departments to take over the municipal functions of the abolished Councils "represents a move toward [centralisation] of administrative and political power" (Lo, 1999, p. 297). While the government promised to transfer several powers held by two disbanded councils to the DCs, the promise has not been kept (Kwong, cited in Cheng, 2019).

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[8] Cheng (2016c) reported that some pro-democracy candidates refused to sign the confirmation form.

d) Degrading the public sphere

Actions by the Hong Kong authorities to isolate or enfeeble media and civil society groups occurred since the 2010s. For instance, citizen-run independent media found it difficult to obtain press cards to cover government-held press conferences (Lai, 2014). In terms of the shrinking freedom of assembly, the police, under then-Commissioner Andy Tsang, arrested 113 protesters who were against the government's budget by occupying the streets in March 2011 (Reuters, 2011). The city's police also fired tear gas towards UM participants in 2014 (South China Morning Post, 2014). In the Lunar New Year 2016, police clashed with anti-China localists who were protecting illegal hawkers from being cleared for selling without licenses in public (K. Cheung, 2016). The government prosecuted 37 of the protesters for rioting (Cheng, 2016a), the first time the charge was brought up since the 1960s.

A year later, the National Democratic Institute also closed its office in Hong Kong and claimed the organisation was targeted by the Beijing[9]. The Institute was involved in several projects on pro-democracy education, including Designing Democracy, which was co-led by the Centre for Comparative and Public Law in 2014. The project invited the public to discuss and come up with universal suffrage proposals for the CE and the LegCo and ran in a similar period to Benny Tai's Occupy Central with Love and Peace (OCLP) deliberations[10]. Tai was also a member of the Centre for Comparative and Public Law at that time. Because of this connection, campaigns smearing the Hong Kong office of the Institute assisted Tai in destabilising the city. These accusations were also found in media owned by Beijing (Liu et al., 2019).

The democratic backsliding of Hong Kong since the post-handover period was also reflected in several indices. For instance, the city dropped 19% of the score from its peak in the Democracy Index, subsequently dropping the city's classification from a flawed democracy to a hybrid regime (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2023). Other academic measures, such as Varieties of Democracy, took a step further as it observed the autocratisation of the city since 2012 and classified Hong Kong as a closed autocracy in 2022 subsequently (Papada et al., 2023).

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[9] Refer to National Democratic Institute's (2020) statement.
[10] Details of Designing Democracy project can be referred to Centre for Comparative and Public Law, Faculty of Law, The University of Hong Kong (2014)

2019 and 2020: The city's largest pro-democracy movements

After the failure of the UM and the gradual democratic backsliding in the 2010s, the pro-democracy camp was in low tide (Hung, cited in Jenkins, 2017). It was beyond imagination that an amendment bill on the city's extradition arrangement would trigger the full-scale struggle for democracy.

Starting in early 2019 aimed to oppose amending extradition-related provisions enabling Hong Kong courts to extradite fugitives to China and Taiwan. As there has been no extradition agreement between Hong Kong and Taiwan, the CE of the time, Carrie Lam, claimed that the amendment would enable the government to extradite the alleged perpetrator of a murder case to the self-rule island (Lam, cited in Law, 2019).

The amendment has drawn public opposition as the amendment itself allowed Hongkongers to be extradited to China. Rounds of protests were held before the Bill was put for a vote in the legislature and the government eventually shelved and later withdrew the amendment. However, the decision did not calm the public, and the movement has transformed into demanding democratisation. Five demands, including dropping prosecutions against protesters, holding police into account for brutal behaviour and demanding then CE Carrie Lam to step down, have become the consensus of the movement.[11] Protests of the Movement had also become tactically radical, sometimes violent. The momentum was gradually diminished because of the restrictions of movement to contain the spread of coronavirus (Lee et al., 2021).

Soon after the pro-democracy camp achieved a landslide victory in the DC Election at the height of the anti-ELAB Movement in November 2019, pro-democracy legal scholar Benny Tai advocated for taking the majority seats of the LegCo to get the anti-ELAB Movement's demands met. According to Tai (2020b), the plan anticipated the LegCo, with a majority of pro-democracy members, would be able to veto the government's annual budget, putting pressure on both Beijing and Hong Kong authorities to meet the Movement's demands. In a separate article, Tai imagined that the CE would dissolve the LegCo and hold a by-election after the annual government

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[11] The five demands of the movement are from a protester who held his banner on 15 June 2019, and later died from falling heights to express his view the same day. It included the withdrawal of the extradition bill, retraction of the protest as riots, the release of the protesters and the injured, and the resignation of Carrie Lam as the CE – later replaced with calls for an independent inquiry on police brutality by other protesters. The demand for universal suffrage was also added. See Creery (2020).

budget has been vetoed[12]. Should the election re-elect a pro-democracy-held council again, the CE must resign by law if the lawmakers veto the same budget[13]. As a reputable leader in the pro-democracy movement, Tai (2020a) expected his plan, if executed, could become a "constitutional weapon of mass destruction", a way to force both Beijing and Hong Kong authorities to satisfy the Movement's demands. Tai branded the plan as the pro-democracy 35+ Movement (Tai, 2020b).

To achieve a democrats-controlled legislature, Tai (2020b) advocated for a mechanism, preferably including a primary election, to reduce the number of pro-democracy candidates competing against each other in the general election. Tai presented his idea through media and teamed up with PfD to lobby potential candidates, their campaign teams and party representatives to participate in deliberation meetings. Media reports have shown that at least 16 deliberation meetings, in six separate groups, were held between March and July (The Witness, 2023a; The Witness, 2023b; The Witness, 2023c; The Witness, 2023d; The Witness, 2023e; The Witness, 2023e; The Witness, 2023g; The Witness, 2023h).

After rounds of deliberations, Tai and representatives of the PfD announced holding the primary in July 2020[14]. Soon after the announcement, dozens of pro-democracy politicians, anti-China localists, progressive localists, and individual campaigners followed the call to run for the primary. Several localist candidates were unhappy with the arrangement in which candidates were not required to sign any document to uphold the consensus made in the deliberations. These candidates subsequently published the IWR Declaration to demonstrate that they would honour the consensus of the deliberation to veto the government budget and pressure the Hong Kong and Beijing authorities to respond to the anti-ELAB Movement's demands[15]. Eventually, most candidates representing anti-China localists and progressive localists and their respective organisations endorsed the Declaration.

On 30 June 2020, the NPCSC enacted the NSL, making it effective in Hong Kong by inserting the provisions in Annex III of the BL - National Laws to be Applied in the HKSAR[16]. Such enactment effectively bypassed the need for the Law to be passed

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[12] The original Chinese article "Real Ten Steps of Mutual Destruction. This is Hong Kong's Destiny" was published in the now-defunct Apple Daily. The English interpretation of Tai's article can be read in The Standard (2021)

[13] Refer to the previous footnote.

[14] For news report on the announcement, see Wong (2020d)

[15] The Declaration was co-launched by localist candidates Sam Cheung, Fergus Leung and Owen Chow, Wong (2020e) reported the Declaration.

[16] Hong Kong Free Press (2020a) reported the announcement.

by the LegCo. The NSL criminalises secession, subversion, and incitement of them, unprecedented in Hong Kong under the Beijing rule[17]. A week after the enactment, Erick Tsang, Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs of Hong Kong, warned the pro-democracy camp that organising the unofficial primary with the intention to paralyse government functions could violate the NSL (Tsang, cited in Wong, 2020c). In response, Tai rebutted Tsang's accusation that the primary had no intention to facilitate succession, subversion or colluding with foreign forces, and he did not see the primary would violate the NSL (Tai, cited in Wong, 2020c). Despite Tsang's opinion, Tai and PfD held the primary on 11 and 12 July 2020 as planned. Over 610,000 pro-democracy supporters defied pandemic restrictions and warnings of potential NSL breaches to cast their ballots in makeshift polling stations across Hong Kong, such as pro-democracy councillors' constituency offices, shops, and restaurants supported the pro-democracy movement (Lung et al., 2020).

The primary results were announced on 15 July, with many anti-China and progressive localist candidates winning over candidates representing traditional and moderate pro-democracy parties (Wong, 2020b). On the same day, Au Nok-Hin declared to withdraw from the role as an organiser of the 35+ Movement on safety and personal grounds (Au, cited in Auto, 2020). Moreover, several candidates who won the primary fled the city, citing fears of persecution by the Hong Kong authorities[18].

Despite the chilling effect of NSL, those winning candidates submitted their nominations to the Election Commission during the LegCo Election nomination period as planned. Eventually, Carrie Lam, CE at the time, declared postponement of the LegCo Election for a year on the last day of the nomination period, citing her authority to trigger provisions written in the Emergency Regulations Ordinance as the coronavirus was still a pandemic (Lam, cited in HKSAR Government, 2020).

On 6 January 2021, a total of fifty-four organisers and candidates of the primary were arrested for inciting subversion[19]. Among them, forty-seven have been officially prosecuted. Sixteen of the Hong Kong 47 pleaded not guilty to inciting subversion, while the rest, including Benny Tai, pleaded guilty to all charges. As of the time of writing, the trial of the Hong Kong 47 was waiting for judgment to be delivered by the NSL designated judges.

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[17] Refer to Hong Kong Free Press (2020b)
[18] Wong(2020f) reported Sunny Cheung's departure from Hong Kong. Agence France-Presse (2020) reported Nathan Law's departure to London.
[19] Hong Kong Free Press (2021) reported the arrest.

Criticisms of the 35+ Movement

To make the 35+ Movement a success, the pro-democracy camp must have met two major conditions: They had to win the majority of seats in the LegCo in the election, and all LegCo members representing the camp would pledge to vote against the government budget, and possibly other government bills, to pressure the Hong Kong authorities to meet the anti-ELAB Movement's demands. The first condition was technically feasible, but the 35+ Movement deliberations have not dealt with that properly. While factions of the pro-democracy camp appeared to adhere to the second condition in public, the deliberation scene behind closed doors suggested otherwise. From the news reports covering the statements and testimonies given on the trial of the Hong Kong 47, there were criticisms corresponding to the said conditions. Moreover, the HKSAR Government could have responded differently if the pro-democracy camp had taken control of the LegCo and the Movement had oversimplified possible scenarios.

a) On winning the majority of seats in the LegCo

In principle, the PR system should let parties "be represented in an assembly or parliament in direct proportion to their overall electoral strength, their percentage of seats equalling their percentage of votes" (Heywood, 2019, p.228). Because of the design of the PR system, there is limited room for the pro-democracy camp to win extra seats, which exceeds the proportion of votes gained in the LegCo GC election. Moreover, the effect of the PR system with the HQLR formula in the LegCo GC election encouraged independent candidates, intra-camp rivalry, proliferation of candidate lists and fragmentation of political forces (Cheung, 2018).

While the objective of the 35+ Movement was to maximise the seats to be won by the pro-democracy camp in the LegCo, there were various means to achieve the aim in the GC election. For instance, candidates with little chance of winning may suspend their campaigns before the election day and appeal to their supporters to vote for other pro-democracy candidates at the edge of winning. Such strategic voting tactics occurred in the 2016 LegCo Election (S. Lau and Yeung, 2016). The Movement could achieve its objectives by conducting opinion polling and strategic voting without organising a primary election.

More importantly, the seats to be won in FCs by the camp should have been the decisive factor in achieving the objective of the 35+ Movement. As most of the FC seats in LegCo were elected through a first-past-the-post system, the pro-democracy camp could have run proactive voter registration drives and election campaigns to yield

the victory of seats which were not well-contested by the camp in previous elections. Nevertheless, the camp largely ignored the debate on getting FC seats in the LegCo Election in the 35+ Movement deliberation. There was no meeting other than the DCII constituency. Only Simon Shen, a moderate academic, organised a deliberation meeting for activists intended to run for various FC constituencies (Pao, 2020). The 35+ Movement's effort to focus on the deliberation of LegCo GC elections overlooked the need to win FC seats, which were crucial for the camp to become the majority of the LegCo.

b) On all members would vote against the government budget and other bills

Before the Movement's deliberation meetings, facilitator Au Nok-hin approached the executive council of the CP. The party, which eventually sent five candidates to contest GCs, one in DCII and one in FC, was one of the pro-democracy groups that vowed to veto the government budget to demand the Hong Kong authorities meet all five main demands of the anti-ELAB Movement (Wong, 2023b). However, Au recalled that Tanya Chan, then CP's LegCo member, said in the meeting that if the budget favours the sectoral interest of their FC lawmakers, the party might support the government budget instead (Wong,2023a).

Members of the LSD held a similar proposition. Then vice-chairman of the party Jimmy Sham revealed that their party would support the government's budget if it included funds to kickstart the universal pension scheme and projects improving people's livelihoods in one of the deliberation meetings (Au, cited in The Witness, 2023g).

Given that vetoing the budget by a democrats-led legislature is the camp's bargaining chip, the defection of pro-democracy parties by a sizeable number of LegCo members who voted for the government's budget proposal would effectively collapse the Movement. The potential defection was precisely the concern of two localist factions.

c) The government could have responded differently

In one of the trial hearings, Au described Tai's 35+ Movement to make five demands of the anti-ELAB Movement met as a fantasy (Au, cited in Leung, 2023). Au might have been correct in hindsight, as Tai's plan oversimplified the options of the government should the budget have been vetoed in the LegCo.

The government could still operate with emergency reserves if a democrats-controlled LegCo has vetoed the budget. This would avoid any immediate government shutdown. The CE could subsequently table an emergency budget to fund essential operations. Without consensus on the stance towards the emergency budget, pro-democracy LegCo members could have had division in voting preferences. Should all pro-Beijing LegCo members, together with a few pro-democracy LegCo members, presumably those representing DPHK and ADPL, voted for the emergency budget, the CE would not be required to dissolve the LegCo. Therefore, the bargaining power of the pro-democracy camp to demand the government satisfy the anti-ELAB Movement's demands would be drastically weakened. Even if the CE declared to dissolve the LegCo to hold a by-election, and the pro-democracy camp remained the majority in the chamber, the CE may table an entirely different budget from the one being vetoed to circumvent the mandatory resignation requirement stated in the BL.

In reality, the HKSAR government postponed the election for a year. That was also out of Tai's prediction. The fact that Tai's 35+ Movement plan only assumed one scenario, and that could have been avoided or circumvented by the CE in many ways.

Summary Note: Being reactive and having no constant theory of change
Across four decades of Hong Kong's political development, the pro-democracy camp had incoherent strategies and has shown no single theory of change for democracy that all factions subscribed to.

The change of approach from engaging Beijing in the 1980s to taking advantage of Britain's political reforms before 1997 may have allowed the camp to gain seats and influence in politics in all three levels of councils. Nevertheless, the same tactic became ineffective after Beijing took over the city.

In the first decade under Beijing's rule, the pro-democracy camp was reactive to what Beijing and Hong Kong authorities had put out. From the provisional LegCo to the Article 23 security law legislation to the denial of universal suffrage, the camp did not take notable proactive stances to challenge Beijing's dictated pace of democratisation.

At the beginning of the second decade, new factions took a different path from traditional ones to challenge Beijing's inaction. For instance, the CP advocated for the pro-democracy camp ruling Hong Kong (Civic Party, 2008) and contested the CE election not in protest but in a serious fashion. Meanwhile, LSD brought contentious politics into the city's political scene (League of Social Democrats, 2007). However,

their efforts to pressure constitutional reform through a de facto referendum in 2010 were largely unsuccessful. The camp's divide was also exacerbated as DPHK and ADPL negotiated with Beijing and yielded concessions (Ma, 2011).

The remaining half of the second decade has been Beijing's tightening political control over Hong Kong. With NPCSC vetting and restricting the number of CE candidates from the 2017 election onwards (Stevens, 2014), both models of democratic reunification advocated by traditional Democrats since the 1980s (Yuen and Cheng, 2024) and path-dependence democratisation by DPHK then-chairman Ho (2011) and his negotiation faction, had collapsed. Traditional Democrats also faced the creation of political groups which criticised their decision to negotiate with Beijing in 2010 and competed against them in DC and LegCo elections.

More crucially, the absence of a new theory of change for democratisation has left a void for new progressive localists, such as Demosistō, and anti-China localists, such as Youngspiration, Hong Kong Indigenous and Hong Kong Nationalist Party, to fill in. Localists held the view that the way out of Hong Kong was the creation of a Hong Kong nation with "some form of self-determination or outright independence from China" (Kaeding, 2017, p.165). Both traditional and new Democrats had only been reactive "to include localist references and even calls for self-determination" (Kaeding, 2017, p.167). For instance, DPHK acknowledged the existence of localism "cannot be changed" (Lo, cited in Tong, 2017), and CP incorporated localism in their ten-year declaration and viewed "the One Country, Two Systems is a setback" (Leong, cited in H. Lau, 2016). The swing of both factions to appeal to localist-leaning supporters also triggered moderates to leave the parties and establish new groups to maintain their presence in the middle of the political spectrum.

The ever-splintering of the pro-democracy camp may have shown what Fulda (2020, p.206) described as "a general lack of political maturity." Fulda (2020, p.207) viewed that the pro-democracy camp emphasised protesting to make their demands heard, which worked in the British era, missed the opportunity to build larger political parties representing diverse interests and achieve solidarity through party leadership and coalition-building. Unlike Taiwan's outside the Nationalist Party (*dangwai*) movement before democratisation, which achieved solidarity between the moderate and radical factions through achieving a shared "set of key principles…process of strategic alignment" (Fulda, 2020, p.148), Hong Kong's pro-democracy camp has not observed such a process. The city's rapid and top-down democratisation before 1997 may have made the camp leaders overlook the importance of organisation and

coalition building to prepare for Beijing's oppression. Together with the power-restricted LegCo and the electoral system's tendency to divide the opposition since 1998, the camp's effectiveness in fighting for democracy through electoral participation has declined. Even after 1997, the camp was inadequate in countering the effect of the LegCo elections' HQLR PR system by having effective coordination in LegCo elections (Cheng, 2015). The camp's inability to address such threats shows another dimension of immaturity. The incentive to achieve solidarity was further weakened when the LegCo's GC electoral system rewarded independent and alternative candidates (Cheung, 2018), exacerbating fragmentation and polarisation (Ma, 2018).

Tai's 35+ Movement may have provided a theory of change that most factions appeared to subscribe to. Regrettably, the subsequent persecution of the Movement's organisers, candidates, and the whole pro-democracy camp meant it would be impossible to prove whether such a strategy would work, let alone if another grand strategy was in place in the foreseeable future.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

This chapter will explore the literature relevant to the research, namely the concepts of social movements, group-based deliberations, and polarisation. It first discusses group-based deliberation in political settings, followed by the practice of deliberation in social movements. In addition, it will introduce the relationship between Hong Kong's pro-democracy camp and elections and the practice of group-based deliberations for elections in the Hong Kong pro-democracy camp.

After going through the concept of deliberations, the review will move on to the literature on polarisation. That section will begin with a brief evolution of polarisation theories, followed by an explanation of how these theories are missing when analysing the causation between deliberation and polarisation of the deliberative group and how different types of polarisation, specifically positional polarisation, interactional polarisation, affective polarisation, and interpretative polarisation, can bridge the gap of established group polarisation theories. After that, there will be a brief review of the literature studying the relationship between polarisation and social movements and reviewing process tracing as a model to investigate the case.

The chapter will end with reflections on reviewing the literature on deliberations, polarisation, process tracing, and analysing how the established studies can shape this research.

Election as a social movement? Relationship between social movement, deliberations, and elections

Group-based deliberation in political settings

As mentioned in the introduction, deliberation is a process in which people "carefully examine a problem and arrive at a well-reasoned solution after a period of inclusive, respectful consideration of diverse points of view" (Burkhalter et al., 2002, cited in Gastil, 2008, p.8). While deliberation can be practised in non-political settings, the focus of this research is on political ones.

There is a variety of literature on deliberation in political settings. For instance, Gastil (2008, pp.5-8) viewed deliberation as essential for democracy, as it ensures that communication within the system is inclusive, participatory, and enlightening. Gastil further identified the analytical process and social process of deliberations in political settings. The analytical process of deliberation involves a series of steps:

- Creating a solid information base
- Identifying and prioritising key values
- Identifying a broad range of solutions
- Weighing the pros, cons, and trade-offs of the solutions
- Making the best decision possible

(Gastil, 2008, p.9)

For the social process of deliberations, it refers to the way communication occurs during the deliberation process. Key factors include:

- Adequately distribute speaking opportunities
- Ensure mutual comprehension
- Consider other ideas and experiences
- Respect other participants

(Gastil, 2008, pp.9-10)

Gastil adopted the above framework to categorise different types of deliberations in politics and suggested the ideal form of various settings of deliberations, including group-based conversations and discussions (Gastil, 2008, pp.15-42), elections (Gastil, 2008, pp. 79-118), and in communities and societies (Gastil, 2008, pp. 213-250).

While Gastil's book explored different scenarios in which deliberations can be practised, he did not explore the enclave deliberations, let alone enclave deliberation of pro-democracy movements in preparation for elections[20]. His chapter on deliberative elections was about organising citizen panels with equal representation of voters in the panel, and voters can evaluate parties and candidates before casting their votes (Gastil, 2008, pp. 79-118). It was not about political parties or social movements deliberating for candidacy arrangements. While Gastil briefly mentioned using deliberative practices in America's civil rights movement, his emphasis was on the "free space" for the public to participate and deliberate without fear and foster democratic change and the practice of deliberation where people can learn self-respect, a deeper group identity, public skills, and values of cooperation and civic virtue (Evans and Boyte, 1992, cited in Gastil, 2008, p.217). Those are, again, remotely related to the 35+

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[20] Karpowitz et al. (2009) define enclave deliberation as the process where disempowered groups, such as parties and social movements, deliberate within their own enclaves before entering the broader public sphere, such as civic forums.

Movement's enclave deliberations on coming up with candidates to stand for an election.

The most relevant chapter on Gastil's contribution to this research is about deliberative practices in conversations and discussions. In that chapter, Gastil (2008, pp. 18-19) first mentioned Habermas' "ideal speech situation", where individuals can question each other's beliefs until they reach a limited set of valid statements. Gastil views the ideal of rational view exchange as leading to enlightened understanding (Gastil, 2008, p.19). He also realised the studies that discovered the polarisation of conversations when people only engage in political conversations with those who share similar views, reinforcing their existing beliefs and potentially leading to more extreme positions (Huckfeldt et al., 2004, cited in Gastil, 2008, pp. 27-29). Gastil moved on to discover discussion-type deliberations by Schkade et al. (2006, cited in Gastil, 2008, pp. 32-33), which suggested individuals with similar viewpoints reinforce each other's beliefs and lead to a more homogeneous and extreme group opinion is a typical outcome of deliberative processes.

Practising deliberations in social movements
When it comes to the relationship between deliberation and social movements, there has been an increase in literature on how these two concepts work together. For instance, della Porta and Doerr (2018) described the relationship between deliberative practices and social movements as complex. Such complexity lies in the difference in orientations of deliberation and social movement, although their ideal forms emphasise equal participation and a consensus-based decision-making process (della Porta and Doerr, 2018). Talpin (2015) suggested that deliberative practice has been increasingly adopted by government institutions as a form of democratic innovation as a response to social movements, but there are difficulties for social movements to practice deliberations internally.

della Porta (2005a) also emphasised the internal democracy of social movements, such as the importance of participation, consensus building, and horizontal networks. She highlighted the challenges of social movements in adopting deliberative practices, such as balancing participation and representation, noting the difficulties in implementing direct democracy and the potential for manipulation by minorities within unstructured assemblies (della Porta, 2005a). Separately, della Porta and Doerr (2018) discovered tensions between the ideals of deliberative practices and the realities of protest and social movements. Examples include activists in social movements who may lack openness to other political actors, the risk of marginalisation

of disenfranchised groups, and the cultural biases that may influence deliberative norms (della Porta and Doerr, 2018). When practising deliberation within social movements, there are difficulties in balancing participation and representation (della Porta and Doerr, 2018).

Despite the challenges, della Porta and Doerr (2018) argue that social movements can provide opportunities for deliberation and democratic participation and are essential to deliberative practices and vice versa. Social movements can benefit from adopting a deliberative approach to decision-making, which includes listening to diverse perspectives, engaging in respectful dialogue, and seeking common ground (della Porta and Doerr, 2018). The ideal form of deliberations in social movements should be bottom-up and allow interested communities and parties to participate in the public sphere, which is crucial to making society more democratic (della Porta and Felicetti, 2018).

In terms of observing and reflecting on the challenges of practising deliberation in social movements, Doerr (2018) conducted extensive research on social movements in Europe and the United States by observing and interviewing participants. He found that political translators, also known as the disruptive third, played a crucial role in addressing misunderstandings due to language, race, class, and power imbalances during deliberation meetings. These individuals translated the emotions of marginalised groups, promoting equality and ensuring that their voices were heard in decision-making processes. Additionally, Doerr (2018) highlighted the preparatory work conducted by the organisers of the United States Social Forum, who made efforts to ensure equality during deliberations through various measures, such as providing support for small or "radical" groups, training non-profit representatives, and emphasising the importance of respect and openness to new ideas.

The above literature on deliberation within social movements was based on studies and observations in countries in the democratic era. In contrast, Levine (2018) explored the relationship between nonviolent social movements and public deliberation in rising authoritarianism. While nonviolent campaigns are neither inherently deliberative nor aimed at building deliberative democracy, the success of some nonviolent campaigns can also benefit public deliberation (Levine, 2018). Levine (2018, p.14) also viewed that Habermas appreciated social movements and nonviolent campaigns such as anti-war demonstrations, and there is no conflict with his theories on deliberative practices, which stressed calmness, rationality, and openness. Overall, Levine viewed that "the most promising strategy for expanding deliberation in an

increasingly authoritarian world is to support nonviolent campaigns and to reinforce strategies of nonviolent confrontation that also yield deliberation" (Levine, 2018, p.1).

Practising deliberations of social movements in Hong Kong

Literature on deliberations practised by social movements in Hong Kong can be found in studies on various movements since 2010. For instance, Chan (2017) described the organisers of the anti-Express Railway Movement in 2010 the desire to "participate in a deliberative type of social movement replaced the top-down, representative type of action organi[s]ed by pro-democracy political parties and trade unions" (Chan, 2017, p.35). Nevertheless, the article did not mention how the activists performed deliberative practices in the movement.

Numerous social movements were found and organised after the anti-Express Railway Movement, but very few have been studied on whether and how the movements practised deliberations. The exceptions are studies on the OCLP leading to UM in 2014 and the anti-ELAB Movement in 2019.

In 2013, Benny Tai, Professor Chan Kin-man and Reverend Chu Yiu-ming launched the OCLP, and they formed a secretariat and commissioned the Public Opinion Programme at the University of Hong Kong to organise a series of public deliberations (POPCON, 2014). Tai stressed that the deliberations and the subsequent civil referendum on universal suffrage proposals "bestow legitimacy to the social covenant, which provides the foundation of Hong Kong's democratic governance" (Tai, 2017). However, Chan (2015) stated that there were splits on the proposed constitutional reform packages to be brought to the civil referendum on the last day of the OCLP deliberation, and the solidarity of the movement had been rebuilt after intervention by Cardinal Joseph Zen.

Other than the co-organisers, two scholars have studied the deliberative series of OCLP. For instance, Yang (2019) argued that the self-selection nature of OCLP deliberation participants turned the whole process into enclaved deliberations. Yang also suggests that deliberation within social movements cannot avoid the enclave nature in most circumstances due to social movements' selective nature and limited resources (Yang, 2019, p.156). Although there are limitations and setbacks to the OCLP decision-making process, Yang viewed that the deliberation of OCLP qualified the 'practice of deliberative democracy within a movement' (Yang, 2019, p.144). Another scholar, J. K. Wong (2015), compared OCLP deliberation days with typical mini-publics in terms of process and outcome. J. K. Wong (2015) argued that the

deliberations of OCLP satisfied the essential criteria for democratic institutions, and deliberative mini-publics can form part of a social movement, which is beyond the usual role as institutional mechanisms for citizen participation within the policy process.

During the height of the anti-ELAB Movement, Leung and Fang (2022) conducted a study in which they observed the deliberative processes of protesters with a university education and those without when the anti-riot police attempted to besiege the Chinese University of Hong Kong where the protesters had gathered. The researchers found that protesters who lacked political literacy and civic mentality could not effectively participate in the deliberative process (Leung and Fang, 2022). The study revealed a phenomenon called "deliberative deficit", where protesters with lower political literacy and civic mentality than their university-educated counterparts faced challenges in deliberations within the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong (Leung and Fang, 2023).

Hong Kong pro-democracy camp and elections

In hybrid regimes, it is common for pro-democracy groups and activists to utilise elections to demand democratisation. For example, Taiwan's Democratic and Progressive Party demanded the full re-election of the legislature in their election platform when the country was not fully democratic (Lin, cited in Chung and Chin, 2016, p.3). Meanwhile, Thailand's Future Forward Party vowed to amend constitutions deemed undemocratic in the 2019 election (Macan-Markar, 2019). Pro-democracy campaigners have participated in elections to advance the democratic agenda in countries like Tonga (Lātūkefu, 1993), Cameroon (Takougang, 2003), Burma (Hliang, 2007), Zimbabwe (Taundi, 2010), and Spain (della Porta, 2013).

Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement was no exception. DPHK put demands for speeding up democratic development into their manifesto as early as 1996[21]. Similarly, the CP's manifesto also focused on demanding universal suffrage (Chau, 2023). Despite suggestions that Hong Kong could support a highly competitive party system as a hybrid regime (M. Y. H. Wong, 2015), Beijing's opposition to the city's party politics hindered the development of political parties (Lau and Kuan, 2002). Beijing's disapproval is evident in the BL, which prevents the Chief Executive from being a member of any political party. Additionally, Beijing's lack of a clear plan for Hong Kong's democratisation also contributed to the underdevelopment of political parties in the city

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[21] The DPHK's manifesto in 2020 remains the same as the one in 1996. See Democratic Party (1996) and Democratic Party (2020).

(Ma, 2018). LegCo remains the only branch of government in which all Hongkongers are eligible to vote, and the elections have become a de facto measure of support for the pro-democracy movement (Cheng, cited in Ng, 2019).

The emergence of practising group-based deliberations for elections in the Hong Kong pro-democracy camp

Even though the design of the LegCo GC elections favours independent candidates and interparty rivalry (Ma, 2018), the pro-democracy camp once practised deliberations to come up with teams and candidates for the LegCo elections. Indeed, deliberate for election had been first practised by the camp in the 2003 DC Election.

In 2003, Cheng (2015), the first convenor of the PfD, organised the first pro-democracy deliberation for candidates participating in the DC Election. The DC election coordination deliberation mechanism was further developed in 2007 and continued to evolve in the 2011 and 2015 DC elections (Cheng, 2015). However, the lesson of cross-faction coordination in the 2004 LegCo Election made there was no deliberation for the LegCo elections onwards. In 2016, PfD released public opinion poll results on the eve of the election day to encourage pro-democracy voters to vote strategically to maximise the number of pro-democracy candidates to be elected. This action was criticised by pro-democracy candidates, although most of them reluctantly followed it (Kwan, 2016, cited in InMedia Hong Kong, 2016).

Despite criticism, the pro-democracy camp has recognised PfD as the authority for conducting pro-democracy primaries or coordinating elections. For example, in 2018, PfD organised two pro-democracy primaries for LegCo by-elections. The group has also coordinated four previous DC elections by using deliberations and opinion polls to prevent pro-democracy candidates from different factions from competing against each other. Additionally, the organisation held two pro-democracy primaries for the DC Election in 2019.

There has been limited research on pro-democracy movements engaging in deliberative processes. For example, Honari and Muis(2014) explored deliberation within the Iranian Green Movement, focusing on networks of individuals and the decision-making surrounding whether to vote or boycott the election. Nevertheless, there is no literature found on studying a pro-democracy movement practising group-based deliberations in preparation for sending candidates to stand at elections. Despite the lack of relevant literature, it also implies that there is a gap that can be discovered.

Revisiting polarisation

In the earlier section, I discussed the potential for polarisation in political conversations among like-minded individuals, which can result in the reinforcement of beliefs and the adoption of extreme stances (Huckfeldt et al., 2004, cited in Gastil, 2008, pp. 27-29). However, there are still questions that need to be addressed: What does polarisation mean in the context of human interactions and conversations? How does this phenomenon relate to deliberation? Lastly, how relevant is it to the Hong Kong pro-democracy camp as well as the 35+ Movement?

This section briefly reviews polarisation theories and highlights a potential gap in explaining the behaviour-group polarisation causation chain. Then, it introduces four types of polarisation, namely positional, interactional, affective, and interpretative, and discusses how they could address the gap in studying deliberations. Lastly, the section emphasizes the relevance of polarisation theories to this research.

A brief evolution of polarisation theories

The concept of group polarisation has its roots in the early work of Sherif (1937, cited in Hogg and Vaughan, 2022). Ziller (1957), Stoner (1961, cited in Hogg and Vaughan, 2022), and Kogan and Wallach (1964, cited in Hogg and Vaughan, 2022) also made significant contributions in the following decades. Stoner and Wallach et al. (1962 cited in Hogg and Vaughan, 2022) laid the groundwork for the risky shift phenomenon, which observed that participants in deliberation groups with a tendency toward riskier behaviour were more likely to take risks after discussion, leading to riskier decisions. Stoner also found a cautious shift (1962, cited in Sunstein, 2009). Moscovici and Zavalloni (1969) integrated the risky shift phenomenon into their broader concept of group polarisation.

Hogg and Vaughan (2022) categorised studies on group polarisation into three categories of theories: persuasive arguments, social comparison/cultural values, and social identity theory.

Persuasive Arguments Theory

The introduction of new and compelling arguments within a group discussion can solidify and intensify the existing opinions of its members (Burnstein and Vinokur, 1977, Vinokur and Burnstein, 1974, cited in Hogg and Vaughan, 2022). Individuals in a group are exposed to both familiar and unfamiliar arguments supporting the dominant viewpoint, which can lead to a deepening of their

original stance, resulting in more extreme views and contributing to the polarisation of the group's collective opinion (Hogg and Vaughan, 2022).

Social comparison/cultural values
Individuals adjust their opinions to align with what they perceive to be the group norm or culturally valued position and avoid being censured socially. Specifically, social comparison theories suggest people compare their own behaviours and opinions with others "to establish the correct or socially approved way of thinking and behaving" (Hogg and Vaughan, 2022, p.363-364). This perspective has two variants: the bandwagon effect and pluralistic ignorance.

The bandwagon effect refers to the phenomenon where people, upon discovering a popular or socially accepted viewpoint during a discussion, may strive to portray themselves as fervent supporters of that viewpoint. This phenomenon was discovered by Codol (1975, cited in Hogg and Vaughan, 2022). Meanwhile, pluralistic ignorance refers to the situation where individuals may publicly act in a way that doesn't align with their true beliefs, leading to a misunderstanding of the group's actual consensus. This can occur when people assume that others' public behaviours accurately reflect their private beliefs, which may not always be the case. (Miller and McFarland, 1987, Prentice and Miller, 1993, cited in Hogg and Vaughan, 2022).

Social identity theory/ self-categorisation theory
Social identity theory emphasises individuals form their identities and relationships based on their group affiliations. It suggests that individuals categorise themselves after comparing with others and construct a shared identity based on the characteristics that define the group (Hogg and Vaughan, 2022). Turner and Oakes (1989, cited in Hogg and Vaughan, 2022) called the identity categorisation process self-categorisation theory, with a focus on how a group member after self-categorisation produces social, group, and intergroup behaviours.

In contrast to Hogg and Vaughan, Sunstein (2009) found group polarisation in a better position to explain both extremism and error than groupthink. He believed that group polarisation "offers a simple and clear prediction: As a statistical regularity, deliberating groups will end up at a more extreme point in line with their pre-

deliberation tendencies. The idea of groupthink is far more complex and unruly, without any simple predictions." (Sunstein, 2009, p. 89).

Sunstein's book discusses various theories of polarisation. He mentioned how the exit behaviour of moderate group members can cause groups to become more extreme (Hirschman, 1972, cited in Sunstein, 2009, pp.44-45). He also coined "polarisation games" (Sunstein, 2009, pp. 57-58), in which deliberation can lead to a scenario where individuals take more extreme positions than they originally held before engaging in the deliberative process. Sunstein also introduced the concepts of informational cascades and reputational cascades. Informational cascades occur when people imitate the beliefs or actions of others, even when they lack knowledge, leading to a chain reaction. This happens when individuals are uncertain and start to follow the growing majority (Sunstein, 2009, pp.90-95). On the other hand, reputational cascades happen when individuals in a group adopt a perception not because they believe it, but because it seems to align with the majority view to avoid social disapproval (Sunstein, 2009, pp.95.96). At the end of his book, Sunstein compiled a list of twenty-eight studies on group polarisation, spanning from the 1960s to the mid-2000s, demonstrating the breadth of research in this area.

What is missing in the polarisation literature?

While the existing group polarisation theories aggregate nearly a century of studies, I argue that there are gaps between the application of theories and the analysis of group-based deliberations. The literature on group polarisation assumes a causal chain between behaviour and group polarisation when analysing the deliberative process. However, there are two main shortcomings to consider.

Firstly, deliberative theories often assume that rationality is always present, but real-world deliberations may fall short in this regard. Participants can become polarised due to differences in opinions or positions during deliberation. Additionally, individuals may become subjective or emotional, particularly after heated exchanges, leading to increased interactions with like-minded participants, heightened hostility toward those with differing opinions, and vastly differing interpretations of the subject matter within the deliberative group. These various behaviours can be exhibited before the group has been polarised. In other words, there needs to be a description of the process that polarises the deliberative group, and group polarisation should be understood as a phenomenon that occurs at the end of the deliberation.

The second downside is that a polarised group might not make radical decisions or exhibit risky behaviours after deliberations. Certain behaviours, like moderate participants leaving the discussion for various reasons, can polarise the group and lead them to take riskier actions. It is also possible that the deliberative group may contain antagonistic sub-groups that cannot agree on any issues or actions. This might lead to a deadlock, with participants only able to agree to disagree.

Bridging the gap in the causation chain: Positional, interactional, affective, and interpretative polarisation

I suggest using four types of polarisation to describe the process of group-based deliberations in political settings before concluding that the deliberative group has been polarised. These types are: a) Positional polarisation , b) Interactional polarisation , c) Affective polarisation, and d) Interpretative polarisation.

a) *Positional polarisation*

The concept of positional polarisation stems from research on political polarisation (Fiorina and Abrams, 2008, cited in Yarchi et al., 2020). It refers to diverging viewpoints on a political issue, suggesting that the extreme preferences at each end of the moderate-radical spectrum are incompatible. This means that satisfying one side will inevitably frustrate the other (Yarchi et al., 2020). Positional polarisation can also result from one-sided arguments and marginalisation, resembling the risky shift phenomenon suggested by Moscovici and Zavalloni (1969).

b) *Interactional polarisation*

Interactional polarisation refers to the phenomenon in which people engaging in discussions tend to interact more with those who share similar views and disengage with those with opposing opinions (Yarchi et al., 2020). This increased interaction within like-minded subgroups strengthens their own views and leads to polarisation within the overall deliberative group.

c) *Affective polarisation*

Affective polarisation refers to an increase in animosity, hostility, and negative feelings between members of different political parties (Iyengar et al., 2012). Political discussions among like-minded individuals can foster positive feelings among them (Huckfeldt et al., 2004, cited in Yarchi et al., 2020). Conversely, when individuals engage in discussions with political opponents, it tends to cause psychological discomfort and negative emotions (Mutz, 2006; Parsons,

2010, cited in Yarchi et al., 2020). This theory is rooted in social identity theory (Segovia, 2022).

d) *Interpretative polarisation*

Interpretative polarisation refers to the process by which different groups within a society contextualise an issue "in starkly different ways". (Kligler-Vilenchik et al., 2020, p.1). When there is a strong interpretative polarisation, a group engage in the conversation to conceptualise the same topic or frame the issue at stake, drastically different from another group, making "meaningful conversation between groups is almost impossible." (Kligler-Vilenchik et al., 2020, p.2). This form of polarisation may reinforce positional polarisation (Kligler-Vilenchik et al., 2020).

Why are these types of polarisation, and how do they apply?

Positional and affective polarisation encompass the behaviours that lead to group polarisation, as discovered by group polarisation theorists. They also describe how polarisation is categorically displayed within group-based political deliberations. For example, positional polarisation is strongly rooted in the group polarisation literature, focusing on the divergence and dominance of one-sided opinions. Affective polarisation, on the other hand, has evolved from social identity theory. Similarly, interactional polarisation resembles the interaction process among participants as studied by Moscovici and Zavalloni (1969) and Huckfeldt et al. (2004, cited in Gastil, 2008, pp. 27-29). Each of these studies focuses on the polarisation of participants' positions after deliberations, reflecting the analysis of the social process of deliberation as described by Gastil (2008). As for interpretative polarisation, its correlation with positional polarisation suggests that identifying positional polarisation in group-based political deliberations may facilitate the discovery of diverging interpretations of issues or matters within the group.

By drawing from the theoretical framework of established group polarisation theories, these four types of polarisation describe how deliberative groups become polarised. They link behaviours such as moderate participants leaving deliberations and the bandwagon effect to the eventual polarisation of the deliberative group. The presence of these four types of polarisation can create a distinction between the behaviours discussed in group polarisation theories during the deliberative process and the actual state of polarisation within the groups after the discussions. For instance, the bandwagon effect within the deliberating group might lead to affective polarisation between moderate and radical members. Still, the group as a whole may not be

polarised and could reach a consensus that all participants adhere to. In essence, the existence of four types of polarisation allows for an analysis of the group's state after deliberation, independent of the behaviours that cause group polarisation. Figure i below outlines the proposed theoretical framework.

Group polarisation theories

Proposed framework of this research
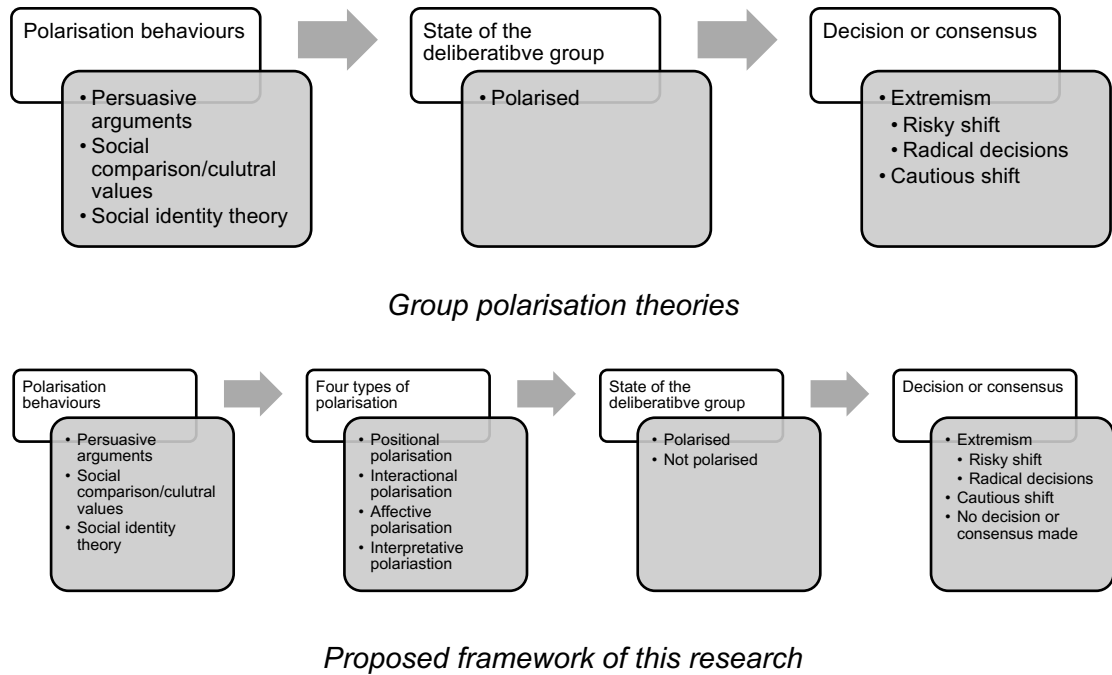
Figure i Comparison of the theoretical frameworks of established group polarisation theories in the deliberative process and the addition of four types of polarisation and isolation of causation chain in the framework

Polarisation and social movements

There are a few studies on the relationship between polarisation and real-world social movements. While studies on polarisation and pro-democracy movements in other parts of the world were hardly found, studies on Hong Kong's democracy camp and polarisation can still serve as guidance when constructing the research design for this research.

In his book chapter on movements and group polarisation, Sunstein (2009, pp.99-126) discussed various social movements such as the equality movement, ethnic movement, conspiracy theories, extremism, and terrorism, and their connection to group polarisation. Sunstein (2009, p.106) refers to the leaders of these movements as "polarisation entrepreneurs" and notes that their actions, even if deadly, are hardly irrational (Sunstein, 2009, pp.123-125). Sunstein identifies two factors through which movement leaders and participants contribute to the outcomes of group polarisation.

1) Polarisation entrepreneurs often suffer unrealistic optimism (Weinstein,1980, cited in Sunstein, 2009, pp.123-125) and greatly inflate their prospects for success (Johnson, 200[4], cited in Sunstein, 2009, pp.123-125); and

2) "availability bias" when recent events made leaders inflate probabilities of success, and "unavailability bias" when the absence of recent events made participants deflate such probabilities (Kuran and Sunstein, 1999, cited in Sunstein, 2009, pp.123-125).

Nevertheless, Sunstein (2009, pp.124-125) stressed that group polarisation could be highly desirable in the context of the rights movement, such as the abolitionist movement ending apartheid and communism.

For the drawbacks of practising deliberation in social movements, Mitchell et al. (2006) identified that shallow argument pools in social movements' deliberative processes in southeastern Europe could lead to group polarisation. The authors also noted that the nature of the deliberations in the social movements they studied was enclave ones, which is in line with Sunstein's (2002) findings on enclave deliberation and group polarisation. To address this issue, Mitchell et al. (2006) suggested exposing individuals to a variety of viewpoints through public debate as a way to moderate extreme positions and promote a more democratic discourse.

Despite the downsides, some scholars have viewed group polarisation in social movements as a positive thing. For example, Smith et al. (2014) studied the development of social movements by looking at how new shared social norms that establish collective identities emerge. They suggested that through validating communication about normative conflicts, these norms and identities are negotiated, leading to a new "identity-norm nexus" that empowers individuals in the movement. The researchers drew parallels between their findings and the group polarisation phenomenon identified by Moscovici and Zavalloni (1969) and proposed that group polarisation can reinforce shared norms and identities, ultimately leading to effective collective action. Furthermore, group polarisation can help opinion-based groups anticipate intentions to take socio-political action on various issues.

What about studies on polarisation in social movements in Hong Kong? Ma (2011) examined the pro-democracy camp's divide, highlighting the differences

between the hardliners who launched the de facto referendum and negotiated with both Beijing and Hong Kong authorities for a more progressive constitutional reform package. Seven years later, Ma (2018) studied the polarisation of the democratic camp in Hong Kong, focusing on the fragmentation and polarisation after the UM in 2014 and its impact on the subsequent 2016 LegCo Election. Ma's studies gave the context of polarisation in Hong Kong's pro-democracy camp because of the de facto referendum movement and the UM. Nonetheless, Ma did not study those movements as a subject.

There are several studies on polarisation in UM and anti-ELAB in Hong Kong. For instance, Lee (2016) examined the role of social media in the polarisation of public opinion during OCLP deliberations and during the UM. Using survey data, Lee "does not see the polari[s]ing influence of social media as being always reali[s]ed to the same extent" (Lee, 2016, p. 66-67), contrasting the fact that social media and the internet facilitates polarisation of opinions (Bennett and Iyengar, 2008; Sunstein, 2009, cited in Lee, 2016). The author concluded social media communication was anticipated to lead to a stronger polarisation of public opinion in Hong Kong in the UM since the Movement was politically confrontational, where people were more inclined to selectively consume and interpret information "in a biased manner" (Lee, 2016, p.67).

As mentioned in earlier sections in this chapter, Yang (2019) interviewed eleven participants of the OCLP deliberations, including one co-founder of the movement, and found the drawbacks of the institutional design of the OCLP deliberation days. The author viewed self-selected membership-based deliberations reflected the enclaved nature, and the deliberative process "incorporates only a small spectrum of like-minded participants who might not seriously engage with opposing views" (Yang, 2019, p.144). Moreover, enclave deliberation like OCLP may fail to produce a consensus among movement participants, necessitating reliance on movement leadership to make crucial decisions (Yang, 2019, p.159) Yang (2019, p.155) also discussed the potential for enclave deliberation to lead to group polarisation, particularly when voluntary voting is involved. He found that due to self-selection, those who participate in voting tend to be hardcore participants, and they are likely to adopt an aggressive position that contributes to polarisation and deliberative breakdowns. Having said that, their study suggested that "there was no definitive evidence to support that enclave deliberation would necessarily lead to group polarisation" (Yang, 2019, p.155).

For polarisation in the anti-ELAB Movement, there were studies from Lee (2022) and Song et al. (2023). Lee (2022) explored the impact of ego-network differences on affective polarisation during the anti-ELAB. The author argued that the

structure of social networks and the degree of political disagreement within them could influence polarisation in social movements in Hong Kong. Ego-network differences can, directly and indirectly, help alleviate affective polarisation by reducing negative attitudes towards a political outgroup and increasing exposure to opposing viewpoints. Meanwhile, Song et al. (2023) surveyed and interviewed students in Hong Kong during the anti-ELAB Movement regarding unfriending, unfollowing, or hiding practices on social media due to the polarisation of politics. The authors are concerned with the impact of online relationship dissolution and the psychological implications of political polarisation during the Movement. Despite Song et al. (2023)'s study did not address the anti-ELAB Movement's deliberations, it showed the impact of exit behaviour in groups discussing the Movement. It can be a political gesture that protects privacy but may lead to disappointment and discomfort for those who are unfriended (Song et al., 2023).

Process tracing as a method

After revisiting group-based deliberations in political settings and exploring the relationships between social movements and polarisation, there is still a piece missing required in this research: How did the 35+ Movement deliberations proceed, how did different types of polarisation occur and shaped the deliberative process, and lastly, were the four types of polarisation contributed to the decision to adopt primary election as means of the Movement.

To address the previous questions, process tracing seems like a suitable method. Process tracing allows the study of causal mechanisms linking causes with outcomes, enabling the researcher to make strong inferences about how causes contribute to producing an outcome (Beach and Pedersen, 2019). David Collier (2011) provides an overview of process tracing, a qualitative research method that identifies causal mechanisms linking causes and effects. Process tracing involves reconstructing the causal chain of events leading to a specific outcome by examining intervening variables between cause and effect and introduces four typologies of process-tracing tests for causal inference formulated by Van Evera (1997, cited in Collier, 2011) and adapted from Bennett (2010, p.210, cited in Collier, 2011, p.825). On challenges in choosing one of the four tests for causal inference suggested by Van Evera (1997), Collier (2011, p.828) acknowledged that these tests are not always "easy to apply", hence suggested starting with a good narrative or a timeline listing the sequence of events to address similar queries.

Reflections from the literature

Having reviewed the literature on group-based deliberations in political settings, polarisation theories, polarisation in social movements and process tracing, several reflections are beneficial to this research.

On qualities of the deliberative process

The analysis of the 35+ Movement's deliberative process can follow Gastil's (2008) notion of the analytical process and social process and assess if the deliberations were held in the ideal form. For instance, if the analytical process of the 35+ Movement's deliberations followed rational traditions, the social process displayed the ideal of pursuing virtues such as equality, mutual comprehension, consideration, and mutual respect.

Should the quality of the 35+ Movement deliberations fall short, the research may point to factors contributing to the decline, such as shallow argument polls (Mitchell et al.,2006) and participants not considering opposing views seriously (Yang, 2019). The social process may involve rising hostility (Iyengar et al.,2012), increased interactions with like-minded participants, reduced interactions with participants of opposing views, and more. There are also factors beyond analytical and social processes to consider, such as democratic innovations like disruptive third-party involvement and extensive preparations (Doerr, 2018). Another consideration is whether the 35+ Movement deliberations overcame challenges suggested by della Porta (2005a), such as problems with delegation, majority vote, and hierarchies.

Overall, this research is significant in terms of studying the group-based political deliberations of a pro-democracy movement in preparation for the election, contributing to the understanding of the deliberative process in pro-democracy movements.

On polarisation

In prior sections, I evaluated polarisation theories and the deliberative process with greater detail, delinking scholarly work such as Schkade et al. (2010), which assumed causation of deliberation and extremism in the group polarisation school. This research aims to assess better the existence of four different types of polarisation and how they contribute to the consensus of adopting the primary election as a means of the 35+ Movement.

Many studies on group polarisation in political settings have used quantitative methods like surveys and experiments to measure polarisation tendencies numerically.

However, qualitative methods, while not providing numerical tendencies, help understand how polarisation behaves in group-based political deliberations.

The research also aims to observe possible depolarisation over the course of events (Yarchi et al., 2020; Kligler-Vilenchik, 2020) and exposure to opposing views (Lee, 2022). For example, the authorities' crackdown on the pro-democracy camp in Hong Kong and the stifling of the city's civil society could depolarise the participants.

On mitigating the divide and avoid repeating the mistakes
The third point of reflection from the literature is to evaluate if the 35+ Movement deliberations made attempts to avoid shortfalls in OCLP deliberations. In the context of OCLP, the camp has already divided in 2010's constitutional reform and has yet to be reconciled before entering into deliberations. OCLP co-founder Kin Man Chan (2015) highlighted the edge of a breakdown because of the polarisation on the last deliberation day. At the same time, Yang (2019) stated that institutional design, such as enclave voting in OCLP (Yang, 2019) instead of consensus building, might have contributed to deliberation breakdowns. While the subjects to be deliberated in the two pro-democracy movements were vastly different, whether Tai made efforts to avoid polarisation and the breakdown of deliberation through democratic innovations or other means is worthy of discovering.

On process tracing
Based on Collier's (2011) suggestion, it is important to create a timeline of events related to the 35+ Movement deliberations before data collection. This will help identify the groups involved, the number of meetings, and potential participants. It will also aid in drafting relevant interview questions. Another note on the reflections on process tracing is related to the method of data collection. With one interview with each interviewee due to time and safety concerns, follow-up questions should be asked to maintain the richness of the data collected from the interviewees' accounts of the events in the 35+ Movement deliberations. Meanwhile, in order to address the methodological limitations in which data cannot be collected by observations or pre-deliberation interviews, the questions should be designed to prompt interviewees to recall differences in positions, emotions, interactions, and interpretations before and after deliberations. These explicit prompts aim to investigate potential polarisation and depolarisation.

<u>Summary</u>

This chapter begins by reviewing the literature on deliberations, polarisation, and their relationship with social movements and the Hong Kong pro-democracy camp. It then follows process tracing and reflections on all the reviewed studies. A proposed framework to add different types of polarisation to the established causation between deliberation and group polarisation is also mentioned.

In addition, the chapter suggests that the analysis of the 35+ Movement's deliberation may follow Gastil's (2008) notion of the analytical and social process, assess if the deliberations were held in the ideal form, and point to factors that contribute to the waning of qualities and their effects to the decision to adopt primary the part of the 35+ Movement. It also suggests discovering beyond the analytical and social processes, such as if democratic innovations were present to maintain deliberative qualities and, subsequently, avoid polarisation.

In terms of reconstructing the events of the 35+ Movement deliberations, process tracing literature recommended reconstructing a timeline of events related to the deliberations before data collection, which may facilitate the focus of data collection through interviews. To maintain the richness of the data, follow-up questions were used during interviews to induce the interviewees to recall events. The questions asked in the interviews should also be oriented to explore possible polarisation and depolarisation that occurred during and beyond the 35+ Movement deliberations.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

This chapter will outline the methodology of this research. The 35+ Movement is a particular case of the Hong Kong pro-democracy movement, with a series of deliberation meetings involved.

Using process tracing, I will reconstruct the moments and events during and after the deliberation meetings. It will also facilitate the exploration of different types of polarisation and how they have evolved in the Movement's deliberation meetings. For data collection, I interviewed participants of the Movement's deliberation meetings and asked them questions using the episodic interview technique. The chapter will also mention research objectives, an approach to analysis and remarks.

Process Tracing

This research aims to reconstruct the series of events in the 35+ Movement deliberations, so process tracing has been chosen to facilitate the investigation. Process tracing is a method for studying causal mechanisms, enabling me to make strong inferences about how a cause contributes to producing an outcome (Beach and Pedersen, 2019).

Collier (2011) presents a framework for process tracing in qualitative research to identify causal mechanisms linking causes and effects. It involves reconstructing the causal chain of events leading to a specific outcome by examining intervening variables. While the process tracing technique is useful for studying rare events with limited data, it requires careful attention to detail and can be time-consuming. Without proper reconstruction of dates, groupings, and participants, it's easy to waste time and neglect important information. To address the concern, I gathered information on the 35+ Movement's deliberation meetings from media reports, identified potential participants, and invited them for interviews. This approach helped identify the factions they belonged to and the deliberation series they participated in.

Episodic Interviews

The episodic interview method is a qualitative data collection technique that involves inviting participants to recount specific events (Antony, 2019). These interviews are guided by interview guidelines to ensure important topics are covered (Antony, 2019). The method assume that the experiences of participants are "stored and remembered in the form of episodic-semantic knowledge" (Anthony, 2019, p.949). Episodic knowledge relates to specific situations, while semantic knowledge involves abstract and generalised assumptions about events (Strube, 1989, p.13, cited in Flick, 2022, pp. 220-221). The method includes a dialogic format, narrative stimuli,

predefined questions, and unplanned queries that evolve during the dialogue (Mueller, 2019). It is useful for small-scale data collection with situation-based narratives (Flick, 2022, pp.222-223). Data collection types include repeated events, subjective definitions, stereotypes, arguments, and situational narratives (Flick, 2022, pp. 228-229).

Process tracing and episodic interviews – Why together?

There are benefits to using process tracing and episodic interviews together as they share similarities. They are both qualitative research methods focusing on understanding human behaviour and experiences. Additionally, both methods involve detailed data collection of specific instances and can be used for inductive and deductive purposes.

In a previous study on Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement, process tracing and episodic interviews were used together. Yang (2019) used process tracing to reconstruct the episodes from video recordings of OCLP deliberation meetings, articles and speeches of the OCLP leaders, and newspaper reports. Yang also interviewed the founder, coordinators, and participants of OCLP to reconstruct the deliberation days and capture the interviewees' feelings, preferences, and behaviours. Yang's approach, the features of episodic interviews, demonstrates the practicality of combining both concepts to investigate the 35+ Movement.

While using both applied process tracing and episodic interviews together appears to be a promising approach to facilitate data collection for this research, I am aware that I need to craft the guiding questions to capture different kinds of polarisation apart from reconstructing the Movement's deliberation meetings.

Research Objectives

1. To reconstruct the process of the Hong Kong pro-democracy 35+ Movement deliberations leading to the organisation of the primary election
2. To account for positional, interactional, affective, and interpretative polarisation at the 35+ Movement deliberative process.

Research Design

This research conducts process tracing on the 35+ Movement deliberative process using testimonies from the Hong Kong 47 trials reported by Hong Kong's independent court news website The Witness. The reconstructions include dates of deliberative meetings, meeting groupings, participants, and possible issues and dynamics within the meetings. From the reconstruction, I identified 52 potential participants from media reports who attended the 35+ Movement's deliberative series

and were not prosecuted by the Hong Kong authorities for their involvement in the primary. They include potential candidates, campaign team members, and coordinators.

After identifying the population, I contacted them through messaging applications, namely Signal and Telegram, for interviews. Telegram was actively used in the 2019 anti-ELAB movement and remains popular among pro-democracy activists (Urman et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Signal was also used by anti-ELAB protesters (Albrecht et al., 2021), but is less popular as phone numbers are required for account registration.

When the interviewees had given their consent, I obtained their subjective definitions of events, narratives of the Movement's deliberation meetings, and narratives of situations in relation to different types of polarisation from interviews. The guiding questions of the interview were oriented to capture various types of polarisation that occurred in the analytical and social process of the 35+ Movement deliberation meetings. There was also a follow-up question after the first six guiding questions. These follow-up questions further encouraged the interviewees to recall moments that may qualify as signs of different polarisation. The seventh guiding question aimed to explore the potential depolarisation and attempted to acquire about the polarisation in the deliberative process when only one interview with each sample was conducted years after the events concluded, unlike other studies, which were able to collect data before and after deliberations. The last guiding question was an open-ended response for interviewees to give their perspectives, which might have been omitted from all previous guiding questions.

The guiding questions, their follow-up questions and a brief description of these questions are in Appendix I. The questions gained conditional approval from the University of Leeds ethics committee, along with the application code BESS+ FREC 2023-0568-835.

Data Collection

Six men were interviewed, at least two of whom attended the same meeting. The participants represented anti-China localists, progressive localists, and traditional democrats. The majority of the population either gave no response or declined to be interviewed. Eleven people who declined to be interviewed claimed they had not participated in any deliberation meetings despite being named in court reports. It is possible that these individuals may distance themselves from the 35+ Movement, even

if they did attend these meetings. Another possibility is that there were errors in the statements made during the Hong Kong 47 trial, where defendants may have incorrectly identified people who participated in the Movement's deliberation meetings.

When I was reaching out to the population, I skipped approaching five people within the population. One was named the co-conspirator in the Hong Kong 47 trial, while the rest belonged to parties that may have run for the DC Election in 2023 when the data collection had commenced. If these people have been known to have been approached by a researcher residing out of Hong Kong, it may cause them to be disqualified from running by the Election Commission. Even worse, they could have been arrested for colluding with foreign forces, a crime under NSL.

Approach to Analysis

After data collection, I use the initial coding and focused coding method developed by Charmaz (2014, cited in Flick, pp.326-327), which is based on grounded theory coding. This method facilitates the sequencing moments of the deliberation meetings and the discovery of moments of different types of polarisation from what has been expressed by the interviewees. Qualitative analysis data software Atlas.ti has been used to facilitate the coding. While the transcripts are in traditional Chinese, the codes are in English.

To protect the identity of the interviewees from persecution, harassment, and intimidation from the Hong Kong authorities, all their names are anonymised during transcription. Moreover, the constituencies are coded as A, B and C, while the interviewees are coded as 1 to 6, respectively.

Code of Constituencies	Code of Interviewees	
A	1	2
B	3	4
C	5	6

Table I: Coding of constituency and interviewees

I used the sentence-by-sentence analysis strategy to analyse the analytic process, social processes, institutional design and democratic innovations of the deliberative meetings described by the interviewees. From the coding, I came up with four issues at stake in these meetings and moments of different types of polarisation.

Other notes on the Methodology

The interviews were conducted in Cantonese. Because of this, there are issues in relation to disparities in the meaning of words between different languages. The most significant one is the word deliberation. The word is formally translated as 協商, which coincidentally shares the same Chinese word 'Consultative' in the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (中國人民政治協商會議). To avoid confusion, Benny Tai used the term deliberation in English and the word 協調, coordination in literal translation[22]. I will adopt Tai's approach in this research when asking interviewees questions in relation to the deliberation meetings as the pro-democracy activists are used to such a term since Tai promoted it as early as 2013.

Secondly, I am aware of my ideological position relative to the interviewees. As one of the participants of potential candidates of the Movement, I attended the first meeting in one of the constituencies' deliberative series and sent my team member as my representative in the subsequent one. Eventually, my team and I left the deliberative series for safety reasons and decided not to run for the primary.

I acknowledged the positional differences between me and the target population, some of whom had stood for or helped candidates who ran for the primary. Also, there was no means I could confirm if some of the deliberation participants declined to be interviewed because of my political views. Nevertheless, I approached all target populations with the same set of invitation letters and research briefs, and all participants I interviewed covered three major factions of the pro-democracy camp. As said at the beginning of this thesis, my interest was finding out what happened in meetings of all deliberation series, and the guiding questions were oriented to explore the existence of different types of polarisation, and my personal stance towards the primary proposal had not altered the approach to data collection. The only advantage I took from participating in the deliberative series was that I used my memory in the meeting and the reports of my representative to stimulate interviewees to recall episodes of the meeting when they were having difficulties recalling the moments. This strategy has only been used in follow-up questions.

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[22] Tai (2018; 2019) used deliberation meetings and deliberative meetings to describe OCLP meetings, respectively.

Chapter 4 - Findings

In this chapter, two major aspects of the findings are going to be presented based on the interviewees' accounts. First, the reconstruction of the Hong Kong pro-democracy 35+ Movement deliberation timeline based on media reports and interviewees' accounts. The reconstruction follows how it got organised and what issues were at stake in the deliberation meetings. After the reconstruction, this chapter is going to demonstrate how different types of polarisation occurred in the deliberative process of the Movement.

How 35+ Movement deliberation series were organised

While several interviewees recounted part of the details on how they were invited to attend the deliberation meetings, it was Interviewee 3 in Constituency B and Interviewee 6 in Constituency C that gave greater detail on how the Movement's deliberation was organised in the first place.

Interviewee 6 reflected that Benny Tai invited him to facilitate his Constituency deliberations in January 2020 for the upcoming LegCo Election. He said Tai expected the role of facilitators to be similar to a chairperson of a DC who was later identified by the Hong Kong 47 trials as one of the facilitators in the deliberation series of Constituency C. He later expressed to Tai that he was going to campaign for a candidate in the same constituency. Subsequently, Tai did not find him again and invited him to be one of the deliberation's facilitators. However, he later received a text message from a middleman, whom he could not recall the identity, stating that "any person who was interested in running could attend the deliberation meeting".

Interviewee 3 claimed that his role as the coordinator of the deliberation series of Constituency B allowed him to have more knowledge of the organisation of the deliberation series in which he participated. Nevertheless, he felt the information on the time and location of the deliberation meetings of the series in which he took part was "slightly messy" as that information was "not that definitive". While the interviewee did not comment further on the meaning of "not that definitive", it appears that he felt the information on the time and location of the deliberation meetings was sent to him quite lately. Still, he said that people who are in the pro-democracy camp should have ways to know when and where the deliberation meetings would be held and be able to participate.

The remaining interviewees expressed no specific issues or difficulties with learning how to participate in the deliberation meetings. For instance, Interviewee 2 said there was a WhatsApp group to fix the time, and the location was not too difficult to reach. He and Interviewee 1, who attended the same deliberation series, said that even if candidates were not available to attend the deliberations, they or their respective political organisations would send a representative to participate. Similarly, Interviewee 5 in Constituency C said that he felt he had been given enough time to be notified to decide to attend deliberation meetings.

In terms of interactions in the deliberations, all interviewees reflected that there were no specific difficulties in speaking at the deliberations. From their observations and experience, they were given opportunities to speak if they wanted to. However, Interviewee 1 commented that the deliberation meetings he attended were "just everyone making their own statements" rather than genuine interactions. Similarly, Interviewee 6 expressed that people were skittish when voicing their opinions in the meeting as he felt that the agenda and consensus were set before the deliberation series was held.

Regarding the outcome of deliberation, interviewees 1, 2 and 4 acknowledged the existence of a draft consensus document being sent by Tai or the representatives of PfD after each meeting. The draft consensus would have terms and wordings updated according to what had been gone through during the deliberation meetings. When all deliberation series had reached to produce the final version of the consensus document, Tai and the PfD announced the pro-democracy primary.

All interviewees were unable to recall the dates on which the deliberation meetings were held. However, it was not the aim to construct the complete timeline of the events of the 35+ Movement deliberation meetings from the interviews. The guiding questions were also not orientated to encourage interviewees to recall the exact time and locations of the deliberation meetings they attended. As said in the previous chapter, the reconstruction of the timeline of the 35+ Movement deliberations relies on media reports of the Hong Kong 47 trials. Interviewees' recall of the organisation of the Movement's deliberation meetings could complement what has been reported by the media, although the reconstruction of the timeline has been conducted before the interviews.

Using the media reports and interviewees' accounts, the reconstruction of a brief timeline of events in of the 35+ Movement deliberations is shown below.

Time In 2020	January	March	April	May	9 June
Events	Tai approached Interviewee 1,6 and other activists with intention to run for LegCo representing pro-democracy cam.	The deliberation series began. 2 March KLE meeting 16 March KLE meeting 24 March KLW meeting 26 March HKI meeting	14 April NTE meeting 17 April HKI meeting 23 April NTW meeting 28 April DCII meeting 29 April KLW meeting	4 May KLE meeting 5 May NTE meeting 8 May NTW meeting 13 May DCII meeting 18 May KLE meeting 19 May HKI meeting	Announcement of the unofficial pro-democracy primary by Benny Tai and PfD

Table II A brief summary of events of the 35+ Movement leading to the announcement of the pro-democracy primary.

Source: The Witness HK (2023a; 2023b; 2023c; 2023d; 2023e; 2023f; 2023g; 2023h)

What issues were at stake in the deliberation meetings?

From the media reports, several issues of concern regarding the 35+ Movement were raised in different deliberation series. However, these testimonies given by the defendants of the Hong Kong 47 trials were not exhaustive and did not focus on the possible polarisation moments. I brought up some of these issues of concern to the interviewees, explored what was at stake in the deliberations, and categorised it into three issues as below.

1. *On whether to hold the primary as a means of the 35+ Movement*

From the account of the interviewees, deliberation on whether to adopt the primary as a means of the 35+ Movement was absent, as participants were focused on the rules and procedures of the primary instead. According to the interviewees' accounts, most of the interactions in the deliberations were focused on the rules of the primary election, with two interviewees commenting that there was no specific discussion on the objectives of the Movement in the deliberations.

In Constituency A, both interviewees recalled that deliberations, which spanned at least two meetings, were about the rules of the primary election. They did not recall deliberations of other options, for instance, using opinion polling. Specifically, Interviewee 1 said that participants were not able to have a say in the deliberation process. He also questioned if every participant agreed with what had been written on

the consensus document towards the direction of holding the primary. He later added that the decision-making of the deliberation should have been put to a vote among the participants who were confirmed to run for the election. Participants in the deliberation who did not run for the election should be excluded from the process in the first place.

In Constituency B, Interviewee 3 observed that neither the anti-China nor progressive localist factions were interested in holding the primary election at the beginning and in the middle of the deliberation series. Participants representing these factions questioned the objective of the 35+ Movement in the first deliberation meeting, and he said in the meeting, participants only treated the primary as a process of competition among factions for the candidacy representing the camp to run in the LegCo Election, instead of part of the grand plan to make pro-democracy camp to become the majority in LegCo.

Before the second deliberation meeting of Constituency B, Interviewee 3 said the anti-China localists retained their same view, citing the fear of "wasting resources and nothing in return" and "giving the reputation of the faction to the others" if the primary had been adopted. Nevertheless, the whole faction later ran for the primary. According to Interviewee 3, there were two reasons which made anti-China localists change their minds. The first reason was that participants realised the challenges of running for LegCo should the NSL be enacted by July 2020. They expected a significant number of pro-democracy candidates to be disqualified on the grounds of NSL even if the election was held normally. Therefore, participants in the deliberation started to think of making the primary election "more meaningful". The second reason was that several "middlemen" representing progressive localists successfully lobbied the anti-China localists to join the primary in late June.

The interviewees in Constituency C recalled no conversations on whether to use primary elections as a means of the 35+ Movement in the deliberation series they attended. Having said that, Interviewee 5 described that the exchanges in the deliberation series had spent at least an hour on "peripheral matters", such as how many candidates should the pro-democracy camp send to run in that constituency. He added that the deliberation was not focused on the goals of the 35+ Movement and, more importantly, what to achieve if the pro-democracy camp had taken the majority of the LegCo.

Overall, all deliberation series demonstrated that the majority of participants might assume that the primary would be held as part of the 35+ Movement. There is a

perception that some participants, including interviewees, treated the 35+ Movement as the primary election alone, with only two interviewees attending Constituency C deliberations thinking otherwise.

2. *On the common platform to veto the budget*

In Tai's (2020b) proposed 35+ Movement plan, a pro-democracy majority legislature would enable the camp to leverage the power to veto the government's budget to press the regime to fulfil the five demands raised in the anti-ELAB Movement. While the public might expect such a topic to have been deliberated in the meetings, interviewees reflected otherwise – Participants were neither focused on the topic nor concerned.

All interviewees who participated in Constituency A and B deliberations said there was almost no mention of the common pledge to veto the budget in the deliberation series. They all recounted that the deliberations were focused on the rules of the presumed primary and other practical matters rather than the need to have a common platform.

In Constituency C, Interviewee 5 recalled that people who attended the deliberation meeting expressed the tendency to include vetoing the budget in the consensus document but did not touch upon the reasons for making such a pledge. He said that, for the span of three hours, participants in the deliberation spent most of the time arguing between "will veto the budget" and "using the power proactively to veto the budget" would be adopted in the consensus document. He, however, cared less about the wording. Similarly, Interviewee 6 reflected that the same differences occurred in the deliberation meeting. He added that one anti-China localist activist who later ran for the primary held the view to have a "bundled stance…to veto the budget", while a person representing a party from the traditional faction worried about candidates being disqualified if the wording "bundled stance…to veto the budget" were adopted. The interviewee claimed he had forgotten much of the details of the issue and subsequent outcome from that deliberation meeting.

3. *On how to come up with the rules of the primary*

The rules of the primary of the 35+ Movement have become a focus of different series of deliberations. Much of the deliberation was on how many teams could run, methods of voting and mechanisms responding to the possible disqualification of the candidates, also known as the "Plan B" strategy.

In Constituency A, Interviewee 1 reflected that they spent a substantial amount of time in the first two deliberations on the issue of voting methods and the choice in response to disqualifications. He recalled that block-voting had been brought up in the discussion, and participants representing progressive localists insisted on having such a voting method. Interviewee 2 shared the same observation and suggested that this method may give candidates from localist and progressive factions higher chances of winning the primary. If they knew they might be trailing behind candidates representing established parties, block-voting would help their factions win the last seat in the primary.

However, the method was abandoned after the second deliberation meeting in the said Constituency. Interviewee 1 recalled that in the last deliberation meeting, Tai reported to the participants that there was a "technical issue' which hindered running block voting on the online voting system. Interviewee 1 said that teams which once proposed having block-voting could only "accept the arrangement with no choice" to have the primary switching back to one vote for each voter. Interviewee 2 also recalled the debate, stating that Tai and Au expressed the difficulties in promoting the block-voting method when other constituencies had the consensus on having each voter choose one person on the ballot. The interviewee described how Tai and Au used their reputation to settle the difference, with Tai persuading anti-China localist and progressive factions "like a lecture".

In terms of strategies for responding to potential disqualifications, a lengthy deliberation was held in the first and second meetings. There were two options that came up in the meetings, and they were a) The disqualified candidate could designate a replacement candidate to run on his or her behalf, known as the "soul boy system"[23], and b) a precedence list system, in which the first losing candidate in the primary could run in the general election under the pro-democracy banner should any winning candidate in the primary have been disqualified from running by the electoral commission.

Interviewee 1 reflected that the team he represented expressed a preference for using the precedence list. However, he said he, along with half of the participants, "compromised to get the Movement going". In this context, the term compromise means to give way to the factions that insisted on using the "soul boy system". Meanwhile, Interviewee 2 recalled that the division in the response was between the

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[23] The Chinese phrase of the Soul Boy System is 靈童制, which was inspired by the Dalai Lama's reincarnation soul boy in Tibetan Buddhism.

two progressive localist teams. According to Interviewee 2, representatives of Demosistō expected their candidate to be disqualified by the authorities. Therefore, they preferred to adopt the "soul boy system" in the first and second deliberation meetings. On the other hand, the interviewee said participants representing candidates who may be at the edge of winning insisted on the precedence list system, and they looked obtrusive in that meeting and made others irritated. There was no consensus drawn in the first meeting. He added that in the second deliberation meeting, participants had become considerate of the situation of Demosistō and did not insist on having the precedence list system. He, however, did not care about which system was going to be adopted as he felt he would not be affected anyway.

Deliberation in Constituency B did not bring up block-voting methods but discussed the "Plan B" strategy in the first two meetings. For instance, Interviewee 3 recalled that one participant representing the progressive faction suggested that all pro-democracy candidates should run for the LegCo Election and decide which method to let pro-democracy candidates suspend their campaigns in the latter stage. It has been described as the "write-in" method. Although the interviewee did not attend the second deliberation meeting, he knew from his information channel that participants worried that the public did not understand what exactly the camp was doing and did not want to risk it. He also added that participants were afraid that those winning candidates in the primary through the "write-in" method had questionable loyalty to the pro-democracy camp, or they called these people "ghosts"[24]. Therefore, the "write-in" method did not proceed further in the second meeting, and participants opted for the most conservative method, the "soul boy system". In the subsequent meeting, Interviewee 4 recalled that the facilitator explained the "soul boy system" and the precedence list system. He did not recall the content or the exchange in great detail, but he realised that no decision had been made regarding the "Plan B" strategy in that meeting.

Interviewees who attended the Constituency C deliberation have given rather shallow accounts of the voting method and "Plan B" strategy. Still, Interviewee 5 recalled that the first deliberation meeting touched upon how many LegCo seats the pro-democracy camp should be running in that constituency, with the options ranging from 5 to 7. He felt that candidates who felt a lower risk of being disqualified cared less about the "Plan B" strategy, while the anti-China localists and progressive localists joined the force in the primary and co-branded as the resistance faction, had "fought for

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[24] The term ghost, 鬼 in Traditional Chinese, means covert agent in this context. The term was used in the meeting to describe these people.

every inch of the land" as he felt these candidates realised higher risks of being disqualified from running in the main election.

How did polarisation occur in these deliberations?

As I crafted the interview questions to capture the possible moments of four types of polarisation, the following shows the results of each type based on the interviews.

Positional Polarisation

The phenomenon of positional polarisation was apparent in the deliberation series of Constituencies A and C, while the occurrence in Constituency B is unclear.

In Constituency A, both interviewees recalled that a pro-democracy independent district councillor made a vocal preference for block-voting in the first deliberation meeting, together with participants representing both anti-China localists and progressive localists. With the voting method not reaching a consensus in the first meeting, both interviewees realised that the councillor had not attended the second and third deliberation meetings. The exit behaviour of that independent councillor is one of the signs in which positional polarisation occurred. Additionally, Interviewee 1 reflected that the preference for block-voting or a single non-transferable voting system remained evenly split after the first meeting. Positional polarisation in terms of the voting method in Constituency A was apparent.

Why didn't the polarisation lead to the breakdown of the deliberation and, consequently, the Movement? The interviewees hold different perspectives. Interviewee 1 said that even if participants insisted on not accepting the single non-transferable voting system, they, himself included, reluctantly accepted the technical and promotional difficulty presented by Tai in the end. Even if the final version of the consensus document did not make the participants happy, he wanted to "get the Movement going". His team eventually accepted the rules and participated in the primary. Meanwhile, Interviewee 2 reiterated that Tai and Au put their reputation at stake and settled the differences on the table, resulting in "everyone not voicing out their opposing views", adding that being considerate to Demosistō was the only reason participants backed off. Both interviewees thought that the differences in voting methods remained, but people just set the differences aside.

In Constituency C, positional polarisation was also shown in the form of the exit behaviour of the participants—specifically, both interviewees. They left the deliberation

series as they did not find the Movement had a common purpose for different factions working together. Specifically, Interviewee 5 questioned the lack of purpose of the 35+ Movement and added that having an objective to veto the government budget is "reserve causation"[25], as participants have various reasons for supporting the veto, but they do not come up with a common mission or ignored in the deliberation. Similarly, Interviewee 6 commented that in the absence of a common platform, the only goal of the 35+ Movement was to minimise the number of people competing for the seats at LegCo. There is no intention to maximise the possible gain of seats through working together or at least to take care of those who lost in the primary. He questioned the meaning of the 35+ Movement if every faction took different approaches in response to political events when getting their own seats in LegCo.

For Constituency B, the 35+ Movement itself was the position at stake. Interviewee 3 recalled, after I reminded him, that two candidates representing traditional Democrats remain open to the Movement. Meanwhile, participants representing anti-China localists reacted with surprise after one of the candidates representing traditional Democratic parties said to wait for the draft consensus document before deciding the next step as "there was no consensus in this meeting". The interviewee added that participants representing anti-China localists were sceptical about the Movement after attending the first deliberation meeting and worried that their participation in the Movement would let their reputation be "shared with the traditional democrats". However, the interviewee further commented that such scepticism was expressed out of the deliberation meetings. Therefore, it is unclear if the surprised reactions from the anti-China localists in the meeting could be counted as a polarising position.

Even if I take the scepticism expressed by the localists outside of the deliberation into account, positional polarisation in Constituency B deliberations remains unclear. That is because a) the anti-China localists maintained their scepticism, but there was no contrast, as traditional democrats maintained their flexibility of whether to hold the primary as part of the Movement. There is no antagonism on positional difference, and b) the fact that anti-China localists who participated in the deliberation agreed to run for the primary after a successful lobby by the progressive localists who later ran for primary in the same constituency. The absence of an axis of positional differences and the outcome of the localists joining the primary made judging the occurrence of polarisation and depolarisation difficult.

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[25] The interviewee used the term 倒果為因 in Cantonese, which is reverse causation, a form of informal fallacy.

Interactional polarisation

From the interviews, interactional polarisation was not apparent within the deliberation of three constituencies but occurred outside of the meetings. None of the interviewees expressed their tendency to increase their interactions with more like-minded individuals during the deliberation. Also, all of them expressed no recognisable hurdles to attending the deliberations and interacting with the participants if they wanted to be in the meetings. Interviewee 1 in Constituency A and Interviewee 5 in Constituency C said deliberation meetings were more inclined to statement-making by participants representing different factions. The interaction among participants in the deliberations was not strong in the first place. Together with the traditional democrats' carefree attitude towards the Movement, the interaction element went further down in the meetings.

Should one count the possible interactional polarisation within the deliberation meetings, the experience of interviewees 5 and 6 running out of like-minded individuals in the deliberation series and interacting with each other on the basis that they would not participate in the 35+ Movement might be the only moment I captured.

Nevertheless, interactional polarisation likely occurred outside of the Movement's deliberation series. According to Interviewee 3, anti-China localists wanted to beat traditional Democrats as they worried their presence in the LegCo would treat the position as a job to "get the paycheck". They wanted to force the traditional democrats "to do something more". Because of that desire, they increased interactions with the progressive localists, whose members also did not have a good impression of traditional democrats. As mentioned in the previous section, the progressives lobbied the anti-China localists to run for the primary, and the latter agreed. It might be the first indication of the increased interactions among like-minded participants.

The second indication, or the elevation of the interaction among anti-China localists and progressive localists, was the special meeting jointly held by the 17 DCs controlled by the pro-democracy camp on 6 June 2020. The meeting was organised by Clarisse Yeung, chairperson of Wan Chai DC, who was identified as a member of a group under the progressive localist faction. (Wong, 2020g) Within the meeting, both localist factions tabled an impromptu motion to establish the Hong Kong People's Congressional Platform (Wong, 2020g). Interviewee 3 viewed that meeting as an election rally of both factions, with the aim to sharpen their positioning by saying things were slightly radical.

The third indication of enhanced like-minded interactions among members of anti-China localists and progressive localists was the publication of the IWR Declaration. Launched by two candidates from the anti-China localist faction and one from the progressive localists on 10 June 2020, the IWR was a response to Tai's decision that primary candidates were not required to sign the consensus document produced in each of the deliberation series. However, that was also seen as a response to the fact that candidates representing the DPHK, one of the traditional Democrat factions, did not endorse the consensus document by signing.

The interaction between like-minded anti-China localists and progressive localists outside the deliberation meetings, later co-branded as the resistance faction, demonstrated the trait of interactional polarisation described by Yarchi et al. (2020). Interactional polarisation was demonstrated by an increased intensity of political actions conducted by members of localist and progressive factions.

Affective polarisation

While the interviewees expressed their and witnessed others having negative affects towards other participants in the deliberation series, I am unable to identify whether affective polarisation occurred in the deliberation meetings. Nevertheless, there was a possibility that depolarisation occurred after the Hong Kong authorities' persecution of pro-democracy activists.

In Constituency A, Interviewee 1 witnessed participants "curling their lips", and Interviewee 2 spotted several participants feeling agitated after hearing a participant insist on using the precedence list system and requesting for getting one more winning seat in the primary—Nevertheless, neither interviewee named the people, or the faction involved, nor which meeting had such feelings occurred. Hence, it is unable to identify if there was rising hostility among the participants in this deliberation series.

In Constituency C, Interviewee 5 recalled that there were moments when participants displayed hatred towards opposing factions when the deliberation was on choosing "will veto the budget" or "using the power proactively to veto the budget" to be adopted in the consensus document. However, he added that the emotions in that fierce debate, as he described, reflected the resentments held among the members of different factions accumulated throughout the years. The debate on the wording was "just a spark that ignited". Meanwhile, Interviewee 6 could not recall moments of arguments held in the first deliberation meeting, which was reported by the media.

Subsequently, he could not recall the emotions and the extent of hostility held among participants.

As both interviewees of Constituency C did not attend the subsequent deliberation meetings, I am unable to identify the change of hostility among participants in subsequent deliberation meetings.

In Constituency B, Interviewee 3 described the anti-China localists' rising hostility against traditional Democrats outside the deliberation meetings. The interviewee said the hostility had been demonstrated through actions taken by the localists, such as the special meeting of 17 DCs and the IWR. He also added comments made by localists on occasions outside the deliberations, such as "He was from the Democratic Party, and he must win the game", did not come from reasoning. Despite the increased hostility throughout the time, the interviewee did not mention if such emotion was brought into the deliberation series. Interviewee 4 witnessed the moment in the deliberation meeting in which the localists said something, and the whole faction left the meeting in the middle. However, I cannot detect affective polarisation from his account as he could not recall the content of the speech made by the localists.

In terms of affective depolarisation, both interviewees in Constituency B felt the existence of it after the persecution of pro-democracy activists by the Hong Kong authorities. Interviewee 3 said that estrangements accumulated in the 35+ Movement were lowered as the Hong Kong 47 trials were "shocking". He felt the negative affects among the participants might remain but have been set aside as they "could not afford not to support each other for a living". Therefore, activists who had not talked during the primary have opened their hearts and resumed talking with each other.

Interviewee 4 gave a similar perspective, saying that he put down the personal resentment he had before as it is a thing of the past. He added that people were in the same prison cell even if they had quarrels in the past. There is nothing good about picking up the quarrel again.

Although affective depolarisation occurred among participants of Constituency B based on the accounts of the interviewees, such depolarisation occurred outside of the deliberation and years after the end of the 35+ Movement. From the interviews and media reports, there was no sign or reference to observe a change of hostility when Tai declared quitting the Movement. In other words, it was unable to verify the extent and

change of affective polarisation between the end of the Movement and the start of the persecution of primary organisers and candidates. There was no reference point of affects retrieved from the interviews and media.

Interpretative polarisation

There were two aspects of potential interpretative polarisation, namely the a) interpretation of using primary as part of the 35+ Movement in the LegCo Election and b) interpretation of the meaning of the LegCo Election in 2020.

For a), only two interviewees had doubts about the benefits of holding the primary, which has been interpreted by Tai. Specifically, Interviewee 3 said that one of the veteran politicians representing traditional Democrats told him that adding the primary would damage the harmony of the pro-democracy camp, and there would be no practical effect. He agreed with that politician's analysis. Interviewee 5 felt that the LegCo elections, under the PR system, had a set of rules that were already restrictive. Adding a primary under such circumstances was "a fairy tale".

The remaining interviewees did not observe the problems associated with using the primary as part of the 35+ Movement. It is notable that Interviewee 2 felt using whatever option had a marginal impact on his team's electoral campaign. Meanwhile, all interviewees did not observe or recall significant support for adopting the primary in the deliberation meetings they attended. The interpretation of using the primary as part of the Movement has, once again, come to a point where only one end of the interpretation is captured, and the majority has not expressed their interpretation or could not have cared less. In the absence of opposing interpretations, It would not be justified to describe such a phenomenon as polarisation.

For b), interviewees were asked whether the meaning of the LegCo Election in 2020 was bi) just another ordinary election, or bii) if there had been meanings beyond an ordinary election. They could interpret their perspectives or recall the interpretations expressed by others.

In Constituency A, Interviewee 1 did not give specific interpretations. His impression that participants jumped straight to deliberate primary arrangements and his intention to "get the Movement going" may have made him overlook it. Conversely, Interviewee 2 tilted towards the interpretation that the LegCo Election in 2020 had a different meaning, suggesting that the election would be an elevated version of the 2019 DC Election. The extent of the influence of public opinion would have been

demonstrated through the election, and the political impact would have been more profound. He did not observe participants in the deliberation series treating the 2020 LegCo Election as an ordinary one despite the meetings having spent a lot of time on the rules of the primary.

In the other two constituencies, the polarisation of interpretations was more apparent than in Constituency A. For instance, Interviewee 3 reflected that in the first deliberation meeting in Constituency B, participants across factions held the view that the election was just an ordinary one. Their interpretations have only changed until the anti-China localists felt the election might not be able to commence normally. Therefore, the faction hoped to make primary and general elections more meaningful. For the interpretations of traditional Democrats, Interviewee 4 reflected that the meaning of the election in 2020 was to maximise the seats obtained by the camp. From his words, the faction's interpretation of the 2020 LegCo Election has remained an ordinary one. The shift in the interpretation of the election by the localists versus the unchanged interpretation by the traditional Democrats could be seen as interpretative polarisation that occurred in Constituency B. However, such polarisation occurred outside of the deliberation meetings.

Interviewees 5 and 6 in Constituency C spotted the differences in the interpretation of the meaning of the Legco election in 2020 held between the localists and traditional Democrats. Like the observation in Constituency B, traditional Democrats did not treat the 2020 Legco election differently. Interviewee 5 interpreted that localists in the deliberation meeting viewed the election as a test of the legitimacy of the Hong Kong government. To him, it looked as if the anti-China localists would take the election as an opportunity to demand the government to respond to the demands of the anti-ELAB Movement. Nevertheless, I cannot capture any interpretative polarisation in this deliberation series as neither interviewee attended the subsequent meetings. They did not share any change in the interpretations observed outside of the deliberation series.

Relationship among different types of polarisation

In terms of how different types of polarisation related to each other in the 35+ Movement, it was found that interactional polarisation and affective polarisation might have occurred concurrently.

The increase in interactions between anti-China localists and the progressive localists who participated in deliberations of Constituency C hyped up the hostility of both factions towards traditional Democrats, resulting in elevated actions such as the

special meeting of the 17 DCs and the IWR Declaration. The effect of interactional polarisation, in which like-minded members representing localists and progressive factions increased their interactions, reinforced the hostility towards the traditional Democrats. For sure, the negative affects towards traditional Democrats held by the anti-China localists and progressive localists was well-established before the 35+ Movement. However, such negative affects have been exacerbated by the increased interactions among them throughout the Movement.

Similarly, the effect of affective depolarisation, because of the persecution of the pro-democracy camp by the Hong Kong authorities, facilitated interactional depolarisation. Interviewee 3 said that he observed participants of the deliberation who made zero conversation during the primary campaigns had resumed talking to each other again since the state crackdown began. Those activists accumulated resentment among each other at the height of the Movement, and it appeared to him that those activists had set their negative affects aside.

Summary – Signs of waning deliberative qualities amid polarisation

This chapter reconstructed the organisation of the 35+ Movement deliberations by media reports, with details complemented by interviewees. From the interviewees' accounts, there were three issues at stake at the deliberation meetings based on the accounts of six interviewees. I also discovered how positional, interactional, affective, and interpretative polarisation occurred and co-occurred in three different deliberation series, and beyond the deliberation room.

The decision to hold primary as part of the 35+ Movement did not encounter substantial challenges from participants representing different factions, with only the anti-China localists sceptical towards the Movement at the beginning stage of the deliberations. Interviewees even regarded the primary as the Movement instead of one of the options to achieve the goals to control the LegCo. This indicates that participants in the deliberation series reasonably expected the primary to be held. Meanwhile, a lot of time was spent in the meetings deliberating the wordings of a common pledge to veto the government budget and the rules of the primary. The above findings show signs of a waning qualities of the deliberations' analytical process, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Regarding the occurrence of different types of polarisation, positional polarisation was the most apparent in the Movement's deliberations. Such polarisation was demonstrated in the way in which participants, including two interviewees, exited

from the deliberation series for not agreeing with the decision and direction held by the host, facilitators, and members of other factions. Interactional polarisation and affective polarisation occurred outside of the deliberations and reinforced each other. Affective depolarisation and interactional depolarisation co-occurred after the arrest of 47 pro-democracy activists and the trial of their NSL breaches. Lastly, interpretative polarisation only occurred in one of the constituency but outside of the deliberation series.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

This chapter will discuss the discovery from the interviews, namely how polarisation occurred in the deliberative process of the 35+ Movement and its effects leading to the decision to adopt primary as part of the Movement. On the discovery from data collection, the chapter starts with discussing how different types of polarisation influence the 35+ Movement deliberations, leading to the adoption of the primary as part of the Movement, followed by the role of positional polarisation in the established group polarisation causation chain. The discussion on discoveries goes on with the phenomenon in which participants treated the primary election to the 35+ Movement and waning deliberative qualities. This chapter ends with a remark on using interviews to investigate polarisation.

How did polarisation influence the adoption of the primary?

Before collecting the data, I had the assumption that polarisation contributed to the decision to adopt primary as part of the 35+ Movement. With interviewees and an independent councillor exiting from the deliberation for positional reasons, I thought participants who remained would polarise towards a position in favour of adopting the primary as a means of the 35+ Movement. Nevertheless, accounts by the interviewees suggested otherwise – Traditional Democrats could not have cared less about the decision, anti-China localists were sceptical of the idea of primary and the Movement, and the progressive localists were the only faction keen on deliberating the common pledges and rules of the primary.

Positional polarisation may have contributed to exit behaviour, which may have facilitated the deliberation towards adopting the primary as part of the 35+ Movement. Nevertheless, positional polarisation in the deliberation alone may not be the only condition contributing to the primary being adopted. For instance, the accounts of two interviewees attending different deliberation series reflected a perception that consensus among Tai and certain faction leaders to adopt the primary had been achieved before the deliberation. Their impression parallels what Au Nok-hin testified in the Hong Kong 47 trials. From the media reports, Au attended a meal meeting with Benny Tai and leaders of traditional Democrats and progressive localists (Ho, 2023c), in which Au promised to organise the primary for the upcoming LegCo Election (Ho, 2023d). It appears that Tai, as the advocate of the 35+ Movement and host of all deliberation meetings, and Au, the facilitator of some deliberation meetings, reached a preference to hold the primary along with the leaders before inviting members of different factions to participate in the deliberation series. Another media report reflected

that a participant of the meal meeting had reservations about the primary and suggested using opinion polls (Chu and Ling, 2023). Still, the Movement's deliberation commenced after the meal meeting, and such reservation has not been mentioned in the deliberation meetings.

Meanwhile, interactional and affective polarisation contributed to the anti-China localists' participation in the primary. Nevertheless, I cannot observe if these types of polarisation, together with interpretative polarisation, influenced the decision to adopt primary as part of the 35+ Movement within the deliberation meetings.

The anti-China localists suspected that the enactment of the NSL would not make the 2020 LegCo Election a free election as disqualification of anti-China and progressive factions' candidates on NSL grounds was expected, leaving only traditional Democrats could contest in the general election. Hence, they demanded that traditional Democrats pledge to do more than wait for paychecks if elected to the LegCo. However, some traditional Democrats treated the 2020 LegCo Election as just an ordinary one and did not share the same view.

Interpretative polarisation may have influenced how localists positioned themselves as more committed factions to pursuing demands of the anti-ELAB Movement to the voters than the traditional Democrats in the primary election campaigns. Nevertheless, such polarisation did not affect the decision to hold the primary inside or outside the deliberation. Similarly, interactional and affective polarisation influenced the anti-China localists to participate in the Movement and the subsequent primary. However, the opportunities were about the increased interactions with the progressive localists and mutually reinforced hostility against traditional Democrats outside the deliberation rooms. Both types of polarisation only made the anti-China localists remain committed to the Movement, not persuading them to endorse the adoption of the primary in the deliberation meetings.

Positional polarisation serves as a trigger between exit behaviour and polarised groups
The interviews discovered that participants of the 35+ Movement deliberation meetings who disagreed with the direction of the discussion, which was oriented to the rules and procedures of the primary, had not attended subsequent meetings. In the absence of participants questioning the objectives of the 35+ Movement and the common pledge to veto the government's budget, two deliberation series investigated had their positions polarised.

Such discovery enriches what Sunstein (2009) described as exit as a form of group polarisation. In his work, Sunstein only stated that groups in which people are prone to exit would be "more willing to take extreme measures" (Sunstein, 209, p.4-45). However, he only pointed to the actions of the group becoming extreme because of the exit of members, without specifying the gap between the exit of members from the group and extreme measures that the remaining members of the group would have taken. I argue that the causation is not straightforward: In the exit-extremism causal chain, positional polarisation can play the role of a trigger.

The exit of participants in a group deliberation can possibly trigger different kinds of polarisation before the group has adopted extreme measures. Sunstein's proposition on exit causing group polarisation and Hirschman's (1974) view that an easy exit will weaken the dissenting voices, thus producing racialism, have missed out on the process in between. For instance, an exit of moderate participants in deliberation may lead to the remaining ones becoming more positionally, affectively, interactionally, and interpretatively polarised. Hence, the group's decision to choose a more radical measure or action can be a result of having more radical action options on the table, participants becoming more emotional, having more frequent interactions among the participants with more radical thoughts, or the participants framing the matter in concern in a more extreme way, and a combination of them. Sunstein and Hirschman may have overlooked the types of triggers, leading to a more radical measure taken by the group after moderates have left the deliberative process.

The discovery of this research, in which positional polarisation because of the exit of dissenting participants in the deliberative process, can serve as the trigger that fills the gap of the said causal link. Surely, the exit of participants may be able to trigger affective, interactional, and interpretative polarisation, resulting in more radical measures taken by a group at the end of the deliberation. However, data collected in this research are not sufficient to discover such a possibility.

It is also noted that the 35+ Movement's primary election itself was not an extreme or radical plan in the first place. The primary had only become seemingly a risky move after a government official warned about the potential breach of NSL for conducting it. Therefore, this research has left out the last step of the analytical framework on deliberation and action proposed in Chapter 2. Future research is encouraged to reconstruct the moments between the camp's decision to hold the primary and the days the primary was held as to whether candidates of the primary, as well as their respective groups and parties, would have resumed the deliberation and

to respond to the changed situation which the primary has been regarded as a risky move. Such investigation would contribute to exploring the exit-extreme move under the proposed framework of this research.

Treating primary as the 35+ Movement

From the interviews, I realised that all interviewees who attended the deliberation series of Constituencies A and B used the term 35+ Movement to describe the pro-democracy primary, and vice versa. It is an interesting discovery, as the 35+ Movement has referred to the grand plan to achieve a pro-democracy majority LegCo. The primary election was only part of the plan or an option. The interchanging use of both terms by four interviewees indicates that participants might have been distracted by the primary arrangements in the deliberation without noticing that the plan had deviated from what Tai proposed in the first place.

The original proposal, advocated by Tai in March 2020, expected a two-round deliberation "with public participation" (Tai, 2020b). Under Tai's plan, pro-democracy candidates whose ranks were out of the target seats to be won by the camp in a primary or an opinion poll could still run for the LegCo GC Election. Candidates trailing at the polls would only be required to suspend their campaigns days before the election when the final public polling conducted by the Movement was announced. The original plan preferred all candidates to showcase themselves in the official campaign.

However, the accounts from the interviewees reflected the deviation from the plan during the deliberation, For instance, Interviewee 1 reflected that members who participated in the deliberation series were only concerned about the voting methods of the primary and the "Plan B" strategy. The original plan of a two-round primary and opinion poll rule was changed to a one-round primary after the deliberation, and Tai, Au and the participants, including two interviewees, did not bring up any dispute or disagreement about such changes.

In Constituency B's deliberation series, the trajectory of adopting a one-round primary only occurred in the second meeting. Accounts from Interviewee 3 demonstrated that participants proposed different options to achieve the objective of the Movement, such as "write-in" candidacy. While there was no consensus achieved in the first meeting, Tai proposed sending the draft consensus document of Constituency A as a reference to all participants before coming back for the subsequent deliberation meeting. Tai sent such a document several days after the first deliberation meeting.

Tai's action effectively shifted the focus of the second deliberation meeting. From Interviewee 4's account, the issue at stake at that meeting was the primary's voting method and "Plan B" strategy. The existence of the draft consensus document taken from Constituency A has driven attention to Constituency A's model, which was a one-round primary. Although representatives of the anti-China localists faction left the meeting abruptly, members of other factions moved on to deliberate voting methods of the primary and the "Plan B" strategy. The absence of anti-China localists, who voiced their scepticism towards the Movement and the primary in the deliberation, made participants who remained in this deliberation spend time and effort on the voting method and "Plan B" strategy. Subsequently, participants built up the impression that the 35+ Movement means the one-round primary instead of the original plan.

In Constituency C, participants representing the localists and traditional Democrats deliberated topics of wordings of pledges to veto the budget, voting methods of the primary and "Plan B" strategy in the first meeting. From both interviewees' accounts, participants, irrespective of factions, did not touch upon the objectives of the 35+ Movement and the different options to achieve them. Also, participants representing anti-China localists and traditional Democrats treated the 35+ Movement as a one-round primary since the first deliberation meeting, without realising that the primary election was only part of the 35+ Movement.

From the accounts of all interviewees, Tai did not reiterate his original plan for the 35+ Movement in all deliberative series. It could be possible that Tai, the host of all deliberation series, respected the consensus of having a one-round primary achieved by the participants. It was also possible that Tai did not care about the format of the primary election and was not aware of the confusion held by the deliberation participants, in which activists in the meetings treated the 35+ Movement as the primary election alone. As long as there would be a primary election with public involvement, he may not care how many rounds of selection rules have, details of the voting method in each constituency and how different factions described the primary and the 35+ Movement.

Waning deliberative qualities of the 35+ Movement

From the interviewees' accounts, the 35+ Movement deliberations showed signs of falling short of deliberative qualities. From Tai's role as a deliberation host to participants exiting the deliberation series, the deliberative deficit was notable in many ways.

Interviewees' accounts demonstrated the quality of the deliberation was far from Gastil's and Doerr's ideal. The quality of the 35+ Movement deliberation series was also poorer than the OCLP Movement deliberations, which Benny Tai also led. According to Yang (2019), the first deliberation day of the OCLP impressed the participants, and the second phase of the deliberation series gained wider support from different sectors of society. Participants in the second phase of the OCLP deliberations felt the discussion on democracy and universal suffrage was a good civic education experience and boosted their commitment to the OCLP (Yang, 2019).

Waning analytical process

There are signs showing the analytical process of the deliberative process were waning. For instance, Tai made the decision to bring the draft consensus document from Constituency A to B without deliberation, shifting the focus of the second meeting of Constituency B to the rules of a one-round primary election. It deprived the opportunities for participants in Constituency B to come up with their draft of consensus documents, damaging the quality of the analytical process.

Also, the absence of substantial deliberation on the objectives of the 35+ Movement and options to achieve the goal demonstrated that the analytical process was not following the ideals of rationality. Apart from the first deliberation meeting in Constituency B, meetings in Constituencies A and C did not discuss why they were coming together and went straight to deliberate voting methods.

Waning social process

As the host, Tai influenced the social aspect of the deliberative process. In Constituency A, Tai influenced the deliberation by explaining the technical and promotional difficulties of using block voting in the primary while participants were still deliberating on the voting methods. Although Tai may not intend to leverage his position as the host to influence the decision, his words made Interviewee 1 and other participants who preferred block voting abandon their insistence reluctantly. It is also noted that Interviewee 2 described Tai and Au as "have put their nimbuses of fame on the line to straighten out the differences among the participants". Interviewee 1, who had attended all three meetings in his series, felt he had "no stake in the deliberations as he could only express dissatisfaction with what had been presented, such as draft consensus documents, leaving him no choice but to take the option on the table as it was.

Similarly, Interviewee 6 in Constituency C commented that there seems to be a consensus achieved between the host and participants with greater popularity prior to the meetings. To him, the deliberation series was a formality to justify the primary

instead of allowing participants of all factions to come up with what would work best for the Movement.

In terms of feeling safe and respected, even if participants were given the freedom to voice their views during the deliberation, there were other factors that discouraged them from speaking up in the meetings. For instance, Interviewee 2 reflected that they could not recognise all participants in their series, and there were no measures to prevent the closed-door meetings from being spied on. He added that, for these reasons and the group he represented, he did not speak much in all the meetings he attended. Similarly, Interviewee 4 viewed certain people in the meeting as irrelevant to the 35+ Movement, and Interviewee 6 commented that people were skittish in the meeting and subsequently touched upon peripheral matters. Not feeling safe or encouraged to speak their minds in the meetings deteriorates the quality of the movement's deliberative process. Lastly, some participants did not care as they were uninterested or felt their teams' chances of winning would not be affected. As a result, these participants did not actively engage in the deliberative process.

On using democratic innovations to avoid mistakes

From the interviewees' accounts, It is possible that the activists representing pro-democracy factions were not analytically and socially ready for deliberations and required democratic innovations to safeguard deliberative qualities. Nevertheless, those innovations, unlike OCLP deliberations, were not in place.

First of all, not all participants in the deliberation series were able to make decisions. From Interviewee 2's account, certain candidates of the primary did not participate in all deliberation meetings. Some have only sent their representatives to present or have not participated in any meetings. For those who have participated, they might not be authorised to make decisions, and only to reiterate their factions' stance.

Participants also had doubts about the 35+ Movement, were skittish at the deliberative process and did not feel safe or respected if voiced out in the room. They eventually decided to quit the deliberation and, subsequently, the 35+ Movement.

The host and facilitators should have briefed and prepared participants in advance, requiring their presence to contribute to the deliberative process and make decisions. They should also have ensured a safe environment for participants to speak up, in which their voices were confidential to the outside world and respected by fellow participants representing different camps. Nevertheless, the absence of all the above

factors made participants unwilling to contribute to the deliberative process genuinely, deteriorating deliberative qualities and shifting the decision-making power towards the host and facilitators.

Waning deliberative qualities in terms of lacking democratic innovations may have led to positional polarisation. Apart from the lack of preparation by the host and facilitators to make the deliberation as inclusive and equal as possible, the absence of redress to the participants who quit the Movement, appealing to them to rejoin the deliberation, paved the way for positional polarisation. Whether the deliberation's departure from ideal deliberation practice was intentional, the 35+ Movement's deliberation demonstrated limited scope and focused on a particular issue, which is the primary.

Remarks on using interviews to discover polarisation in deliberations

Before the data collection, I anticipated that using interviews alone, without observing in the 35+ Movement deliberations series, would impose significant challenges in reconstructing the deliberative process and finding out possible polarisation. Previous studies on deliberations and polarisation involved the collection of data at least twice, typically before and after deliberations. Studies on polarisation by conducting experiments have also captured participants' opinions and tendencies before and after deliberations. For online conversations, researchers can detect polarisation through timestamps of conversations. All of the above was impossible in this research, as there were no recordings or minutes of the deliberation series publicly available, and I only participated in one meeting of a deliberation series as a participant but not as an observer to record what candidates and their representatives said in the meeting.

For example, I drafted the guiding questions with attempts to discover the possible polarisation, with question number 7 of discovering the possible depolarisation to prove the existence of polarisation in the deliberation series. Such an attempt yielded mixed results. This research discovered that the existence of affective and interactional depolarisation occurred outside of the deliberation series because of the crackdown on the pro-democracy camp by the Hong Kong authorities, not from interviewees' renewed understandings or impressions of what had been deliberated in the Movement's meetings. Depolarisation found in this question were a result of the crackdown on the pro-democracy camp and were associated with the polarisation of the camp way before the deliberations commenced.

Such discovery shows that those reflections by the interviewees went beyond what happened outside of the subject matter which this research intends to investigate. While interviews on historical events still have the methodological potential to recall polarisation, there is a need to craft the guiding questions to let interviewees have a precise reflection of the subject matter and moments that the research intends to investigate.

Another issue concern is fading and potential avoidance of memories. The 35+ Movement deliberations were held in 2020, three years after the interviews of this research were conducted. All interviewees may have forgotten some of their memories of the deliberations, as all of them expressed that they could not recall certain details of the deliberation meetings which they had attended. It is also possible that interviewees might have been overwhelmed by the ongoing crackdown on the pro-democracy camp by the Hong Kong authorities and would like to avoid the risks of being associated with the Hong Kong 47 in any form. For instance, some interviewees appeared evasive when asked to recall details of certain moments in the meeting. One interviewee said he had forgotten a moment when he was involved in a fierce debate with another participant who is one of the defendants in the Hong Kong 47 trials, and the media have reported the moment.

Whether such avoidance is intentional is not the focus of this research. Still, one must recognise the risks of being persecuted by the Hong Kong authorities, as interpreted by the interviewees, might hinder the breadth and depth of the data collection. Including other data sources, such as news reports and materials presented at the Hong Kong 47 trials, may patch what the interviewees have left blank.

The last remark was that a second interview with the interviewees might also enrich the breadth and depth of the data collected for analysis. Because of limited time, I cannot launch an updated ethical review application to achieve this. However, I envision a second interview with the same set of interviewees, asking them questions developed based on their respective first accounts, accounts by other interviewees, and information from news reports on the Hong Kong 47 trial, which may facilitate them to recall moments of deliberations missed in the first interviews. It would have been beneficial for the reconstruction of the moments of deliberation and moments of different types of polarisation.

Summary

This chapter covered how different types of polarisation influenced the 35+ Movement deliberations and their relationship, leading to the decision to adopt the primary election as a means of the Movement. In short, positional polarisation in the deliberations contributed to such a decision, but the co-occurrence of interactional and affective polarisation outside the meeting among localists and progressive factions contributed to most factions being on board with the primary. From the interviews, I also discovered the role of positional polarisation serves as a trigger between the exit behaviour and the Movement's decision to hold the primary election, enriching the knowledge on group polarisation by adding a positional polarisation trigger between the exit-radicalism causal chain.

From the accounts of the interviewees, this research finds that the participants treating the primary as the sole of the 35+ Movement shifted the focus of the deliberative process. Instead of the objectives and other options to achieve the aim of achieving a pro-democracy majority legislature, the deliberations focused on the organisation of primary elections. After reflecting on such a discovery, the discussion highlighted the waning deliberative qualities of the 35+ Movement meetings.

Regarding the challenges, it is identified that using one-time interviews alone to discover polarisation and depolarisation of the deliberative process remains difficult. A second interview with the same set of interviewees, with questions drafted based on the analysis of the first round of interviews and renewed information, may improve the breadth and depth of data collection.

Surely, discussions in this chapter rely on the data collected in the interviews. Should more interviews have been conducted, the interpretation of the deliberation series and the insight above could have been more detailed than what has been found. However, I could only conduct the analysis based on the data I had obtained. It is also acknowledged that my position towards the Movement may let one view that the analysis could be skewed towards a negative perception towards the deliberation. My response to such a view is that the discussion in this chapter is based on what the data collected, and accounts of the interviewees reflect waning deliberative qualities, for example, were shared across interviewees representing three different factions. While I cannot deter one from associating my position on the Movement with the analysis, the fact that interviewees from different factions shared similar observations and feelings demonstrated what has been discovered has its own weight and deserves to be interpreted.

Conclusion

This research revealed how different types of polarisation occurred in the Hong Kong pro-democracy camp's 35+ Movement deliberations. The research first reconstructed the timeline of meetings of six constituencies' 35+ Movement deliberations through media reports. Based on the reconstruction of the timeline, I interviewed six people who participated in three separate deliberation series and attempted to discover the moments of different types of polarisation in the deliberative process and possible depolarisation.

The accounts of the interviewees demonstrated that positional polarisation occurred in two separate constituencies in the form of exit behaviours exhibited by participants and interviewees. Meanwhile, interactional and affective polarisation occurred when the anti-China localists and progressive localists demonstrated hostility against traditional democrats after increased interactions among members of respective factions outside of deliberation meetings. The research also found that interaction polarisation, in which members of anti-China localists and progressive localists increased their interactions with each other, has exacerbated affective polarisation in the increased hostility against traditional democrats expressed in the primary election campaigns.

The discovery of different types of polarisation addressed the gap in the existing deliberation and group polarisation literature suggested by Hirschman (1974) and further developed by Sunstein (2009). The camp's decision to adopt the primary was not a straightforward result of moderate or dissenting participants exiting from the deliberative process; positional polarisation, in which the absence of moderate or alternative proposals on the table, triggered the group to adopt the primary. Such discovery opens future research on the effects of different types of polarisation that serve as the trigger in the exit-radicalism causation chain.

The research also found that the deliberative qualities of the 35+ Movement were far from ideal. For instance, the introduction of a draft consensus document of a constituency to another shifted the issues of concern of the deliberative process. Moreover, the inaction by the Movement's host, Benny Tai, in which participants deliberated on the arrangements of the primary election instead of the strategies of the Movement, made participants overlook other approaches to achieve the goal of making the pro-democracy camp become the majority in the city's legislature. In the absence of participants' genuine and substantive exchanges and discussions and democratic innovations to prevent waning deliberative qualities, the analytical and social

deliberative process of the 35+ Movement deliberations appeared tokenistic to interviewees.

There are also reflections on using interviews as the sole method to discover different types of polarisation. For instance, a more refined set of guiding questions is needed to facilitate interviewees' recall of more accurate positions, affects, interactions, and framing of discourses held at least two different times in the past. Depolarisation may not correspond to the polarisation in the deliberations but to the pro-democracy camp's divide and polarisation that has existed and exacerbated since 2010.

For the reflection on using a one-time interview to capture polarisation and depolarisation moments, there is a chance that interviewees might have their memories faded away or avoid answering the guiding questions. A second interview asking the same set of interviewees with questions based on analysis of data collected from interviewees and other updated information may facilitate the breadth and depth of data collection.

The limitation of this research is the number of respondents who agreed to be interviewed. Participants of the 35+ Movement deliberative series might fear the risk of breaching NSL if being found to be interviewed by an overseas researcher. It could also be possible that my objection to adopting primary as a means to achieve the goals of the 35+ Movement when I was a politician in 2020 impacted the response rate. Although I cannot change the views of the target population, I approached every of the target population as an academic researcher and remained open to the research objectives.

While this research contributed to the knowledge of discovering a deliberative process in a pro-democracy movement on strategies for elections and deepened the understanding of the occurrence of polarisation in the deliberative process, one should not forget that such discovery is associated with a traumatic reality: The crackdown of the pro-democracy camp in Hong Kong after the enactment of the NSL, in which the host, most organisers and candidates of the 35+ Movement's primary election are either remanded or living in exile. The subsequent stifling of the pro-democracy groups created a chilling effect on Hongkongers who remain in the city and live in all corners of the world, including those recently settled in the United Kingdom.

While leaders and activists of Hong Kong's pro-democracy camp are under persecution, reviewing and reflecting on what happened is not rubbing salt in the

wounds. Such reflection might benefit the management of a pro-democracy movement in hybrid regimes.

Pro-democracy movement occurs in hybrid regimes in Asia, such as Thailand, in which activists have been campaigning for democratisation through different types of political expression, such as sit-ins, protests and, more crucially, through the ballots (Macan-Markar, 2019). I hope the findings of this research shed light on other pro-democracy movements in Asia and beyond. Poor deliberative qualities can cause misjudgements and give an excuse for the authorities to wipe out the entire movement. Assessments on the capacity of resilience should always be present when the deliberations are making crucial decisions for the pro-democracy movement. Overestimation of the movement's capacity or underestimation of the regime's eagerness for repression may cost the movement dearly.

My final point is that Hong Kong's pro-democracy camp has rarely collectively evaluated its successes and failures. From the failure of the de facto referendum in 2010 to the vain attempt of the UM in 2014 to the anti-ELAB Movement in 2019, meetings to reflect those movements have never been held among activists representing different factions internally or with supporters in the public domain. Activists who pointed out the shortcomings of the movement would easily be attacked by supporters for betraying democratic ideals. Fuelled with emotions and competing interests, especially during elections, it was virtually impossible for activists representing different factions to come together and ponder what could have been done differently.

Beijing's dismantlement of the Hong Kong pro-democracy camp may devastate the movement, but it might also serve as an opportunity to put the differences aside and reflect together in a more honest and humble manner. The time to pay lip service to solidarity in front of supporters has long gone, and only genuine reflection can lead to the movement's reconciliation, cohesion, and resilience. Who knows if such reflective exercise may contribute to a stronger movement when the time is, once again, on the side of the people?

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zhengren zhi xin xi huiyi shang she lu dangan qi hou jiaojing fang 實時更新 47
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%E8%A8%8A-%E6%8E%A7%E6%96%B9%E5%8C%BF%E5%90%8D%E8%
AD%89%E4%BA%BA%E6%8C%87%E6%88%B4%E8%80%80%E5%BB%B7
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huiyi shang mei ti wu chabie foujue 實時更新 47 人案｜第 74 日審訊　彭卓棋：
戴耀廷會議上沒提無差別否決 ['Live Update 47ers case | The 74th day of trial
Michael Pang: Benny Tai did not mention indiscriminate veto. *The Witness*.
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80%80%E5%BB%B7%E6%9C%83%E8%AD%B0%E4%B8%8A%E6%B2%92
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gong kong fang xiawu jiu jiu xi xietiao huiyi tiwen 實時更新 47 人案｜第八天審訊
區諾軒續作供　控方下午就九西協調會議提問 ['Live Update 47ers case | Trial
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%ac%e5%85%ab%e5%a4%a9%e5%af%a9%e8%a8%8a%e3%80%80%e5%8
d%80%e8%ab%be%e8%bb%92%e7%ba%8c%e4%bd%9c%e4%be%9b%e3
%80%80/.

The Witness 2023h. Shishi gengxin 47 ren an | di qi tian shenxun qu nuo xuan xu zuo gong zhi yu dai fenbie huijian zhengdang ji youyi can xuan ren 實時更新 47 人案｜第七天審訊　區諾軒續作供　指與戴分別會見政黨及有意參選人 [' Live update 47ers case | The seventh day of trial Au Nok-hin continued to testify Have met different political parties and candidates intended to run with Tai separately']. *The Witness*. [Online]. [Accessed 1 January 2024]. Available from: https://thewitnesshk.com/%E3%80%90%E5%AF%A6%E6%99%82%E6%9B%B4%E6%96%B0%E3%80%9147%E4%BA%BA%E6%A1%88%EF%BD%9C%E7%AC%AC%E4%B8%83%E5%A4%A9%E5%AF%A9%E8%A8%8A%E3%80%80%E5%8D%80%E8%AB%BE%E8%BB%92%E7%B9%BC%E7%BA%8C%E4%BD%9C%E4%BE%9B/.

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Appendix I: Guiding questions of the interviews

The guiding questions of the interviews are shown below. All interviews were conducted in Cantonese. The English translation is provided for reference.

1. 請分享你參與邊區邊幾個35+運動協調會議，同埋喺參與會議方面（例如獲邀出席、會議時間同地點）有幾大困難。

   Please share which series of 35+ Movement deliberation meetings you have attended and the extent of difficulties in participating in the meetings (i.e. being invited to join, meeting time and location)

   (Follow-up question)

   As far as you know, was there anyone, including you, who felt it difficult to participate in these coordination meetings in terms of interacting with each other and prompted withdrawal from it and/or not running for the primary?

   喺你認知當中，有冇人、包括你在內、係覺得參與會議上有交流困難而退出協調會議甚至唔參與隨後嘅初選？

2. 請你憶述你參與嘅協調會議之中，包括你在內嘅參加者，有冇邊位表達過選舉相關知識係同你或者在座嘅人有唔同睇法嘅？如果有嘅，又係邊樣知識同埋點樣唔同嘅睇法？

   Please recall that if participants of the deliberation meetings, including you, have expressed knowledge related to elections that were different from the others? If yes, which aspect of the knowledge was that and how different the views were?

   (Follow-up question)

   你認為在座嘅人對於選舉喺2020年嘅政治脈絡中嘅意義隨時間而有所轉變？

   Do you think their interpretations of the meanings of the election in the political context of 2020 have changed over time?

3. *請你憶述你參與嘅協調會議之中你特別有印象嘅議題（例如舉辦初選、民調、預算案立場、共同綱領）。你有幾接受其他與會者當時提出嘅論點？同一時間，有冇啲咩議題係經過商討後多咗人表達同意嘅？表達嘅相同與及相反意見，可以係喺同一次會議又或者係多次會議之後。*

Please recall topics discussed in the deliberation meetings in which you held vivid memories (i.e. organising primary election, opinion pooling, stance on the government budget, common platform). To what extent you agree with those viewpoints given by other participants? At the same time, were any topics that gained more acceptance by the participants after the discussion? The agreements and disagreements can be reflected in the same or subsequent meetings.

4. *由協調會議到截止初選報名果陣，你或者你嘅團隊有冇諗過離開協調會議，唔參與當時可能發生嘅初選或者民調？有啲咩考量（例如聲譽、勝算同唔繼續參與嘅後果）令你或者你嘅團隊最後有相關嘅決定？*

From the start of the deliberation meetings to the deadline of the pro-democracy primary nomination period, have you or your team ever thought of exiting the deliberation and not participating in the tentative primary or opinion poll? What factors (i.e. reputation, chance of winning and consequence for not participating) influence you or your team to continue the final choice?

5. *請你憶述一下，由協調會議到截止初選報名果陣，包括你在內嘅參加者，有冇人喺會議表現出對於其他人感到厭惡，同埋又或者因而提出採取更激烈嘅立場或者策略？*

Please recall the period from the start of the deliberation meetings to the deadline of the pro-democracy primary nomination, has anyone, including you, expressed hatred against other participants, hence or separately proposed to adopt a more radical stance or strategy?

6. *你或者你嘅團隊成員，有冇喺協調會議期間聽到一啲你哋唔同意嘅睇法或者決定，但係冇作出反對甚至係同意嘅？如果有嘅，請分享果一樣或者幾樣嘅睇法或者決定係咩嘢？*

   Have you or your team members heard some views or decisions in the deliberating meeting which you disagreed with but have not expressed opposition or even expressed agreement upon those views and decisions? If yes, please share that or several of those views and decisions.

   (Follow-up question)

   你覺得果啲會議中嘅分歧隨住時間有冇擴大或者收窄？

   Do you feel those divisions have exacerbated or converged over time?

After the interviewees answered the above questions, the seventh guiding one is to record their reflections on the deliberation process.

7. *而家事後睇番，經歷過去 3 年幾嘅嘢，你點樣睇成個 35+ 運動協調會議同決定程序？*

   Looking back from now, with what happened in the last 3 years, how do you view the whole 35+ deliberation meetings and the procedure to come up with the decision?

   (Follow-up Question)

   隨時間同呢幾年所發生嘅事，有冇令到你對同樣參加 35+ 運動果陣，同你立場唔同、對你唔客氣又或者唔同你溝通嘅人，對佢哋嘅睇法有所變化？

   As time goes by and what happened in the previous years, have you changed your views on those people who also participated in the 35+ Movement at the time, holding different positions from you, being hostile to you or refusing to interact with you?

The last question is an opening-ending question by the end of the interview.

8. *對於以上嘅問題又或者初選協調會議，你會唔會有任何嘅補充？*

   Do you have anything to add to the above questions or about the coordination meetings of the primary election?

Appendix II: Ethics Approval Letter

Dear Kwan Tai Michael Mo,

0568 - Hong Kong Pro-democracy 35+ Movement – Adopting primary election as an outcome of group polarisation

I am pleased to inform you that the above research ethics application has been reviewed by the Business, Environment, Social Sciences Faculty Research Ethics Committee and on behalf of the Chair, I can confirm a conditional favourable ethical opinion based on the documentation received at date of this email and subject to the following condition/s which must be fulfilled prior to the study commencing:

1. *Consent Form -* Please note that although researchers may do everything they can to protect anonymity of participants, there are eventualities which may mean that full anonymity cannot be guaranteed. For example, as we have seen with data breaches in other parts of the world, data cannot be described as 100% secure. Therefore, please take every care to ensure that any identifying characteristics of participants are removed from the data during transcription, storage, and analysis of the data. We note that you say the recordings will be deleted as soon as transcription is completed. This is wise.
Note also that police may be able to issue a subpoena for information about any suspected criminal acts. By drawing your attention to these issues, we do not mean to hinder this important research, but we do advise you to discuss with your supervisors and to please take care of your participants, your data, and yourself
2. *Where will the data collection be undertaken? If off campus, a fieldwork risk assessment is usually required -* Please note that Teams interviews are counted as fieldwork. Please remove the phrase 'There will be no fieldwork' therefore. What we understand you to mean is: 'The researcher will not travel to the site'
3. Please specify which language will be used for interviews: will you use English? Or Cantonese/Mandarin/other dialects? A mixture? If using other languages, who will be responsible for translating interview data? Will the interviews be translated before transcription or after?

The study documentation must be amended where required to meet the above conditions and submitted for file and possible future audit.

Once you have addressed the conditions and submitted for file/future audit, you may commence the study and further confirmation of approval is not provided.

Please note, failure to comply with the above conditions will be considered a breach of ethics approval and may result in disciplinary action.

Please retain this email as evidence of conditional approval in your study file.

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the original research as submitted and approved to date. This includes recruitment methodology; all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. Please see https://ris.leeds.ac.uk/research-ethics-and-integrity/applying-for-an-amendment/ or contact the Research Ethics & Governance Administrator for further information on if required.

Ethics approval does not infer you have the right of access to any member of staff or student or documents and the premises of the University of Leeds. Nor does it imply any right of access to the premises of any other organisation, including clinical areas. The committee takes no responsibility for you gaining access to staff, students and/or premises prior to, during or following your research activities.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, risk assessments and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited.

It is our policy to remind everyone that it is your responsibility to comply with Health and Safety, Data Protection and any other legal and/or professional guidelines there may be.

I hope the study goes well.

Best regards

Ms Taylor Haworth, Research Ethics Administrator, Secretariat

On behalf of Dr Judith Hanks, Chair, BESS+ FREC (formerly known as AREA)