

Lecture 6

This week we started with the students giving me an update on their plans for their [case study assessment item](#), and then we watched the film, [The Take](#) (by Avi Lewis and Naomi Klein), about the take-over of factories and other businesses by workers in Argentina in the early 2000s.

We had already covered some of the background to *The Take* by discussing FaSinPat in Lecture 5 (one of the factories that workers had taken-over).

I have shown the film several times to different groups of students, but this time it was very different. The students in the class had been involved several months earlier in the Umbrella Revolution—the pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong in the latter part of 2014 when protestors, largely students, occupied several major districts for 79 days. What had been a relatively small demonstration unexpectedly escalated once the police used tear gas on students. It's estimated that 1 million people (almost one-seventh of the population) became involved; Kinman Chan from the Chinese University of Hong Kong has called it “one of largest civil non-violent disobedience actions in human history.” Like the workers in the film the students had first-hand experience of acting on their political commitments to take and occupy; like the workers in the film, the students had first-hand experience of clashes with the police and the use of tear gas. So in those scenes at the barricades the silence in the room was, to use a cliché, deafening. There is no doubt in my mind that the students identified and felt a sense of solidarity with the workers in Argentina.

The film is 87 minutes long and I wanted the students to watch the whole file, but this meant that we didn't have a lot of time for discussion at the end. A missed opportunity?