Thesis Summary

Internationalism in the 21st Century: The Milk Tea Alliance, 2020-2022

For about a year, as part of my MA in political science, I researched the Milk Tea Alliance (MTA), a transnational solidarity network originating in the convergence of Hongkongese, Thai and Taiwanese activists in 2020. While there are a few studies about it, most of the discussion comes from media reports, think tanks and activists themselves. The goal of this project was to realise the first in-depth analysis of the MTA rooted in the sociology of mobilizations (or social movements), focusing on mapping the following dimensions:

1. Its specific interactions: who interacts with whom, and how; and what types of exchange and mutual support occur, from financial aid to symbolic acts;

2. Its tactical repertoire, i.e. the various types of protest events and modes of action;

3. Its intersubjective characteristics: ideological framing, cultural interrefencing, political goals and discourses, collective identities.

4. Lastly, and based on all the above: what does "transnational solidarity" means in the case of the MTA?

From a theoretical point of view, another aim was to discuss and assess the two prevailing approaches in the existing research on transnational solidarity and movements. The classic standpoint presumes that it is the result of an ***ad hoc*** convergence between activists or

movements sharing certain pre-existing characteristics (identities, political beliefs and goals, mutual relationships and ties...). Another perspective argues that solidarity - and especially transnational solidarity - is itself a process: it emerges in and through interactions and activities, wherein people from different locations develop shared experiences and a mutual critical sense of solidarity. The argument in this regard is that a more fruitful conceptual framework consists in looking for the precise articulation of both dimensions - *ad hoc* convergence and relational process - in each specific study case and context. It might be that some movements or transnational interactions are defined more by one or by the other, but I argue that as a starting point we can presume there is a combination of both, which is one of the aspects thatneeds to be examined empirically.

This research is based on an extensive gathering of information, materials and activist testimonies about the MTA, collected, on the one hand, through two hour-long interviews with individuals involved in it and, on the other hand, data found on social media and in news reports. I thank both interviewees for having, on top of accepting to do the interviews, provided some more relevant links and data, especially the database of events and activities compiled by the MTA Calendar project. I only focus on the 2020-2022 timespan, although the MTA is still active as of mid 2023.

Chapter 1 lays out the theoretical and methodological apparatus used for this study, while *Chapters 2* and *3* represent the core of the analysis and discussion, organised thematically. Ifirst examine the activists' own descriptions of the MTA, their values and goals, the various political issues or causes mentioned, and the multiple relevant geographical locations. I then give an overview of the people and groups involved in these transnational interactions, from Hong Kong to Belarus and the US. I conclude *Chapter 2* by outlining the spectrum of the MTA's modes of action, from digital activism to public events, including both individual and collective activities. *Chapter 3* is devoted to the symbolic and aesthetic aspects of the MTA, the meaning-making and shared cultural references used by its participants, and the affective dimension which constitutes a transversal theme mentioned by nearly every activist who took part in it.

Below I shall briefly outline the most important elements of each section, as a way to show the main materials, concepts and analyses contained in this research, which was written in French (because of the University's requirements), which unfortunately limits the possibility of non-francophone activists and scholars to take a look at it thoroughly. I hope to be able to offer an interesting overview of the findings and contents, despite this limitation and the clear anglo-centric flaw in my empirical approach, which simply stems from lacking linguistic fluency in the various languages relevant throughout the MTA. I will talk about other limitations and potential improvements for future research on the MTA, in the conclusion summary.

Theoretical Framework

Transnational Solidarity as a Multidimensional Process and Network

Solidarity is defined in this work as *a process of politicisation where practical and intersubjective connections are created through the interaction of dominated subjects, who thus develop reciprocal affinities based on their shared oppression and desire for emancipation*. As Davis (2017a: 6) writes, transnational solidarity actively emerges 'from translocal performances of care and shared experiences'. Drawing on the contributions of Marx (2000 [1844]: 74), Fanon (1952: 109, and cf. Ng 2019: 159-61), Freire (1970) and Karen Ng (2019), it can be argued that these connections, practices and affinities generate and cultivate a shared

sense of the universal character of experienced/perceived injustice, i.e. a problematisation of it as an affront to human dignity as such, encouraging people to go beyond their particularist aims and mobilise for a general transformation of social reality to exclude any form of oppression that impinges on human fulfilment (what Freire called conscientização, borrowing the idea of conscienciser from Fanon).

It's also worth mentioning that I solely focus on liberatory forms of internationalism, i.e. excluding both elitist and reactionary/authoritarian/far right transnational connections. In other words, the MTA is approached in terms of what some others have called "cosmopolitanism from below" (Kurasawa 2004, Agustín & Jørgensen 2019).

Following Davis and others, I emphasise the *multidimensional* character of this process, considering that interactions and practices of transnational solidarity cannot be reduced to a discursive and ideational phenomenon, because interpersonal, intersubjective/cultural/meaning-making, material, physical, spiritual and emotional aspects *potentially* all matter too. I argue that it's more interesting to leave the door open for any of these dimensions, with the goal of figuring out which aspects do indeed form a central part of these processes and interactions...

I use the conception of networks developed by Passy and Monsch (2014, 2020), as explained in the following quotes:

> Networks are ties that enable institutionalization of social structures; they are collections of interests that allow for instrumental action to be performed, and they constitute an enclaveof meanings that enables the mutual construction of cultural scripts and, ultimately, the network itself.
>
> [Activists] can perform joint action with peers by relying on shared cognitions concerning common good and politics and [...] those shared meanings are formed and transformed through conversations activists enjoy in their respective commitment communities, and in their network of friends and relatives (Passy & Monsch 2020: 286-287)

Media Ecologies & Affordances: Avoiding dichotomies in the study of online interactions and activism

In the context of social movements, the impact of digital mediations can be understood as follows: platforms and technologies contain potentialities (*affordances*) that can be used by actors at different moments in the protest, with different degrees and types of impact. The type and degree (and timing) of impact will be determined above all by the evolution of the movement itself (movement dynamics), but also by external or unforeseen events, in other words anything that influences the trajectory of the movement itself. This approach was usedto study one of the elements of the MTA, namely the anti-ELAB resistance movement in HongKong (Lee et al. 2021), whose LIHKG forum was structured in such a way that the tendency for opinion leaders to emerge was restricted - favouring (potentially) more horizontal participation.

Several authors (Foust & Hoyt 2018, Treré & Mattoni 2015) have emphasised the advantages of approaches using the notion of 'media ecology', in order to overcome reductionist impasses. Precisely, against all forms of determinism, this ecological metaphor insists on the indeterminacy of the convergence or relationship between human agentivity and technological affordances (or possibilities/potentialities). Both pessimistic (or 'dystopian') and optimistic (or 'utopian') visions of the role of technologies in social transformations tend to reify the impactsof these mediations by defining them as intrinsic rather than potential effects.

Digital folklore and Performance Constellations

> From protest signs and television advertisements, to memes, gifs, TikTok, and other social media formats, and to gestures and costumes – politics is beyond the conceptual and is aesthetic in its visual accessibility to the general public. (Hui 2020: 78)

The mobilisation cycles of 2014 and 2019-2020 in Thailand, Taiwan and Hong Kong, which form the context of the emergence of the TAM, are particularly marked by what Gabriela de Seta (2020) has called "digital folklore "26 . In her review of the literature on these various cultural practices, which may at first sight seem trivial but have become ubiquitous forms of interactionin certain population groups, she proposes this term as a category encompassing the various dimensions that have been studied, such as artistic and vernacular creativity, or the phenomenon of memes. She defines it as follows:

> digital folklore is the folklore of the Internet, a vernacular emerging from below and a folk art created by users for users, coalescing into repertoires of jokes, memes, and other genres of digital content. (de Seta 2020: 180)

Digital folklore is part of a wider dynamic characterising certain contemporary mobilisations, theorised by Marcela Fuentes using the concept of 'performance constellations'. In the context of protest movements in Argentina, Mexico and Chile between the late 1990s and 2011, Fuentes focuses on dramaturgical 'assemblages' that connect spatially and temporally separated places and actors by providing them a performance-based framework for mobilisation within both digital and physical interactions. Closely linked to the strategic use of digital affordances, the author defines performance constellations by way of an astronomical metaphor, constellations giving shape to clusters of stars that are separated in space and time: 'how on- and offline activist acts propel, shape, and sustain collective action across spatial and temporal gaps' (Fuentes 2019: 2). As Ladia (2022b) explains, Fuentes considers that all protest mobilisations can be analysed in terms of (dramaturgical) performance, i.e. the staging of social conflict, solidarity or resistance:

> They are part of a 'theater of life' where socio-political actors take on rehearsed roles inorder to engage with the public as their audience. Serving both as a method of inquiry and intervention, these performances deliver messages of oppression and hope in order to encourage the audience, as citizens, to join the performance. And as they occupy new spaces, these protests transform into a new form of performance - an assemblage of cross-platform, multi-sited, live, collective, and present bodies - this is Fuentes' ***performance constellations***. (Ladia 2022b)

Note: the theoretical section is much longer but those were the key concepts I used throughout the analysis...I also wrote about some theoretical hypotheses, I prefer to leave those out of this summary as it wasn't about making rigid predictive/causal hypotheses but general open-ended considerations based on some of the relevant literature. Let's jump to the empirical/analytical part instead!

Activists' Own Definitions of the MTA & Relevant Political Issues

Despite a certain ambivalence in the ways MTA activists have described it, and the diversity of the causes [*which I go into that section: from the relevant domestic issues in each country tothe defense/liberation of various oppressed minorities/regions, ecological topics and of course the*

theme of Chinese authoritarianism and imperialism], we can generally see that the MTA is perceived as an informal and partly symbolic transnational network, connecting several popular movements in their struggle against authoritarianism and other injustices, and for democracy and freedom. China and its imperialist project are a prominent, but not exclusive, target. While the starting point of this "alliance" is the convergence of Thai, Hong Kong and Taiwanese activists and internet users (and later on the significant participation of Burmese activists and groups), the geographical scope of the MTA goes beyond this context and includes actors from places as far away as Iran, Belarus and the United States. Its participants see it as a form of reciprocal empathy, of emotional support providing a little hope to those involved in struggles that seem hopeless, by showing them that other people in other regions are facing similar issues and suffering, and have declared their solidarity with their causes. I also talkabout some of the more contradictory things that one could encounter when looking at MTA content online, such as the attempted appropriation by Indian nationalists. I quote many activists and groups, both from my own data collection and interviews, as well as anonymous quotes compiled by Xun-ling Au, and Niao Collective's threads.

The three next sections are the biggest parts of the study, but I tried to keep the summaries as short as possible. Needless to say some things aren't mentioned and a lot of data and materials aren't shown here.

Mapping the MTA's Participants & Interactions

There is no central organisation, no official meeting place or website, no formal structure or leadership.structure or leadership. The MTA's rhetoric and self-description are partly similar to other contemporary movements, such as Black Lives Matters in the United States, the Gilets jaunes in France, or even Anonymous, in this explicit refusal - and to some extent the effective absence - of formal structure, centralisation, or even figuration in and of itself. We can nevertheless identify which kinds of people and groups have taken part in the MTA, both online and in public spaces. I first talk about individual activism (especially on social media/online), then mention the interventions/actions of various prominent figures (activists, artists, actresses/models) such as Joshua Wong, Netiwit Chotiphatphaisal (the pic below is aprotest in the memory of Tiananmen square massacre, with others from the Student Union ofThailand), Ro Nay San Lwin, Robert Minn Khant, Roy Ngerng Yi Ling, May Toe Khine, and Poe Mamhe Thar. The rest of this section - and the main part of it - is an overview of the various collectives, groups and projects either directly about the MTA, or who joined and took part in it at some point, in some way.

Figure 4 : Action par Netiwit Chotiphatphaisal et la SUT (Student Union of Thailand), le 3 juin 2020. Source: The Nation Thailand 2020.

Let's just say that I found ***A LOT*** of groups and projects, and I clearly couldn't pretend to be able to provide an exhaustive list but I still mention probably around 40-50 of them. More than 20 projects are directly MTA-themed, they're the ones who systematically bring whatever is happening to this transnational network and wave of solidarity. A slew of groups emerged in 2020 or 2021, such as MTA Philippines (one of the most active online groups) or the Niao Collective, and later on MTA Calendar and MTA Galleries. But there is even more groups/projects tied to specific national or diaspora contexts who fight for various causes but at some point cooperated with other activists and usually explicitly referred to the MTA: student associations, meme pages, NGOs, leftist publications, political or human rights organisations, some coffee shops in Asia and North America choosing to stand with the region's protests, etc...

Some of the most noteworthy activist groups include the "Milk Tea Alliance - Friends of Myanmar" - whose statements were spread by others on social media since they themselves aren't directly on it -, the TATD (Taiwan Aliance for Thai Democracy) who organized many important solidarity events in Taipei (see pics below; there were also similar offshoots in the US and Australia), the multiple Myanmar-based and transnational/diaspora groups campaigns supporting Burmese resistance against the coup (CDM, Blood Money Campaign, General Strike Committee, Sisters 2 Sisters, India For Myanmar, Sri Lankans 4 Myanmar, Myanmar Students Coalition in Canada, etc.), and the equally numerous groups supporting who continued to fight on behalf of Hongkongers despite the brutal crackdown that went into effect there in late 2020 (the worldwide Students for Hong Kong, and dozens of collectives throughout Canada, the US, the UK, and Germany, and beyond - e.g. Befria Hong Kong in Sweden). In other words, thereare multiple levels and locations of the global MTA network: some are primarily rooted in the national contexts of the struggles at stake (e.g. the CDM in Myanmar, Thalugaz and Thai Lawyers for Human Rights in Thailand, the Taiwan Digital Diplomacy Association in Taiwan), then there are elements in the region/in neighbouring countries (e.g. TATD, Sri Lankans 4 Myanmar, MTA Philippines and MTA Indonesia), and thirdly in the larger diasporas and global public(s), many collectives try contributing as they can in Europe, North America, Australia and more. I've only talked about groups tied to the movements and issues in Hong Kong, Thailand, Taiwan, Myanmar and other regional countries, but it's worth mentioning that others - such as Uyghur Issue JP (in Japan), the Free Rohingya Coalition or the ones fighting for Tibetan self-determination (Tibet Rights Collective, Students for a Free Tibet, the Tibet Network) - are rooted

in the liberation of ethnic and colonized minorities throughout the region. Lastly, leftist publications like *Lausan* (Hong Kong-focused) and *New Bloom* (Taiwan-focused) also hosted and contributed to transnational dialogues between activists.

Figure 6: La TATD organisa un rassemblement en solidarité avec les mouvements de Thaïlande et de Hong Kong, le 16 août 2020 à la gare de Taipei (Taipei Main Station). Sources: Everington (2020), @nutmh (2020), @tatdnow (2020), NationTV22 (2020), Dedman & Lai (20 21: 16-17).

Figure 7: La TATD organisa un rassemblement pour marquer leur soutien à la résistance en Birmanie (on repère également des drapeaux se référant à Hong Kong et la Thaïlande), le 28 mars 2021 à la Place de liberté, à Taipei. Source: @tatdnow (2021).

The Hybrid Tactical Repertoire of the MTA

As an informal network with relatively undefined boundaries, it is certainly partly arbitrary to consider that one mode of action or another is - or isn't - characteristic of the MTA; for instance, one could sometimes argue that it is rather a modality of one of the national movements rather than the MTA *per se*. Despite this difficulty, the explicit or implicit references (i.e. to solidarity between two or more movements, even if the terms 'Milk Tea Alliance' are not mentioned directly) to the MTA by activists make it possible to observe in what contexts - and for what types of action - actors act in the name of the MTA. We have thus been able to observe that various actors (Internet users, student groups, human rights associations, pro-democracy organisations, diasporas, etc.) have resorted to the following modes of action: tactical and cognitive mutual aid (circulation of information and practical know-how, eg. first aid guide), financial support, boycotts and symbolic/political acts of consumption, petitions, marches, rallies, vigils and commemorations, the use of signs referring to the MTA within another movement in a specific context, translation and documentation work (and archives/memories

of struggles), as well as the various digital practices. The latter includes practices of sharing, translating and circulating information; archiving and documenting contemporary events and movements; using cultural codes and references to discuss political themes discreetly; some cultural and artistic forms of protest, the practical and tactical organization of actions, and of course debates and deliberations. Here are a few materials I used for this section.

Example of transnational diffusion of modalities of protest action (left is in Hong Kong in october 2019, and right in Thailand a year later)

Figure 17: Utilisation des téléphones comme lampes de poche. À gauche: à Hong Kong, en octobre 2019. À droite: en Thaïlande, le 18 octobre 2020. Source: Mahtani & Wangkiat (2020).

This transnational diffusion included a lot of advice shared by activists from one country on how to deal with and fight back against repression methods, tips and precautions for these confrontations, and even detailed guides for first aid (e.g. Håkan Geijer's *Riot Medicine* was shared a lot).

The HK19 Manual

ᥙᥣᥱ	HK	Links & resources
ချစ်ခင်ရတဲ့ ညီအစ်ကို မောင်နှမတို့ရေ... ငါတို့က ဟောင်ကောင်တော်လှန်ရေးမှာ တစ်ထောင့်တစ်နေရာက ပါဝင်ဆင်နွှဲခဲ့ကြသူတွေ ဖြစ်ပါတယ်။ အခု မင်းတို့နိုင်ငံမှာ ဖြစ်ပေါ်နေတဲ့ အခြေအနေ အရပ်ရပ်နဲ့ ပတ်သက်ပြီး စိုးရိမ်ပူပန်ပြီး စိတ်မကောင်းဖြစ်မိပါတယ်။ ဒါ ကြောင့် လွတ်လပ်ပြီး တရားမျှတတဲ့ အဖွဲ့အစည်းတစ်ခု ပြန်ဖြစ်လာဖို့အတွက် ငါတို့တွေ မင်းတို့နဲ့အတူ ဒီတိုက်ပွဲမှာ ရပ်တည်သွားပါမယ်။	Dear brothers and sisters in Myanmar, We are part of the Resistance in Hong Kong, and we look at what is happening to you in Myanmar with concern and great sadness. We share your values, and stand with you in the fight for a just and free society.	

Un guide (~160p.) traduit en anglais et birman (par la journaliste Mary Hui), contenant des conseils stratégiques inspirés de l'expérience hongkongaise. Date: 16.02.2021. Source: @YourAnonCentral (2021b).[125]

Below are some examples of direct references to the MTA in Myanmar, Thailand and Hong Kong respectively; as we address later there is here a deliberate choice to put the symbolism,

references and (in the second and third pics) political demands of the MTA network in display, partly in a "lighting the beacons of Gondor" fashion (sorry for the corny analogy, but you get my point lol).

Figure 23: Un groupe de personnes réalisa cette représentation de la MTA avec des bougies, à Taunggyi, la capitale de l'État Shan, dans l'Est de la Birmanie, le 27 février 2021. Sources: Goh (2021), 7 Day News via @saiwaihlyanhtun (2021) et @MatthewCung (2021), @Myozawpaolo (2021).

Figure 24: : Manifestation à Bangkok, le 28 février 2021. Photographie: Jack Taylor/Agence France Presse. Source: Taylor (2021).

Here's a group of activists staging a series of pictures at the summit of Peak Tower in Hong Kong, on February the 28th, 2021

The MTA's Contentious Performativity, Vernacular & Aesthetics

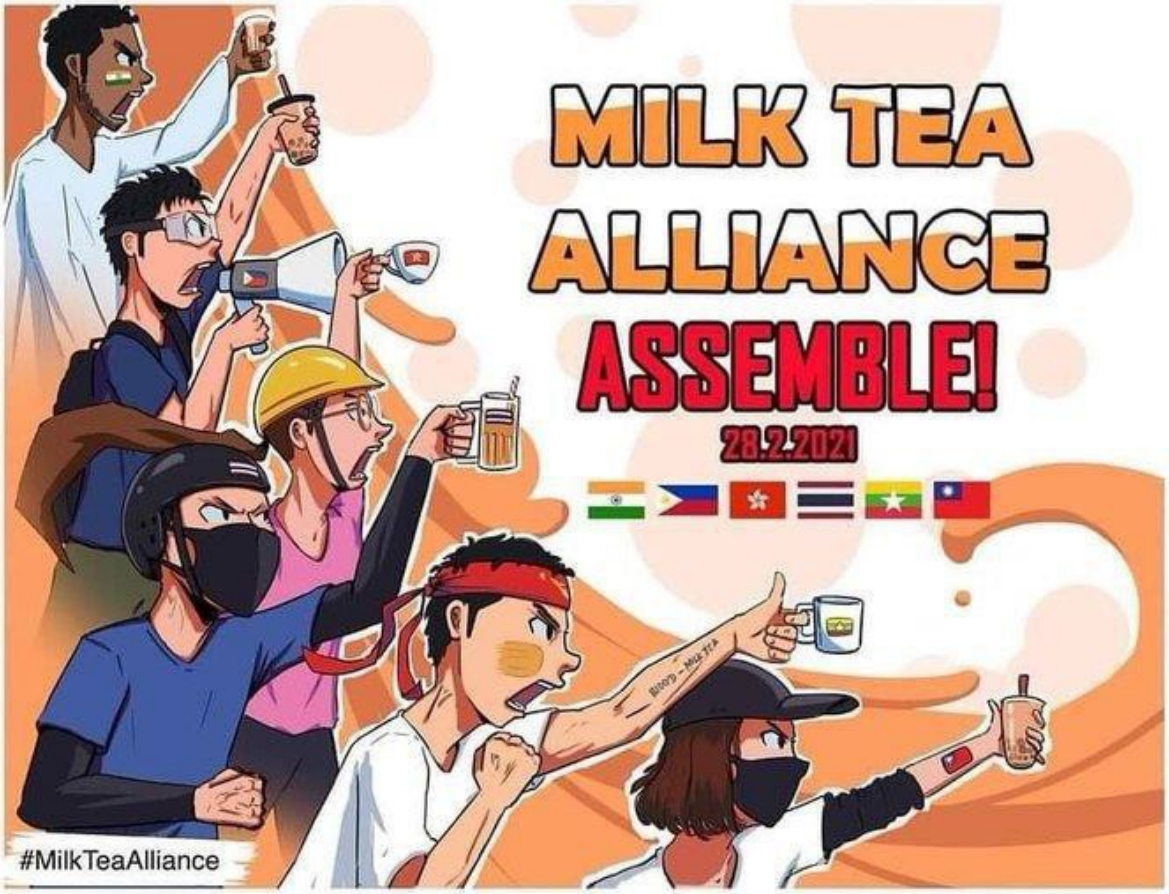
However, these modes of action are inseparable from a performative and aesthetic work that must also be seen as a logic of action characteristic of the MTA. Publicizing the issues at stake for the various movements represented in the MTA, as well as the transnational solidarity connecting them (usually with direct reference to the MTA), takes the form of a double occupation of public and digital spaces. The entanglement of modalities of action in these two spaces takes the form of *constellations of performance*, following Fuentes' approach: a performative assemblage/configuration - where mobilized actors adopt certain roles to interact with the public as their own audience, symbolically performing and re-enacting conflicts and struggles - linking fragmented sites of protest from different localities and temporalities within a common dramaturgy of action/contention. This enables the MTA to articulate highly diverse modes of action deployed at multiple levels (local, transnational, digital, public): its tactical repertoire is thus marked by a mix of conventional modalities (non-violent actions in public spaces, formal declarations, recourse to traditional aesthetic forms such as inscribing precise demands on placards, petitions) and others that are more spontaneous and informal (symbolic staging via digital mediations, contestation through artistic and cultural channels, subtle forms of politicization through inter-referentiality and recourse to *seemingly* "apolitical" or "unserious/silly" forms of expression).

In this section I thus examined the iconography, performative modalities and cultural resonance of the MTA network, using a lot of materials found on social media. This includes discussing memes and protest art, the symbolism of *milk tea* itself (i.e. its cultural and politicalimplications in the region, and the specifically colourful and celebratory visual symbols used within the MTA), the general pattern of using referencing elements of pop culture - most notably the "three-finger salute" from *Hunger Games* -, and even a few videos and/or songs. Unfortunately this is already far too long as a summary, so let me just show a few examples and conclude this

part with a very relevant remark from Bava Dharani:

> *By purposefully employing symbols such as Milk tea, and K-pop dancing, activists highlight how they are able to resists while retaining their joy and youth and vulnerability, elements that are discouraged in serious political movements. (...) The MTA subverts (...) power structures by leaning into and constructing itself with language, symbols and activities that are whimsical, joyful and 'unserious'. It refuses to be afraid to employ cultural tropes that may define it to be 'un-resistance'.*


END Dictatorship
Cool KiDS
DRINK MILK TEA
28/02
MILK TEA ALLIANCE 2021 ASIA SPRING REVOLUTION


MILK TEA ALLIANCE ASSEMBLE!
28.2.2021
#MilkTeaAlliance

The Affective Dimension: "*Milk Tea Alliance is sharing each other's pain*"

The majority of MTA participants describe it as a form of reciprocal empathy offering hope to those involved in the various struggles by showing them that elsewhere other people are facing similar difficulties and suffering, and have declared their solidarity with their cause. In additionto the process of cognitive construction and synchronisation, this affective content of interactions and the reproduction of performances generates a climate of excitement and enthusiasm, or 'emotional energy' (Jasper 2011: 287). A sense of community without co-presence or proximity is made possible by this maintenance of mutual affective support, as well as the sharing of formed and transformed cultural scripts/cognitions, during performances and on social media such as Twitter. I use a lot of quotes from activists in this section, but let me share something from one individual I talked to:

> *I think our main thing, for me, for my side, is more about sharing each other's pain. You know, we have famous phrase from Hong Kong movement: the phrase is "Hong Kong belongs to anyone who shares its pain." And I really love this phrase in general, I feel it's exactly about the Milk Tea Alliance. At least about my part of participation. I feel like sharing each other's pain is very important, it's also promoting empathy or empathizing to the other countries (...) Because I think it's something we really lack especially before the Internet time. Like we have so many troubles around the world, but we live in small bubbles. (...) Everyone living in their own walls, we think "Oh, our wall is so beautiful there's no problems... People killing each other is not a big deal." But right now, the Internet with this modern activism I feel like this pain is more and more shown everywhere, on the Internet, on the real life. We can see this pain, and we can do something with it. It's hard to avoid this pain, it's impossible. Before it was easy to just not get this information but right now we need to deal with this pain. Milk Tea Alliance for me is mainly about pain of the other people, of the other groups of people around the world, not around Asia.*

Conclusion

As most activists themselves have said themselves, the MTA resists a stable, single definition, because it is complex and multifaceted: informal but connecting multiple associations and formal organisations, transnational and multi-thematic but often claimed in the context of specific and/or local struggles, a general context/pretext for many forms of collective action but also claimed by individual activists on the Internet, and a phenomenon occupying both online and public spaces, and combining some traditional as well as more contemporary/innovative modes - and modalities - of action. The purpose of this work was to give an account of these various aspects, without first categorising the object in a restrictive way.

To do this, I analysed its actors, its political content, its tactical repertoire and modes of action, its iconographic/visual productions, its performative/symbolic interactions, and its affective dimension. On the basis of this study, we can conceive of the MTA as a transnational networkof practical mutual aid, solidarity performances - in the dual sense of protest actions and dramaturgical stagings - and affective support. I have adopted the conceptualisation of networks proposed by Passy and Monsch (2020), i.e. in terms of relational configurations connecting various actors sharing compatible socio-political interests or causes within a framework facilitating strategic action, and constituting 'enclave[s] of meanings' enabling the construction of cultural scripts and shared cognitions that make the network itself possible.

Shared perceptions are constructed and transformed in the course of interactions and

conversations within engaged communities and the network, which links different groups, movements and other actors who are not in the same activist milieu. By sharing conceptions of the "common good" and political issues, frameworks of identity and agency, and other mental representations, collective and protest action is facilitated (mind synchronisation). The distinctive feature of the MTA is both its transnational (or 'translocal') dimension and the centrality of the techno-digital mediations that structure all the interactions in this network. In addition, there is no central organisation, no formal structure, no institutionalised procedure, and the relational dimension of the network consists mainly of informal, non-institutionalised links between activists, Internet users and political groups (associations, NGOs, left-wing magazines, occasionally a trade union, etc.).

Its tactical repertoire is marked by a mixture of 'conventional' methods - non-violent actions in public spaces, formal declarations, recourse to traditional aesthetic forms such as writing specific demands on placards, petitions - and others that are more spontaneous and informal - symbolic staging through digital media, protest through artistic and cultural channels, subtle forms of politicisation through inter-referencing and recourse to forms of expression that are a priori apolitical or 'not serious', marked by digital folklore and popular culture. Participation in performances - based on a popular vernacular (Hunger Games, Les Misérables, K-Pop, etc.)and derived from digital folklore (memes, the milk tea symbol) - constitutes "a framework or common narrative" (Fuentes 2019: 16) that is particularly salient among the youth of the region and its diasporas, not least because their cultural socialisation is partly different from that of older generations. There is, for example, a certain desire to politicise certain elements of everyday life (milk tea as a consumerist ritual turned into a political symbol) or products of the cultural industry ('three-finger salute' from Hunger Games as a symbol of resistance and revolution) for protest purposes.

In particular, the theoretical proposition is that we should not dichotomise the dynamics of transnational networks or solidarity, by strictly opposing the convergence of pre-existing and compatible elements on the one hand, and the processual emergence of intersubjective and practical connections (leading, in the case of transnational solidarity, to a form of critical consciousness corresponding to a protestor/subaltern cosmopolitanism) on the other. We found that while the MTA's network is informal and follows a largely processual logic, a significant proportion of its actors originate from and engage in specific contexts of struggle, with local/national issues at stake or linked to a particular cause (defending Tibetan self-determination). Activist figures such as Joshua Wong, national organisations such as the CDM, and student associations fighting for Hong Kong or Burmese liberation, for example, are actors strongly attached to particular socio-political contexts. The cognitions, tactics, cultural or vernacular references, and other resources or modalities we observe in the MTA are in part the product of national/regional socio-cultural contexts, previous cycles of mobilisation (2014 / 2020 in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Thailand) and the 'social conditions of internationalism' (Gobille 2005: 143) in the region and in the diaspora; but the genesis of these aspects - and their conjugation into a shared critical/contestant consciousness and practices of mutual support - stems simultaneously from a ***multidimensional transformative process*** (relational, cognitive, performative, symbolic, emotional/visceral, etc.) in digital interactions and public encounters/actions.