

## **The Rise of Civic Nationalism: Shifting Identities in Hong Kong and Taiwan**

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### **Abstract**

The rise of civic nationalism in both Hong Kong and Taiwan indicates a prominence of democratic liberal values which are contributing to the further rejection of an ethnonational Chinese identity imposed by Beijing. Using the 2014 Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong and the Sunflower Movement in Taiwan as case studies, this paper examines how the rise of civic nationalism is furthering the nation-building project of Hong Kong and Taiwanese identities. Following a comparison between the Umbrella Movement and the Sunflower Movement in terms of the sequence of events, the paper identifies the impact of the movements on both societies through an examination of the successes and failures of each movement, the rise of new political forces and party politics, as well as political institutions. The paper concludes by discussing the implications of the widening identity gap of Hong Kong and Taiwan from China.

**Keywords:** *Hong Kong, Umbrella Movement, Taiwan, Sunflower Movement, political identities, civic nationalism, social movements*

## 1. Introduction

Identity politics in Hong Kong and Taiwan have become inherently more complex over the last decade due to increasing threats and changes to both of these societies. Despite being largely ethnic Chinese societies, Hong Kong and Taiwan are very different from China due to their differentiated histories which have been influenced by multiple factors including foreign colonial rule, their separate independent governments and experiences with democratization. As a result, Hong Kong and Taiwan have developed their own unique local and national identities, both of which are attempting to defend themselves against China's increasingly powerful presence in today's globalized world.

As Malte Philipp Kaeding argues, Hong Kong and Taiwan are an excellent comparative case study due to their "similar socio-economic background and development, and an authoritarian past that de-emphasized political participation through a strong emphasis on traditional Chinese (political) culture" (Kaeding, 2011: 258). Most recently, another similarity has appeared with the occurrence of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement (香港雨傘運動) and Taiwan's Sunflower Movement (臺灣太陽花學運). Both movements shared similar ideas, upholding ideas of democracy, self-determination of the people and peaceful protest. Student participants protested on the streets and occupied key areas where law enforcement attempted to disperse the protestors. They both focused on not only addressing their respective governments about their concerns but also the institutions in question which risked being influenced by China and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In both places, the rise of civic nationalism has been rooted

in the ideas of universal values including freedom, democracy as well as clean and transparent institutions, forces which are opposing the “China factor” as external threats to both societies. This paper seeks to further examine the relationship between civic nationalism and the rise of student activism through a further analysis of both movements. In this process, the paper will identify key similarities and differences in the ways civic nationalism has manifested itself in both places through an examination of the successes and failures of each movement, the rise of new political forces and party politics, as well as political institutions.

## **2. Nationalism as an Analytical Framework**

Research on national identity has produced several theories that address different conceptions of identity formation. On one hand, political scientists such as Donald Horowitz and his work in *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* examine “ethnicity” as an umbrella concept that “easily embraces groups differentiated by color, language, and religion; it covers ‘tribes,’ ‘races,’ ‘nationalities,’ and castes.” (Chandra, 2006: 398). Such an analysis suggests that the nation is a community which can be defined through the ethnicity or blood connections between people. On the other hand, Benedict Anderson’s theory of *Imagined Communities* argues against this discourse and looks at the ways in which the imagined collective experience can form communities constructed by a common social experience, since nations are “imagined political communities” which are “imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson, 1991: 6). This conception of a civic nation is based upon the principle that the nation is formed through the choice of individuals. These viewpoints have shaped the debate as to whether nations are based upon ascriptive or acquired characteristics.

Nationalism, a social movement on behalf of the nation, can be further split along these two lines, divided along principles of ethnic nationalism and civic nationalism.<sup>1</sup> While other scholars have used various definitions, the main difference between these two terms is how membership within the collective community is defined. Ethnic nationalism is based upon a “given” criteria of ethnicity presented as a form of “ascriptive identity” which is in turn based upon variously defined elements ranging from a myth of common descent or other “given” criteria such as language or religion to demark ethnic differentiation (Keating, 2001: 4). The main premise is that this type of identity is “given” rather than “chosen” by the individual. In contrast, civic nationalism is a type of nation-building which is formed by “a collective enterprise of [...] members [...] rooted in an acquired rather than ascriptive identity” (Keating, 2001: 6). The acquired identity is based upon common values and patterns of social interaction which are demonstrated through institutions and historical memory. Therefore, an individual “irrespective of birth or ethnic origins” can become a member of the community through adaptation of a certain set of political and social interactions that are defined by common values and a sense of common identity (*ibid.*).

In the context of Hong Kong and Taiwan, the emergence of civic nations has occurred through the rejection of a Beijing-centred ethno-Chinese nationalism and the valuing of democracy and freedom under the norms of a largely democratic international system. As scholar Shirley Lin notes, although people from these two regions may “acknowledge their Chinese roots... this does not translate easily into a common national identity” (Lin, 2014: 116). Given the agenda of the student protestors in the Sunflower Movement and the Umbrella Movement and the rejection of the notion of a “political China” in both

scenarios, an analysis of the ways in which civic nationalism has operated in both regions will shed more light on the future prospects for identity formation in both regions.<sup>2</sup> Since identity is fluid and consistently changing concept, a variety of factors must also be considered including “cultural norms, political priorities, social expectations, national economic development aspirations, geopolitical contexts and historical antecedents” (Lien, 2014: 26).

### **3. Hong Kong and the Umbrella Movement**

The return of Hong Kong to the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1997 created a series of events which produced great dissatisfaction in the post-colonial era. On the political front, the protests on the 1st July 2003, the sixth anniversary of the handover became some of the earliest signs of the Hong Kong’s people de-identification with China when the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government led by the first Chief Executive Tung-Chee Wah 董建華 attempted to pass legislation which would enact a security law based upon Article 23 of the Hong Kong Basic Law (基本法), which “prohibit[s] any act of treason, secession, sedition, subversion against the Central People’s Government” (Hong Kong Basic Law, 1997). Such a policy, which was eventually repealed, brought fears to the Hong Kong people that the government would attempt to limit the freedom of expression as it occurs in China. Meanwhile, on the economic front, the HKSAR Government and the Central Government in Beijing signed the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) which acted as a free trade agreement that “offered a timely economic boost by providing preferential access to Mainland markets in 18 services areas and eliminating tariffs on 374 Mainland product codes” (HKSAR Information Services Department, 2013). The “immediate and visible

impact” of CEPA however came in the form of relaxed restriction on cross-boundary travel between Hong Kong and China (HKSAR Information Services Department, 2013). The results of the new scheme resulted in boosting Hong Kong’s economy to pre-SARS levels through the estimated 800,000 to 900,000 Mainland visitors who travelled to Hong Kong monthly between 2003 and 2004 (Ngok, 2011: 692). Despite the initial positive effects of this agreement, CEPA made Hong Kong’s economy increasingly more dependent on China’s economy.

Growing tensions further escalated through a series of people-to-people events including the January 2012 Dolce & Gabbana incident in which local news reports stated that the company had prevented Hong Kong locals from taking pictures outside the store, while Chinese tourists were allowed (Krupnick, 2012). That same month, Kong Qingdong 孔慶東, a Peking University professor, had stated that Hong Kong people were disloyal to China and continued to maintain a colonial mentality and labelled them as “dogs” after an incident with a Chinese tourist eating on the MTR went viral on social media.<sup>3</sup>

The HKSAR Government also attempted to implement a more vigorous vision of citizenship which attempted to bridge the identity gap by trying to foster feelings of a National Chinese identity that emphasized a “shared ethnocultural heritage” with China through the Moral and National Education (MNE) Curriculum (Han, 2015: 244). However the rise of student groups such as Scholarism (學民思潮), led by student leader Joshua Wong 黃之鋒, resisted the reforms through protests, sit-ins and the mobilization of Hong Kong youth. The students successfully delayed the implementation of the curriculum described as “ethnocentric language calling for national unity based on geography, blood, and ethnic commonalities” (Lin, 2014: 123).

The culmination of dissatisfaction by the Hong Kong people led to the eventual Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong after the Standing

Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC) came to a decision on the 31st August 2014 that the 2017 election for the Chief Executive would allow for the quasi-democratic election of the Chief Executive with only candidates pre-approved by Beijing allowed on the ballot. This decision however was met with intense opposition from Hong Kong Pan-Democrats since Article 45 of the Hong Kong Basic Law states that “the aim is the selection of the Chief Executive by Universal Suffrage upon nomination by a broadly represented nomination committee with democratic procedures” (Hong Kong Basic Law, 1997). Thus the characterization of Hong Kong’s current political dilemma as the Umbrella Movement demonstrated is centred around the “Hong Kong people[’s] demand [for] genuine universal suffrage in the 2017 election for the next Chief Executive (CE)” for what locals describe as “‘true democracy’ in the sense that people will have real choices of candidates, not simply among those pre-selected by Beijing” (Yeung, 2014). This decision by Beijing was seen as the violation of the Hong Kong Basic Law and the guarantee of Hong Kong’s autonomy under “One Country, Two Systems” (一國兩制, OCTS). The subsequent sit-in protests between the 26th September 2014 and the 14th December 2014 became colloquially known as the Umbrella Movement, which became a sign of opposition against these reforms and the rejection of Beijing politics. The movement had reverberating effects on society, further polarizing pan-democratic (泛民主派 / 泛民) supporters and those who support the pro-establishment (建制派) policies.

The Umbrella Movement came about through the formation of different groups fighting for the universal suffrage of Hong Kong’s Chief Executive, with each group however attempting to use different means to achieve this goal.<sup>4</sup> On one hand, the Occupy Central Movement (OCM) led by University of Hong Kong law professor

Benny Tai 戴耀廷 was inspired by his January 2014 piece in the *Hong Kong Economic Journal* (信報財經新聞) arguing that civil disobedience was necessary to generate pressure on the PRC Government to reform the system.<sup>5</sup> The OCM was further supported by Chan Kin-man 陳健民, an Associate Professor of Sociology at Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and Chu Yiu-ming 朱耀明, a local Baptist church minister, who were both recruited by Tai. Through the mantra of “Occupy Central with Love and Peace” (讓愛與和平佔領中環 / 和平佔中), the OCM had only intended to occupy Chater Garden for a few days, and after being arrested would return back to work since Tai had worked with the pan-democrats to used OCM as a bargaining chip with Beijing in order to reform the Universal Suffrage package (Ng, 2016: 136). The OCM group was met with tensions from the Umbrella Movement student coalition who was led by Joshua Wong from Scholarism and Alex Chow 周永康 and Lester Shum 岑敖暉 from the Hong Kong Federation of Students (香港專上學生聯會, HKFS). Wong, in response to the OCM’s peaceful demonstration proposal stated that it was not “meaningful or adequate” in “send[ing] a message to the government” or having Beijing listen to the concerns of the students (Wong, 2015: 43-52). Instead, Wong proposed and successfully worked with the Hong Kong Federation of Students to take control of Civic Square, an action at the time seen as “radical” in comparison to all of the previous actions the students had taken, and thus created limited cooperation between the Student Coalition and those OCM supporters who were backed by pan-democrats (*ibid.*).

A faction of radical localists contrasted themselves with the peaceful and non-violent method that Benny Tai advocated and the student coalition by suggesting that a more aggressive militant approach was needed instead of the strict principles of non-violence advocated by the three promoters of Occupy Central (Fung, 2015: 9). These localists

believed the mild confrontation tactics of pan-democrats had not been successful in democratizing Hong Kong since the 1997 handover. Therefore, these localists supported a more militant use of violence to force Beijing to accept the demand of Hong Kongers.

The OCM mantra of peaceful protest was already broken by the second day of the movement when police attempted to remove the students from the Civic Square by force and used tear gas to disperse the protestors (Ng, 2016: 64-75, 92-105). The student coalition quickly became the dominant force of the movement who later on met with Carrie Lam 林鄭月娥, Hong Kong's Chief Secretary, on the 21st October 2014. The meeting however was not successful due to the refusal of the government to concede to the demands of protestors. Such a conflict created a situation whereby it was deemed both parties had no "exit strategy", further dragging out the movement longer than was initially anticipated. When students attempted to make a final push to mobilize and take over the government buildings on the 19th November 2014, the police deployed water cannons and used force to stop the protestors. The movement finally ended on the 15th December 2014 after 79 days of protest when the police forcibly cleared protestors after court injunctions were put in place by pro-Beijing groups, effectively ending the movement (Lin, 2015).

Although the Umbrella Movement was unable to achieve its goal of universal suffrage, the event had reverberating effects on society which fundamentally changed Hong Kong's political atmosphere. While Beijing may have secured its political control over Hong Kong, it resulted in the rapid rise of localism and the new political awakening among a generation of Hong Kong youth to defend their home. In January 2015, only months after the end of the Umbrella Movement, two new political parties, Youngspiration (青年新政) and Hong Kong Indigenous (本土民主前線) rose out of the conflicts between different

pro-democracy protestors and the rise of Hong Kong localism. Their entrance in Hong Kong's political scene suggests that the failure of the Umbrella Movement to achieve its goals drove many students to shift their affiliation towards localists camps who would use more militant means to achieve their goals. The manifestos of both parties reveal their sentiments towards student leadership and traditional pan-democrats.

Hong Kong Indigenous (HKI) became a party known for advocating the use of more aggressive means of violence, arguing that "the old resistance methods have failed against the authorities" (Hong Kong Indigenous, n.d.). Furthermore, HKI expressed discontent for the Communist Party stating not only that "One Country, Two Systems is just a scam under the Communist Party rule" but that pan-democratic legislators have failed the Hong Kong people, stating that "[d]ay after day we local Hong Kong people lose our rights and indigenous values to the Chinese Communist Party, while the pan-democratic legislators indulge in their own 'China Dream'" (Hong Kong Indigenous, n.d.).

Likewise, the rise of another youth-based group Youngspiration, also demonstrates the failure of the mainstream student movement and the principles of non-violence in attempting to enact democratic reforms. They argue that "after 79 days of fruitless Umbrella Revolution", Hong Kong continues to be suppressed by both the HKSAR government and the government in Beijing, declaring that the latter has "accelerated on a daily basis its unscrupulous invasion into Hong Kong in terms of population, economy and culture, etc." (Youngspiration, n.d.). Similar to HKI, Youngspiration also maintains the principles of a democratic localism, which advocates the idea of a bottom-up approach that gives "just and fair, priority to Hong Kongers" (ibid). Localists argue that the principles of incorporating a democratic China into the future of Hong Kong diminishes the ability of Hong Kongers to represent the interests of the city. Such actions can be seen in the student union referendums at

multiple universities (e.g. Hong Kong University, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong Baptist University and City University of Hong Kong) to leave the Hong Kong Federation of Students due to its political belief in “building a Democratic China” into its platform (Fung and Ng, 2015). In addition, localists have also suggested that the June 4th protests should also move away from commemorating an event that occurred in China, and not Hong Kong.<sup>6</sup>

The inability of the largely peaceful Umbrella Movement to secure universal suffrage also encouraged the emergence of more radical localist groups to seek greater use of violence during the 2016 Lunar New Year demonstrations in Mong Kok, which raised concerns from other Hong Kong activists and intellectuals who see such tactics as unacceptable and not reflecting the values of the majority (Kwan, 2016). The protests simultaneously occurred with an important by-election in the New Territories East Constituency which further showed the political polarization between pro-Beijing, pan-democrat and localist groups, with one candidate, Edward Leung 梁天琦 from Hong Kong Indigenous (HKI), also participating and subsequently arrested for his participation in the Lunar New Year demonstrations. As conflict between government and protesters is intensified, the collateral damage will likely be that everyday life will become hijacked by political battles, with many ordinary citizens caught in the middle (*ibid.*).

#### **4. Taiwan and the Sunflower Movement**

In contrast to Hong Kong, where the 1997 handover directly altered Hong Kong’s political scene, the politics of Taiwan has been typically cast as the divide along strong ideological divisions between a KMT (Kuomintang, 國民黨) Chinese nationalism and a DPP (Democratic Progressive Party, 民主進步黨) Taiwanese independence. Beijing’s

conception of the Chinese nation ( 中華民族 ) emerges as another external threat to Taiwan as China seeks to reunify with the island, as Xi Jinping 習近平 stated during the 2015 Ma-Xi Meeting that, “we [China and Taiwan] are brothers connected by flesh even if our bones are broken, we are a family whose blood is thicker than water” (Wen, 2015). Despite Taiwan’s historical and cultural distinctiveness, China attempts to argue that the Chinese nation is ethnically homogeneous, attempting to group Taiwan with the Han Chinese majority in China.

The Taiwanese people however have a long differentiated history of civic action, especially through the Tangwai 黨外 Movement in the 1970s and 1980s whereby the DPP emerged as an opposition force representing a local Taiwanese identity.<sup>7</sup> Protests have been a long and large part of Taiwanese expression but took special prominence in the period after martial law was lifted. Student movements have been extremely popular within the last few decades, with youth organizing important social movements including the 1990 Wild Lily Student Movement ( 野百合學運 ), which sought direct elections of Taiwan’s President and Vice-President and popular elections for all representatives in the Legislative Yuan ( 立法院 ) as well as the Wild Strawberries Movement ( 野草莓運動 ) in 2008 which protested the visit of Chen Yunlin 陳雲林 , the chairman of the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS) to Taiwan.

The election of President Ma Ying-jeou 馬英九 from 2008 to 2016 also saw the warming of cross-strait relations and close economic and political ties between China and Taiwan under his administration. The beginning of Ma’s presidency also coincided with the Wild Strawberries Movement, marking the beginning of a string of further conflicts between the government and protestors who disagreed with Taiwan’s closer relationship with China. On the economic front, the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA), which was presented as a

preferential trade agreement between Taiwan and China became a highly debated topic. A major point of concern raised was the quick passing of ECFA without the proper preliminary and secondary legislative review process, which would allow transparency and oversight. Combined with the concerns that ECFA would create economic overreliance on China, a transparent review process was also desired due to the lack of transparency of the Chinese government. Despite these concerns, ECFA was passed and came into effect on September 12, 2010.<sup>8</sup>

Meanwhile, the question of free speech also came into question when Jimmy Lai 黎智英, the Hong Kongese owner of Next Media (壹傳媒), sold the Taiwan Division of the company to Want Want China Times (旺旺中時媒體集團) and its pro-China Taiwanese Chairman Tsai Eng-meng 蔡衍明. The purchase raised concerns about media transparency as the deal would give Tsai control of approximately 45% of Taiwan's media market (Cole, 2015: 22).<sup>9</sup> This event has been regarded as the beginning of civic activism among Taiwanese youth, who, through the "Alliance Against Media Monsters" launched two protests in November 2012 to protect the diversity of voices within Taiwanese media (*ibid.*). As J. Michael Cole argues, the events of Next Media buyout became linked to several other issues in Taiwanese society including the demolition of Losheng Sanatorium (樂生療養院), the production of unsafe nuclear energy, nuclear waste storage on Aboriginal land in Lanyu 蘭嶼, forced evictions in several Taipei 臺北 districts (Shilin 士林, Huaguang 華光, Taoyuan 桃園) and Dapu 大埔 in Miaoli County (苗栗縣), Aboriginal land expropriation, as well as Anti-Black Box Curriculum Movement (反黑箱課綱運動) which sought to implement controversial changes to textbook education (Cole, 2015: 288). Eventual leaders of the Sunflower Movement, such as Lin Fei-fan 林飛帆, were active participants in many of these preceding events such as the 2008 Wild Strawberry Movement, the protests

opposing acquisition of Next Media by Tsai Eng-meng and the protests against the bulldozing of Huaguang community near Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall (中正紀念堂) (*ibid.*). The commonality between these events derives itself from the overlapping leadership who would eventually come together to protest against the KMT government.

The Sunflower Movement occurred from March 18 to April 10, 2014 after the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA) was unilaterally approved by the KMT government. Taiwanese students and other civic groups protested against the CSSTA, raising concerns of closed-door negotiations and “the passing of the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA) by the ruling party Kuomintang (KMT) at the legislature without a clause-by-clause review” (Cole, 2014). With the KMT holding a majority in the legislature (65 out of the 113 seats), the agreement was approved regardless of the voices amounting from the opposition. The CSSTA was seen as the controversial follow-up agreement to ECFA which raised further concerns of the negative impact that economic integration could have on Taiwan’s economy as well as other concerns of freedom of speech and the compromised position of democracy on the island. Although issues of democratic governance, accountability and public trust were at the forefront of the Sunflower protests, other observers also suggested that the CSSTA would also create several issues which would exacerbate the problems of rising unemployment and inequality and further risks of opening Taiwan to further economic dependence on China and its larger economy (Fan, 2014). As such, the issue of procedural democracy became a main concern and the relationship with China took an important secondary focus. The combination of academics, students and other civic organizations protested the hasty approval of the CSSTA which resulted in the eventual occupation of Taiwan’s Legislative Yuan. Despite the media’s portrayal of the “undemocratic” seizure of the legislature,

Taiwan's civil society remained peaceful and democratic, asking authorities to not only implement a monitoring mechanism to oversee future bilateral negotiations with China but also to meet them on their demands for the government's transparency in negotiating with Beijing due to the undemocratic and under-the-table "black box" negotiations which occurred (Cole, 2014).

Student activist Lin Fei-fan, a student at National Taiwan University; Chen Wei-ting 陳為廷, a student activist at National Tsinghua University, and legal scholar Huang Kuo-chang 黃國昌 from Academia Sinica became the most visible leaders to emerge from the Sunflower Movement. Notably, both student activists and over 50 civic organizations rallied against the CSSTA, eventually leading to the occupation of the Legislative Yuan (Cole, 2015: 260). The students were most prominently known for their organized and peaceful occupation which saw not only the organization of cleanups around the legislature, but also the order from the organizing leaders to not vandalize or destroy any property. Despite the media's portrayal of the "illegal" seizure of the legislature, public support was on the side of the students who favoured both the re-review of the CSSTA and the disapproval of the government's conduct towards students (Cole, 2015: 265). Furthermore, internal strife between Premier Jiang Yi-huah 江宜樺 and speaker of the Legislative Yuan Wang Jin-Pyng 王金平 represented further conflicts within the KMT. While Jiang ordered to send the riot police in to dispel the protestors, Wang ignored this request, creating further conflict between him and President Ma (Cole, 2015: 265-267). Throughout the movement, both Premier Jiang and President Ma attempted to discuss with the students, asking unsuccessfully for the students to return home.

By March 30th, both Lin Fei-fan and Chen Wei-ting organized a major rally outside the Legislative Yuan with an estimated 350,000 people who joined in solidarity (Cole, 2015: 296). Despite initial

agreements by the students to meet with President Ma, the students later rebuffed their former request asking for a further open and transparent public meeting. The movement did not finally end until Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-Pyng announced that the CSSTA would not be passed without a proper review and a proper regulatory mechanism that would guarantee more transparency. Despite the KMT's displeasure with Wang's statement which had not been approved by the party, the Sunflower Movement saw Wang's declaration as an "act of goodwill" and began the process of vacating the legislature (Cole, 2015: 321-323). Despite some radical perspectives from splinter groups who argued that the government should not be trusted and the occupations should last longer, the students after 24 days of occupation left on 10th April 2014, not only cleaning the Legislature Yuan before leaving but were met with thousands of people outside holding sunflowers, with several stories shared by the activists, during a two-hour ceremony outside (Cole, 2015: 321-323).

Despite discussions as to whether or not Wang Jin-pyng's promise would be kept, questions remained as to how various parts of the pre-existing oversight bill would be addressed, including the review process and how relevant citizens or other professionals could contribute their thoughts and opinions. In that sense, the Sunflower Movement was successful in generating this issue as a national discussion for the people of the island to decide. These issues have subsequently passed into the current Tsai Ing-wen 蔡英文 administration, which as of April 2016 continues to draft an oversight bill regarding cross-Strait relations (Hioe, 2016).

In the aftermath of the Sunflower Movement, there were other demonstrations against the Ma administration, such as the July 2015 textbook controversy that saw the sinicization of history books to promote further ideas of reunification and appeasement of Beijing.<sup>10</sup> The

subsequent Nine-in-One Local Elections for municipal and county level officials also saw the substantial defeat of the KMT. The DPP was successful in winning 13 out of 22 cities and counties while the KMT control dropped from 15 seats to 6 seats after the election. Notable losses for the KMT included both Taichung 臺中 and Taipei where former KMT mayors Jason Hu 胡志強 and Sean Lien 連勝文 were defeated by DPP's Lin Chia-lung 林佳龍 and independent Ko Wen-je 柯文哲 (who was subsequently backed by the DPP) (Huang, 2015).

The outgrowth of the Sunflower Movement most importantly led to the subsequent creation of the New Power Party (時代力量, NPP) by key players including the lead singer of the heavy metal band Chthonic (閃靈), Freddy Lim 林昶佐, lawyer Lin Feng-jeng 林峯正 and Sunflower Movement activist Huang Kuo-chang (Chen, 2015). The creation of NPP also marked the entrance of a new political force created by social activism in Taiwanese politics, with the new party representing the “Third Force” (第三勢力) in Taiwanese politics. The party's platform called on the people to “embrace the same dream of creating a proud and desirable Taiwan” and promised to organize the party around the idea of transparent mechanisms to allow all citizens to participate in the decision making through open debate to continuously better and improve society (New Power Party, 2015). Their successful campaign during the 2016 Taiwanese presidential election also resulted in their success in securing five seats, making them the third largest party in the Legislative Yuan (Gerber, 2016). Overall, the long-term effects of the political activism during the Sunflower Movement has transformed into political participation with the formal electoral system, bringing about new voices in Taiwan which seek to represent the youth voices in Taiwan.

## **5. Hong Kong and Taiwan in Comparative Perspectives**

The most striking commonality between Hong Kong and Taiwan is the prevalence of “civic values [which] are more important than ethnicity in creating a common Chinese identity, especially among the younger generations.” (Lin, 2014: 128). Comparisons of these two places have been frequently made especially after the Umbrella Movement and Sunflower Movement in these respective places. The rise of civic nationalism indicates a prominence for free and democratic liberal values which are permeating both regions and are contributing to the further rejection of an ethnonational Chinese identity, which is back dropped against questions of increased economic interdependence on Mainland China, an increase in the number of Chinese tourists which have strained local infrastructures, as well as features of increasing pro-China media bias. However, the unique pillar of distinct identities in both Hong Kong and Taiwan can be described through the civic realm of national identity (Kaeding, 2011: 272). While this is a key similarity that both share, it should be noted that there are three interesting distinctions to be made about the respective movements in both regions and their future directions.

## **6. Successes and Failures of the Movements**

First, a comparison of the outcomes of the Umbrella Movement and Sunflower Movements reveals the divergence between the two movements. Although both movements attempted to make demands on their respective governments, Taiwan’s situation comparatively speaking was more successful in asking the government to respond. In Hong Kong, student protestors asked Chief Executive C.Y. Leung 梁振英 to meet the demands of implementing true universal suffrage for the SAR. However, Leung as well as Carrie Lam did not give in to the student

demands. The Umbrella Movement ultimately lasted longer due to the inability of the student protestors to secure their goals which contributed to the declining public support over the 79-day protest and the movement was only dispersed in the final weeks after the failure of the November 19th attempt to occupy the central government buildings resulting in pro-government groups obtaining court injunctions to clear some of the roads. The different factions of protestors ranging from the Occupy Central group, the student coalition of HKFS and Scholarism as well as fringe localists contributed to the internal strife between the organizers, leaving the leadership of the movement in question. In particular, the conflict between pan-democrats and the student coalition was clear due to the more “radical” opinion of students to push for further action. There were no government leaders in Hong Kong who supported the students, a result of the fact that Hong Kong’s government must still directly adhere to the demands of Beijing, despite the implementation of OCTS. Ultimately, while the Umbrella Movement was successful in generating a conversation about the direct election of the Chief Executive, the movement was unable to accomplish its goal of democratizing Hong Kong, resulting in Beijing trying to politically integrate the SAR at a more rapid pace than previously seen.

On the other hand, Taiwanese students had gained more public support for what was viewed as not only the violation of procedural democracy by the KMT government but due to the increasing issue of cross-Strait integration. Since the movement only lasted 24 days, events escalated quickly and only garnered more support as time went on, especially with the March 30th rally which further united citizens and activists. Furthermore, the Sunflower Movement was not only a student movement but also encompassed over 50 civic organizations as well as some support from the DPP opposition at the time. Thus, the coordination in Taiwan by the demonstrators was much more organized

and due to the shorter occupation was better received by various segments of society. Although police did use force against the protesters in Taiwan, it was not near the levels of force used by police in Hong Kong where tear gas and water cannons were used to disperse the protestors at various stages of the movement.<sup>11</sup> In addition, Taiwan's longer history with democratic struggle allowed for more experienced protestors compared to the relatively inexperienced protestors in Hong Kong whose only prior experience were the MNE demonstrations. Although the promise of Wang Jin-Pyng was never guaranteed to ensure the implementation of an oversight mechanism in Taiwan, the majority of the Sunflower demonstrators were in a position to peacefully leave the Legislative Yuan, thus contributing further to the success of the movement in securing at the very least, its short term goals.

## **7. The Rise of “Third Force” Politics**

Secondly, in the aftermath of both movements, new political forces emerged in society – the rise of localism in Hong Kong and the entrance of the “Third Force” in Taiwan. Although both have seen massive student support, localism in Hong Kong has created further conflicts between the pan-democrats and the localist camp while more succinct coordination has occurred between the DPP and the New Power Party.

As the previous discussion of the manifestos of Hong Kong Indigenous and Youngspiration suggests, localists oppose the pan-democrats for situating a Democratic China within Hong Kong's democratic future. They also argue that the pan-democratic principles of “Peace, Rationality, Non-violence and Non-profanity” (和平、理性、非暴力、非粗口) are not effective and have revealed little results nearly two decades after the 1997 handover. Localists have differed from the pan-democrats by focusing their discourse on putting local Hong

Kongers' priorities first thereby giving the basis for their disagreement with the pan-democrats on the future of Hong Kong. Although there have been some political successes, such as the election of a few Umbrella Soldiers in the 2015 district council elections and the third-place finish of Edward Leung from Hong Kong Indigenous in the 2016 New Territories East by-election, the rise of localist forces will not be truly tested until the September 2016 Legislative Council (立法會, LegCo) elections. However, there are already talks that two localist groups, Hong Kong Resurgence Order (香港復興會) and Hong Kong Indigenous will field two well-known candidates, localist author Chin Wan (陳雲, pen name of Horace Chin Wan-kan 陳云根, founder of HKRO) and HKU student Edward Leung, in the same electoral district during the September election (Hui, 2016). Although the nature of Hong Kong's proportional representation system allows more than one candidate to be elected from a single district, the diverging principles between localist factions means that localist parties must learn to cooperate with each other in addition to the more difficult collaboration that is needed between pan-democrats and pan-localists.

Taiwan saw similar concerns from its student movement that the opposition had failed to protect Taiwanese society against the KMT government. This lack of trust from the students led them to independently organize the Sunflower Movement without the help of any political parties (Cole, 2015: 260). Like Hong Kong, Taiwan's mainstream political parties (e.g. DPP) were visible at certain times during the movement, but their role was peripheral to the main student movement. The difference however is the more pronounced role of the "Third Force" during the 2016 presidential election whereby the "DPP has pursued a similar approach to cooperation with candidates from other groupings, yielding several other seats to small parties" (Templeman, 2015). This included three candidates from the New Power

Party during the 2016 presidential election: Freddy Lim, Huang Kuochang and Hung Tzu-yung 洪慈庸. The success of NPP during the 2016 presidential election has been seen in part due to Tsai's endorsement of electoral cooperation between the DPP and the NPP. Despite the idea that such a "cooperative but competitive" relationship may cause further strain, this type of political cooperation is more prone to long-term cooperation across political camps (Read, 2016). Such political cooperation is only beginning to occur in Hong Kong and is still opposed by factional group interests of the various localist parties.

## **8. Institutional Design and Autonomy**

Third, Hong Kong's shrinking autonomy in the post-1997 period has led to citizens' attempt to defend "their civic identity against real and perceived threats from the government" (Kaeding, 2011: 271). Kaeding argues that key elements of the civic identity that Hong Kong citizens cherish and pride themselves on are concepts of the "rule of law, civil liberties, human rights, a free and vibrant press", which are being threatened by their own government due to the "One Country, Two Systems" (OCTS) arrangement that allows Hong Kong to be controlled centrally by the government in Beijing (Kaeding, 2011: 271). In part, a large institutional problem within Hong Kong, and the core issue of the Umbrella Movement is the inability to elect their own Chief Executive. While Hong Kong people were unable to previously elect their Governor under British colonial rule, what should be emphasized is the "exceptional status of the rule of law as established by the British" (Kaeding, 2011: 271). However, Hong Kong and its current configuration under OCTS may never see such a democratic transition although the idea of an independent Hong Kong state, at the current moment, appears to be a growing discourse among localists. However,

for the people of Hong Kong, British colonial administration dominates the history of the city-state before the 1997 handover. While the 1980s also provided an avenue for new civic action, Hong Kong citizens have hardly had a voice in their own politics especially after the Sino-British Joint Declaration negotiations began. This still remains true in the post-colonial era under the PRC as Hong Kong citizens still have no say in their own future. The institutional framework left by the colonial government, which although never experienced public legitimacy, was controlled by a democratic Britain accountable to its people. As such, these problems are also further rooted in the problem of institutional design, whereby the political discontent which generated the Umbrella Movement stems directly from the lack of election of the Chief Executive in Hong Kong. Given such a situation, Hong Kong is limited in its ability to use elections as a sign of approval or disapproval of its Chief Executive. Despite having geographical constituencies where citizens are able to elect lawmakers, the functional constituencies create an imbalance, favouring special interest groups which have traditionally supported pro-establishment candidates. Therefore, Hong Kong's LegCo does not accurately reflect the voter demographics and is unable to represent of the interests of the people.

Taiwan by contrast has its *de facto* independence which is directly out of China's sphere of control. Its democratic system allows for the people of Taiwan to elect their own President and therefore their own choices about their government. Taiwan during the Ma Administration was indirectly threatened by economic integration which the people argue was created by the KMT government's quick passing of the CSSTA through the legislature without proper review. To the Taiwanese, this is a breach of the civil principles that have been instilled in its society. Since civic nationalism in Taiwan was formed through the "struggle of the opposition movement for representation and the

democratic transformation of the KMT government” (Kaeding, 2011: 271), Taiwanese identity and the creation of democracy on the island are interconnected. As Shelly Rigger recognizes, Taiwanese nationalists “have come a very long way from their original belief that Taiwan is a distinct nation in the ethno-cultural sense” (Song, 2009: 70). Due to the longer history of Taiwan’s democratic movement, Taiwanese identity is much more layered and complex than Hong Kong identity. What citizens in Taiwan do embrace however, regardless of their political affiliations, is a pride in the successful and peaceful democratic transition that occurred on the island. In this, we see that the Taiwanese take great pride in protecting common civic values, especially during the Sunflower Movement when students felt that the government did not abide by the principles of a transparent and elected democratic government. The clear responses by the people of Taiwan in the subsequent nine-in-one elections and the 2016 presidential election saw the defeat of the KMT and the installation of a new DPP government. Taiwan’s democratic system allows for the people to be given free and independent choices to vote for their leaders and hold them accountable. This mechanism allows citizens to replace governments, such as the Ma Administration, which was unable to meet the expectations of the people. Although Taiwan’s democracy is still relatively young, it functions more effectively than Hong Kong’s quasi-democratic system which is unable to truly represent the demands of the people. Therefore, the institutional problem in Hong Kong creates more difficulty in creating desired political change which is further polarizing the society. For both cases, however, key institutions are ingrained in society through their historical experiences with support for the concepts of the rule of law and democracy. What fundamentally sets Taiwan apart from Hong Kong is the island’s past historical struggle with democracy and nationhood, something Hong Kong has yet to fully experience.

## **9. Conclusion**

This paper examines the rise of civic nationalism in both Hong Kong and Taiwan to compare the similarities and differences which shaped the respective Umbrella Movement and Sunflower Movement. The political identity of the people from both regions encompasses a component of civic nationalism which demonstrates the people's conception of freedom and open and transparent societies as part of the fundamental core of the people.

In the case of Hong Kong, the people's collective memory seems to be entrenched firmly in the characteristics of a civic identity which embraces democratic institutional values that are strong enough "to resist patriotic education [and] nationalistic propaganda" (Kaeding, 2011: 272). Conversely, the growth of the Hong Kong identity developed in comparison to a Chinese identity, whereby Hong Kong citizens identify themselves with the former colony's economic achievements, Cantonese cultural distinctiveness and democratic values. The Umbrella Movement reaffirmed the civic character of the people to resist both the political and economic integration with China by attempting to reassert the values of universal suffrage and self-determination of the Hong Kong people. However, since Hong Kong autonomy is not even a debatable question for the PRC and Hong Kong is legally a Special Administrative Region of the PRC, the real question for its citizens will be to examine what they will do with such little room for negotiation in the future. The polarization of Hong Kong's political spectrum indicates further discontent as the year 2047, the year in which the guarantee of 50 years of unchanged life in Hong Kong under the Basic Law expires, quickly approaches.

Likewise, Taiwan faces similar questions of economic integration with Mainland China, mostly through the decision-making led by the Ma Ying-jeou government and its decisions in 2008 which predominantly

began with the ratification of the ECFA treaty. Rapid economic interdependence between the two places has been seen as a decision too fast and too soon for the people on the island to find comfortable. In part, we can see this through the massive protests that occurred when CSSTA was rapidly passed through the Legislative Yuan without a proper clause-by-clause examination. As Kaeding explains, there is a “feeling [amongst the people of Taiwan] that the [Ma] government is threatening Taiwan’s identity, particularly its civic components of democracy and Taiwan sovereignty” (Kaeding, 2011: 272). The election of Tsai Ing-wen however has marked the improved status of Taiwan’s domestic political situation, with the beginning of Tsai’s presidency representing more stability in cross-party negotiation with the NPP, and the more ideal situation in which student leaders of Hong Kong desire. As such, the institutional design of democracy has allowed for the necessary systems to replace governments through an open and transparent electoral system.

Although this analysis has focused predominately on the comparison between civic nationalism in Hong Kong and Taiwan, the rise of Hong Konger and Taiwanese identities are rooted in both important ethno-cultural and civic components which adds layers of multi-complexity to these identities. From Beijing’s perspective, these unique local identities in Hong Kong and Taiwan reveal that the project of creating a National Chinese Identity is fragmented. Moreover, the growing identity gap between these places are increasing unless, as Shirley Lin suggests, “China may have to propose a new identity based on common civic value rather than ethnicity, and develop a formula for governance that guarantees even greater autonomy to Hong Kong and Taiwan” (Lin, 2014: 128). What this comparative case study suggests is that as autonomy continues to shrink in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, OCTS will not be a viable solution for Taiwan

and the people will not accept any form of these arrangements. Likewise, Hong Kong will continue to look towards Taiwan for guidance as it seeks to find common allies that also oppose CCP politics. Unless Beijing is will to propose a new Chinese identity based on civic principles, people from both Hong Kong and Taiwan will continue to fight for the politics of representation in order to achieve their ultimate goals of self-determination.

## Notes

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1. Anthony Smith lists four important characteristics of nationalism, which he defines as (1) the growth of nations, (2) the consciousness of belonging to the nation, (3) a language and/or symbol of the nation and (4) a social/political movement on behalf of the nation. See: Anthony Smith (2001). *Nationalism: Theory, ideology, history*. Malden MA: Polity Press.
  2. “Political China” in this context simply refers to the politics associated with the People’s Republic of China (PRC).
  3. HK people labelled as dogs by mainlander. *South China Morning Post* (2012, January 21). Retrieved from <<http://www.scmp.com/article/990698/hk-people-labelled-dogs-mainlander>>.
  4. This section provides a summary of events from the Umbrella Movement. Full details of the sequence of events can be found in: Jason Ng (2016). *Umbrellas in bloom: Hong Kong’s Occupy Movement uncovered*. Hong Kong: Blacksmith Books.

5. Benny Tai's article, written in Chinese, advocated civil disobedience in Hong Kong's business district in order to put pressure on Beijing. See: Benny Tai 戴耀廷 (2013, January 16). 公民抗命的最大殺傷力武器 [civil disobedience's deadliest weapon]. *Hong Kong Economic Journal* (信報財經新聞).
6. This issue has been discussed in the recent June 4th protests over the past few years. See: Owen Fung, Stuart Lau and Tony Cheung (2016, June 5). Sea of candles in Hong Kong at June 4 vigil despite boycott calls. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from <<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/1965426/sea-candles-hong-kong-june-4-vigil-despite-boycott-calls>>.
7. A detailed history can be found in Chapter 16 of: Murray A. Rubinstein (2007). *Taiwan: A new history*. Expanded Edition. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe.
8. Historic Taiwan-China trade deal takes effect. *BBC News* (2016, September 12). Retrieved from <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-11275274>>.
9. A detailed account of the Sunflower Movement events can be found in: J. Michael Cole (2015). *Black island: Two years of activism in Taiwan*. Charleston, South Carolina: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
10. A detailed account of the 2015 textbook controversy can be found in: J. Michael Cole (2015, July 24). Taiwanese students occupy education ministry over textbook controversy. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from <<http://thediplomat.com/2015/07/taiwanese-students-occupy-education-ministry-over-textbook-controversy>>.
11. Brian Hioe discusses in detail the use of police force during the Sunflower Movement. See: Brian Hioe (2015, March 24). Police violence in the Sunflower Movement. *New Bloom Magazine*. Retrieved from <<https://newbloommag.net/2015/03/24/police-violence-in-the-sunflower-movement>>. See Jason Ng's account for details on the Umbrella Movement.

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# **Book Review**

