Networks of Play and Resentment:
Emotionally Mobilized Protests in Macau in the Internet Age

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Scholars have hotly debated the relationship between the Internet and protest throughout the current global cycle of protests. This study, however, introduces two crucial yet understudied factors of associations and emotions—especially the central role of emotion—to develop a metacomprehensive analytical framework that stretches beyond the binary relationship between the Internet and social protests. Situated in Macau's specific context, this study explores how particular associations strategically appeal to two emotional routes to mobilize the public to participate in protests in Macau in the Internet age. Through the use of case studies, ethnographic participant observation, and in-depth interviews, this study focuses on two particular strands of emotion-centered, association-initiated, and Internet-facilitated protests, namely, playful protests and resentful protests, to illustrate the working mechanisms of emotional mobilization of protests in the Internet age.

Keywords: emotion, Internet, Macau, association, protest

Since 2010, several Internet-enabled movements, protests, riots, and revolutions have occurred around the world, such as the Jasmine Revolution, the Arab Spring, and the Occupy Movement. From this point on the Internet, social media platforms in particular have been widely viewed as central to the orchestration of protests as a "decisive tool for mobilizing, for organizing, for deliberating, for coordinating, and for deciding" (Castells, 2012, p. 229), as people "planned the protests on Facebook, coordinated them through Twitter, spread them by SMS, and webcast them to the world on YouTube in the Internet age" (Castells, 2012, p. 58).

However, overemphasizing the central role of the Internet and raising risks of engaging in Internet-utopianism by simplifying the dynamic relationship between the Internet and protests as a linear causal relationship (Bennett, Breunig, & Givens, 2008), thus fails to situate the Internet and protests adequately within dynamic contexts (Fuchs, 2012; Ganesh & Stohl, 2013) and ignores the inner complexities, especially

the important emotion nature, of social protests (Garde-Hansen & Gorton, 2013; Juris, 2012; Tang, 2015; Tufekci, 2017).

This study, therefore, attempts to rejuvenate the emotions of protests in a specific context in the Internet age. To be more specific, it will explore how particular associations strategically appeal to specific emotional routes for emotional mobilization in Macau in the Internet age. Based on this contextualized study, I attempt to propose a possible emotion-centered analytical framework of protests for future studies.

Rejuvenated Emotions of Protest in the Internet Age

Social protests and contentious politics are of vital importance to both the real world and academia, attracting numerous scholars to conduct research from various perspectives. Communication scholars have also intervened in this research field and have highlighted the importance of media and communication, especially the emerging Internet and social media, which have changed the ways in which activists mobilize, communicate, and demonstrate (Garrett, 2006; Juris, 2012). The Internet seems to serve not only as a practical tool but also as a decisive foundation for the resource mobilization, political processes, strategic frameworks, and collective identity of social protests in the Internet age (Fuchs, 2012; Ganesh & Stohl, 2013). Especially with the development of social media platforms, scholars have optimistically imagined a new era and wave of social protests since 2010 (Karpf, 2012; Tufekci & Wilson, 2012), using terms such as "Revolution 2.0" (Ghonim, 2012), "Twitter Revolution" (Parmelee & Bichard, 2011), and "Facebook Revolution" (Khamis, Gold, & Vaughn, 2012).

However, these optimistic studies on protests in the Internet age tend toward techno determinism and Internet centrism in simplifying the relationship between social protests and the Internet and the inner complexities, especially the important emotional nature, of social protests (Fuchs, 2012; Garde-Hansen & Gorton, 2013; Hands, 2011; Juris, 2012; Mercea, 2011; Papacharissi, 2015; Tang, 2015; Tufekci, 2017). This emotional feature is disregarded not only in reference to the Internet age but also in most traditional studies on social protests. Originally, most scholars regarded social protests as emotional, and thus irrational, political behaviors in need of control, and mainly used explanatory frameworks of status inconsistency, social isolation, atomized individuals, alienation and anxiety, and relative deprivation to explain the emergence and development of social protests (Gurr, 1970; Smelser, 1962). However, scholars later criticized these works for overemphasizing the emotionality and irrationality of social protests and thus for not adequately explaining how individuals' mental or emotional imbalances lead to social collective behaviors. These scholars thus reject emotional factors and highlight the rational features of social protests in developing theories on resource mobilization, political processes, strategic framing, and identity projects (Cohen, 1985; McAdam, 1982; Melucci, 1989; Tilly, 2008; Touraine, 1971).

This previously implicit assumption that emotion and rationality can be contrasted was refuted at roughly the start of the 21st century by numerous scholars who brought emotions "back in" as an explanatory variable of social protests (Emirbayer & Goldberg, 2005; Flam & King, 2005; Gould, 2009). In fact, emotions have long been studied in sociology, but typically in reference to broader contexts of social order, social structure, social change, and social activity rather than in relation to social protests (Scheff, 1994; Turner, 2007). Later, more scholars started to focus on "emotions of protest," and especially on

emotions as political rhetoric and for mobilizing power in social protests (Johnston, 2014; Piven & Cloward, 1979). For example, Christian Smith (1996) discusses how moral outrage mobilizes social protests; Jeff Goodwin (1997) highlights the affectual ties and solidarity of social protests; and James Jasper (1998) shows how various emotions underscore different dimensions of social protest.

Scholars employing this emotional perspective claim that emotions have become a productive element for rewriting and reshaping protesters' action logics (Goodwin, Jasper, & Polletta, 2001); accordingly, protests are imbued with emotions and are inconceivable without emotions, which "give ideas, ideologies, identities and even interests their power to motivate" (Jasper, 1997, p. 127). For example, Deborah Gould (2009) argues that it is impossible to understand protests without considering the crucial role of emotions in the emergence, mobilization, expansion, and decline of movements and protests. However, most of these studies focus mainly on the motivating power of emotions rather than on the relationship between emotions and protests or on the whole process of protesting (Jasper, 1998). For example, Victoria Henderson (2008) describes emotions as "the energy that drives" (p. 28) participation in social protests; Gavin Brown and Jenny Pickerill (2009b) assume that emotions "serve as triggers for activism" (p. 26); Kye Askins (2009) regards emotions as an "unspoken and often unrecognized force" (p. 7) that compels individuals to act; and Anna Gruszczynska (2009) suggests that an emotion serves as an "important factor" in the "emergence" of social protests (p. 45). In this sense, emotions are regarded as a crucial factor that spurs social protest.

However, some scholars have criticized this view and "posit a more complex, ambiguous relationship between emotion and activism" (Horton & Kraftl, 2009, p. 17) rather than assuming the presence of a simplified causal relationship. Erika Summers-Effler (2002) suggests that, on the one hand, the emotional dynamics of subordinate positioning can produce critical consciousness and encourage resistance to bring about social change from disadvantaged positions. On the other hand, it could operate to limit disadvantaged people's options and maintain their subordinate positioning and social inertia. In other words, microemotional dynamics can influence more macroprocesses of society, both processes of persistence and change (Summers-Effler, 2010). Furthermore, emotion may both change and sustain the status quo, and also inspire activism and be provoked by activism at the same time. For example, Brown and Pickerill (2009a) argue that "various scholars have begun only recently to consider the emotions that inspire and sustain activism, that are provoked by it" (p. 1). James Jasper (1998) and Goodwin and Jasper (1999) also state that emotions are always both the motivation and goal of social protests. Guobin Yang (2000) further argues that protestors experience emotions by pursuing emotional fulfillment and self-realization rather than using emotions to participate in protests.

But these previous studies mainly brought emotions back into the traditional protests, without much attention to protests in the Internet age. However, as Manuel Castells (2012) argues, emotions, especially the emotions of outrage and hope, are playing an increasingly important role in protests in the Internet age. The Internet's functions in protests serve as "networks of outrage and hope." For Castells (2012), "the big bang of a social movement starts with the transformation of emotion into action" (p. 13); thus, social protests are essentially emotional movements, and, accordingly, emotions are "the origins of social movement" (p. 15) and "the drivers of collective action" (p. 137). Zizi Papacharissi's (2015) book *Affective Publics* also explores how the Internet, especially social media, facilitate feelings of engagement

and the affective publics' display of emotion, thus shaping the online and off-line solidarity that is crucial for movements and protests in the Internet age. Zeynep Tufekci (2017) combines on-the-ground interviews with analysis to demonstrate how Twitter and tear gas—representing connections and common sentiment—made the Internet-fueled protests form and operate differently from past protests. Jeffrey Juris's works (2008a, 2008b) also highlight the importance of deeply felt emotions that generate intense affective solidarity during the global protests.

Therefore, the increasing importance of the Internet and social media in social protests in the Internet age does not necessarily lead to the Internet centrism that disregards emotions in protests; rather, it proposes a new opportunity and new context for us to rejuvenate the emotions of protests in the Internet age. As Castells (2012) argues, the Internet's function in protests serves as "networks of outrage and hope" (p. 82). Based on the new networks and connections of emotions in protests, we can not only further examine emotion's mobilizing power in social protests but also explore the inner complexity of emotion and its dynamic relationship with protests in the Internet age. This study, therefore, attempts to address the following research question: How do protestors, and especially organizers, appeal to specific emotional routes for emotional mobilization in the Internet age? To be more specific, how are protests in Macau mobilized by some associations and facilitated by the Internet via emotion-centered strategies and tactics?

Contextualized Emotional Mobilization in Macau

Besides disregarding the inner complexities and emotional side of social protests, Internet centrism also fails to examine the contexts of social protests (Lin, 2017a). Similarly, emotions of protest must also be situated in specific contexts to explain how different contexts provoke emotions that inspire and sustain social protests (Brown & Pickerill, 2009a; Castells, 2012). As Jochen Kleres and Åsa Wettergren (2017) argue, "different patterns of emotion management derive from different political and socio-material contexts/experiences" (p. 507). They analyze fear, hope, anger, and guilt in climate activism and find that activists from the Global North tend to use hopeful "positive messages" while rejecting guilt and blaming, but those from the Global South tend to combine hope, guilt, and anger to manage fear. However, most previous studies on emotions related to protests usually highlight the salience of anger, outrage, and resentment, which, they argue, are more prominently found during times of protest (Barbalet, 1998; Petersen, 2002). They suggest that such emotions can efficiently boost individuals' willingness to participate in protests (Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000).

However, individuals rarely experience a single emotion at a time but rather display a combination of emotions as an "emotional constellation" in close temporal proximity (Benski, 2011). In fact, protestors typically encounter different emotions during a protest in expressing negative emotional messages toward their opponents and positive ones toward themselves (Goodwin & Jasper, 2006). For example, in the 1989 Chinese student movement, protestors exhibited negative emotional messages of anger, outrage, and fear toward Chinese authorities while experiencing positive emotional messages of pride and compassion within the movement (Yang, 2000). In reference to the Internet age, Castells (2012) also argues that besides the negative emotional message of anger, the positive emotional message of hope is also crucial to protests in inspiring a transition from the experience of anger to the experience of hope. According to Kleres and

Wettergren (2017), different emotions are chosen, managed, and combined by different activist groups as sort of "mobilizing strategies" due to different protesting contexts (p. 507).

This study, therefore, attempts to situate itself in the specific context of Macau to explore the research question above, especially focusing on how particular protesting organizers strategically appeal to different emotional routes via the Internet to mobilize protests in Macau. As a former Portuguese colony and as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Macau serves as a unique context for studying social protest in the Internet age.

Since its sovereignty returned to the PRC in 1999, Macau's political scene has been dominated by government-backed and pro-Beijing groups and associations, which represent the PRC to control Macau's political arena and facilitate Macau's SAR government to govern the city (Liu, 2008; Wang & Hung, 2012; Yee, 2001). These traditional associations, as sort of "quasiparties" in Macau's political system, serve the government's co-optation strategy to reduce citizen participation and social protests (K. P. Chou, 2005; Ho, 2011), "not only are democratic discussions impermissible within the pro-government camp, all serious attempts to reflect on Macau's authoritarian culture are suppressed in the name of national unification, national interest and social stability" (Liu, 2013, p. 253).

Among those 5,000 traditional associations, most of which categorized themselves as "loving China, loving Macau" associations, there are very few prodemocratic associations that may organize democratic protests in Macau (Kwong, 2014). Established in 1992 by Antonio Ng Kuok Cheong, the New Macau Association (NMA) is the most widely recognized prodemocratic association in Macau and a sort of "opposition party" in Macau's Legislative Assembly (LA). NMA and its main leaders including Antonio Ng Kuok Cheong, Au Kam San, and Sulu Sou Ka Hou used to be the main prodemocratic legislators in Macau LA and had organized and participated in annual demonstrations on Labor Day (May 1) and Handover Day (December 20; Kwong, 2014). But most of the traditional demonstrations usually aim at specific livelihood issues, like increasing salaries and reducing immigrant labor, rather than the democratic reform of the political system.

Because of the political history and status quo, especially the "authoritarian culture," there used to be few protests in Macau (B. Chou, 2010). In similar terms, it has long been identified as a "conservative city" (Kwong, 2014, p. 64) and a "small, quiet town" (Lin, 2017b, p. 239) without conflicts and protests. Macau citizens—92.1% of whom have no experience of participating in any protests (Yee, Lou, & Chan, 2011)—accordingly have long been considered "politically apathetic, with a low level of political awareness and efficacy" (Kwong, 2014, p. 61). They are just simple and silent citizens who dislike conflicts and protests, "bowing their heads obediently and accepting the reality of dominance" (Lin, 2017b, p. 239). Even when their interests had been seriously infringed by the government, 40% of them still preferred to keep silent rather than oppose the government (Kwong, 2014). Given this specific context, protest organizers must devise special strategies. As Mr. Choi, the former chairman of the Macau Concealers (an affiliate of the NMA), explains: "Macau citizens are so obedient, Macau society is so harmonious, and Macau politics are so dull. Emotions are the most powerful resource that we can turn to for mobilizing people in an emotional society" (Choi, personal communication, April 20, 2012).

The development of the Internet significantly facilitated the flourish of new Internet-based associations and the more effective use of emotions for protests mobilization. After about 20 years of rapid development since its public launch in 1995, Macau's Internet accessibility reached 84% in 2017, 54% higher than the global average; in particular, almost 100% of citizens between 18 and 40 have frequent Internet access ("Aomen Wangmin," 2018). In this sense, Macau has become a developed informational society, with more and more new associations being formed, developed, and maintained on the Internet. These new associations are no longer fully harmoniously co-opted by the government and are more active and even radical in their protesting activities. However, such associations are not all purely Internet-based like their counterparts around the world; rather, most maintain deep and close relations with the NMA.

Situated in Macau's special context, and in reference to the research question above, this article will specifically explain how the new Internet-based but NMA-related associations strategically appeal to specific emotional routes via emotion-centered tactics to mobilize the Macau citizen, especially the Macau youth, to participate in social, cultural, and political protests in the Internet age.

Method and Data

This research employs a case-study approach. Case studies strategically condense a number of theoretical and empirical elements to elucidate a singular practice or phenomenon in a bounded context that forms a unit of analysis (Merriam, 1998). In particular, this study focuses on the following four cases: "CTM Planking," "Protesting Green Bus Price Raising," "5/25 March against the Bill of Greed and Privilege," and the "5/15 Jinan University Antidonation Protest," which have been the most meaningful protests held in Macau in recent years, according to fieldwork observations. I used purposive sampling to choose these cases, and the rational had been described by Thomas Schwandt (1997): "Sites or cases are chosen because there may be good reason to believe that 'what goes on there' is critical to understanding some process or concepts, or to testing or elaborating some established theory" (p. 128).

More specifically, this research applies ethnographic research methods and in-depth interviews. Ethnographic research explores, examines, and interprets culture and society through first-hand involvement with research subjects (Murchison, 2010). Again, I used purposive sampling rather than random sampling to choose the ethnographic sites that were critical to the research question, since the qualitative research aims at the in-depth understanding rather than the generalization of social issues (Abrams, 2010). Initially, I purposively identified websites and social media (mainly Facebook, YouTube, and WeChat) of the NMA and its affiliated associations including Macau Concealers, Macau Conscience, and Love Macau, as well as the leaders of these associations as the targeted sites for online participant observation. As illustrated above, these associations and persons are the most important organizations and leaders of most protests in Macau. The fieldwork was conducted over roughly five years, from 2011 to 2016, through which I observed the main activities of these associations and persons and identified four main protests during this time period as cases to target at in this study.

In addition to these online fields, I also went to the off-line sites of those protests to observe their whole process, especially the emotional expression of the protestors during the protests. Participant observation fieldwork is central to ethnographic research; this research therefore accepts that fieldwork of

"physical displacement is a requirement" (van Maanen, 1988, p. 3) by engaging in participant observation in the protests discussed below, both online and off-line. I found no special difficulties in getting access to the ethnographic sites both online and off-line, and did not encounter any ethical issues with the study because the political opportunity structure of protests in Macau was still relatively friendly to protestors.

In addition, in-depth interviews were crucial in motivating respondents to offer detailed information (Skinner, 2013). Again, I used purposive sampling that "exercises his or her judgment about who will provide the best perspective on the phenomenon of interest" (Abrams, 2010, p. 538). The interviewees selected were mainly leaders and influential actors of associations and protests mentioned above. I conducted five face-to-face interviews of approximately one hour each and three online interviews through WeChat and WhatsApp.

Depending on the research question, Helena Flam and Jochen Kleres's (2015) edited book *Methods of Exploring Emotions* was used as the main reference in data collection and analysis, "observing/noting which emotions are expressed and attributed by actors to each other, noting one's own concurrent emotions, as well as when relevant circulating and shared emotions emerge" (p. 14).

Playful Protests

According to my fieldwork, when political and social associations in Macau have tried to emotionally mobilize citizens to participate in protests initiated by them, they have typically manufactured positive emotional messages of humor, joy, and pleasure first rather than negative emotional messages that are argued to be more prominent and salient for protests focused on other areas (Barbalet, 1998; Petersen, 2002). This emotional route to mobilization is based on organizers' strategic considerations rather than on an autonomic response or spontaneous reaction through protest. As Mr. Choi, the founding leader of Macau Concealers, notes:

> Macau's political system is so dull. Macau's residents are so tired of serious and dull politics that they of course are not interested in serious and dull protests. We thus use egao as our main strategy and tool for protest mobilization. Egao is considered very fun and playful to Macau's residents and especially to the youth who are very interested in this form of playful protesting. (Choi, personal communication, June 29, 2012)

The "egao" ("kuso," "mock" or "spoof" in English) approach is used as a form of contextualized resistance and protest in Macau. The term "egao" combines two characters in Chinese: "e" means "malicious" or "evil," and "gao" means to "make or do." Egao literally translates to "engaging in mischievous tricks" whereby netizens use originally uncorrelated and uncoordinated symbols from films, songs, current affairs, and public figures to produce creative, ironic, satirical, and subversive narratives, discourses, poems, puns, songs, literature, images, and videos. Egao represents a kind of cultural practice that has a longstanding tradition in Macau, Hong Kong, and Mainland China, and the term "egao" itself has become sort of slang used in China to describe this form of "culture jamming" from which netizens can deconstruct serious themes for comic relief imbued with a sense of disobedience to and defiance of authority (Liu, 2013; Warner, 2007). In this sense, the culture of egao not only constitutes an aesthetic practice and cultural

spectacle online but also serves as a form of "spectacular resistance" (Farra & Warner, 2008) and as an emotional route of mobilization used by certain associations. As Mr. Choi further explains:

> We use egao to express our grievances and to mobilize our audience. It is a tradition in Macau—our audience likes and enjoys this culture. Therefore, we heavily rely on the Internet for this form of egao mobilization. However, we refuse to turn egao into a paper-specific term online; rather, it is a tool used to attract the public's attention. Afterward, we may organize playful protests step-by-step off-line. (Choi, personal communication, June 29, 2012)

Two typical cases, "Planking CTM" and "Protesting Against Green Bus Price Raising," can be used to illustrate this form of playful protesting in Macau. CTM, the largest telecom and Internet service provider in Macau, monopolized the communications market with a mismatch between services offered and charges applied, which spurred widespread public dissatisfaction among Macau netizens. In addition to engaging in playful egao practices online to express grievances, certain associations organized playful protests off-line step by step. Macau Concealers established a Facebook page called Macau People Cursing CTM to coordinate and launch a flash mob dubbed the "Planking CTM" on May 17, 2011, World Telecommunications Day. Planking (the Lying Down Game) is an activity in which the participant lies face down with their hands on the sides of the body in an unusual or incongruous location, creatively producing pictures shared on social media. This glamorous photo pose had not just been for fun, but was also "used for social protests" in Taiwan where some people use this craze to spread social messages ("'Planking' Craze," 2011). According to Mr. Cheong, one of the organizers of the "Planking CTM," the protestors in Macau did not learn the Planking activity from YouTube, but more directly from the "planking craze" in Taiwan where they were more familiar with and easier to understand the special meaning of "planking" in context. In Cantonese, "planking" is pronounced as "puk gai," a common swearing and curse phrase roughly means "may you drop dead" in Cantonese.

On that day, about 30 netizens gathered and protested outside CTM's store on the Senado Square, the most crowded square in Macau, and expressed their dissatisfaction and grievances with CTM through the planking post. The protest created an impressive cultural spectacle and attracted hundreds of spectators who took their cameras and cellphones to record this flash mob and then uploaded the pictures to the Facebook page of "Planking CTM." Citizens who did not participate in the protest off-line thus involving in the discussion of the protest online, praising it as "the most interesting protest" "the funny behavioral art for resistance" and so on. Although the protesting flash mob is usually short-lived, it has long been practiced and regarded as a performative and carnivalesque fashion of mild subversion via "artistic/playful means" on the urban landscape, with a potential to become sort of annual gatherings and rituals for resistance (Bird, 2014, p. 225). On the same day of the following year, Macau Concealers orchestrated another planking flash mob against CTM that resulted in a meeting held with CTM managers to discuss CTM's future services. "Planking CTM" activity has become a yearly ritual through which Macau netizens engage in cultural egao activism through online and off-line realms with fun and pleasure.

Another playful protest of egao held in Macau is the "Protest Against Green Bus Price Raising." On June 29, 2012, led by the Green Bus Company, Macau's three bus companies submitted an application to

the Macau Transport Bureau to increase fare prices by 23%. The application became widespread news, leading to the occurrence of numerous playful egao activities online. Macau Concealers also established a Facebook page to call for off-line playful protests similar to the case of "Planking CTM." On July 15, about 100 protesters marched to Macau Transport Bureau to protest against the fare prices rising. The march was just like a game—some protestors rode on some bus models, like riding horses down the street toward the transport bureau. Some other protestors held the banners of "Protest Against Green Bus Price Raising," but most of them took turns playing the game of riding the buses, with nonstop laughter. Ms. Liu, one of the participants, told me that she was so happy during the protest because it perfectly reminded her of the game Trojan Horse Riding she played in her childhood, so she believed that such an interesting, playful, and joyful protest would become another unforgettable memory. When the protestors arrived at the transport bureau, the game-like march turned into a party-like protest, so much so that some protestors took out their guitars, drums, and microphones to play and sing parodic songs they had created to express their grievance with the Green Bus and Macau Transport Bureau. Pressured by these cultural activism activities, the Macau government finally suspended all approval processes and immediately dismissed the Green Bus Company's application.

This form of egao in Macau is typically self-interpreted by associations and activists themselves as a form of "playful protest" imbued with humor, fun, joy, pleasure, and excitement. As Jasper (1998) argues, "Participation in social movements can be pleasurable in itself, independently of the ultimate goals and outcomes. Protest becomes a way of saying something about oneself and one's morals and of finding joy and pride in them" (p. 415). These positive emotions "can create a variety of 'hooks' to engage people" (Branagan, 2007, p. 3) through a playful atmosphere that generates emotional energy for protesting (Ahmed, 2010; Anderson, 2009). These more enjoyable and playful forms of protesting are assumed to be more energizing (Chvasta, 2006) in resonating with an ethos of "fun and laughter" (Wettergren, 2009). Throughout the fieldwork period, I could indeed appreciate the fun nature of actions taken, could hear the laughter of the people, and could feel the pleasure from their hearts. In this sense, protesting itself is imbued with fun, laughter, and pleasure (and vice versa), implying a more creative and positive form of playful protesting. In fact, fun, laughter, pleasure, and humor are constant elements of playful protesting, which does not function through rational arguments buttressed by logic and facts but rather through the use of funny discourse to combat serious political strategies (Warner, 2007). In this sense, fun, laughter, pleasure, and humor are regarded as basic preconditions for engagement in playful protesting that guarantee that activists protest "for the fun of it" with an instant reward of pleasure (Wettergren, 2009).

This form of playful protesting also creates a new political and activist space in which netizens can engage in "insurgent political movements" and "creative insurgency" to bring about changes in the real world (Harold, 2004; Kraidy, 2016), as it typically merges fun with a specific political agenda, creating a powerful catalyst for social and political change (Young, 2006). For example, both of the above cases of playful protesting brought positive changes in the real world leading to CTM's negotiations and to the government's engagement with protestors. As a performative experiment, playful protests subverted the perceived seriousness and lack of playfulness of politics in Macau: "The playfulness of direct action proposes an alternative reality, but it also makes play real; it takes it out of western frameworks of childhood or make-believe—and throws it in the face of politicians and policy makers" (Jordan, 1998, p. 133). Therefore, playful protesting is also regarded as a playful action of ideological critique (Lambert-Beatty, 2010). For

example, the two cases described above critiqued CTM's monopoly and collusion between the government and the bus companies.

Resentful Protests

Since the NMA self-declared as a "democratic party" and "opposition party" within Macau's political system, its affiliated and related associations have typically followed the NMA in its position against the Macau government. Therefore, besides strategically turning to positive emotional routes of playful protesting to attract public attention and to critique the government through hidden transcripts, they also deliberately turn to the negative emotional route of resentful protesting to mobilize the public to protest against the government more directly and radically. As Mr. Chao, another former leader of Macau Concealers and a former president of the NMA, explains:

> Egao is just a specific strategy; it's a means rather than an end. We use egao to attract attention, to provoke anger, and finally use this anger to motivate participation. We may still use egao in protests, but we are not that "playful" anymore. Rather, we are angry because we are not just having fun here; we are aiming toward political and democratic changes in Macau. (Chao, personal communication, July 7, 2016)

In this sense, the cultural activism of egao discussed above not only demonstrates the use of positive emotions as a strategy of playful protesting in itself but it also serves as a premise for further political activism based on negative emotions, functioning "as a sort of stepping stone into political activity" (Duncombe, 2002, p. 6). Indeed, besides positive emotions of humor, fun, joy, and laughter, negative emotions of grievance, anger, and outrage have become a major source of energy behind protesting (Barbalet, 1998; Castells, 2012; Petersen, 2002). As Castells (2012) states, "social movements do not arise just from poverty or political despair. They require an emotional mobilization triggered by outrage against blatant injustice" (p. 248). Some scholars even argue that negative emotions are more prominent than positive ones, as anger, outrage, and resentment are more direct "drivers" of protest mobilization, thus sufficiently mobilizing the public to participate in certain protests (Henderson, 2008, p. 28). Specifically, one core emotion, "resentment," an emotion rooted in structural changes that create further status hierarchies and that arise from the exposed hypocrisy of a disregard for rights and undeserved advantages (Barbalet, 1998; Petersen, 2002), becomes a powerful motivator of protests in several ways by identifying injustice (McAdam, 1982), by attributing blame to injustice (Javeline, 2003), and by provoking indignation and outrage (Klandermans, 1997). In this sense, resentment is intertwined with many other negative emotions, becoming more and more powerful through this process of intertwinement to motivate the public to participate in protests.

According to our fieldwork, because of activist associations' positions against the government, resentment has also become a core emotion spurring protest mobilization in Macau. Certain associations facilitated by the Internet have initialized and amplified resentment against the government by identifying the government as a source of injustice, by attributing blame to particular government officers, and by provoking indignation and outrage toward the government. As Mr. Chao explains,

As the most important democratic political association in Macau, it is our vocation to assume an opposing position. However, we are not alone, and we should not be alone. Anger, outrage, and resentment felt by the majority of Macau's people and by society at large are emotions that we can take advantage of to mobilize individuals to take action with us. (Chao, personal communication, July 7, 2016)

In May 2014, a government-drafted bill that offered generous one-off compensation packages to the Macau chief executive and to other principal officials spurred an uproar both online and off-line. Macau Concealers first launched a petition campaign called "One Person One Picture Against the Self-Serving Bill" on May 14, 2014. This time, it no longer used principles of egao to inspire playful protests. Rather, it asked netizens to share photos with a poster stating, "This corrupt retirement package is really ridiculous," on which a giant pig was displayed to represent corrupt officials, to express their grievances, anger, outrage, and resentment.

Another NMA-related association, Macau Conscience, also petitioned against the controversial bill on May 20, 2014. The group's three leaders, including Mr. Chao, also the president of the NMA at that time, handed the petition to an official representative outside of the legislature. A photo of this exchange was then uploaded to the Facebook page with an announcement that the association would launch a campaign entitled the "5/25 March Against the Bill of Greed and Privilege." Next, the association created a specific Facebook page to mobilize the campaign and invited 46,000 netizens to participate.

On May 25, 2014, under the scorching heat of the summer sun, 20,000 citizens (the police recorded the official figure as 7,000), many of them wearing white shirts, took part in the protest (dos Reis, 2014). Protesters marched in front of the government headquarters holding signs written in Chinese, Portuguese, and English with statements such as "The Government Neglects Public Opinion," "Officials Care Only About Themselves," "No Shame at All," and "Abuse of Power." They also yelled "Withdraw!" and "Recall!" throughout the protest. Our on-site interviews show that protestors came out to attend the protest mainly because of their grievances, rage, outrage, and resentment. As some of them noted:

"I am so angry! How could they steal public money so brazenly? It's like a robbery happening in broad daylight!"

"I know they are greedy, but I never expected them to be so shameless as well."

"We cannot keep silent forever! We need to express our outrage with the government."

"Misgovernment drives the people to revolt. The bill is totally intolerable; it pushed us over the edge, and we have to do something."

In addressing this response, on May 29, Fernando Chui Sai On, the Macau chief executive, finally called for a special press conference to announce the scrapping of the bill and promised that the government would move forward with a new proposal only with the citizens' agreement. This decision was immediately hailed as a "victory" by Mr. Sou, the leader of Macau Conscience, which the association celebrated as "the

start of a broader democratic movement in Macau" (Luk, 2014). The protest is the largest antigovernment protest held since the 1999 handover of Macau ("Macao Officials," 2014). Almost all successful protests have involved a "scale shift" (Tremayne, 2014); from such a scale shift, the "5/25 March" has been identified as the "Macau Spring" (Sautede, 2015) and as a "historical turning point" (Ip, 2015) in Macau denoting "Macao's political awakening" (Kwong, 2014).

Another similar case was the "5/15 Jinan University Antidonation Protest" held in May 2016. In May 2016, the NMA accused Chief Executive Fernando Chui Sai on of "abusing" his position and exhibiting a "notorious" lack of transparency on the allocation of 100 million RMB (roughly 123 million MOP) to Jinan University (Leong, 2016). The NMA and some of its affiliated and related associations established a specific Facebook page to mobilize a march on May 15. However, they not only targeted the event itself but also the chief executive and political system as a whole through their slogan: "Refund, Resign, and Reform." This kind of slogan suggested that the emotion-centered protests in Macau were becoming sort of democratic protests toward political and democratic changes in Macau.

However, it is too early to be overly optimistic. This protest pattern in Macau was usually issues based, showing its capacity for the quick aggregation of the public around contentious issues and its potential for flash mobilizations, but it promoted only ephemeral engagements from participants. Very few other, similar resentful protests and no long-standing social movements were found during my five years of fieldwork. To some extent, this protest pattern failed to build a collective identity like the feminist, environmentalist, or vegetarian movements in the new social trends in the West. Therefore, although the pattern successfully facilitated the aggregation of individuals around common causes, it may fail to foster a common identity through "multiple and heterogeneous social processes" (Melucci, 1996, p. 20).

Concluding Remarks

Situated in Macau's specific context in the Internet age, this study explored how particular associations and organizers strategically appeal to particular emotional routes via the Internet to mobilize protests in Macau. The study found that the Internet has played an increasingly important facilitating role in social protests in Macau, although it has not become a decisive tool for protesting. Rather, social associations with defined political positions, especially NMA and its affiliated and related associations both online and off-line, have strategically mobilized the public to participate in protests through two emotional routes of playful protests and resentful protests; even the playful protest itself had a strategy and a sort of "stepping stone" of resentful protest.

By these research findings, this study hoped to contribute to the relevant research fields in many ways. First, it introduced two crucial yet understudied factors of associations and emotions—especially the central role of emotion—to develop a metacomprehensive model beyond the binary relationship between the Internet and social protests. Second, it identified the "networks of play and resentment"—indebted to Castells's (2012) "networks of outrage and hope"—to explain two particular types of emotional protests, namely, playful protests and resentful protests, to enrich the studies of emotions of protests in the Internet age. Third, it further challenged the false binary of the irrationality versus the rationality in social movement studies by highlighting the strategic dimension of emotions of protests, that emotions do not merely

represent the autonomic responses or spontaneous actions of protestors but rather they are used through a deliberative process based on protestors' evaluations. Indeed, some scholars even use the concepts of "emotional management" and "emotional strategy" to explain how protestors can strategically use their agency, power, resources, and creativity to inspire emotional mobilization (Hochschild, 1979; Whittier, 2001; Yang, 2000).

However, this study still has its intrinsic limitations—that it is mainly based on case studies in Macau's specific context, which may hinder its broader recognition and may raise critical questions about the adaptability of its research findings in other contexts. Future studies, therefore, may need more thorough empirically supported theorization of the framework in diverse political and cultural contexts; comparative studies among different contexts may be particularly welcome.

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