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# Attitudes towards the Umbrella Movement in Macao: Findings and Implications from a Survey of University Students

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*This study examines preferences related to democracy and their spillover effects on political trust and political participation through a social survey of Macao's university students. In contrast to conventional measurements that enquire into attitudes towards democracy in abstract terms, this study measures students' preferences related to democracy through their attitudes towards a particular political incident—the Umbrella Movement. A detailed discussion of the Umbrella Movement as a feasible and valid indicator yields the following research findings. First, students in Macao generally approve the demand for universal suffrage made by the Umbrella Movement. This can be interpreted as a preference for a minimal definition of democracy. Second, bivariate and regression analyses demonstrate that a positive correlation exists in students' support level for universal suffrage, corroborating the statement that student leaders in the Umbrella Movement were "fighting for democracy" and the importance of "living in a democratic system". Universal suffrage as an indicator empirically reflects students' attitudes towards democracy. Third, regression analyses also affirm that support for universal suffrage is a statistically significant predictor of students' political trust and political participation. The higher the support that students have for universal suffrage, the higher their likelihood of having less trust in both the Macao government and the central government, and in engaging in unconventional political participation.*

## INTRODUCTION

In comparison to Taiwan and Hong Kong, Macao seems to be lagging in political development. While the Nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) Party in Taiwan began its democratisation in the late 1980s, the first Legislative Yuan election was held in 1992, and the presidential election occurred four years later in 1996.<sup>1</sup> Taiwan eventually became the first successful case of democratic transition in the Greater China region after nearly half a century under authoritarian rule after World War II. Hong Kong, on the other hand, started the struggle for democracy almost at the same time. However,

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<sup>1</sup> Tien Hung-mao and Chu Yun-han, "Building Democracy in Taiwan", *The China Quarterly* 148 (1996): 1141–70; Tien Hung-mao and Shiau Chyuan-jeng, "Taiwan's Democratization: A Summary", *World Affairs* 155, no. 2 (1992): 58–61.

Hong Kong's journey was much harsher as the schedule of political development was strictly controlled by China after its handover in 1997.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, grievances over stagnant political reform, as discussed later in detail, are recognised as the trigger for the Umbrella Movement.<sup>3</sup> In Macao, however, no such similarities to the aforementioned scenarios have been observed.

In early studies on Macao politics, the Macao people were described as politically apathetic. For example, based on two social surveys on political attitudes conducted in 1991 and 1999, Yee concluded that “the Macao people in general have low esteem for politicians and are inclined to believe that to be involved in political activities could be dangerous. Like their grandparents or great grandparents in traditional Chinese society, they do not think they themselves can influence government policies. Few would thus take actual political action to oppose government wrongdoing”.<sup>4</sup> In another survey also implemented by Yee in 1994 with university students in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao, even university students with relatively high educational levels maintained traditional views of “guardianship” rather than a liberal understanding of democracy comparable to their counterparts in mainland China.<sup>5</sup> When Macao university students were asked, “What is a democratic government?”, the primary option selected by 57.1 per cent of respondents was “[The government] listens to the public’s opinions and takes care of citizens’ interests”. By contrast, only 45.8 per cent of respondents believed that “a government elected by the people” should be a component of democracy. However, there has been evidence to question whether the aforementioned statements are still valid after two decades. A recent counter case to the Macao people’s political apathy was the 2014 Anti-Retirement Package Bill protest, which was the largest collective action since Macao returned to China in 1999. According to media reports, 20,000 citizens were involved and young people were the main participants. Ieong has argued that the occurrence of such a large-scale protest cannot be explained without taking into account the significant changes in Macao’s socio-economic structure in recent years. Following the post-materialism theory, Ieong provided a detailed analysis of how the youth’s increasing educational level and the prevalence of social media had opened opportunities for unconventional political activities.<sup>6</sup> What remained unknown was whether Macao’s young generation, as predicted by the post-materialism theory, would really potentially support

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<sup>2</sup> Ma Ngok, *Political Development in Hong Kong: State, Political Society, and Civil Society* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Stephan Ortmann, “The Umbrella Movement and Hong Kong’s Protracted Democratization Process”, *Asian Affairs* 46, no. 1 (2015): 32–50.

<sup>4</sup> Herbert S. Yee, *Macao in Transition: From Colony to Autonomous Region* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), p. 104.

<sup>5</sup> Herbert S. Yee, “The Political Subcultures of University Students in Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan”, *Issues & Studies* 32, no. 3 (1996): 55–77; Lu Jie and Shi Tianjian, “The Battle of Ideas and Discourses before Democratic Transition: Different Democratic Conceptions in Authoritarian China”, *International Political Science Review* 36, no. 1 (2015): 20–41.

<sup>6</sup> Ieong Meng U, “Macao and Hong Kong, Convergence or Divergence? The 2014 Anti-Retirement Package Bill Protest and Macao’s Governance Crisis”, *Asian Survey* 57, no. 3 (2016): 504–27.

democracy.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, what would be the consequences if such changes in political attitude occurred?

This article intends to provide up-to-date social indicators research through a social survey of Macao's university students and their preferences related to democracy, and how their attitudes towards democracy influence political trust and political participation. Following the practices of Yee's previous studies, university students were selected as the target group, as this social group was well-educated and inclined to be open-minded. Changes in political attitudes would most likely be manifested in them, and they were an ideal indicator to predict the future political development of Macao society. However, this study will not investigate the abstract meanings of democracy; rather, it is intended to measure preferences related to democracy through consideration of a specific political incident—the Umbrella Movement. The author shall explain in detail the choice for this indirect measurement design and the issues related to validity. The article is structured as follows. The first section provides a background of the Umbrella Movement and discusses the feasibility and validity of using the incident to serve as a social indicator of democratic preference. The second and third sections illustrate, respectively, the survey results, and the influence of the Umbrella Movement on students' political trust and political participation. The final section wraps up the discussion and concludes.

### **THE UMBRELLA MOVEMENT AS AN INDICATOR OF PREFERENCES RELATED TO DEMOCRACY: FEASIBILITY AND VALIDITY**

The Umbrella Movement, that occurred in Hong Kong in 2014, was selected as a proxy indicator to measure respondents' attitudes toward democracy. The author used an indirect measurement design because the survey was based on second-hand data originally intended for examining the relationship between media use and the attitudes towards the Umbrella Movement. As a result, the questionnaire did not include questions related directly to the preference of democracy. This limitation is, however, compensated by Macao's unique socio-economic conditions. First, as Sou Ka Hou, youth leader of Macao's pro-democracy camp, highlighted in reference to the Macanese reaction towards the Umbrella Movement, "Macao people's interpretation of democracy is superficial; they care more about livelihood and may not have a clear understanding of the meaning of civil disobedience".<sup>8</sup> Indirect measurement may offer greater factual validity than direct measurement because the former provides respondents with specific circumstances to make a judgement. Hence, it is commonly adopted in questionnaire design for measuring complex and abstract concepts. Second, no previous studies had attempted to examine the attitudes and influence of the Umbrella Movement in Macao.

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<sup>7</sup> Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977).

<sup>8</sup> "First-hand Experience of the Umbrella Movement, Macau Youth: It is Such a Long Road to Democracy", *Mingpo*, 21 December 2014, p. A6.

Using the Umbrella Movement as a proxy indicator is therefore a “killing two birds with one stone” strategy that would reveal both university students’ attitudes towards an influential political incident and their latent preference of democracy. To further guarantee the feasibility and validity of this indirect measurement design, two questions need to be answered: first, how the incident was related to democracy; and second, how support for the incident was related to students’ preferences concerning democracy. A general background of the Umbrella Movement will reinforce our understanding of the ensuing discussions.

The schedule of political reform in Hong Kong had long been a controversial issue between pan-democracy camps and the Hong Kong government. In 2007, the National People’s Congress Standing Committee (NPCS) made the decision that “the election of the fifth Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the year 2017 may be implemented by the method of universal suffrage”.<sup>9</sup> At the end of 2013, the Hong Kong government eventually provided a consultation document on the 2017 Chief Executive election methods. The consultation document received strong criticism from pan-democracy camps because of the suggestion that the composition of the nominating committee would be the same as the election committee. The current election methods were considered lacking in representativeness and legitimacy, as the election committee comprised only 1,200 members from four sectors of society; in other words, the new methods simply replace the election committee and give it a new face. The consultation document made no progress towards an honest, open democratic election but had instead set up a process to rule out candidates who were unwelcome by Beijing. In reaction to the sluggish political reform, a civil disobedience campaign called “Occupy Central” was proposed to launch on 1 October 2014. The campaign was initiated by Benny Tai Yiu-ting, a law professor at the University of Hong Kong. He intended to mobilise protesters sitting in the Central district to block Hong Kong’s financial centre in order to force Beijing to reconsider genuine universal suffrage. The campaign did not meet its purpose as the NPCS replied on 31 August (as set out in the “8.31 Decision”) and flatly rejected any revisions to the nominating process. Things then took an unexpected turn: university and middle school students were the first to start a strike to oppose the “8.31 Decision” on 22 September. Several days later on 26 September night, Joshua Wong, one of the student leaders of the strike, mobilised protesters to occupy a square next to the Hong Kong government headquarters. This directly led to a confrontation with the police. The protesters held up umbrellas to resist the attempts of repression by the police with pepper spray and batons. The umbrellas later became the symbol of the protesters—the reason why the media called the protest the “Umbrella Movement”. To stand with the students, Tai Yiu-ting decided to start the “Occupy Central” campaign in the early

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<sup>9</sup> See <[http://www.2017.gov.hk/filemanager/template/en/doc/Con\\_Doc\\_e\\_\(FINAL\)\\_with\\_cover.pdf](http://www.2017.gov.hk/filemanager/template/en/doc/Con_Doc_e_(FINAL)_with_cover.pdf)> [28 September 2016].

hours of 28 September, and that began the 79-day protest.<sup>10</sup> However, since the beginning of the Umbrella Movement, which was spontaneous most of the time, neither the student leaders nor the organisers of the “Occupy Central” campaign were recognised as the chief conductors; the protest’s failure to achieve any concessions from either the Hong Kong government or Beijing could be attributed mainly to the lack of adequate bargaining power despite the large number of participants.<sup>11</sup>

The relationship between the Umbrella Movement and democracy was thus straightforward; the core appeal of the protest from start to end was to fight the cause for a representative and competitive election. While previous studies have demonstrated that democracy is a multidimensional concept, they agree that elections are one of the essential components. For example, Coppedge et al. presented six distinctive concepts of democracy including electoral, liberal, majoritarian, participatory, deliberative and egalitarian. The emphasis varied from one version to the next, but elections are a common attribute in all of them.<sup>12</sup> Munck and Verkuilen, on the other hand, conceptualise democracy in a less complex way by disaggregating the concept into “contestation” and “participation”, which are two attributes of components such as the “right to vote”, “fairness of the voting process” and “extent of suffrage”.<sup>13</sup> A recent study conducted by Quaranta further provides evidence that although citizens in 22 European countries hold divergent opinions on additional elements such as “referendums”, “differentiated parties”, “deliberation” and “responsiveness to other governments”, they share a general belief that “equality before the law”, “free elections”, “justification of government decisions” and “checks and balances” are the basic aspects of democracy.<sup>14</sup> The purpose of the Umbrella Movement could have been regarded as the struggle of Hong Kongers towards a minimal definition of democracy.

The relationship between the Umbrella Movement and Macao university students’ democracy preferences was less straightforward and requires further explanation. First, in recent years, social grievances against the pro-establishment camps and the Macao government have increased due to their disregard of social demands for public housing,

<sup>10</sup> Also see <<http://www.scmp.com/article/1604649/what-occupy-central-10-things-you-need-know>> and <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/29407079/hong-kong-umbrella-protests---whats-going-on>> [28 September 2016].

<sup>11</sup> This is according to an estimation based on a representative telephone survey conducted by the Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Survey at the Chinese University of Hong Kong from 8 to 12 December 2014. Approximately 20 per cent of the population in Hong Kong had at some stage participated in the Umbrella Movement. See <<http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com/news/art/20141219/18974592>> [25 January 2017].

<sup>12</sup> Michael Coppedge et al., “Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: A New Approach”, *Perspectives on Politics* 9, no. 2 (2011): 247–67.

<sup>13</sup> Gerardo L. Munck and Jay Verkuilen, “Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices”, *Comparative Political Studies* 35, no. 1 (2002): 5–34.

<sup>14</sup> Mario Quaranta, “The Meaning of Democracy to Citizens across European Countries and the Factors Involved”, *Social Indicators Research: An International and Interdisciplinary Journal for Quality-of-Life Measurement* 136, no. 3 (April 2018): 859–80.

anti-corruption initiatives, and in terms of government responsiveness and accountability. Bottom-up, political-oriented social movements such as those in Hong Kong that put pressure on political reform were nevertheless unrealistic given the weak civil society and the comparatively strong social control in Macao. With this in mind, it was understandable that politically enthusiastic young people in Macao paid close attention to the Umbrella Movement. If the protest had resulted in concessions from Beijing, it would have implied that Macao could grab similar opportunities to restart the journey towards democratisation. Second, due to the scarcity of civic education in Macao's educational system, most students did not derive their concept and understanding of democracy from abstract theories in textbooks but rather largely from empirical experiences. During the 79-day protest, numerous news reports, discussions and controversies emerged continually and were disseminated on various social networks daily. It was technically impossible to isolate oneself from the spotlight of the Umbrella Movement, especially for young people who are all typically internet-savvy. The author's survey data affirmed this judgement—62.1 per cent of respondents reported that they had, at times, discussed the Umbrella Movement with others on Facebook. Additionally, 11.4 per cent of respondents said that they had once shown their support online and 3.7 per cent had, at some stage, participated in the protest in Hong Kong. For the generation of the so-called post-1990ers in Macao, no political incident had been as closely connected to democracy as the Umbrella Movement since they were born, and it forced them to ruminate on the debate and controversies behind it. Their attitudes towards the incident should have more or less reflected their attitudes towards democracy.

In summary, the Umbrella Movement provided a plain and straightforward measurement of support for democracy at a minimum standard. More importantly, the Umbrella Movement was likely to exert an enduring influence on political development in Hong Kong.<sup>15</sup> It would be worth the effort to examine whether the same influence has spilled over to Macao. If such evidence were found, this would provide a better estimation of Macao's future political trajectory.

## DATA AND METHOD

The social survey data used in this study (summarised in Table 1) were collected from February to April 2016 at three universities in Macao. Due to a lack of funding, a convenience sampling method was applied. The questionnaires were distributed during class breaks between the general courses and immediately collected by research assistants.

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<sup>15</sup> The emergence of the localism camp in Hong Kong was commonly recognised as the precedent of the Umbrella Movement. Unlike the pan-democracy camp, which generally accepted the rules set by the Basic Law, the localism camp intended to break from the status quo by notions such as self-determination or independence from China. In the latest legislative council election held in 2016, the localism camp won six of the 70 seats. See <[http://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/china/2016/09/160905\\_hongkong\\_legco\\_election\\_counting](http://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/china/2016/09/160905_hongkong_legco_election_counting)> and <[http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/05/world/asia/hong-kong-election.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/05/world/asia/hong-kong-election.html?_r=0)> [28 September 2016].

A total of 825 respondents' surveys was received. Among them, 638 students were permanent residents of Macao, and the other 187 were not.

One of the questions posed to respondents in the questionnaires is: "In August 2014, the "Occupy Central" campaign (Umbrella Movement) occurred in order to pursue a representative and competitive election for the Chief Executive and legislative council members; what is your opinion on the demand for universal suffrage?". The responses were rated using a 10-point scale ranging from 1= "totally disagree" to 10= "totally agree".

In addition to asking students about their attitude towards the Umbrella Movement, they were required to answer two follow-up questions on political trust and political participation in order to capture the existence of spillover effects. The first question was: "How much trust do you have in the following institutions?" Students then rated their level of trust towards the Macao government and the Chinese central government on a four-point scale ranging from 1= "none at all" to 4= "a great deal of trust". The second question was, "Have you participated in the following activities in the past year?" The frequency of participation in demonstrations and public consultations was measured on a four-point scale ranging from 1= "never" to 4= "very often".

For the final part, the questionnaires recorded detailed demographic characteristics of the respondents such as gender, age, majors (0="Language & Humanities", 1="Business", 2="Education", 3="Social Science", 4="Science"), residential status and cost of living. Respondents' consumption of news and their national identity were included as additional control variables. The former was measured with an open-ended question: "People receive the news from newspapers, television and internet; would you please tell us how much time you spend consuming the news on average per day?" The latter was a nominal question that provided information on the following: Macanese, Macanese in China, Chinese in Macao, Chinese, and Others. The first two items were coded as "1" as they reflected a sense of local identity, while the remaining were coded as "0".

TABLE 1  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE RELATED VARIABLES

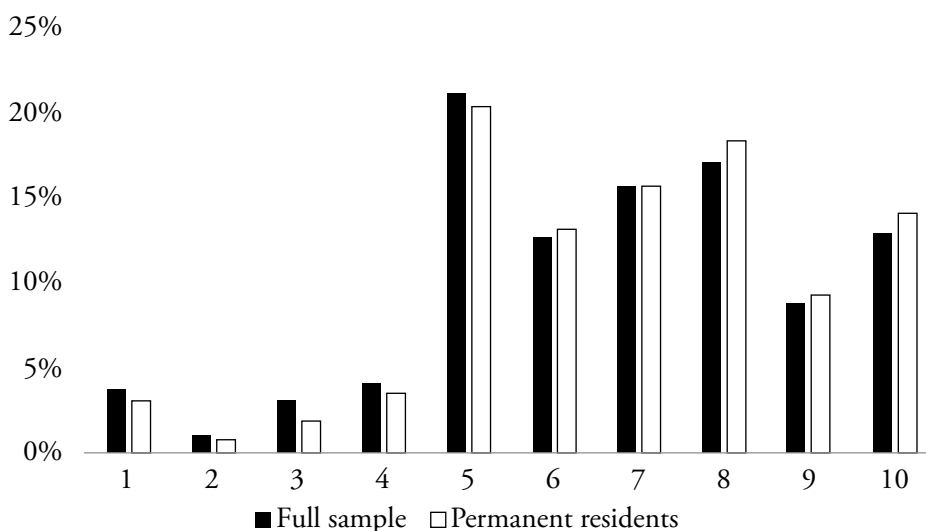
Variables	N	Mean	Min	Max
Support for demand for universal suffrage	815	6.67	1	10
Trust in the Macao government	815	2.48	1	4
Trust in the Chinese central government	815	2.38	1	4
Demonstrations	805	1.30	1	4
Public consultations	805	1.26	1	4
Gender	822	0.39	0	1
Age	818	21.2	17	40
Majors	802	2.94	1	5
Living expenses	755	2,827	0	40,000
News consumption	797	27.5	0	864
National identity	786	0.67	0	1



## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

As Figure 1 shows, students generally approved the demand for universal suffrage. Over 90 per cent of the respondents ranked this item with a “5” or above on the 10-point scale, with a mean score of 6.67. When only students with permanent resident status were considered, the point scale was skewed more to the right side, with a higher mean score of 6.84. This slight difference seemed to signify that local students who have lived in Macao for a longer time were relatively more concerned about the issue of political development than non-local students.

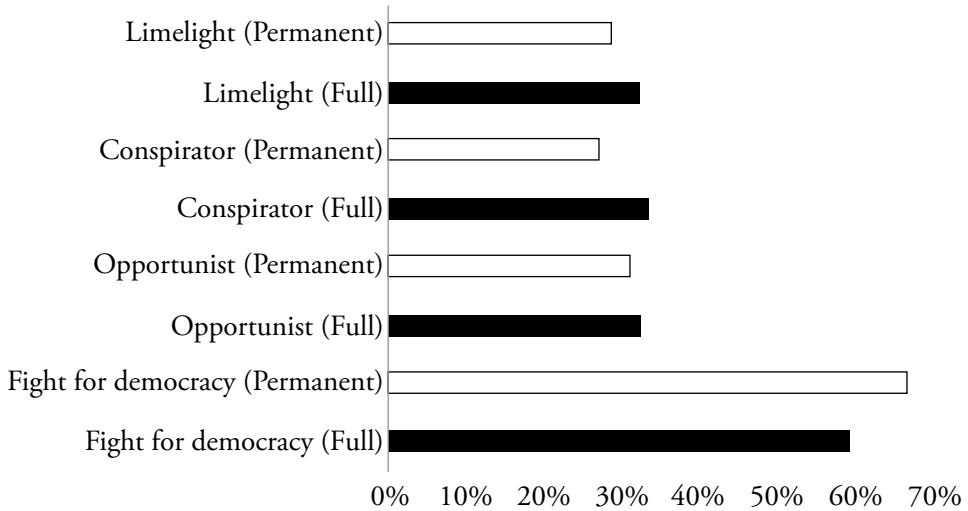
**Figure 1. Distribution of Views about the Support for the Demand for Universal Suffrage**



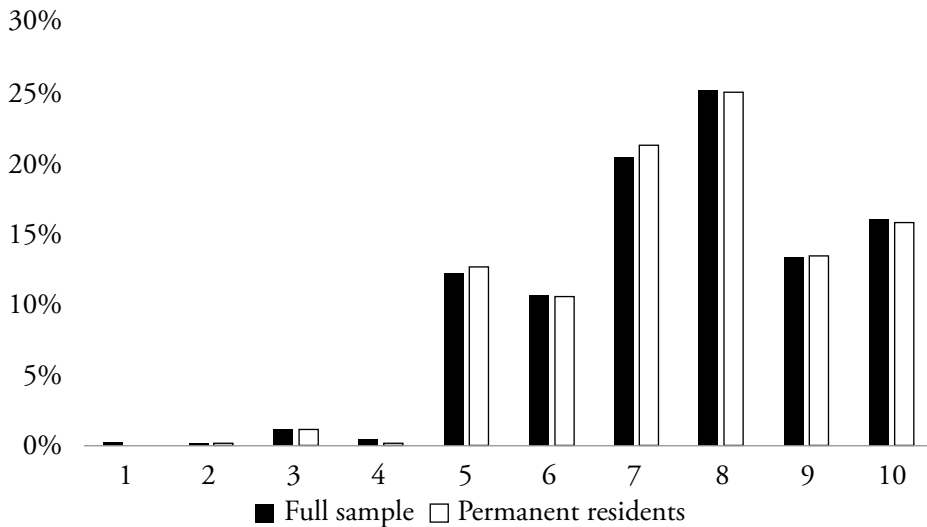
Note: “1” = “totally disagree”; “10” = “totally agree”.

To further examine the support for universal suffrage through students’ preferences related to democracy, the following two questions were asked: (i) “Do you agree with the following statements about student leaders?”; (ii) “In general, is it important to you to live in a democratic system?” The differences between the full sample respondents (of both permanent and non-permanent residents) and permanent resident respondents continued to emerge, as evident in Figure 2. Students who were permanent residents held a relatively more positive view of student leaders. For example, among them, 66.1 per cent agreed that the “fight for democracy” was the reason that student leaders had participated in the Umbrella Movement, in contrast to 59.15 per cent of the full sample respondents who agreed. Permanent residents were also less likely than the full sample respondents to agree with statements that student leaders were “opportunists” (–1.36 per cent), “conspirators” (–6.25 per cent) and “seeking the limelight” (–3.35 per cent). Nevertheless, in Figure 3, the two samples gave very close ratings to the importance of living in a democratic system, with almost identical mean values (7.56 vs 7.57).

**Figure 2. Distribution of Views on the Statements about Student Leaders in the Umbrella Movement**



**Figure 3. Distribution of Views on the Question of “Importance of Living in a Democratic System”**



Note: “1” = “totally disagree”; “10” = “totally agree”.

Table 2 demonstrates that all the variables in Figures 2 and 3 were significantly correlated with “support for universal suffrage” ( $p < .001$ ) in both the full sample respondents and permanent resident respondents. The positive and moderate correlation of “fight for democracy” ( $r = .35-.37$ ) and “living in a democratic system” ( $r = .35-.39$ ) provided some primary evidence that support for universal suffrage had a relatively strong connection with students’ attitudes towards democracy.

TABLE 2  
BIVARIATE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SUPPORT FOR UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE AND THE PREFERENCE OF DEMOCRACY

Variables	Full sample	Permanent residents
Fight for democracy	.37***	.35***
Opportunist	-.13***	-.16***
Conspirator	-.16***	-.19***
Limelight	-.19***	-.22***
Living in a democratic system	.35***	.39***

Notes: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

The ordinary least squares (OLS) regression in Table 3 provides more information on the factors that determine the support level. According to the standard coefficients in model 1, the most influential factor was national identity (Beta=.17). If a student identified himself/herself as Macanese, he/she was more likely to profess the appeal of the Umbrella Movement. The insignificance of permanent resident status confirmed that it was local identity rather than residential status that influenced students' preferences related to democracy. The second-most important factor was news consumption (Beta=.14). It was not surprising that more time spent in consuming the news led to a higher likelihood that the student would be familiar with the struggle behind Hong Kong's democratisation and sympathise with the protesters. The influence of living expenses (Beta=-.11) and gender (Beta=.11) was in the opposite direction. The former was a proxy for students' family economic status. Higher living expenses meant a higher likelihood that the student came from a wealthy family. As the Umbrella Movement generated political instability, wealthy families were expected to have a negative view of the incident because they could be worried that their economic interests would be harmed by the upheaval. As such, students' attitudes towards the incident thus may have been influenced by their family members. The finding that male respondents were more supportive than females was interesting, and a possible reason for this is that Macao is a rather conservative society. In traditional Chinese culture, politics are usually considered a "male" or masculine topic. In model 2, additional variables from Table 2 greatly increased the R-squared from 0.094 to 0.279, implying that almost 30 per cent of the variance in the dependent variables could be explained by factors in the model. This did not alter the findings from the bivariate analysis. "Fight for democracy" (Beta=.29) and "living in a democratic system" (Beta=.25) remained the two strongest predictors. In summary, it was acceptable to use students' support level for universal suffrage to measure their preferences related to democracy.

## **SPILLOVER EFFECTS ON POLITICAL TRUST AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

The author's survey results showed that university students in Macao were generally supportive and shared a positive view of the Umbrella Movement. Then, what are the

TABLE 3  
REGRESSION ANALYSIS ON DETERMINANTS OF SUPPORT FOR UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Support for universal suffrage		Support for universal suffrage	
	$\beta$	Beta	$\beta$	Beta
Permanent resident	-.15 (.03)	-.02	-.54 (.29)	-.10
Male	.50** (.18)	.11	.56*** (.16)	.12
Age	-.02 (.04)	-.01	.02 (.04)	.02
Living expenses	-.00** (.00)	-.11	-.00* (.00)	-.09
Business	-.07 (.28)	-.01	.03 (.24)	.00
Education	-.27 (.36)	-.03	-.18 (.32)	-.02
Social sciences	.38 (.28)	.07	.30 (.25)	.05
Science	-.15 (.31)	-.02	-.12 (.28)	-.02
News consumption	.01*** (.00)	.14	.01** (.00)	.10
National identity	.86** (.26)	.18	.75** (.24)	.15
Fight for democracy			.13*** (.18)	.25
Opportunist			-.08 (.17)	-.01
Conspirator			.00 (.17)	.00
Limelight			-.43* (.17)	-.09
Living in a democratic system			.39*** (.04)	.29
Constants	6.33*** (1.05)		2.14* (.98)	
R <sup>2</sup>	.09		.27	
N	687		685	

Notes: Robustness standard errors in parentheses; \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

resulting political consequences? This section provides a follow-up analysis of the spillover effects from the Umbrella Movement, with a focus on permanent resident respondents due to the fact that students from elsewhere solely study in Macao for several years and then leave after graduation; their political attitudes therefore do not have much influence on the governance of Macao. Students' political trust and practical political participation received particular attention due to their significance on political stability. Political trust, defined as people's evaluation of how well the government produced outcomes consistent with their expectations, was commonly regarded as an indicator of regime support.<sup>16</sup> Low political trust could trigger a series of negative outcomes in the form of political participation, like political disaffection and rejection of institutional political participation such as voting. This, in turn, undermined the legitimacy of the existing political system. Moreover, widespread political distrust was

<sup>16</sup> Jack Citrin, "Comment: The Political Relevance of Trust in Government", *The American Political Science Review* 68, no. 3 (1974): 973–88; Marc J. Hetherington, "The Political Relevance of Political Trust", *The American Political Science Review* 92, no. 4 (1998): 791–808; Arthur H. Miller, "Political Issues and Trust in Government: 1964–1970", *The American Political Science Review* 68, no. 3 (1974): 951–72.

a catalyst for unconventional participation such as protests, demonstrations and riots.<sup>17</sup> However, some scholars have different interpretations of the above correlation. Drawing a typology similar to Easton's "specific support" and "diffuse support" that distinguishes political trust towards establishing political institutions and the value of democracy,<sup>18</sup> Inglehart declared that "although hierarchical political parties are losing control over their electorates, and elite-directed forms of participation such as voting are stagnant or declining, elite-challenging forms of participation are becoming more widespread... respect for the political leaders is generally declining in advanced industrial societies; but support for democratic principles is rising. These changes do not undermine democracy; they tend to make it more secure".<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, Inglehart's argument was inapplicable in the case of Macao, which was far from a mature democratic system and more similar to what Levitsky and Way describe as a "hybrid regime".<sup>20</sup> For them, political institutions are embedded in regimes. Low political trust in government would reflect legitimacy crisis in the regime.

Inspired by the discussions above, the author examines spillover effects of the Umbrella Movement in two ways. First, the origin of the Umbrella Movement was Hong Kongers' discontent with the existing political system. Although apparently politically more stable compared with Hong Kong, Macao's government suffered the same defects in the lack of legitimacy and an increasing disconnect between the ruling parties and society.<sup>21</sup> It was worthwhile to examine whether the correlation between political trust and support for universal suffrage was negative. Second, if a negative correlation was confirmed with a statistical model, the support level for universal suffrage could serve as a proxy for political trust, and its correlation with political participation could be further examined, especially with regard to unconventional activities such as demonstrations. The main reason that political trust was not directly used as a predictor was that it was not the focus of this study. Moreover, multicollinearity problems were less likely to occur if political trust was omitted from the model.

Table 1 shows that students generally did not have much political trust in either the Macao or the central government. The mean value for the frequency of political participation was even lower. However, the mean value was misleading in this case because not every student participated in demonstrations or public consultations. A better measurement method was to recode the values as 1="ever participated in" and

<sup>17</sup> Citrin, "Comment: The Political Relevance of Trust in Government".

<sup>18</sup> David Easton, "A Re-Assessment of the Concept of Political Support", *British Journal of Political Science* 5, no. 4 (October 1975): 435–57.

<sup>19</sup> Ronald Inglehart, "Postmodernization Erodes Respect for Authority but Increases Support for Democracy", in *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government*, ed. Pippa Norris (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 236–57.

<sup>20</sup> Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>21</sup> Bill K.P. Chou, "Politics and Social Organisations in Macao: A Historical Institutional Analysis", *China: An International Journal* 13, no. 1 (April 2015): 22–42; Ieong, "Macao and Hong Kong, Convergence or Divergence?".

0="never participated". The participation rate in demonstrations and public consultations then became 29 per cent and 23.8 per cent, respectively. Regression models in Table 4 provide further examinations of the correlation between support for universal suffrage, political trust and political participation. As political trust was an ordinal variable, ordinal logistic regression was applied in models 3 and 4. It was evident that support for universal suffrage remained significant after demographic variables were controlled. The coefficient meant that a one-unit increase in support for universal suffrage led to a 22.5 per cent ( $e^{-0.203}-1$ ) decrease of political trust in the Macao government. Model 4 is interpreted in the same way. The negative correlation ( $e^{-0.203}-1=33.6$  per cent) was even stronger in the case of the Chinese central government. In other words, the stronger the student's support for universal suffrage, the higher is the likelihood that he/she would be distrustful of authorities. Demonstrations and public consultations became dummy variables after being recoded; therefore, models 5 and 6 are logistic regressions. According to the model's outcomes, support for universal suffrage only increased the probability of unconventional political participation (demonstrations) but not institutional channels (public consultations) for around 10 per cent ( $e^{0.1}-1=10.5$  per cent). In general, the model's outcomes suggested that support for the Umbrella Movement was likely to be associated with distrust in the establishment of political institutions and a higher probability of participation in demonstrations.

Implications from the aforementioned results should be interpreted cautiously. On the one hand, the negative correlation between the support of the Umbrella Movement and political trust provides evidence that university students are concerned about the problem of legitimacy deficits inherited in Macao's political system. On the other hand, the positive correlation between participation in demonstrations and political trust is only one factor that influences the occurrence of demonstrations because in reality, it also depends on other various factors such as the mobilising mechanisms, which are very different between Hong Kong and Macao as explained later. As previous studies have pointed out, in contrast to Hong Kong, Macao people are more interested in issues related to low politics (e.g. housing prices, traffic congestion) than high politics (e.g. political reform, judicial independence).<sup>22</sup> Government failures, in reality, would trigger social discontent.<sup>23</sup> But protests in Macao are usually "issues oriented" not "politics oriented", and this explains why large-scale social movements hardly take place as there are very few social issues in Macao that would arouse wide concern in Macao society.<sup>24</sup> Hence, after the 2014 Anti-Retirement Package Bill protest, Macao has not seen another protest of a similar large scale. Based on existing evidence, this is considered both good and bad news for the Macao government. Looking on the bright side, protests triggered by social discontent remain sporadic not systematic in Macao. However, if the Macao government makes no effort in improving its

<sup>22</sup> Yee, *Macao in Transition*.

<sup>23</sup> See <<http://news.rthk.hk/rthk/ch/component/k2/1370877-20171219.htm>> [29 January 2018].

<sup>24</sup> Ieong, "Macao and Hong Kong, Convergence or Divergence?"

TABLE 4  
REGRESSION ANALYSIS ON POLITICAL TRUST AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

	Model 3 Political trust in Macao government	Model 4 Political trust in central government	Model 5 Demonstration	Model 6 Public consultation
Support for universal suffrage	-.20*** (.04)	-.29*** (.04)	.10* (.04)	.05 (.04)
Male	-.07 (.18)	-.13 (.17)	.54* (.21)	.55* (.22)
Age	-.19* (.07)	-.08 (.06)	.06 (.05)	.05 (.05)
Living expenses	-.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Business	.40 (.25)	.52* (.26)	.00 (.00)	.06 (.35)
Education	.11 (.33)	.17 (.31)	.74* (.38)	.41 (.41)
Social sciences	.04 (.26)	-.02 (.28)	.35 (.33)	.03 (.03)
Science	-.01 (.28)	-.14 (.30)	-.43 (.37)	-.18 (.38)
News consumption	-.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	.00* (.00)	.00 (.00)
National identity				
	-.46 (.25)	-.48* (.21)	.21 (.30)	.05 (.31)
Constants			-3.91*** (1.20)	-3.28** (1.17)
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.05	.07	.04	.02
N	543	543	543	543

Notes: Robustness standard errors in parentheses; models 3 and 4 are ordinal logistic models; models 5 and 6 are logistic models; \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

government performance, the inherited legitimacy deficits would exacerbate and generate serious governance crisis in the long term.

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

To the author's understanding, this study is the first attempt to examine support for the Umbrella Movement and its spillover political influence on Macao's university students. The findings are summed up as follows. First, following a detailed discussion on feasibility and validity, attitudes towards the Umbrella Movement as a proxy indicator are utilised as an indirect measurement of students' preferences related to democracy. Based on the social survey data collected, university students in Macao generally approved the demand for universal suffrage in the Umbrella Movement. As representative and competitive elections are an indispensable component of democracy, students' high support level of universal suffrage could more or less reveal their attitude towards the preference of a democratic political system. Second, bivariate and regression analyses demonstrate that a positive correlation existed between support for universal suffrage and statements about student leaders in the Umbrella Movement that they were "fighting for democracy" and the importance of "living in a democratic system". Third, regression analyses also confirm that support for universal suffrage was a statistically significant predictor of students' political trust and political participation. The higher the students' agreement with universal suffrage, the higher would be their likelihood

of having less trust in both the Macao and the central governments, as well as in engaging in unconventional political participation. In other words, the Umbrella Movement had a significant influence on students' political attitudes and practical political activities.

Nevertheless, due to the sampling method, it was not feasible to apply statistical inferences based on the aforementioned findings to all university students or the youth generation in Macao. Further studies are required to investigate the entire pattern. Despite the limitations, this study offers salient policy implications. The survey results have clearly illustrated that students lack trust in the Macao government. This engenders the conditions necessary for unconventional actions and political instability. This study also reveals the tendency of a certain number of students who are daring to express their opinions by challenging the elite class via actions such as demonstrations. The Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong has provided a vivid example for Macao of what could occur if the demands of political participation overwhelmed the capacity that the existing political system could offer. To maintain people's confidence in the regime, a more responsive and accountable government is imperative. Macao would not be able to achieve this without negotiating with the central government to reinitiate stagnated political reform.