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Sunflowers and Umbrellas: Government Responses to Student-led Protests in Taiwan and Hong Kong

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With local identities increasingly consolidated, especially among young people, there have been unprecedented protests in both Taiwan and Hong Kong against their respective governments' policies toward Beijing. Taiwan's Sunflower Movement (SM) in March 2014 opposed further economic integration with China, specifically the ratification of a cross-Strait agreement on trade in services. Soon after, in September 2014, Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement (UM) demanded that Beijing modify its formula for nominating and electing Hong Kong's next chief executive in 2017. Taiwanese students held sunflowers as a symbol of hope to effect change, while Hong Kong students held umbrellas to shield themselves from police tear gas. In both instances, the international attention and the political impact were far greater than what the two governments and most pundits had expected. Both protests were led by young people, many of them students, some of whom expressed strong "anti-China" sentiments. This was despite a continuing effort by Beijing to promote a Chinese identity especially among young people.¹

Although the protests shared similar roots, the two governments responded very differently. Taipei yielded to the students' demand to delay the passage of the trade pact and draft a mechanism for the Legislative Yuan to monitor future negotiations with China. The Hong Kong government refused to amend the electoral proposal and initiated legal proceedings and other punitive measures against the protestors and their supporters.

Causes for Grievances among Young People

Both Taiwan and Hong Kong contributed greatly to China's economic development since its opening in the 1980s and became more reliant on China relative to other parts of the world in both trade and investment. Although it no longer relies on either Hong Kong or Taiwan economically as much as it once did, Beijing still gives high priority to deeper integration with both regions, socially and economically, in the hope that such integration would strengthen the people's sense of Chinese national identity. The measures adopted to achieve that deeper integration were similar in both regions. The Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) of 2003 granted Hong Kong preferential access to the Chinese market. For Taiwan, the Cross-Straits Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) of 2010 set the foundation for the two sides to liberalize trade in goods and services and investments. Tourism is now perceived to be an increasingly im-

portant engine for creating jobs and growth in both regions. Chinese tourists constitute nearly 78 percent of Hong Kong's annual 60 million tourists in 2014 and 40 percent of Taiwan's nearly ten million tourists even with heavy restrictions.² The number of new immigrants has also been rising. In Hong Kong, mainland Chinese immigrants already constitute 12 percent of the city's population and 40 percent of marriages are cross-border.³ This number will continue to increase since 150 mainland Chinese are allowed to move permanently to Hong Kong every day. Taiwan has restricted immigration from China except for family and spousal reunions, but the number of spousal reunion applications has steadily increased.⁴ The resulting increase in emigration from China has strained both regions' welfare systems and infrastructure, respectively.⁵

Contrary to Beijing's expectation, the accelerated pace of social and economic integration has led to a rise in local identity, especially among young people, who believe their values are different than those of the mainland Chinese who are visiting or moving to their hometowns.⁶ In Hong Kong, a June 2015 poll showed that for people under the age of 30, 87 percent identified themselves primarily as Hong Kongers compared with 59 percent for respondents over 30.⁷ Since 1997, that percentage has increased by 19 points for respondents under 30 but by only three points for those over 30. Taiwanese identity has risen even faster, with those who believe they are exclusively Taiwanese reaching 59 percent in June 2015, and those who believe they are both Taiwanese and Chinese reaching 34 percent. Those who believe they are in some sense "Taiwanese" therefore total 93

percent.⁸ According to many other surveys, young people have an even stronger sense of being Taiwanese than do their elders. A December 2014 survey showed that only 2.4 percent of people between the ages of 20 and 29 identify themselves as “Chinese,” compared with 92.5 percent who said they were “Taiwanese,” when forced to choose between the two.⁹ In short, while greater interaction with mainland Chinese tourists brought economic benefits to both economies, it also produced a rising local identity and increased tensions between the two groups, as studies have shown in both regions.¹⁰ Anti-China platforms have increasingly played a role in Taiwanese elections, and Hong Kong politicians critical of Beijing have also fared well, as seen in the 2012 Legislative Council Elections.¹¹

Recent behavior by the Communist Party of China (CPC) has threatened the sense of autonomy in both regions. Under President Xi Jinping, Beijing has shown greater ambition internationally and domestically.¹² As it confronts its Asian neighbors on territorial claims in the South China Sea and initiates new regional institutions, it has also conducted sweeping domestic campaigns to limit the scope of civil society.¹³ Beijing has reduced the level of autonomy Hong Kong previously enjoyed, using official and unofficial means to advance its desired policy outcomes, especially with regards to its electoral reforms.¹⁴ As for Taiwan, Xi has taken the historical step of meeting President Ma Ying-jeou for the first time since the rift between the CPC and Kuomintang (KMT) in 1949, a bold step intended to lock Ma’s successor into accepting the principle that Taiwan is part of China and to promote the idea that Taiwan must ultimately reunify with the

mainland.

The economic reality for young people does not lead them to embrace the economic incentives provided by Beijing. Inequality has widened in both places in the last decade, especially after the introduction of CEPA and the ECFA. Distribution of family income in Hong Kong is the worst of any of the world's developed economies, and is only slightly better than countries such as South Africa, Sierra Leone, and Zambia.¹⁵ Studies have shown that economic inequality and the lack of opportunity for young people in Hong Kong are closely linked to the increase in mainland Chinese immigration after 1997.¹⁶ Taiwan may be a more middle-class society by comparison, but inequality has increased there as well, and there is a widespread perception that integration with the Chinese economy has been a major reason. While business elites have benefited from CEPA and the ECFA, professionals, the middle class, and the working class do not believe that tourism or trade benefits them.¹⁷ For students who are about to enter the workforce, jobs and opportunities appear to have been reduced because of economic and social integration.¹⁸ Unemployment is a particular problem for young people in both regions, and real wages have barely increased as integration with China deepened, most likely because of lower labor costs in China. Finally, partially due to increased flows of Chinese capital as a result of financial liberalization, asset inflation continues unabated in both regions, leading to real estate becoming unaffordable for young people, who are then delaying forming families and having children.

Nature of the Protests: The Sunflower Movement

The ECFA has been fairly controversial in Taiwan since it was proposed in 2008, as were several follow-on agreements that were negotiated and signed after the ECFA's adoption in 2010.¹⁹ The liberalization of trade in services was a particular rallying point against the increasingly unpopular administration led by Ma Ying-jeou. Signed in June 2013, the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (STA) opened 64 sectors for Chinese direct investment and for employment of Chinese professionals in Taiwan. Many observers predicted the STA would exacerbate the problems of rising unemployment and inequality.²⁰ Although the government had not planned to seek line-by-line review or even approval from the Legislative Yuan, there was sufficient criticism of the agreement, including from within the KMT itself, that eventually the KMT and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) agreed that the STA would be ratified only after a legislative review and vote. After both parties held public hearings, the KMT tried to move the agreement to the floor on March 17, 2014 and use its majority to ensure passage. The following day, hundreds of students protested outside the Legislative Yuan, broke through police barricades, and occupied the building for 24 days, creating the biggest protest rally in Taiwan's history. The students also took control of the surrounding areas around the legislature, organizing medical assistance teams, garbage recycling centers, and impromptu college classes, especially after several leading universities cancelled classes in support of the protests. Although the protestors included professionals and a wide range of civic organizations, over half of them were esti-

mated to be college students, primarily from Taiwan's five leading universities.²¹

The students' demands evolved quickly in the first few days and became focused on two issues. First, they wanted the government to be more transparent in its negotiations with Beijing. The STA was viewed as having been negotiated in secret, with public consultations after the signing conducted in a superficial manner. Second, the students had the specific aim of delaying the ratification of the STA by the legislature, and some sought to amend its contents as well. In order to address both issues, the students and other civic organizations pushed hard for the passage of a monitoring mechanism to oversee future bilateral negotiations with China.

On the fourth day of the protest, Premier Jiang Yi-huah met with the students, and President Ma also pleaded with them to return home. On the thirteenth day, half a million people joined the students in a one-day protest march. On April 6, 2014, Speaker Wang Jin-pyng of the Legislative Yuan came out to hear the students' grievances and promised to have the legislature consider a monitoring framework before continuing its deliberations over the STA. The Executive Yuan then drafted a supervisory framework that required all future cross-strait negotiations to be reviewed by the legislators and sent it to the Legislative Yuan for consideration. Their demands having been met, the students held a celebratory

rally on the evening of April 10, 2014 and ended their protest.

Nature of the Protests: The Umbrella Movement

After Hong Kong reverted to Chinese rule in 1997 as a Special Administrative Region (SAR), it was governed according to a Basic Law drafted decades earlier by the People's Republic of China (PRC) officials with select representation of the Hong Kong elites on the basis of the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration that set the guidelines for Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty. The Basic Law affirmed that the head of the SAR, the Chief Executive (or CE), and the members of Hong Kong's legislature (the Legislative Council, or Legco), would be eventually elected by universal suffrage. The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC) subsequently confirmed that the CE could be chosen by universal suffrage in 2017 and after that, the Legco as well. But that left the question of how the candidates for chief executive would be nominated.²² Despite the Basic Law's language that the CE would be nominated "by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures," Beijing had repeatedly made clear its position that the details would be subject to approval by the NPCSC. It further emphasized that only "patriotic" candidates who "love the country" may be nominated, implying that Beijing would veto the nomination or election of any undesirable candidate. With regard to the legislature, Beijing similarly appeared set on ensuring a majority of pro-establishment legislators by maintaining the functional constituency system, which allows only a small per-

centage of the Hong Kong population to vote for most of the seats. Beijing's decisions have inflamed the city, which came increasingly to believe Beijing does not intend to allow "one man, one vote" in an open and competitive nomination system.

In order to conduct universal suffrage for the CE in 2017, the Hong Kong government had to conduct public consultations on the adoption of the new system of nomination and election. Throughout 2013, pan-democratic members of Legco, the pro-democracy political parties, and select civil society organizations had been promoting the concept of genuine universal suffrage, including civic nominations of candidates.²³ But in his report on the consultations in July 2014, Leung Chun-ying (also known as C.Y. Leung) minimized the growing demands for fundamental change. On August 31, 2014, the NPCSC released its decision on electoral reform, making clear that the nominating committee would be formed similar to the previous election committee without any possibility of civic nomination. Only two to three candidates who receive the endorsement of a majority of committee members would be nominated. The decision shattered any illusion that Beijing would allow an open nomination process and hence, genuine democracy, and made clear that Hong Kong could make no substantive changes in the system proposed by Beijing.

In March 2013, inspired by the example of Occupy Wall Street, academics from several universities had organized the Occupy Central with Love and Peace (OCLP) movement to push for democratic reforms. The group planned a sit-in on October 1, 2014, but because of the August 31 NPCSC White Paper, rather than waiting until October, a group of students led by the Hong Kong Federation of Students and Scholarism began to boycott classes and on September 26, stormed the Civic Square outside the Legislative Council building. The original leaders of OCLP decided to join the students, and the protest expanded to include the Admiralty district, thereby disrupting traffic on one of Hong Kong's busiest thoroughfares. For nearly three months, the students camped outside the Legco building and in areas stretching from Admiralty to Causeway Bay, and later, Mong Kok, occupying the busiest commercial areas of Hong Kong. At first, the Hong Kong government did not respond to the students, but simply asked them to return home. On the second day of protest, however, the police forcibly removed the students and sprayed tear gas at the protestors, leading to the students opening yellow umbrellas to protect themselves, hence the term Umbrella Movement. Reluctantly, the government agreed to have a televised debate between the student leaders and Carrie Lam, Hong Kong's Chief Secretary, on October 21, 2014. Rather than a debate or a negotiation, it turned out to be a session for the students to air grievances without any compromise being offered from the government. This standoff continued for months, and it became clear that neither the students nor the government had an exit strategy. The protests finally ended after pro-government groups sought and obtained court injunctions to clear some of the roads. In the name of enforcing the court orders, the police forcibly cleared the three largest protest sites between November 25 and December 15, ending the

79-day protest.²⁴ The demonstrations had been highly disruptive to Hong Kong's commercial and financial activity and were widely covered by international media. The protest tarnished Beijing's image, and some critics accused Beijing of violating its commitments under international law.²⁵ The US Senate also held hearings with testimonies urging the US government to take action and support the demand of the protestors for more democracy.²⁶

A few weeks after the protests ended, a second round of consultations on the election reforms began and a report on the UM was issued, in accordance with Carrie Lam's promise to the protestors in October 2014, again with little effort to fully reflect the range of views in the city. When the final reform bill, which closely followed Beijing's August 31, 2014 guidelines, came to a vote in Legco on June 18, 2015, it was voted down by a vote of 28 to 8—far short of the two-thirds majority required for passage. Unless either Beijing or Legco has a significant change of heart, there will be no chance for direct election of the CE in 2017, thus delaying that aspect of electoral reform until the next election scheduled for 2022, or even beyond.

Not only were there no concessions made by the government during or after the protest, the government decided to charge some of the protest leaders with disorderly behavior, and government supporters warned them that those charges

would greatly reduce their prospects for employment. University faculty and administrators who supported the protests were harassed. In particular, a well-regarded professor and former law school dean, Johannes Chan, who supported the UM and was nominated for an important administrative position at the University of Hong Kong, was voted down by a board filled with political appointees close to the government. By comparison, some Taiwanese students have also been charged with trespassing for their roles in the protests, but few believe they will actually be convicted, especially if the DPP wins the presidential election in 2016.

Comparison of the Movements

The two governments thus responded to the student protests very differently. Ma decided not only to delay the passage of the STA, but also to consider various proposals for the creation of a monitoring framework, thus meeting the protestor's core demands. On the other hand, C.Y. Leung did not give in to any of the students' demands and over the course of the months after the UM, the Hong Kong government adopted punitive measures to intimidate students and their supporters in order to prevent any further protests. Why were the outcomes so different?

Student leadership and experience

The students who were involved in both the SM and the UM had been organized previously. After democratization, Taiwanese students had succeeded in bringing about policy reform through the 1990 Wild Lily movement and the 2008 Wild Strawberry movement. The two SM student leaders, Chen Wei-ting and Lin Fei-fan, had worked together before and were joined this time by a large number of graduate students and young professionals who had many years of experience as activists. In recent years, the same student leadership had protested urban redevelopment, nuclear power plants, and media monopoly. The students were also highly knowledgeable about social media, sending out electronic press releases and raising money internationally through crowdfunding.²⁷

The Taiwanese students were careful not to align with either political party, both of which were divided internally with regards to the STA and had low credibility with the public.²⁸ They also had very clear and specific demands and vowed not to end their protest until the government agreed to stop the ratification of the STA, engage the public in consultations, and begin establishing formal legislative procedures for overseeing future negotiations with China.

Finally, the Taiwanese students were highly disciplined. Although many of them were very radical, they deliberately eschewed the anti-globalization and pro-independence positions that some privately favored, and instead projected a more

moderate image in order to appeal to a broader spectrum of the public.²⁹ They focused on the STA and the demand for a monitoring legislation in the knowledge that the STA was widely opposed by a wide range of interest groups, from environmental and gay rights organizations to parents of university students.³⁰

Some of the Hong Kong protestors had also worked together in 2012 to oppose the government's proposal to introduce "moral and national education," which united parents and students with the specific goal of stopping the government from imposing national education on all schools. However, the protest did not force the government to abandon the plan completely, only agreeing to delay the introduction of a new curriculum with no explicit provisions for future consultation and approval. Thus, social activism had achieved a more limited impact in bringing about policy change in Hong Kong than it had in Taiwan.³¹

Moreover, the majority of the protestors in Hong Kong were younger and had less experience than their Taiwanese counterparts. The most visible leader was the 17-year-old high school student Joshua Wong, who headed up Scholarism. In fact, although the OCLP movement was initially organized by three university professors, it gave way to an amorphous student-led movement with little consensus among the various pro-democratic groups supporting it. The students had two demands: to have the NPCSC withdraw the August 31 decision about electoral

arrangements for 2016 and 2017, and to have C.Y. Leung restart consultations and submit a new report to the NPCSC about the Hong Kong people's desire for real democracy. These demands were far less specific and far more sensitive than the demands issued by the leaders of the SM in Taiwan. Beyond that, the protestors were divided on additional demands, which included asking for the resignation of C.Y. Leung and pushing for civic nominations for the CE election. Representatives of the Hong Kong Student Federation and Scholarism met with the Occupy Central's founding members, but the students were more radical in their demands, as Joshua Wong acknowledged.³² Rather than narrowing their demands to a small set of actionable proposals, the students chose to continue with their long list of grievances with the ostensible overall goal of making Hong Kong more democratic and more equitable.

Although the UM became a very large-scale multi-day protest, it lacked leadership, organization, and strategy. After the debate with Carrie Lam, there was no further dialogue with the government, and thus, no ability to reach a solution for ending the protest, similar to that negotiated between Wang Jin-pyng and the students in Taiwan. Managing three different protest sites became problematic, especially when UM expanded to Mong Kok, where primarily working-class protestors had to fight off government-related triads, while the protests on Hong Kong Island remained dominated by younger students and professionals, who were opposed mainly by the police. The level of public interest – even among those who supported democracy for Hong Kong – waned as the protest disrupted

the city's smooth functioning.

In short, the protest leaders in Taiwan were more skilled and organized than those in Hong Kong. The Taiwanese student leaders made effective tactical and strategic decisions as the context changed, and they were united in their leadership. In contrast, the Hong Kong protest lacked credible and experienced leadership, which sapped the strength of the movement over time.

The Public Response

While the Taiwanese public appeared divided at first about whether to applaud or denounce the students for an illegal break-in and occupation of a government building, the students' appeal that the government be more transparent and the creation of a broad network of civic organizations and professors supporting the students aroused greater public sympathy over the first week of the protest. Not only did the students make full use of social media like Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, and PTT, a popular bulletin board in Taiwan, they also facilitated livestreaming from the legislative chambers and drew widespread domestic and international coverage. Public support for the protest rose to 51 percent on the sixth day, with an even higher percentage agreeing with the students that the STA should be reviewed by the legislature in detail.³³ The height of the protest was when half a

million people joined the students for a one-day demonstration against the STA, with a full-page advertisement in *The New York Times* and the Chinese-language newspaper *Apple Daily*. Although support for the protest had started to decline by the last days of the 24-day protest, 65 percent of the public came to believe that the students' protest was good for Taiwan's democratic development.³⁴ That support cut across age, ethnicity, and class.

The SM was also supported by the international community, e.g., Yu Ying-shih, a respected US-based Chinese historian. He issued a statement supporting civil protests on March 21, 2014, which was widely circulated and made tremendous ripples through the KMT and the DPP.³⁵ Policy analyst Robert Sutter also advised the US government to actively support the protest and in effect, support "Taiwanese free expression."³⁶

As in Taiwan, the UM protestors in Hong Kong were young with 85 percent under 40 and a majority professionals or self-employed individuals, according to one estimate, but the protests' appeal did not broaden over time.³⁷ Hong Kong society was deeply divided, more so than Taiwan. Historically, its democratic movements were supported primarily by the well-educated middle class but did not have widespread support from the business elites nor from the working class. There has been strong support for the rule of law but not necessarily for democracy. A

similar pattern was evident during the UM.³⁸ Although divided about C.Y. Leung, the business elites were united in their support of economic integration with China and opposed the protests, which disrupted business and created tension with Beijing. The working class, many of whom have close links to family in China, was enmeshed in networks organized by pro-Beijing groups and was generally not sympathetic to pro-democracy demands. Most Hong Kongers believed in the rule of law as the most important value and did not see democracy as a core value, doubting it would be beneficial to the city. Polls showed that the generation under 30 differed in that they valued freedom and democracy more than rule of law.³⁹

As a result of these divisions by generation and class, the city was polarized over the UM. Support rose and fell through the protest, but it ranged between only 31 and 38 percent while opposition was always higher, at 34 to 46 percent.⁴⁰ Indeed, University of Hong Kong (HKU) polls showed that a majority of the public consistently opposed the UM.⁴¹ By the end of the protest, they simply wanted the demonstrations to end as soon as possible. There was no broad tendency by local or Chinese elites to reach out to the students, as Taiwanese elites did for the SM. Although the UM generated a great deal of international sympathy, Beijing labeled its rhetoric as “foreign intervention.” Beijing had long been denouncing foreign support of the democratic movement in Hong Kong, and C.Y. Leung echoed the sentiment during the protest.⁴²

Government's Accountability to the People

Taipei and Hong Kong needed to play a nuanced two-level game between Beijing and their constituents. Skillful negotiations with Beijing could be politically expedient for both governments, but they operate under entirely different systems. Taiwanese politicians are accountable to the voters under an extremely competitive and democratic system. Serving his second term and co-serving as the chairman of the KMT, Ma wanted to ensure that the KMT would win the following presidency and a majority in the January 2016 legislative elections, which will be held concurrently with the presidential elections. KMT legislators are most concerned about their own electoral success, rather than toeing the party line. As a result, the KMT could not promise further economic (not to mention political) concessions to Beijing even if its leaders were ideologically inclined to do so and even if such measures might be economically beneficial to certain party supporters. Moreover, a rift between Ma and Speaker Wang, who had the clout and seniority in the KMT and the government to go head-on with Ma, gave the protesters an opening.⁴³ Having long disagreed with Ma's position on most issues, Wang sided with the students and gave them an opportunity to declare victory and end the protest.

Taiwan did face pressure from China, which aired its opinion through articles in

Beijing-controlled media, criticizing the students for irresponsible behavior that jeopardized the credibility of the Taiwanese government and the economic future of the island. Editorials described the student protestors in both Taiwan and Hong Kong as “revolutionaries,” and claimed that they worked together with malicious political intent.⁴⁴ But, with complete autonomy from Beijing, the Taiwan government, political parties, and elites were under no obligation to adopt China’s preferences. As seen in the last few presidential elections, Beijing’s interference actually backfired, with political elites careful not to appear deferential to Beijing.

Under the Basic Law, the Hong Kong government only enjoys a “high degree of autonomy” in internal affairs, implying that Beijing retains authority on what it regards as major issues. Since the handover, Beijing’s control is most visible through the Liaison Office, which has not bridged the differences of opinion between Hong Kong and Beijing but only fueled the rising resentment of Hong Kong citizens. The roots of the protest had been planted for several years as Beijing’s increasing demands for ultimate control clashed with rising public expectations for democracy. In early 2013, chairman of the Law Committee of the National People’s Congress, Qiao Xiaoyang, warned that “any members from the opposition camp who insist on confronting the central government cannot become the chief executive of Hong Kong.”⁴⁵ Then Beijing’s August 31 White Paper, which indicated that Beijing expected to control the elections, sparked the protest. Beijing also made clear that the Hong Kong government would have no leeway to negoti-

ate any further. The declining space for the SAR government to negotiate with different constituents made it impossible for any standoff to be defused, leading to an increasingly divided city.

The Basic Law also created several institutional problems. The government was to be led by a nonpartisan CE, with no accountability to the people but highly sensitive to Beijing's criticism, resulting in the lack of ability to reach out to the protestors and solve the impasse during the protest. Second, there was no mechanism to aggregate different societal interests or solidify policy support, usually done by political parties. Elected by a broader segment of Hong Kong than the CE but still rather unrepresentative of the general population, the legislators are not fully accountable to the public nor bound by party loyalty. They provide oversight on executive decisions, but cannot introduce legislation and are primarily effective in rejecting government proposals. The government governs through its alliance with the elites without building a mechanism to co-opt dissenters and absorb opponents.⁴⁶

The UM was protesting against perhaps the most sensitive issue since 1997 as the city faces an uncertain electoral procedure in the 2017 CE election. Beijing framed the issue as a question of stability versus chaos in a heavy-handed attempt to discredit the protests.⁴⁷ As with Taiwan's SM, it broadcast its disapproval through

the Communist Party media, calling the protest “unrest” in *People’s Daily*, creating a stalemate which will persist for the foreseeable future.⁴⁸ Pro-Beijing individuals including retired officials, local businessmen, and journalists wrote frequently about the danger of Hong Kong losing its status as an orderly gateway to China and described the UM as a foreign-assisted effort to promote a “color revolution.”⁴⁹

As Beijing put increasing pressure on the Hong Kong government to stonewall the students and the public in general, the government had little room to compromise. As in the case of Taiwan, C.Y. Leung and the liberal-minded president of Legco, Jasper Tsang Yok-sing, had their differences but Tsang only became openly critical of Leung’s policy and Beijing’s interventionist approach on the electoral reform months after the UM had ended.⁵⁰

Conclusion

After the SM, Taiwan’s local elections in November 2014 included voting for the mayors of the island’s six largest cities, with outcomes clearly influenced by the SM. The ruling Nationalist Party which championed the STA, suffered one of the worst losses in over a decade and barely held on to 6 out of 22 municipalities, amounting to a vote of no confidence in Ma. The most important post, the may-

orality of Taipei, went to an independent candidate Ko Wen-je, perceived as an outsider and reformer. Very supportive of the SM and close to the DPP, Ko ran as an independent and gained a majority of votes of the younger generation.⁵¹ His campaign fundraised and organized through an extensive network of student and young professional volunteers in a city that was traditionally a KMT-stronghold. As the January 2016 presidential and legislative elections approach, the KMT is concerned about losing not only the presidency but also its majority in the legislature. Few members want to be affiliated with Ma, but Ma's successor as KMT chairman, Eric Chu, has little chance of winning the presidency and has been unable to unite the different factions.

The party continues to champion economic integration with China, which appears to benefit only a small group of elites rather than the broad spectrum of middle-class Taiwanese. Although the DPP is likely to capture more votes than in the last two presidential elections, it too may be put on notice for not engaging with the younger generation and for lacking a policy to narrow economic inequality and generate job opportunities going forward. The student movement solidified support for stronger checks and balances and a questioning of further liberalization with the Chinese economy, including direct investment, tourism, and immigration. The SM has invigorated the debate about the priorities of Taiwanese society and forced both political parties to become more responsive to the younger generation, especially with regards to strengthening public consultation in reaching policy consensus.

Compared with the experience in Taiwan where the government is under electoral pressure to be more responsive, the Hong Kong government's failure to incorporate or handle grievances aired during the UM is leading to a political crisis with declining legitimacy and political stability.⁵² After the UM, the division between the executive and legislative branches has widened and the pan-democratic legislators continue to block all government funding requests through filibusters and other procedural tactics. UM may have deepened this divide, rather than bridging it. Beijing will continue its hardline strategy to sideline dissent, from academia to social activists, and intensify control of Chinese-language media and press. The government does not seem capable of introducing policies to address economic inequality. Limited measures such as reducing the number of tourists coming to Hong Kong have not been meaningful. The rejection of the electoral reform bill in June 2015 after two rounds of consultation hardened the deadlock; although it is possible that electoral reforms will be reintroduced, there is little likelihood that any will pass. The November 22, 2015 district council polls, an important bellwether of the 2016 Legco election, witnessed a record turnout of 47 percent, indicating that Hong Kong has become more politicized, but it did not meaningfully change the balance of power between pro-government and pro-democracy candidates. Some citizens turned up to vote for the first time to keep Occupy Central candidates out.⁵³ Within the pan-democrats, there was a generational change, as senior figures were replaced by the "umbrella soldiers" or protestors-turned-politicians, despite lack of resources and name recognition.⁵⁴ This victory provides these protestors-turned-politicians with en-

try tickets to contend for Legco seats in 2016. Consistent with the message of the UM, the results show that the younger generation is eager to participate, enabling the “umbrella soldiers” to win seven seats. With the young people overwhelmingly clamoring for more democracy, the SAR government will face a more difficult time governing.⁵⁵ More people disapprove of how the SAR government has dealt with the Central government than ever before, with a record high 42 percent of dissatisfaction, the highest since the 1997 handover, and public confidence in “One Country, Two Systems” at record lows.⁵⁶

Although the policy outcomes were very different in Taiwan and Hong Kong, a generational change in leadership has occurred in both places as a result of the protests. A younger generation, which grew up facing a strong and assertive Beijing government, wants to assert social, economic and political identities that are distinct both from that of older generations and from that advocated by Beijing. Socially, they want to preserve their freedom of expression. Economically, they question the need to prioritize growth over equality and fairness. Politically, they want to reform failing existing institutions including political leadership and parties. Students in both regions have now turned their energy toward engaging in politics including running for office, volunteering in election campaigns of politicians, or simply becoming active citizens.

Even though both regions appear to experience more polarization and gridlock, the difference in institutional design means that Taiwan may better adapt to public sentiment than will Hong Kong. Under a democratic system, Taiwan's government will be pressured to respond to the public although its executive-legislative divide and public differences over policy may both remain. Hong Kong, on the other hand, does not have institutions that can mediate between the government and the society and enjoys less and less autonomy from Beijing. This increases the chances of further political stalemate and even social unrest.

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