

Comparing Political Communities in Hong Kong and Taiwan

ABSTRACT

Recent protests in Hong Kong and Taiwan have been categorized as simply “anti-China.” This article analyzes the impact of each region’s historical and political development, as well as its current governmental structure, upon these protests. It shows how these factors have constructed differential relationships to China for each of them, respectively. The analysis undermines the usual, more superficial characterization of these protests. Moreover, public opinion data shows that protesters’ motivations, goals, and targets vary in the two sets of demonstrations, again a function of political structure and its influence upon the separate ties between each polity and China. The article offers a more analytically rigorous approach to understanding the “Sunflower” and “Occupy” movements than do most other interpretations and, in doing so, uncovers important contrasts between them.

KEYWORDS: Hong Kong, Taiwan, protest, Sunflower Movement, Occupy Movement

INTRODUCTION

The recent student-led protests in the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China (Hong Kong), in which mostly young activists pushed back against what they perceived to be injustices, point to the need for a more analytically rigorous comparison of the political communities in Taiwan and Hong Kong. The aim of this paper is to contrast the political/constitutional structures of the two polities; it argues that these structures constrain the authority over these polities that is available to the People’s

Republic of China (PRC). These differential structures of domestic political power, and the ways in which they shape PRC influence over the two societies, respectively, greatly inform the ways political communities in Taiwan and Hong Kong view themselves and their goals relative to the PRC. These structural factors should be considered in a nuanced comparison of contentious political activity in Taiwan and Hong Kong.

In Taiwan, there were two sets of student protests involving Taiwan's tie to China in recent years: the first one, in 2008, was aimed against a visit by a PRC official charged with managing cross-Strait affairs; the second one, in 2014, targeted the secretive enactment of two economic agreements with the PRC. In Hong Kong, protesters first organized against a proposal for an anti-sedition law and reform of national education curriculum in 2003 and 2012, respectively; in 2014, demonstrators attacked proposed laws for electoral reform.

While it may seem obvious to analytically link both protest movements as simply pitting students against the PRC's influence in their government's domestic politics, a comparative examination of the history and the political/constitutional structures of the two polities indicates that a simple dichotomy of "pro-PRC" and "anti-PRC" is insufficient for characterizing what were, in fact, protests serving different functions for citizens of disparate political communities who had variable political goals.

In the first section, I will trace the historical development of Taiwan and Hong Kong, along with their domestic political structures, to demonstrate the differing relationships between the PRC and each region. The second section will evaluate these structural relationships and their effect on the PRC's available options for exercising influence in Taiwan and Hong Kong. These differing avenues of influence inform the specific targets of the PRC-related protests in Taiwan and Hong Kong. The PRC's specific type of influence combines with the domestic political systems of

governance in each region, which themselves shape the expectations of domestic populations, to create two unique and distinguishable political communities. The differences between Taiwan and Hong Kong undermine any superficial comparison of their political communities based on a simple bifurcation between pro-PRC and anti-PRC. After establishing the structural logic for a more nuanced comparison of Taiwan and Hong Kong's political communities, the third section will examine available survey data to determine whether or not this logic presents itself empirically. The concluding section will summarize the study and suggest avenues for further research.

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR DIFFERENCE

Neither Taiwan nor Hong Kong enjoys the degree of sovereignty available to the PRC, yet their statuses within the international sphere also differ in important ways. While Hong Kong falls under the authority of the PRC, Taiwan's sovereignty is incomplete and challenged by the PRC. These differing statuses are of direct concern to domestic publics in each region, and the protests within each community reflect these concerns.

Hong Kong

Hong Kong has never enjoyed sovereignty within the contemporary international system. In fact, the notion of Westphalian sovereignty had not solidified itself within elite Chinese discourse until the late 1800s.¹ By this time, a portion of contemporary Hong Kong had already been ceded to the British by the Treaty of Nanking in 1842 following the First Opium War. The entirety of

contemporary Hong Kong came under British sovereignty as a result of the Second Opium War in 1856-1860 and the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894-1895.

Historical political development in Hong Kong has been characterized as “minimal to non-existent until the early 1980s” after the British negotiated the 1997 handover of sovereignty to the PRC.² According to a seminal work on Hong Kong political culture, *The Ethos of the Hong Kong Chinese*, a plurality of Hong Kong citizens in the 1980s viewed public consultation as the essential element of democratic governance.³ Despite the colonial governments’ introduction of popularly elected local representatives in the 1980s as a response to popular pressures,⁴ the British government in Hong Kong largely insulated itself from the public and monopolized political power. The colonial regime also historically relied upon the “politically unorganized passivity of the masses” for its own security.⁵

In 1994, just prior to the transfer of sovereignty, the last British governor in Hong Kong implemented several liberalizing political reforms. The PRC, however, strongly opposed Chris Patten’s reforms and claimed the changes did not abide by the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration outlining the terms of the handover of sovereignty. While the PRC reversed the majority of these last-minute reforms following the handover, the executive-led system of governance created by the British was carried over with little revision.

The transition itself also introduced several variables to the political situation in Hong Kong. Under PRC law, Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region that enjoys a “high degree of autonomy” under an arrangement known as “one country, two systems.”⁶ A portion of the Sino-British Joint stipulates that Hong Kong’s political, social, and economic systems and way of life, all of which were greatly influenced by British colonial rule, shall remain unchanged for a period of 50 years. Hong Kong’s Basic Law, the constitutional document adopted by the PRC in 1990,

also proclaims an “ultimate aim” of universal suffrage with no mention of how the achievement of this aim might affect the PRC’s sovereignty over Hong Kong. The PRC also has final authority of interpretation over the Basic Law.

Taiwan

While Hong Kong’s status as a non-sovereign entity under the authority of the PRC is clear, Taiwan’s relationship to the PRC is less certain. Following brief periods of Dutch and Spanish colonialization in the 1600s, the majority of Taiwan was ruled as a prefecture by the mainland Qing Dynasty which eventually declared the island a province of the mainland in 1887. The Qing Dynasty ceded Taiwan to the Empire of Japan in 1895 under the Treaty of Shimonoseki concluding the First Sino-Japanese War. The Japanese occupation of Taiwan ended in 1945 with Japan’s defeat in World War II, and legal authority over the island reverted back to the Mainland. Beginning in 1912, the Mainland was known as the Republic of China, a constitutional republic nominally under the control of the Kuomintang (KMT). After Taiwan’s sovereignty reverted back to the Mainland, the ruling KMT put the island under military rule. Following the KMT’s defeat 1949 civil war defeat by the Communist Party of China (CCP), the PRC was established on the Mainland, and the bulk of the Republic of China’s KMT regime fled to Taiwan. The KMT, however, continued to maintain its claim as the legitimate authority over all of China, a claim simultaneously held by the CCP.⁷

In October 1971, the UN expelled the Republic of China as the “legitimate representative of China”⁸ and allowed the PRC to replace Taiwan within the UN. Following Taiwan’s expulsion from the UN and the rapid dissolution of many of the island’s diplomatic relationships, domestic

political space previously unavailable to dissidents opened up and the repressive political environment of Taiwan began to slowly liberalize. Given its foreign setbacks, the KMT began incorporating local participation and coopting Taiwanese elites into the government in order to enhance its domestic legitimacy. A formal opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), was formed from the *dangwai* opposition in 1986, and martial law was lifted the following year.⁹ Taiwan held its first direct presidential elections in 1996.

The PRC continues to maintain its claim as the legitimate authority over all of China, including Taiwan, while the now democratic government on Taiwan has altered its stance over the years. While Taiwan's indeterminate and relatively unique status within the international system and the PRC's direct challenge to Taiwanese sovereignty constrain Taiwan's actions as an independent state, these factors also constrain the PRC's ability to exert influence over Taiwan. Without *de jure* legal authority over the island, the PRC must balance between applying political pressure and appearing belligerent. Regional tensions and American interests in Asia could lead to a rapid escalation of any cross-Strait conflict.

REACTIONS TO PRC INFLUENCE

While Hong Kong's subordinated legal status and Taiwan's incomplete sovereignty are vital for understanding the politics of each community, these system-level factors are not in and of themselves sufficient for demonstrating the differences within the political communities of Hong Kong and Taiwan. The PRC's growing economic might and political influence within the governments of both Hong Kong and Taiwan, along with the expectations citizens in each region

have for their government, helps account for the complexities involved in comparing the political communities of Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Hong Kong

Hong Kong's liberal market economy under the British colonial regime made Hong Kong a vitally important financial city for Western business in Asia. In 1997, Hong Kong's GDP was nearly one fifth the size of the PRC's. Since the British handover of sovereignty, however, Hong Kong has become an increasingly trivial aspect of the PRC's overall economic power. In 2014, Hong Kong's GDP was only three percent the size of the Mainland's. Simultaneously, the Mainland has become an increasingly prominent investor in the Hong Kong economy. In 1996, investments from the Mainland accounted for 20 percent of total foreign investments in Hong Kong. Sixteen years later, in 2012, Mainland investments shot up to more than 40 percent of foreign investments.¹⁰ Based on sheer economic size and interconnectedness as measured by investments, the raw strength of the Mainland economy relative to that of Hong Kong's has grown immensely, as has the PRC's ability to influence the Hong Kong economy.

This dual shift in Mainland economic power relative to Hong Kong has been mirrored by a parallel consolidation of the PRC's relative political influence. With the exception of the reversals to Chris Patten's last-minute liberalization efforts,¹¹ the handover of sovereignty was not accompanied by substantial changes to Hong Kong's system of governance. The major difference between the pre- and post-1997 Hong Kong governments is that the PRC, rather than Great Britain, has ultimate authority over the region's continuing executive-led political system.

Despite the Sino-British Joint Declaration stating that Hong Kong's way of life should remain unchanged for 50 years, the PRC has attempted to use its newfound legal authority both to influence the trajectory of Hong Kong politics and to impede indigenous democratization efforts. The PRC's political interference includes an attempt in 2003 to implement an anti-sedition law that would have limited the scope of civil liberties in Hong Kong and an attempt in 2012 to reform national education curriculum aimed at promoting Chinese nationalism among Hong Kong's students. Through the use of its interpretive power over the Basic Law, the PRC has also effectively forestalled substantive changes to Hong Kong's system of representation.

In 2002, the Hong Kong government announced plans to implement laws stemming from Article 23 of the Basic Law which allows the government to "prohibit any act of treason, secession, sedition, [or] subversion against the Central People's Government...and to prohibit political organizations...from establishing ties with foreign political organizations."¹² The proposed law laid out each of these illegal acts, but many citizens, legal experts, and pro-democratic legislators in Hong Kong were concerned with the broadness of the definitions and the possibility that the proposed law might be used to limit political expression. On the 2003 anniversary of Hong Kong's transition to PRC authority, half a million people took to the streets and marched peacefully in protest against the proposal which was set to pass into law a few days later. The Hong Kong government subsequently withdrew the proposed law.¹³

In 2012, a similar attempt by the PRC to consolidate its political power in Hong Kong was also defeated by local activists' efforts. Two years prior, in 2010, the Hong Kong government attempted to begin implementing the "moral and civic education" reforms it had initially announced in 2001. These reforms were designed to instill in students a sense of Chinese nationalism and a "love for country and Hong Kong."¹⁴ In response to what they viewed as plans

for communist indoctrination, a group of Hong Kong students formed Scholarism, a student organization with the express aim of defeating the educational reforms. The Hong Kong government shelved the proposed curriculum in 2012 following much protesting, including a hunger strike and an extended public debate over the content of reform.

These two successful protest movements helped lay the groundwork for an increasingly politicized Hong Kong public. Within this context, a Hong Kong law professor in early 2013 proposed a mass civil disobedience campaign as the best possible means of achieving the “ultimate aim of universal suffrage” mentioned in Hong Kong’s Basic Law. This professor, along with several other community leaders, formed Occupy Central with Love and Peace, an organization that aimed to unify Hong Kong’s pro-democratic organizations around the proposed civil disobedience campaign. The umbrella organization conducted a series of public deliberations on both civil disobedience and potential electoral reforms for Hong Kong. Unifying the pro-democratic community, however, proved difficult. Following the PRC’s August 2014 announcement of its plans for universal suffrage in Hong Kong, plans which required the Chief Executive to “love the country and love Hong Kong,” ideological differences within Occupy Central and disagreements over the appropriate protest tactics resulted in two student groups, including Scholarism, essentially commandeering the protest movement. The resulting occupation of three major thoroughfares lasted several months, yet the Hong Kong government did not give in to any of the protesters’ demands for universal suffrage according to internationally recognized standards.

The PRC’s implementation of the “one country two systems” model has, unsurprisingly, led to a general expectation of political and legal autonomy among the people of Hong Kong. Similarly, the PRC’s inclusion in the Basic Law of the “ultimate aim of universal suffrage” has

encouraged pro-democracy activists to push for sweeping electoral reform. The executive-led system of governance in Hong Kong, however, is conducive to stability and concentration of power rather than reform as a result of bottom-up pressure.

Given the systematic centralization of power within Hong Kong and the PRC's legal authority over the region, the post-1997 protests listed above should be viewed as chiefly representing a desire among protesters for both autonomy from the PRC's legal authority and for some form of public consultation regarding policy. The Article 23 protest was a direct reaction to an unpopular policy and most clearly displays the Hong Kong public's desire for public consultation. While the 2012 National Education reform protest was also a reaction to an unpopular policy, it also marked a major push against PRC influence as such. The student group Scholarism labelled the National Education reforms an attempt at "brainwashing" and spoke out against any role for the PRC in curriculum development.¹⁵ The Occupy Central with Love and Peace campaign's push for universal suffrage could also be viewed as most directly an attempt to thwart PRC influence. For democratic elections in Hong Kong to achieve any of the protesters' goals, voters would have to be allowed either to choose a leader who would openly oppose PRC influence or to hold accountable an elected leader that refuses to do so. In either case, the result would be a rejection of the PRC's legal authority over Hong Kong.¹⁶

Taiwan

Compared to the PRC's legal authority over Hong Kong, its capacity to influence Taiwanese politics is much less formalized. In lieu of the direct and independent political and legal authority it enjoys over Hong Kong, the PRC has sought to establish considerable influence over Taiwan

through economic dominance. The Mainland has been Taiwan's main export market for more than a decade with an approximate share of 40 percent of Taiwan's total exports.¹⁷ Taiwan, however, is not a major supplier of the PRC's imports. In 2008, Taiwan accounted for only 8 percent of the PRC's total imports.¹⁸ A similarly uneven relationship exists in the realm of investments. In 2010, more than 80 percent of Taiwan's total outward foreign direct investments went to the Mainland.¹⁹ Despite Taiwan's relaxation, beginning in 2009, of longtime restrictions against investments from the Mainland, Taiwan accounts for only a miniscule portion of the Mainland's total outward investments.²⁰ Economically, the PRC is more important to Taiwan than Taiwan is to the PRC. This factor provides the PRC with the necessary leverage to influence Taiwanese politics without having the legal authority that it has over Hong Kong.

The PRC's economic leverage over Taiwan is constrained, however, by the uncertainty surrounding the cross-Strait relationship. In 1992, following decades of hostility and limited contact, the governments of Taiwan and the PRC agreed to a policy of deliberate ambiguity regarding Taiwan's sovereignty. As long as the Taiwanese government did not speak on the issues of sovereignty, independence, or statehood, the PRC would approach cross-Strait relations without hostility.

Since Taiwan's first direct presidential elections in 1996, the level of deliberate ambiguity espoused by the Taiwanese government has fluctuated with the shifts in power characteristic of democratic governance. The island's first democratically elected President, Lee Teng-hui, was a KMT member of indigenous Taiwanese descent. Just before his election in 1996, Lee was invited by his American alma mater to give a talk on Taiwan's democratization. After the US government granted Lee a travel visa and Lee travelled to the US to give his speech, the PRC conducted missile tests off the coast of Taiwan. The second president, Chen Shui-bian, while also ethnically

Taiwanese, was the first and thus far only President elected from the opposition DPP. Chen's election campaign featured a pledge to abide by the deliberate ambiguity regarding Taiwanese independence or statehood, the use of the name "Taiwan" rather than the "Republic of China," and any change to the island's relationship to the PRC.

The third and current President of Taiwan, Ma Ying-jeou, is a member of the KMT and not of Taiwanese descent. While Ma also placed importance on the continuation of deliberate ambiguity regarding Taiwan's status, his goal for Taiwan's relationship with the PRC has included more cross-Strait cooperation and "eventual unification" with the Mainland.²¹ Six months after Ma's election, the PRC official tasked with cross-Strait affairs paid a visit to his counterpart in Taiwan. This meeting was the first of its kind to take place in Taiwan.²² According to the KMT, any cross-Strait agreements would legally go into effect with or without legislative approval. The DPP, however, claimed such agreements were international agreements requiring legislative approval and accused the KMT of "selling out" Taiwan to the Mainland.²³

Several hundred students opposed to President Ma's decision to invite the PRC official held a sit-in protest outside of the Executive Yuan without first applying for the required protest permit. Following several arrests, the protesting students claimed incidences of police violence. The students demanded not only the resignation of high-level government officials connected to the police violence but also apologies from President Ma and the premier of Taiwan, as well as the termination of the law requiring protester permits.²⁴

In 2010, the PRC and KMT began formalization of an Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA), a bilateral agreement designed to promote bilateral trade through reduced tariffs. DPP politicians in Taiwan depicted the ECFA as a Trojan horse designed to ensure eventual unification with the Mainland.²⁵ Tens of thousands of Taiwanese citizens marched to the

Executive Yuan to protest the agreement. After the KMT majority rejected the DPP legislators' demands for an article-by-article review of the agreement, DPP legislators boycotted the vote. Without the dissenting DPP voters, the KMT legislators unanimously passed the ECFA into law.

The KMT signed a similar agreement, the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA), into law in June 2013. The DPP, along with concerned academics and citizens, again protested the lack of bipartisan legislative oversight, and the KMT agreed to a full review of the CSSTA. Despite allowing public hearings, the KMT later refused to allow any amendments to the bill, and the legislature failed to ratify the CSSTA. After the legislature took up the issue again in March 2014, the KMT attempted to block action by DPP legislators. In response to the KMT's lack of transparency and denial of public participation, several hundred protesters trespassed on the Legislative Yuan and occupied the chambers for several weeks. The KMT finally agreed to institute legislative reviews of the CSSTA, and the students agreed to vacate the legislative chamber.

The officially deliberate ambiguity regarding Taiwan's relationship to the Mainland has constrained the PRC's political influence over the island. Combined with the PRC's lack of any *de jure* legal authority over Taiwan, the political liberalization of Taiwan's government and the accompanying democratic institutions and processes have resulted in a Taiwanese political outlook that differs from the perspective in Hong Kong. The people of Taiwan have both particular expectations of their own democratic government and the means to hold elected officials accountable. The protests against PRC visits to Taiwan and economic legislation, then, should be viewed as representing, first and foremost, a sense of indignation directed toward the Taiwanese government rather than toward the PRC. The desire for autonomy from the PRC's influence is secondary to the demand for a fully democratic political process.

Differences between Hong Kong and Taiwan

To summarize, two factors are vital for a comparison of the political communities of Hong Kong and Taiwan. First, the structures of domestic political power are different. The centralization of political power within the executive branch of the Hong Kong government, an important element implemented by the British colonial regime, contrasts with the democratically diffused and rotating political power within Taiwan. These differing structures of political power within each region shape the expectations of each political community in different ways. The insulated government in Hong Kong, as noted above, has traditionally relied on the “politically unorganized passivity of the masses.” Protesters in Hong Kong appear to reject this passivity in favor of a more active role through confrontational political action. In Taiwan, the dispersed political power and the institutionalized role of civic input through voting provides Taiwanese citizens with an expectation of governmental responsiveness. This does not, however, necessarily entail active participation similar to that by protesters in Hong Kong. The democratic system in Taiwan simply removes both the unaccountability of political power and the uncertainty of the citizen’s role that mark politics in Hong Kong.

Second, the structures of PRC influence are different in the two places. While the PRC enjoys immense economic weight relative to both Taiwan and Hong Kong, it does not have similarly unconstrained political authority in both regions. Given its legal sovereignty over Hong Kong, the PRC is able to utilize Hong Kong’s insulated executive branch to directly influence politics. In Taiwan, the deliberate cross-Strait ambiguity regarding issues of Taiwanese sovereignty, independence, and statehood constrains the PRC’s authority to directly influence

politics on the island. Lacking the same power it enjoys with Hong Kong, the PRC must rely on its economic weight to exert political control. These differing structures of PRC influence are evident in the target of Taiwanese protests, which were all instigated by the President's moves that threatened increased linkages with the PRC. Of course, the few protests mentioned here are by no means the only protests in either Taiwan or Hong Kong, but these few protests have been the major and most highly visible ones that involved the PRC.

Without considering these two important factors, it would be easy to simply overlook the differences between the political communities in Hong Kong and Taiwan. While both regions and their protests share many similarities, assuming no important differences between their political communities is analytically unsound. The structural differences between their systems of domestic political power and their relationships to the PRC are important differences that inform the features of their political communities. But what empirical evidence is there to support this logic?

PUBLIC OPINION

Comparing two separate political communities is no easy task. The undertaking is even more difficult, and the uniqueness of each community obscured, when they are often defined by their relationships to the same powerful third party. While structural characteristics can be inferred from the historical record, the viewpoints of individual protesters acting collectively cannot simply be deduced and compared. Cross national surveys, however, may prove useful since they provide responses to the same questions for each community.

The World Values Survey (WVS) provides the most immediate means for comparing public opinion across political communities. Approximately 1,000 persons in each participating

country or region are, with few exceptions, asked the same questions. The most recent WVS, 2013 for Hong Kong and 2012 for Taiwan, will be used to provide rudimentary empirical support for the theoretical argument presented above. There are several limitations to using WVS, not least of which is that the survey took place prior to Hong Kong's Occupy Central with Love and Peace and Taiwan's CSSTA protest. The WVS also does not contain the most ideal questions for specifically comparing the political communities of Hong Kong and Taiwan. Imperfect approximations are made here, the most apparent of which is having to rely on data that simply measures responses from all who have "attended a peaceful demonstration" rather than only from protesters who joined actions pertaining to China. Nothing short of independent fieldwork could resolve this analytical dilemma. But the WVS is the best tool available for an exploratory comparison such as this.

The WVS includes a battery of questions on various topics. Several of these questions are directly relevant to a comparison of the protest communities in Hong Kong and Taiwan. The survey asks whether an individual has participated in peaceful demonstrations. This question will be used to identify the respective protest communities in each region. Another question asks each respondent how much they trust their government. This information is relevant for understanding a protester's role as such. A protester who trusts her government likely has motivations and goals that differ from those of a protester who is highly distrustful of her government. The WVS also asks about each person's level of support for democracy. This question can help distinguish democratically-minded protesters from those who may be more concerned with simply taking an active role in the political system. Lastly, each respondent is asked to place themselves on a traditional Left-Right political spectrum. Left-Right self-identification is important for

understanding a protester's general political viewpoints and their likely attitude toward specific political parties.

After presenting findings relative to each of the questions discussed above, I will analyze the results in light of the logic of difference presented above.

- *Taiwanese respondents were more averse to protesting.* A full 70 percent of Taiwanese respondents said they would never attend a peaceful demonstration, while only 6 percent said they had actually attended one. In Hong Kong, only 42 percent said they would never protest and 16 percent had already done so.
- *Hong Kong respondents were more trusting of their government.* While only 60 percent of all respondents said they had either “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of trust in their government, only 47 percent of Taiwanese respondents gave similar responses.
- *Hong Kong protesters were more fully trusting of the government.* While 11 percent of Hong Kong protesters had “a great deal” of trust in their national government, none of the Taiwanese protesters had “a great deal” of trust in their government. Similarly, 26 percent of Taiwanese protesters had no trust at all in their national government, while only 20 percent of Hong Kong protesters felt the same way.
- *Taiwanese protesters were more supportive of democracy.* When asked how important democracy was to them on a scale of one to ten, 75 percent of Taiwanese protesters said it was “absolutely important” (at ten), and 93 percent placed it at eight or above. This can be contrasted with the Hong Kong protesters, of whom only 34 percent said it was “absolutely important” while 74 percent placed it at eight or above.
- *Hong Kong protesters were more ideologically diverse.* When asked to place themselves on a scale from one to ten with one being “Left” and ten being “Right,” half of Hong Kong protesters placed themselves in the “Center” (at five or six). Thirty-two percent placed themselves on the “Right”

(at seven or above), and 18 percent placed themselves on the “Left” (at four or below). In Taiwan, Half of protesters placed themselves on the “Left,” while 45 percent placed themselves in the “Center.” Only five percent placed themselves on the “Right.”

While rudimentary, the WVS findings may support the logic resulting from the structural differences between Taiwan and Hong Kong. The larger percentage of protesters in Hong Kong may demonstrate the lack of options for institutionalized citizen participation relative to Taiwan. Hong Kong’s executive-led government is generally resistant to bottom-up pressure. Protests in such a system, like the 2003 Article 23 protest and the 2012 national education reform protests, may serve as a type of “pressure release valve” for citizens with no other avenues for consequential participation.

Hong Kong citizens’ greater level of trust in government may reflect any of a number of things. A larger proportion of Hong Kong’s citizens may genuinely trust their government more. The WVS for Taiwan was conducted in 2012, an election year there. The democratic election cycles are known to result in increased political salience during election years, and the lower level of Taiwanese trust in government may reflect a temporary dip. Alternately, the complete lack of strong trust in government by protesters in Taiwan may reflect indignation towards a democratic government that protesters feel is acting out of bounds.

Taiwanese protesters’ stronger support for democracy relative to Hong Kong protesters provides evidence for the idea that Taiwanese protesters protest to express indignation towards their own government while protests in Hong Kong more directly reflect an aversion to PRC authority. Citizens in a democratic society protesting against what they perceive as their government’s undemocratic actions would logically espouse a higher level of support for

democracy than would citizens in a traditionally depoliticized society protesting under a non-democratic regime.

Further support for this distinction between the political communities in Taiwan and Hong Kong comes from the general lack of ideological diversity among Taiwanese protesters. Half of Taiwanese protesters placed themselves on the “Left,” and 45 percent self-identify as being on the “Right.” Only five percent of Taiwanese protesters placed themselves on the “Right.” The use of a simple Left/Right political spectrum is not without its problems. The meaning of extreme measures on such a scale, as well as the desirability of a centrist position, can vary from person to person and from place to place. According to one study of party politics in East Asia, as of 2001, half of the Taiwanese public was unable to locate the DPP and KMT, and presumably themselves, on a Left/Right spectrum.²⁶ This is understandable given that Taiwan had elected its first president just five years earlier. Given the several election cycles that passed between that study and the 2012 WVS, it seems likely that the Left/Right spectrum would have been more familiar to Taiwan’s citizens in 2012 than it was in 2001.

Despite these potential problems, the findings from Taiwan and Hong Kong may illuminate several important differences between them. First, the greater tendency for Taiwanese protesters to place themselves on the “Left” when compared to protesters in Hong Kong could mean that the majority of Taiwan’s protesters identify with the DPP since the KMT is considered a “Right” party.²⁷ Given the then-current Taiwanese government’s deliberate ambiguity regarding issues of Taiwanese independence, sovereignty, and statehood, DPP supporters might have more impetus to protest against a KMT-led government that was incrementally moving towards a cooperative relationship with the PRC than KMT supporters would have to protest against the 2001 DPP-led government that was maintaining strict ambiguity and inaction regarding the PRC.

Second, the tendency for Hong Kong protesters to place themselves more evenly across the Left/Right spectrum than Taiwanese protesters raises several questions. In the Hong Kong political spectrum, “Left” is associated with the pro-PRC parties and “Right” with more socially progressive parties and those opposed to PRC influence.²⁸ If nearly one-fifth of Hong Kong protesters identify as “Left,” should it be assumed that they were protesting against PRC influence? Or might these generally pro-PRC citizens view their protests as a form of participation in a political system otherwise unamenable to civic input? Without further research, these questions will have to remain unanswered.

CONCLUSION

The unique statuses of Hong Kong and Taiwan relative to the PRC and the structures of their domestic governments are important for understanding the differences between their respective political communities. Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region of the PRC with an executive-led government retained from British colonial rule. The PRC also has ultimate authority of interpretation of Hong Kong’s constitutional Basic Law. This combination of factors allows the PRC to exercise relatively direct political control over Hong Kong through the region’s government. Taiwan’s relationship to the PRC is less certain. Deliberate cross-Strait ambiguity over issues of Taiwanese sovereignty, independence, and statehood prevent the PRC from exercising direct political control over Taiwan. As Taiwan’s democratic government alternates power, the degree of cross-Strait amicability also fluctuates. With a pro-PRC government currently in power, the warming of economic cooperation has given the PRC considerable influence over the island.

These distinct forms of government and relationships to the PRC also inform how citizens in Hong Kong and Taiwan participate in politics and respond to PRC influence. Hong Kong's system of government is relatively insulated from popular pressures, and Hong Kong citizens have traditionally been depoliticized. Historically, public consultation has been seen as the essential element of democratic governance. Some Hong Kong protests, such as the 2003 anti-sedition law protest, most directly represent the protesters' desire for public consultation on policy. The protest against national education reform incorporates this same desire for public consultation along with a rejection of PRC influence as such. The occupation protest resulting from the Occupy Central with Love and Peace campaign for universal suffrage more directly represents a desire for a Chief Executive who either would openly oppose the PRC or who could be held accountable for not doing so. In short, the protests for genuine democratization were a rejection of PRC influence.

In Taiwan, the institutionalization of direct elections and regular alternations of power have given citizens the expectation of democratic accountability and transparency. The KMT's cooperation with the PRC despite strong and vocal opposition runs against the democratic expectations held by supporters of the opposing political party. While the recent protests against the PRC official's visit to Taiwan and against the ECFA and CSSTA legislation are generally viewed as opposition to the PRC, these protests should be viewed as more specifically against the undemocratic nature with which the KMT is conducting cross-Strait relations.

Rudimentary analysis of public opinion data from the World Values Survey broadly supports some difference between the political communities in Hong Kong and Taiwan. First, Taiwanese respondents were more averse to protesting than were Hong Kong respondents. This may point to protests in Hong Kong serving as a "pressure valve" in a system of governance otherwise unamenable to political participation. Second, Hong Kong respondents and protesters

were more fully trusting of their government than were respondents in Taiwan. This may reflect a broad Taiwanese apathy towards electoral politics (the World Values Survey in Taiwan was conducted in an election year under a KMT president) or an indignation toward the ruling KMT government. Third, Hong Kong protesters were more fully trusting of their government than were Taiwanese protesters. If protesters in Taiwan were specifically protesting against the KMT, they would have likely expressed lower levels of trust in their government than would protesters in Hong Kong protesting as a means of political participation.

Fourth, Taiwanese protesters were more supportive of democracy than were Hong Kong protesters. Protesters in Taiwan expressing indignation toward what they perceived as an undemocratic ruling government would likely express higher levels of support for democracy than would protesters in Hong Kong who may be protesting as a means of political participation. Finally, Hong Kong protesters were more ideologically diverse than were Taiwanese protesters. Only five percent of Taiwanese protesters placed themselves on the “Right” of the political spectrum, the side where the KMT would be located. Nearly one-fifth of protesters in Hong Kong self-identified on the same side of the spectrum as the pro-PRC government in Hong Kong. These patterns support the idea that protests in Hong Kong often serve as general forms of public participation while protests in Taiwan are often specifically directed against the KMT government by its opponents.

While the problems with using already existing cross-national public opinion surveys to resolve complex riddles particular to certain regions are numerous, the results of this study suggest the need for further research into the differences between political communities in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Survey research or in-depth interviews with both activists and non-activists in Taiwan

and Hong Kong would allow for more a more directed line of questioning that might help clearly distinguish the differences in types of political participation in the two regions.

¹ Peter Zarrow, *After Empire: The Conceptual Transformation of the Chinese State, 1885-1924*, (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2012), pp. 117-118.

² Suzanne Pepper, "Elections, Political Change and Basic Law Government: The Hong Kong System in Search of a Political Form," *The China Quarterly* 162, (June 2000), p. 411.

³ Zhaojia Liu and Hsin-chi Kuan, *The Ethos of the Hong Kong Chinese*, p. 75, quoted in Lau Siu-kai, "Institutions Without Leaders," p. 205.

⁴ Lo Shiu Hing, "Political Parties, Elite-Mass Gap and Political Instability in Hong Kong," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 20:1 (April 1998), p. 78.

⁵ Lau Siu-kai, "Institutions Without Leaders: The Hong Kong Chinese View of Political Leadership," *Pacific Affairs* 63:2 (1990), pp. 192-194.

⁶ Sean Cooney, "Why Taiwan is not Hong Kong: A Review of the PRC's "One Country Two Systems" Model for Reunification with Taiwan," *Pacific Rim Law & Policy Association* 6:3 (1997), pp. 498-499.

⁷ Shelley Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan: Voting for democracy*, (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 58.

⁸ United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758, *Restoration of the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations*, (October 25, 1971).

⁹ Yun Fan, "Taiwan: No Civil Society, No Democracy," in *Civil Society and Political Change in Asia: Expanding and Contrasting Democratic Space*, ed. by Muthiah Alagappa, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 165-169.

¹⁰ STRATFOR, "Hong Kong: Where the Investments are Coming From," July 8, 2014, <<https://stratfor.com/image/hong-kong-where-investments-are-coming>>.

¹¹ The actions of both the British and Chinese governments surrounding the handover of sovereignty are viewed with suspicion by some authors. See Xudong Zhang, "The Making of the Post-Tiananmen Intellectual Field: A Critical Overview," in *Whither China? Intellectual Politics in Contemporary China*, ed. by Xudong Zhang, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 34. For a more precise description of the pre-handover liberalization of Hong Kong via colonial reforms, see J. Christopher Soper and Joel S. Fetzer, "Democratization, Human Rights, and Religion-State Relations in Taiwan and Hong Kong," in *Religion and Regimes: Support, Separation, and Opposition*, ed. by Mehran Tamadonfar and Ted G. Jelen, (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2013), pp. 166-167.

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¹³ Ma, “Civil Society in Self-Defense,” *The Journal of Contemporary China*, p. 466.

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¹⁶ Lau Siu-kai, “Institutions Without Leaders: The Hong Kong Chinese View of Political Leadership,” pp. 206.

¹⁷ William T. Wilson, “Market Solutions Should be Central to U.S.’s Taiwan Policy,” The Heritage Foundation, August 1, 2014, <<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2014/08/market-solutions-should-be-central-to-uss-taiwan-policy>>.

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²⁰ Kerry Brown, Justin Hempson-Jones, and Jessica Pennisi, “Investment Across the Taiwan Strait: How Taiwan’s Relationship with China Affects its Position in the Global Economy,” The Royal Institute of International Affairs, November 2010, p. 17, <<http://www.kerry-brown.co.uk/files/website-8.pdf>>.

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²³ Romberg, Alan D., “Cross-Strait Relations: “Ascend the Heights and Take a Long-term Perspective,” *China Leadership Monitor* 27 (Winter 2009), pp. 4-5.

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²⁶ Russell J. Dalton and Aiji Tanaka, “The Patterns of Party Alignment,” in *Party Politics in East Asia: Citizens, Elections, and Democratic Development*, ed. by Russell J. Dalton, Doh Chull Shin, and Yun-han Chu (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008), p. 35.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²⁸ Nearly half of the Hong Kong WVS respondents that self-identify as “Far Left” said that, if they were to vote tomorrow, they would vote for the “Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong,” one of the most ardent supporter of the current, pro-PRC government in Hong Kong.