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**How do social media affect Taiwanese people's participation
in social movements under the Ma Ying-Jeou administration
between 2008 and 2016**

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A dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
to the Department of Politics and International Studies at the
University of Warwick

March 2019

Table of Contents

List of Figures	6
List of Tables	6
List of Pictures	6
Acknowledgements	7
Declaration	8
Abstract	8
List of Abbreviations	9
Chapter 1 Introduction	10
1.1 Sunflower Movement takes social movements in Taiwan to another level	15
1.2 Outline of the Study	25
Chapter 2 Literature Review	
2.1 Introduction	32
2.2 Citizenship	33
2.3 Is it possible young citizens' perception of citizenship might have been changed?	43
2.4 New forms of political participation	49
2.5 Is "digital citizenship" a potential form of citizenship in the online world?	56
2.6 Converged technology; multiplied networks	65
2.7 Conclusion	78
Chapter 3 – Citizenship in Taiwan, a case study	
3.1 Introduction	80
3.2 Taiwan's democratisation development	86
3.3 Taiwan after the 2016 presidential election	101
3.4 Key factors behind Taiwan's democratisation process	108
3.5 Research method	121
3.6 Conclusion	125
Chapter 4 – Resurgence of Social Movement in Taiwan	
4.1. Introduction	127
4.2. Resurgence of social movement during President Ma's first term	128
4.3 Anti-Kuokuang Petrochemical Movement (October 2010 – April 2011)	140
4.4 Unfold the Events, Unwrap the Political Communication	145
4.5 Analysis: Understanding social media in a digital context	159
4.6 Conclusion	165

Chapter 5 – Sophisticating Usage of ICT in Social Movement	
5.1 Introduction	168
5.2 Anti-media monopoly movement	170
5.3 Usage of ICTs and social media	176
5.4 Analysing Anti-Media Monopoly Movement	180
5.5 White Shirt Movement in 2013	183
5.6 Conclusion	200
Chapter 6 – When Sunflower Seeds take Root in Democratic Soil	
6.1. Introduction	205
6.2. Sunflower Movement: the origin and implication	206
6.3. A More Sophisticated Usage of ICTs and Social Media	215
6.4. Discussion and Analysis	220
6.5. When citizens publicity express their private me-centricity	222
6.6. Conclusion	241
Chapter 7 – Analysis & Conclusion	
7.1 Summary of the Study	246
7.2 Contribution, Validity, and Limitation of the Study	247
7.3 Analysis	251
7.4 Conclusion	269
Appendix	276
Bibliography	278

List of Figures

Figure 2.1 The Changing Public, adopted from Dalton	40
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List of Tables

Table 3.1 from “A “Green” Legislature: Taiwan’s New Parliament More Different Than Ever”	103
Table 3.2 Female representation in Taiwan’s Legislative Yuan	104
Table 3.3 Numbers of NGOs in Taiwan between pre-1949 and 1999	110
Table 3.4 Internet Users and Population in Taiwan 2004-2016	119
Table 4.1 Major social movements in 2008 – 2016	128
Table 4.2 Keyword density report for protesters’ statement	154
Table 5.1 Introduction Movement under Ma Ying-Jeou’s Second Term (2012 – 2016)	180
Table 5.2 Taiwan in Freedom House report- 2008-2015	196
Table 6.1 Public opinion surveys on the Sunflower Movement	242
Table 6.2 Money spent on campaign advertisement on traditional media outlets- TV	265

List of Pictures

Picture 3.1 Freedom House’s profile report for Taiwan	83
Picture 4.1 Snapshot of a news clip on YouTube	132
Picture 4.2 Snapshot of the official blog of the Wild Strawberries Movement	134
Picture 4.3 Snapshot of the official site of the National Youth Alliance Against KuoKuang Petrochemical Project	139
Picture 4.4 Internet-based platforms used by National Youth Alliance Against KuoKuang Petrochemical	143
Picture 4.5 Word Cloud tab (exported from NVivo)	150
Picture 5.1 A snapshot of the Facebook page of “901 Anti-Media Monopoly Movement”	176
Picture 5.2 Template for Anti-Media Monopoly Campaign	177
Picture 5.3 A snapshot of the official blog of Citizen 1985	187
Picture 5.4 Financial statement of Citizen 1985 (source: Citizen 1985 Blog)	197
Picture 5.5 Snapshot of “lazy people pack” of Citizen 1985	216
Picture 6.1 Facebook event page of 330 Anti-CSSTA Rally	237

Acknowledgements

My heartfelt gratitude goes to the best supervisor I could think of - Dr Peter Ferdinand - for his continued support throughout my study. I could not have made it without his guidance and supervision.

I want to devote this thesis to my mother, Grace Hsu, for supporting my pursuit of an academic career and giving me unconditional support, both spiritually and financially. It is never easy to grow up in a single parent family. But it is truly a blessing when you have a mother who is willing to do anything for you so you can follow your aspiration without any hesitation.

I also want to thank my husband, Ash, who has been with me throughout all the ups and downs since I started by PhD studies. From boyfriend to fiancé and then husband, whenever I felt lost or overwhelmed in the middle of my studies, he is always there for me.

I also want to thank my interviewees for their insight, which contributed tremendously to my research, which I hope can help further the studies of democracy, and encourage more to join forces together to defend this hard-earned value.

Lastly, I want thank many friends of mine and my proofreader, John Stephenson. Your support and generous help enriched this study, and kept me going so that I could complete the last stretch of this unforgettable and remarkable journey.

Declaration

This thesis is submitted to the University of Warwick in support of my application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It has been composed by myself and has not been submitted in any previous applications for any other degrees.

Abstract

This thesis attempts to explore how technology affects people's behaviour in the public sphere. Particularly, at a time when information communication technologies (ICTs) are rapidly reshaping nearly every aspect of our everyday life, this study asks, has citizens' civic engagement been affected as well? In addition, this study takes Taiwan, a third wave democracy in East Asia, as a case study, with the aim of demonstrating how Western liberal democratic values can be compatible with so-called "Asian values", whilst at the same time analysing if and how the civic engagement of Taiwanese people has been affected by the rise of ICTs mentioned above. To make the research scope more focused, this study only focuses on civil society during the years of President Ma Ying-Jeou's administration from 2008 to 2016. This study focuses on what ICTs have changed, and what these changes can tell us. The main research method deployed is qualitative analysis, which was supplemented by a series of semi-constructed interviews with people who played significant roles in one or more of the major social movements that took place during the Ma administration.

The findings and analysis of this study identify the impacts of ICTs on citizens' behaviour from three perspectives: (1) how do ICTs reshape and revolutionise the way citizens communicate with each other; (2) how do ICTs enable social movement and empower activists; and (3) how do ICTs reshape and redefine the notion of the

public and private spheres. In the information age, when technology has profoundly changed our social structure, it is important to continuously revisit people's perception of their shared values of democracy, their political participation, and their role in a democracy. It might be equally important to clarify that the idea of citizenship studied in this thesis is viewed more from a sociological perspective rather than a normative one. It is possible that such a changing perception may lead to further academic research on the normative definition of citizenship in future research.

List of Abbreviations

CDA: Critical discourse analysis
CNA: Central News Agency
CSSTA: Cross-Strait Service and Trade Agreement
DPP: Democratic Progressive Party
ECFA: Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement
FTA: Free trade agreement
GDP: Gross domestic product
ICT(s): information and communication technology/technologies
KMT: Kuomintang
NGO: Non-profit organisation
NPP: New Power Party
NTU: National Taiwan University
TFD: Taiwan Foundation for Democracy
RSF: Reporters without Borders
SMEs: Small and medium enterprises

1. Introduction

It is said that ‘Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty’. That saying is more relevant now than ever. Only by taking collective action, can we ensure that democracy will continue to shape the future of our world.

- **President Tsai Ing-wen (2018)**¹

On 25 June 2018, President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) of Taiwan was invited to deliver an opening address at an event celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (TFD)² in Taipei. In her remarks, President Tsai reflected on the past, present, and future of global democratisation with a bold statement, saying: “Democracy won the twentieth century.” The first female leader of Taiwan pointed out that the victory of democracy became evident when the end of the Cold War accelerated a third wave of democratisation, with a significant number of countries from Eastern Europe to Latin America, and from Asia to Africa, embracing the values of freedom, democracy, and human rights.³ When the third wave of democratisation reached the shores of East Asia, Taiwan joined this trend and embarked on its journey of becoming the vibrant democracy it is today. However, despite celebrating this happy occurrence, Tsai also warned that, “while democracy can move forward, it can also regress.”

¹ An excerpt from her address to the fifteenth anniversary of the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy on June 25 2018.

² Funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2003, the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy is an independent organisation which supports the promotion of democracy around the world. The TFD also participates actively in the global promotion of democracy and supporting the improvement of human rights conditions. See <http://www.tfd.org.tw/opencms/english/about/background.html>.

³ According to Samuel Huntington (1991), the third wave of democratisation saw more than sixty countries around the globe experience democratic transitions.

In order to highlight the fact that democracy has been tending towards retreat in the twenty-first century, the president cited a 2018 report by Freedom House, which shows that 2018 was the twelfth consecutive year of decline in global freedom. She then pointed out that democratic values such as the rule of law, freedom of speech, and human rights are being challenged around the world, and argued that in many places these challenges can be seen in erosions to democracy caused by increases in terrorism and populism. However, despite this gloomy outlook on the state of global democracy, with regards to Taiwan, Tsai had this to say:

Historical trends do not always favour the forward march of democracy. But in Taiwan, moving backward is not an option.⁴

Since Larry Diamond coined the term “democratic recession” in early 2000, the world has been lamenting the manner in which democracy has seemingly ceased its expansion and lost its influence in many parts of the globe. In the middle east, more countries have regressed in terms of freedom and civic rights and even some established democracies, such as the US, seem to be under threat of becoming less democratic. Added to this, people in democratic societies are growing increasingly unhappy about the way these systems function in their countries. Research by the PEW research centre found that across the thirty-six surveyed countries, a global median of 46 per cent said they were very or somewhat satisfied with the way their democracy was working, while 52 per cent were not too or not at all satisfied.⁵ In terms of third wave democracies, some, such as the Philippines, are potentially on the

⁴ For full text of the speech, please refer to the Presidential Office website: <https://english.president.gov.tw/News/5434>.

⁵ The findings of the research conducted in 2017 show that people living in democracies around the world are generally dissatisfied with their countries’ democratic system. It is also found that partisanship has a significant impact on people’s perception about democracy. <http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/10/16/many-unhappy-with-current-political-system/>.

brink of falling back into authoritarian regime. According to a report published by the Economist on 31 January 2018, 89 of the 167 countries assessed in 2017 received lower democracy ratings than the year before, with the report also noting that less than 5 per cent of the world's population currently lives in a "full democracy". When viewed in tandem with the findings of the Freedom house report, it is possible to paint a depressing picture of democracy's path in recent years, despite the Economist noting a potential pause of such a decline in 2018. In any case, it seems as though no one should assume the victory of democracy in the twentieth century will be easily maintained and become a norm in the twenty-first century. With the world facing a continued trend of a global "democratic recession", the Economist's 2018 report shows that Taiwan's democracy stands as a stellar example in the world.

Unlike the seemingly bleak global patterns highlighted above, democracy has continued to move forward in Taiwan. In the Economist's 2019 Democracy Index, Taiwan is ranked third in Asia and 32nd amongst the 167 countries and territories included on the list. Over the past two years, Taiwan's democracy has been given recognition by pro-democracy institutions within the international community, such as Freedom House and Reporters without Borders. In the 2017 Freedom House Index issued by a Canada-based think-tank, the Fraser Institute, Taiwan's ranking jumped forward eight places from the year before to 18th. Out of the 159 countries assessed by the Fraser Institute, Taiwan was one of the 61 countries where freedom was seen to have increased in 2017 compared to the previous year (Strong, 2018).

While democracy in some established democratic countries is being challenged by the rise of populism and growing partisan divisions, Taiwan's democracy, young when compared with many more established ones, remains vibrant. Since the lifting of martial law in 1987, there have been three rounds of peaceful transfer of power, with the first one taking place in 2000. Only three decades after the

lifting of martial law, Taiwan's freedom of press stands praised by Reporters without Borders (RSF) as the freest in Asia (RSF, 2018). In a surprising contrast with the worldwide decline of democracy suggested by the PEW research, the people of Taiwan, particularly those who did not experience the martial law era, demonstrate strong support for the democratic system. According to a survey conducted by the TFD in 2018, 86.2 per cent of the 20-39 age group, the highest percentage of all age groups, agreed that there are problems with Taiwan's democratic system, but still considered it the best system amongst all other forms of political system.⁶ This group were born between 1980 and 1998, thus mostly coming from the Millennial generation, and did not spend a significant part of their life, if any, experiencing the period of martial law that ran from 1949 to 1987. Unlike their parents or grandparents, they probably remember very little, or nothing at all, about the so-called "White Terror", a time which marks a significant page in the political development of Taiwan. Thus, these young Taiwanese have not experienced political suppression in the same manner as their older counterparts and, also of importance, nor did they witness the events and changes that occurred during Taiwan's rapid economic development in the 1970s. Compared with their parents or grandparents, Taiwanese Millennials have grown up in a politically stable and economically prosperous Taiwan.

While some might argue that these Millennials take democracy for granted, their political participation in recent decades would suggest this not to be the case, and indeed, their participation could be said to have reinvigorated Taiwan's civil society. For example, during the time when President Ma Ying-Jeou (馬英九) of the Kuomintang (KMT) was in power between 2008 and 2016, they organised a large

⁶ The source, Focus Taiwan, is an English news website run by the Central News Agency (CNA), the oldest local news agency established in 1924 in Guangzhou, China. CNA relocated its headquarters to Taiwan with the Kuomintang government in 1949, and continues its service and broadcast news in four languages: Mandarin, English, Japanese, and Spanish. See <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201804190036.aspx>.

number of important social movements and protests, calling for a better, more open and more just society. Though dubbed with a derogatory nickname by their senior counterparts - the “Strawberry Generation”⁷ - and often criticised for being lazy, entitled, and too weak to withstand pressure or to work hard, nevertheless, during the eight-year tenure of President Ma, it was people from the “Strawberry Generation” who took action to ensure that democracy will continue to shape the future of Taiwan. Between 2008 and 2016, they took to the streets and staged protests and demonstrations to advocate greater social justice and transparency in politics. Important as they are, elections were only one means taken by these citizens to participate in politics. While their parents who were perhaps traumatised by the White Terror tend to stay away from social movements, many Taiwanese Millennials have utilised their creativity and social media skills to transform the image of social movements into something more “positive” in Taiwan. A good example of this is the Wild Strawberry Movement of 2008, the first large-scale social movement by this generation, in which Taiwanese students across Taiwan took to the street calling for media freedom and as a result inspired more Millennials to actively participate in Taiwanese civil society (Ho, 2015). In an op-ed, National Taiwan University sociology professor, Ho Ming-sho, commented that these Millennials opened a new phase in the history of Taiwan’s civil society and encouraged more youngsters to take part in public affairs. This argument was backed up strongly only six years later in 2014 when young protesters staged an unprecedented occupation protest in Taiwan, known as “the Sunflower Movement”. The protesting students occupied the Legislature for 24 days, significantly expanding the scale and influence of social movements, and achieving their goal of changing the course of cross-Strait

⁷ The Wild Strawberry Movement, taking place in 2008 under the Ma administration, is one of the case studies which will be assessed in this study in later chapters.

development, something which now marks a critical point in modern Taiwanese political history.

So, with democracy undergoing an apparently alarming decline across the world, Taiwan stands as living proof that positive change is still possible. Thirty years after the lifting of martial law, today's Taiwan is considered one of the world's freest countries, with a comparatively strong press freedom⁸ and a seemingly strong will, for a number of very understandable reasons, not to let its freshly established democratic progress march backwards. It is this stellar example of democracy that acts as the inspiration behind this research, and has inspired its author to revisit the significant revival of social movements in Taiwan during the eight years of President Ma's rule. The reason for doing so is that it allows the opportunity to take a closer look at the somewhat unexpected contribution of Taiwanese Millennials within these movements, and in particular reveals an excellent chance to analyse the participation methods of these tech-savvy protestors, something that until now has perhaps not had the attention it has required. And by doing so, this study hopes to **explore and find some potential answers as to whether Taiwanese people's political engagement in the information age offers some clues about young people's perception of democracy and their roles as citizens in a democracy.**

1-1 Sunflower Movement takes social movements in Taiwan to another level

Around-the-clock live streaming and heavy social media use quickly turned the protest into a large movement (Cheng, 2014).

On 18 March 2014, an assembly of university students broke into the compound of Taiwan's Legislative Yuan, the island's highest law-making body. The occupation

⁸ Taiwan's ranking in the World Press Freedom Index compiled by Reporters without Borders (RSF) moved up three places to 42nd in 2018

was organised in response to an announcement by the then ruling KMT government of the sudden passage of the cross-Strait Service Trade Pact (CSSTA) with Beijing, a highly controversial trade agreement. The protesting students argued that the trade pact was passed without a clause-by-clause review at the Legislature. They criticised the ruling KMT, which controlled the majority of the Legislature, for neglecting a prior agreement made by both ruling and opposition parties that the Legislature should hold a review process to protect the rights and benefits of Taiwanese people and prevent closer cross-Strait economic relations from posing any form of threat to Taiwan. The protesting students made four demands: (1) the government should withdraw the trade pact from the Legislature; (2) the government should enact a bill on cross-Strait agreement supervision (CSAS); (3) the government should legislate the CASA bill before the legal review of CSSTA; and (4) that the government hold a national conference on constitution to consult public opinion.

At the initial stage of the occupation, there were only a few hundred protesters inside the parliament. Within twenty-four hours, however, the number of protesting students had swelled rapidly, buoyed by round-the-clock news coverage, and through the dissemination of information via Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms. This student-led protest, which was dubbed the “Sunflower Movement” by Taiwanese media outlets, lasted for twenty-four days, turning the compound of the Legislative Yuan into a sea of banners and posters. The protesting students expressed worry that the human rights and the freedom of speech they hold so dearly would be eroded if the communist Chinese government were to obtain greater access to Taiwan’s free market and, as a result, society. For a society rooted in East Asian culture, one that might frown upon such confrontation by a younger demographic, this unprecedented movement surprisingly received support from the majority of Taiwanese people. A poll conducted by TVBS television (traditionally considered to

be a pro-KMT TV channel), found that 70 per cent of respondents supported the protesting students and agreed that the government should review the CSSTA on a clause-by-clause basis. The same poll also found that 48 per cent supported the action of occupying the Legislature.⁹ Twenty-four days later, the government gave in and agreed to withdraw the CSSTA, and legislate a bill to oversee all cross-Strait agreements.

The “Sunflower Movement”, was more than a one-off student-led protest, but a movement that marked a new milestone in the history of Taiwanese social movements as it was the first time the Internet had played an instrumental role in both organisation and mobilisation throughout the event (Chen, et al., 2014). In addition, the Sunflower Movement challenges existing scholarly literature on the subject of young Taiwanese citizens’ political engagement. A comparative study by Sonoda (2012) finds that Taiwanese are only slightly more interested in social movement activities than the Singaporeans, and much less than the Japanese and South Koreans. Sonoda’s argument is disproven by the 2014 Sunflower Movement, which evidently garnered popular support, especially amongst college and university students. As the aforementioned TVBS poll finds, Taiwanese people generally agree with the demands and rationales of the protesting students, who called on the KMT government to review the CSSTA on a clause-by-clause basis. The poll findings show that such a radical protest enjoyed broad popular support and further indicates that Taiwanese citizens might hold a more open attitude towards such radical forms of social movement than previously thought.

The success of the movement has also inspired many to investigate the role social media played in the Sunflower Movement (see Hsiao & Yang 2018; Tsatisou, 2018; Rowen, 2018). However, most of them focus on how social media was used by

⁹ See the TVBS poll: <http://goo.gl/5nNtel> (Accessed 10 May, 2014).

Taiwanese youth to transmit their messages during social movements. Little attention so far has been paid to the hidden messages that can be gleaned from the way Taiwanese protesters organised the movement and communicated with each other and elected representatives. This study recognises a gap in the existing literature that young Taiwanese people's civic engagement needs to be reviewed from within a digital context and seeks to establish whether their political participation reflects a changing attitude towards democracy or citizenship. This study does not aim to redefine the meaning of democratic citizenship. However, it attempts to revisit the essence of democratic citizenship by dealing with the changing behaviour exhibited by Millennial protesters and social movement participants in recent social movements.

For instance, the Sunflower Movement was not simply just another example of recent civil movements in Taiwan. It was the largest student-led social movement of its kind, and was spread largely by grassroots movements, civil groups and social media. In a report titled "The Sunflower Movement, brought to you by the Internet", Enru Lin, a journalist for the local paper the *Taipei Times*, it is argued that Taiwanese citizens who are under thirty-five used the Internet and other social media platforms in unexpected and unconventional ways to recruit people and share information during the Sunflower Movement (Lin, 2014).¹⁰ Facebook in particular, Lin points out, with its 65 per cent penetration rate in Taiwan, proves to be the most useful and popular tool for Taiwanese people to communicate with each other. Protesting students took advantage of this popular platform and live broadcasted their demonstration from the main chamber of the parliament. They also used Hackpad, a

¹⁰ The news source, Taipei Times, established in 1999 is biggest English news agency in Taiwan. Lin notes that protesting students have used social media to spread their message, mobilise momentum, and counter traditional media, in particular news outlets they believe represent the movement in a false light. See: <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/feat/archives/2014/04/03/2003587148>.

collective editing tool similar to Google Docs, to collectively edit and translate their news releases and statements without spending a penny.

Another article titled “How Technology Revolutionized Taiwan’s Sunflower Movement” published by the Diplomat, paints a vivid picture of how Taiwanese youth used Facebook, Google, and other social media sites to connect with people from all over the world (Chao, 2014). These kinds of connections with the outside world would have been ‘unthinkable’ thirty years ago in Taiwan. During Taiwan’s democratisation process, protests and movements have been hard-pressed to receive accurate first-hand news reports in the post-martial law era. However, with advances in technology and increased accessibility to the Internet, as well as various social media platforms, the Millennial protesters turned the Legislative Yuan into a media centre, delivering news to the outside world, and communicating their demands with Internet users within Taiwan and much further afield.

Nevertheless, like most social movements, their success still has to rely on resources and funds. The Sunflower Movement was no exception. The protesting students successfully raised NTD 6.3 million (USD 210,000) within three hours through FlyingV, one of the biggest crowdfunding websites in Taiwan. They used the funds to purchase a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times* and another full-page advertisement in one of Taiwan’s major local newspapers, the *Apple Daily*. According to Chao’s report, a publicly accessible Google document detailed a list of supplies needed and directed donors on how to contribute. The list successfully helped the protesting students to the extent that for two days during the occupation donated supplies could be seen overflowing outside the Legislative Yuan. The movement also successfully forced the KMT government to meet the demands made by the protesters and pass a scrutiny bill on cross-Strait agreements before the CSSTA could pass through the Legislature. As the movement has proven itself

successful in both social and political aspects, this research argues that many aspects of the Sunflower Movement could well be worthy of further discussion and investigation regarding young citizens' political participation, their usage of social media, and their engagement in social movements.

The existing literature mainly touches upon how the Internet and ICTs have changed the form of social movement and affected citizens' political participation, and yet relatively little attention so far has been paid to the specific participation of Taiwanese Millennials. Indeed, without the Internet, the Sunflower Movement could have not received the international attention it did, nor could it have garnered over NTD 6 million within three hours. However, as the core driving force behind the Sunflower Movement was the Taiwanese Millennial generation, with their demands for stronger public scrutiny and broader public participation in the policy-making process, it might be useful to further investigate their political participation and civic engagement, particularly the way young people expressed themselves during the Sunflower Movement and during other social movements under the KMT government.

As Daniel Bell argues in his *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973), science and technology are the core driving force of change in social structure. The argument of this book indicates a future where a professional and technical workforce will become the dominating class in a knowledge-based economy. In this type of economy, communication plays an instrumental role in terms of allowing these knowledge-based workers to engage and bounce ideas off of each other, and therefore, communication becomes a sort of social obligation as social progress relies on individuals and shareholders to work together. Written in 1974, Bell foresaw a post-industrial society, with a strong emphasis on free-thinking professionals, intellectual freedom, and openness in politics.

Reading this book today, one can be reminded as to how advances in technology have made a profound impact upon every aspect of society over the past four decades. And it is also evident in the case of Taiwan's recent economic development, one which was strongly driven by the pairing of a knowledge-based workforce with a high-tech driven economy. Indeed, Taiwan's democratic and economic development have gone hand in hand together over the past half a century. In a manner very reminiscent of Bell, starting in the 1980s, as society became increasingly affluent because of its leading position in global high-tech industries, its people began to demand more and more freedom and liberty after the lifting of martial law in 1987. Less than 10 years later in 1996 Taiwan had held its first presidential election.

Fast forwarding to the twenty-first century, it is clear to see that technology continues to reshape people's behaviour, including their political participation. Taking the case of the Sunflower Movement as an example, evidence exists to show that technology changed the way protesters now mobilise supporters and strengthen momentum. In an around-the-clock manner, the protesting students used social media platforms, including Facebook, to livestream the event with the world, and they used crowdsourcing websites to mobilise financial support and further generate a significant level of momentum amongst Taiwanese society. An excellent example of how Sunflower Movement protesters aimed to make use of this technology can be seen on a website launched during the first week of the protest called "4am.tw". On a page titled "Who Are We" it states:

The full-page ads on international New York Times [are] only the first step to empower all citizens... We aim to provide first-hand information to the wider public, without censorship or filters... This is the place we collect and present

diverse voices from the street. With photos, videos, and messages, you deserve unfiltered information to form your own judgments.¹¹

The aforementioned statement perfectly summarised the key elements of recent social movements in Taiwan: (1) photos taken by protestors, (2) live videos showing the world the development of the event, (3) unfiltered information which is directly shared by the protestors, and (4) a desire shared by protestors that people should be allowed to form their own judgment over public affairs.

Such trends in social movements can be found in many places around the globe. The Internet and social media platforms provide young people with a wide range of social tools to express themselves in a way that otherwise would not have been possible before. In order to understand how the Internet affects society, especially in regards to citizens' political engagement, it might be useful to observe and analyse how citizens perceive and respond to political matters when they are bombarded with information 24/7. Furthermore, when people are exposed to massive information overload on the Internet, it might be worth asking whether the changing forms of political engagement that come along with this indicate a new notion of citizenship (Dalton, 2008).

With regards to political engagement, scholars like Robert Putnam (2000) often praise the engagement of citizens older than the Millennial generation, and target the blame for decreasing levels of participation in public affairs at the an apparently disaffected and apolitical younger generation. They argue that young citizens shoulder the responsibility for declining political participation as they appear aloof to politics and do not actively participate in public affairs in the more traditional ways of their senior counterparts. However, some have observed that growing online

¹¹ See <http://4am.tw>

communities and communication tools, to some extent, offer citizens a venue where they can feel free to assess, share, exchange, and discuss their opinion on domestic or international affairs, as well as all manner of other topics. Since social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook have allowed users to personalise their news feed, these digital platforms and communication tools have made it easier for citizens to obtain news relating to their interests, and much faster for citizens to receive political information at their own convenience. For instance, by simply clicking on the “following” or “Like” button on social media accounts of government officials and public figures, citizens can receive first-hand information sent directly by the White House, American President Trump, or @Number10gov (the official Twitter account of the Premier of the United Kingdom). As Dalton states in his research, young citizens in the United States and in other Western democracies are quite concerned about their ability to make a difference in society (Dalton, 2008), and these citizens, who are generally better educated and more cosmopolitan than their parents, are generally more supportive of self-expressive values than any of their predecessors in the history of democracy. Holding a drastically different view to Putnam, Dalton argues that instead of running away from politics, today’s young people want to be more involved in public affairs.

Here we see two different images of young citizens. One perspective labels the Millennial generation as apolitical, while another group of scholars sees new potential in young citizens as they take part in politics in a more creative and non-traditional way. Before this study proceeds to elaborate the rationale of its research questions, perhaps it is appropriate to first revisit the classic works of Charles and Robert Merriam’s description of citizenship:

Certainly citizenship is something more than merely adding up a set of specific rights and duties or jobs to do, such as voting, paying taxes and obeying the law. There is something beyond all that –something being the call of legal duties. We might expect of a good citizen, a distinctive if vaguely defined attitude –something akin to the idea of responsibility. Good citizenship properly embraces an acceptance of individual responsibility, moral as well as political, for the condition of the government and the general welfare of the community (Merriam and Merriam, 1954: 805).

The element of citizenship has a long tradition in politics and political thinking. Charles and Robert Merriam elaborate the concept in terms of dual principles – legal duties and a sense of individual responsibility in public affairs. Following the same logic, Dalton distinguishes the conventional notion of citizenship as comprising the dual elements of ‘duty-based citizenship’ and ‘engaged citizenship’ (Dalton, 2008). The first stresses traditional concepts of citizenship, such as the duties and obligation to pay tax (or serve mandatory military service in some countries). The latter emphasises the importance of participation, especially direct-action and elite challenging activities, such as volunteering or joining a protest. In addition, participation in the notion of engaged citizenship also means an attempt to express policy preference but in place of a passive expression of allegiance and duty (Dalton, 2008: 32).

Change does not come from technology, but from the way people use it. In the case of the Sunflower Movement, the participation of Taiwanese Millennials indicates a strong emphasis on ‘engaged citizenship’. In this research, the aim is to capture a more accurate outlook of young citizens’ political participation and discuss the role technology plays in youth-led social movements. Furthermore, as young

citizens are generally more well versed in social media and technology, it might be worth revisiting the development of social movements in Taiwan through a digital lens, and perhaps explore whether there exists the possibility of an idea one could term as “digital citizenship”. (Mossburger, Tolbert, Hamilton, 2012). For “digital citizenship” to make sense in the information age, it requires regular and effective Internet access and citizens with relevant skills to use the technology (ibid).

Mossburger and his colleagues found that those who solely relied on mobile phones to access the Internet are younger and more likely to find job or entertainment online. Although optimists might view it as an opportunity for more connected citizens who can gain fuller access online and become more informed. However the findings of Mossburger’s research show that the disparity remains and in some areas the inequalities in economic and political participations online also remain, despite the growing number of phone-user only Internet users (ibid, 2012: 37).

Compared with qualitative research, what qualitative research can’t reveal is how citizens learn communication and skills through accumulated online activity experience. Therefore, it is with such an intention that this study takes a qualitative approach to explore such a process, and hope the findings can provide useful indications for theories of democratisation and social movements. It is also part of the goal of this study to offer refreshing insight that can possibly be ignored or seen as peripheral by those who simply focus on the decline of traditional political participation.

1.2 Outline of the Study

There already exists an abundant volume of useful research on people’s online behaviour and whether such activities contribute to civil society (Bimber, 2003;

Dalton, 2008; Wellman et al., 2001). However, most of the research focuses on Western or older democracies and few of them focus on Taiwan or other countries in East Asia. It might be safe to argue that value of a case study of Taiwan has been overlooked in the studies of the Internet, social media, or even digital citizenship. Fortunately, the research on Taiwan's democratisation and social movements have flourished over recent decades, and can offer a good foundation for this research. With that in mind, this research aims to bridge the gap between understanding the development of democracy in East Asia, particularly in the case of Taiwan, and the implications of technology on civil society by taking Taiwan as a sole case study, and focusing on the main actors, young Taiwanese people, during its recent upsurge in youth-led social movements.

As discussed above, the decline of traditional forms of civic participation might have bred a hunger for new forms. For instance, in studies of democracy many have pointed out the correlation of participation in voluntary associations and civic culture (Putnam, 2000). It is suggested that social group engagement can positively contribute to social capital and then the functional aspect of a democracy, such as the way that citizens learn civil skills through undertaking volunteering work or discussing public affairs at a town hall or church. So, when traditional civic engagement began to decline, many lamented how such a decline would weaken social capital (Putnam, 2000; Stolle and Hooghe, 2005). Putnam (2000: 176) even argues that personal interaction and face-to-face communication within traditional social group are vital to social capital, because it is through direct contact and social interaction that social capital develops. However, some find online social interaction to be useful in terms of helping advance social capital (Dalton, 2008), while some even suggest the benefit of a "virtual civil society" (Wellman et al., 2001). Therefore, this study will put a certain level of emphasis on the changing forms of political

participation and the online civic engagement of Taiwanese Millennials, most of whom have grown up with the Internet. The internet penetration rate in Taiwan jumped from 62.7 per cent in 2005 to 82.3 per cent in 2017 due to the popularity of smartphones and other mobile devices.¹² Against that backdrop, these Millennials might quite naturally have developed different media consumption habits from their older counterparts, with a potential example of this being their news consumption. Research released by Taiwan-based Shih-hsin University in 2015 finds that 98.9 per cent of university students consider the Internet as their major source of news. The number exceeds that of the ordinary people of Taiwan, for whom the figure is 77.7 per cent.¹³ It is of interest then that it is young people, who spend more time than any of their older counterparts online, that have also been the main driving force behind several important social movements in Taiwan over the past ten years. Such a development was unanticipated by early researchers of East Asian studies, or even within Taiwan studies itself, and therefore a reappraisal might well provide a meaningful contribution to these fields, as well as other relevant ones, such as social media, civil society, and democratisation.

The online behaviour of Taiwanese youth thus raises new research questions and provides new opportunities, particularly when new forms of virtual political engagement seem to be en vogue. This research plans to take a new lens to understand the perspectives of these Taiwanese youth and how they have perceived their roles during these movements, their usage of social media tools, and the relation between ICT and young citizens' political participation. This focus is also where the originality

¹² A report by Taiwan's National Development Council (NDC) found that 82.3 per cent of Taiwan people aged over 12 were Internet users:
<http://focustaiwan.tw/news/asoc/201712290024.aspx>.

¹³ The research, which surveyed university students across Taiwan, found that the in average students spent 6.8 days/per week on the Internet. As for other news medium, the student spent 4 days/per week on TV, 2.7 days/per week on newspapers, and 1.8 days/per week on magazine. See:
<https://www.storm.mg/article/58651>

of this research comes from.

Most quantitative approach-driven research uses big data to analyse a specific online behaviour, such as tweeting (Ampofo, L., Anstead, N., and O’Loughlin, 2011), and the possible implications of such a behaviour. This study, which takes a qualitative approach, also focuses on the online behaviour of social movement participants, but in a broader manner. With a wide variety of social media available online, instead of relying on one particular platform to understand people’s civic behaviour, this study hopes to take a more ambitious approach by analysing a wide range of social media usage during social movements. As Hoskins and O’Loughlin (2007: 13-17) have already noted, the integration of social media platforms has led to a ‘renewed’ mainstream media. For instance, those British people who watched the 2010 Leaders’ Debate were not just passively confronted with a live broadcast but a live broadcast with live responses from all kinds of social media: Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, blogs, and so on. In the same vein, participants in a social movement are not simply mobilised to take part physically, but also to actively share with their friends and social media followers how they think of and engage with the event. This research hopes to capture a broad idea of how social media tools were used and any strategic thinking behind such usage. By interviewing key participants and analysing how they use social media to mobilise and gather support from people outside their age group, **the research question aims to explore whether Taiwanese people’s political engagement in the online and offline worlds offers some clues about young people’s perception of democracy and roles as citizens in a democracy.** With this question, an attempt will be made to argue that relying on people’s engagement in traditional community activities as the only measurement to evaluate their civic engagement will only result in the misbelief that today’s social capital and young people’s political participation are in decline, as has been advocated by the

likes of Putnam (2000).

Another important aspect contributing to the originality of this research comes from the selection of its specific site for case study: Taiwan. Given that democracy in the West has been practiced for a few centuries, it may be important to place the Western experience in a broader cross-national context, as there may or may not be patterns of citizenship which are idiosyncratic and typical of the West. As Dalton asserts, there are many trends apparent in American norms of citizenship and political activity that are common to other advanced industrial democracies, and it is only by broadening the scope of comparison that one can better analyse the similarities and the differences (Dalton, 2008: 6). This is precisely the goal of this research, which takes Millennials in Taiwan and their civic engagement as the main research subject. As one of the freest democracies in Asia, the civic engagement of Taiwanese youth can provide a useful comparison for future research as to the question of if and how the advance of technology changes people's political participation. To strengthen its originality, the empirical findings presented in Chapter 4, 5, and 6 cover social movements **all of which have to some extent have made a certain impact on Taiwan's civil society and democratisation**. Also, this research does not attempt to use big data gathered from participants of social movements. Instead, the uniqueness and strength of this research lies in the selection of its interviewees as **most of them have played significant roles in these movements** and a number of them have later gone on to continue their engagement in public affairs as politicians.

In the following chapters, this study will begin with an extensive review of existing research and literature on citizenship. Chapter 2 covers a wide range of relevant studies and literature, not all of which are related to the case of Taiwan. The reason to include such a wide ranging amount of work is to set out the theoretical basis for the conceptual debate that exists around the notion of civic engagement in a

democracy. In Chapter 3, this study reviews the development of democratisation and revisits the history of social movements in Taiwan. The discussion in this chapter will help focus the research question within a Taiwanese context and explain why the resurgence of social movements in Taiwan is important to the study of democracy. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 compose the main body of this study. They review and analyse the empirical findings from major social movements in Taiwan from 2008 – 2016 under the KMT government. Chapter 4 examines the first stage of the renaissance of social movements during the first term of previous President, Ma Ying-Jeou (2008 – 2012). With extensive qualitative review of these movements, this chapter offers an outlook as to why Taiwanese Millennials' political participation differs from that of their older counterparts in the last century. Chapters 5 & 6 examine social movements under Ma's second term (2012 – 2016), with a special focus on how social movement participants utilised their creativity in their usage of social media. The findings of chapter 4, 5, and 6 help reveal a trend within Taiwanese Millennials' political participation in the information age and why such a trend matters to Taiwan's democratisation. These chapters also discuss the empirical findings on how activists and citizens use ICT tools to engage, express viewpoints, and respond to political issues. In order to supplement the empirical findings, this study conducts semi-structured interviews of key participants, staffers of political parties, and media professionals. Their first-hand observations, experience and reflection also help provide a unique perspective of social movements in Taiwan.

After the empirical findings, chapter 7 proceeds to compare the findings and analytically reviews the movements under Ma's two terms (2008-2012 and 2012-2016). It then discusses the potential impact of ICTs and social media on the organisation processes of social movements, as well as the way activists mobilise and generate their momentum via online tools. It also discusses whether social media

allows citizens to engage in politics differently, not just from the perspective of their engagement methods but also from a conceptual perspective. Chapter 7 then concludes the findings and conceptualises the empirical research. It also discusses the contribution, validity and limitation of the study, as well as offering suggestions for future research.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, many have recently lamented the decline of democracy worldwide. Some criticise “apolitical” citizens for simply sitting in front of their computers and staring at their smartphones and not physically connecting with their local politicians or political parties. However, as the Internet has changed nearly every aspect of our life, civic engagement, and what this means, should not be viewed as being in any way immune to this phenomenon. Of course, it is only when citizens effectively use social media to effect change offline that real change, or even a more solidified idea of digital citizenship, can become more possible and worthy of discussion. History shows that the idea of citizenship has experienced different interpretation in different eras, and the question of what constitutes a good citizens receives different answers now than might have been applied to people in ancient Greece. Perhaps, in the first quarter of the twenty-first century, citizens in democracies are at the beginning of a move toward a new phase of citizenship, a networked and hybrid public sphere, and a more connected online community. And perhaps, by taking a closer look at Taiwan’s democracy and its citizens, this research can offer a spark of hope for the future of democracy.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Almost half of the world's population now live in a democracy.¹⁴ Today's democracies are generally defined as systems which gives its citizens the rights and powers to directly or indirectly elect representatives amongst themselves. Through this process, citizens form a governing body, and so, theoretically speaking, if a democratic system consists of a government formed from the elected representatives chosen by its citizens, it might be reasonable to argue that the engagement and participation of its citizens gives democracy legitimacy as well as vitality. Likewise, the competency of citizens might also largely determine the quality of the democracy they govern (both directly or indirectly). As in any functioning democracy, active participation of citizens in politics and civic life functions as an indispensable pillar in a democratic system of government (Diamond and Morlino, 2016). Therefore, to ensure the quality of a democracy, as Robert Dahl comments, it is reasonable to ask citizens, the actual rulers of democracy, to be 'politically competent' (Dahl, 1992: 46).

Many political thinkers would agree that for a democracy to function well, its citizens are expected to be equipped with certain attitudes, capabilities, and characteristics. However, the conceptualizations of what it means to be a good citizen in a democracy can, and do, vary greatly. Since the time of Greek philosophers, who debated the nature and core value of 'democracy' centuries ago, different schools of concept as to what constitutes a good democratic citizen have been postulated in the long human pursuit of a functioning democracy. Whatsmore, in a democracy, "active

¹⁴ According to the *Democracy Index 2017* published by the Economist Intelligence Unit in 2017, 19 out of the 167 countries covered by the Index are classified "Full democracy", 57 were "Flawed democracy", 39 were "Hybrid regimes" and 52 were "Authoritarian regimes". The report is available online: https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/Democracy_Index_2017.pdf

citizenship” is considered beneficial to a democratic society and therefore many theorists including Putnam (2000) have emphasised the importance of fostering “active citizens” through social interaction and participation in social settings. Such an emphasis had been regarded as the remedy for maintaining and keeping a functioning democracy, that is until the rapid advance of digital and online technology began to reshape the societies in which we live.

2.2 Citizenship

The word ‘civic’ derives from *civitas*, the Greek city-state, and the Latin *civium*, indicating the notion of ‘citizens’. The word civic resonates with the meaning of public in the sense of being visible and in some way accessible and available to the people. This is a notion that runs in opposition to the word private, the notion of the intimate domain. “Civic” therefore carries the implication of engagement in public life – the backbone of democracy.¹⁵

Often, citizens’ engagement in politics is defined as a key element in a democratic regime. As such, in the studies of political science and political communication, “civic engagement” is often defined as a form of voluntary activity aimed at solving problems in the community and helping each other. For Immanuel Kant, being an “active citizen” is not only about being part of a civil society, but being an active a member of the society as well (Kant, 1991). Kant views independence and partaking in the right to vote as a means for citizens to become actively involved in politics. By doing so, citizens show that they are not simply being

¹⁵ Similarly, Bernie Ronan of the Centre for Civic Participation, during his testimony at the White House Conference on Aging Public Forum on Civic Engagement in an Older America (held on 25 February, 2004), defined “civic engagement” according to the collective and political dimensions of the term. He said, “civic engagement is about rediscovering politics, the life of the polis, the city where men and women speak and act together, as citizens... the word *civic*, when connected to engagement, implies work, which is done publicly and benefits the public, and is done in concert with others”.

a silent element, but active members of society. Kant also states that citizens have to be economically independent enough to earn their right of existence and not reside under the will of any other member of society. His view suggests that the attribute of civil independence can be a prerequisite of the bottom-line for the distinction between active and passive citizenship (Kant 1991: 139). Passive citizenship means only that citizens are entitled to the rights of being free and enjoying equality. Voting, however, is not included in the core concept of passive citizenship. In other words, Kant's comments suggest that passive citizens are not truly active citizens, since they offer no contribution to law-making or policy-formation in a society, even though passive citizens are still entitled to the right to demand equal treatment by others in accordance with natural freedom and equality laws.

Another theorist who suggests the importance of active citizenship is British utilitarian philosopher, John S. Mill, who argues: 'the possession and the exercise of political rights is one of the chief instruments both of moral and of intellectual training for the popular mind' (Mill, 1991 [1859]). Mill's thinking on democracy favours educated citizens, as demonstrated in *Thoughts On Parliamentary Reform*, where he defends the idea that the value of a citizen's ballot paper should be proportionally defined and based on her or his level of education (ibid.) However, the duty of citizens, as Mill states, is to ensure that the elected representatives can appropriately wield political judgments for the benefit of the electorate. Mill's view indicates that citizens are expected to cast their vote wisely when they choose the best representatives for themselves. However, is voting alone, based on the notions described by Mill, enough to elevate and enlighten citizens' minds? Isn't it the case that around Mill's time voting in democratic America was, at best, a privilege enjoyed only by male citizens and, at worst, plagued by fraudulence, vote-buying, and even degraded into a role which merely reaffirms the legitimacy of the ruling elites?

(Schudson 1998: 162-165)¹⁶? Perhaps, judging from the historical context of the time when Mill was reflecting on the idea of citizenship and democracy, it might be safe to argue that Mill is proposing an ideal political system in which only well-educated and informed citizens are better qualified to make political decisions (such as voting) than uneducated individuals.

Now, moving forward to the twenty-first century, citizens in democracies around the world generally enjoy greater access to education than those living in Mill's time. Such development leads to a bigger question: compared with citizens living in Mill's time, do the citizens of today make better political decisions and engage in politics more actively?

Before this chapter further explores this question, it is important to mention that not all democracies are the same. In new democracies, for example, citizens face more challenges in becoming 'competent active citizens'. Third-wave democratic countries are often troubled by social division of class, wealth, ethnicity or national identity (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). Many challenges for citizens in a new democracy come from their internal divisions of identity and values. Such divisions often become vicious circles themselves as citizens might find it difficult to tolerate and understand fellow citizens with different sets of views or identities. Similarly, in some democracies, party affiliation becomes another source of confrontation. On political party division, James Bryce (1993) warns of the dangers of 'party split' or 'party identity' in modern politics. He says:

¹⁶ In Schudson's *The Good Citizen*, he argues that there are four different eras with each characterized by a different model of citizenship. Citizens played a relatively passive role during the time between the eighteenth and early nineteenth century as they mainly submitted and seldom challenged the ruling class. In the late nineteenth century, citizens became moderately more active and yet remained passive as they generally were pacified through the appealing nature of entertainment, patronism, or material reward. The third era, which ran through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, saw some citizens favour technocracy whereas others began to emphasise the importance direct participation by citizens in politics. The fourth era, starting from the 1950s and continuing until now, has seen citizens develop a stronger sense of "rights" and playing a much more active role in reshaping public affairs.

The 'spirit of party' may be so diverted from its original character of an attachment to certain principles, that it has become a mere instinct of loyalty to a leader, or to a name, or to a set of catchwords. [...] victory, not truth, becomes the aim [...] and the fellow citizens of the opposite party are treated as enemies rather than partners in a common state (Bryce 1993: 137-138).

To ensure a robust and healthy citizenship in a modern democracy, Bryce suggests that the 'average citizen' has a significant role to play in helping the party better itself and thus saving the country from the tyranny of any particular party. He notes, 'leaders need a great mass of sensible, well-intentioned followers to keep them in track' (ibid., 154-155). From the views of Kant, Mill, and Bryce, it can be noted that today's citizens are not only expected to be active in public affairs and civic life and make sensible electoral decisions, but would also appear obligated to help keep their government and affiliated political party accountable as well. However, today's citizens find it increasingly difficult to forge consensus amongst themselves, despite all the existing democratic tools (i.e. voting, petition, protesting) they have at hand. With clashes due to race, identity, religion, and differing values becoming arguably more fierce than at any point in democratic history,¹⁷ can active citizenship remain a realistic possibility, or is it perhaps now the case that the concept of citizenship has evolved into different forms?

¹⁷ Francis Fukuyama comments in his article "Identity, immigration, and liberal democracy" (in *Journal of Democracy*, published on April 2006, Vol. 17) that citizens in postmodern societies which uphold the values of individualism and relativism have found it more and more difficult to find a consensus on the issue of identity, religion, or even immigration. He says, "[T]he dilemma of immigration and identity ultimately converges with the larger problem of the valuelessness of postmodernity.... Postmodern societies, particularly those in Europe, feel that they have evolved past defined by religion and nation and have arrived at a superior place. But aside from their celebration of endless diversity and tolerance, postmodern people find it difficult to agree on the substance of the good life to which they aspire in common".

Almond and Verba (1963) describe citizenship as a set of attitudes towards the role of the individual in the political process. Such sets of attitudes are sometimes called “**political culture**”, which outlines what to do to become good citizens. Alternatively, another way that this can be seen is when Tocqueville describes the American emphasis on participation, freedom, and equality as the core foundations of its democratic development (Tocqueville, 1960). From these sets of attitudes, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) go on to then further define **participation** as the most important element of democratic citizenship (also seen in Dahl, 1998). As Verba and others argue, democratic participation should emphasise a flow of influence upward from the masses (Verba et al, 1978). If one is committed to the traditional image of a democratic citizenry as portrayed in the literature of political culture (Almond and Verba, 1963; Campbell et al. 1960; Verba and Pye 1965) and chooses to dismiss contemporary thought, then their conclusion might be a perceived reduction in involvement in public affairs. On the other hand, there are scholars who argue that the transformation of modern society and the development of technologies actually encourage average citizens to be more politically active (Inglehart 1990; Macedo et al. 2005). Regardless of the disagreements between traditional and contemporary thinking, participation is a prime criterion for defining democratic citizens.

Another term, “**cultural citizenship**”, has now begun to be more widely discussed at a time when more and more people are advocating for minority needs and in a world when migration has become common in many countries throughout the world (Kymlicka, 1995). Because of globalisation and the advance of technology, it is not rare to observe citizens deciding willingly not to live in their homelands. They move to a different country, a different continent, or even a different culture for a plethora of reasons. As Dahlgren (2009) argues, the themes of global citizenship, post-national citizenship, cosmopolitanism, and global civil society have been

discussed quite widely (also see Held, 2006; Sassen, 2002, Beck and Grande, 2007). In a world when the distance of countries has been significantly shortened by faster transportation and communication, the concept of citizenship is no longer restricted to a singular membership of a territorial community or country. Some suggest that the meaning of citizenship in today's globalised world needs to be rearticulated, as the connection between citizenship and the national borders have been weakened in a world connected through the 'overlapping community of fate' (Held, *ibid*). As there is no universal form of citizenship that can be applied to all democracies, what does citizenship mean to today's citizens? What falls inside the landscape of civic life, and what remains, outside, are questions that cannot be answered unequivocally, as the landscape is ever changing. For instance, in the UK and the US, charity work is often defined as a form of civic engagement. Yet in Northern European countries, where the social welfare system has been very strong, such activity and organizations might not have the same significance as they have in the UK or the US (Dahlgren, 2009).

Perhaps, when civic life continues to become increasingly complex, citizenship should not be defined as merely a set of legal rights and obligations of citizens, but also a "mode of social agency". The lack of a shared definition of citizenship not only reflects the complex postmodern political environment we are dealing with, but an opportunity to revisit and enrich the meaning of citizenship itself. In this 'revisiting' process, it is important not to mindlessly identify everything as citizenship. Because, if everything is citizenship, then nothing really is.

The Changing Orientation of Citizenship

In the face of an increasingly connected world, the following section aims to further explore whether the orientation of citizenship has changed, and, if so, what are the causes. In recent decades, the long-term development of economics, media, and

globalisation have fostered the growth of so-called post-materialistic values, and the world has thus been saturated with information and communication (Kumar, 2005). Despite the massive change in the way people live, Inglehart's research on 'post-material' value, with its emphasis on political participation as a key measurement of 'post-materialism', shows that today's citizens, like their predecessors, still expect to obtain opportunities to take part in democratic processes (Inglehart, 1990 and 1997). As citizens are becoming progressively informed and perhaps critical, they generally consider a democratic political regime as a good way of governing, and yet they are also concerned that their opinions might be consistently left out if their views do not align with that of the mainstream. Moreover, younger generations raised in the late twentieth century are attaching less importance to traditional social and political values.¹⁸ They focus more on quality of life, individuality, lifestyle choices, freedom of expression, and participation. As Huntington and his colleagues argue in *The Crisis of Democracy* (1975), the value shift towards freedom, equality, order, and political opposition is creating tensions that democracies are struggling to resolve. It seems as though in a modern, diverse society, the idea of citizenship can be perceived differently by different groups of citizens.

In this value shifting process, mass media has come to play an important role, reshaping the relationship between the governed and the governors. In particular, for the major part of the twentieth century, television has offered the public a major forum for political communication. Through political talk shows and audience-based discussion programmes, television allows citizens an access to forums to learn and express their views on public affairs (if they want, they can even call the show host or

¹⁸ It's important to note that "younger generations" here refers to those who have grown up in relatively safe, wealthy, and developed Western countries. After World War II, Western countries, led by the United States, benefitted from extraordinary growth and progress in the third quarter of the twentieth century. Globalization and consumerism are two main elements often used to describe postmodernism.

tweet with a unique hashtag so their opinions can be represented and displayed). In a way, mass media creates a kind of ‘public sphere’, where the relations between the governed and the governors begin to change. However, the wide range of media outlets, or the so-called bourgeois public spheres, according to Habermas, only provide a pseudo-public sphere that is ultimately unhelpful for citizens to form a consensus among themselves, not to mention the problems these kinds of formats create when it comes to the forming of well analysed responses to complex social issues. Perhaps this problem is best summed up by Mouffe (1988) when he talks of:

... the existence in each individual of multiple subject positions corresponding both to the different social relations in which the individuals is inserted and to which the discourses which constitute these changes.

While mass media seem to offer citizens a consumerist cultural view, without providing a singular or institutionalized public sphere, it does, however, allow citizens with different sets of values, interests, and the ideologies to find a talk show or programme they can identify with. One result of this can be said to be that , society becomes fragmented and heterogeneous. Yet one other important element emerges from a vibrant mass media scene, and that is a potentially much increased reflection of diversity.

To some, such as Putnam (2000), changes in the values of contemporary publics are seen as an eroding of the governability of democracies. But as Mouffe argues, those different values reflect different social relations of citizens in a society. More so, these changing values show the transformation of today’s civil society. Taking Dalton’s ‘engaged citizenship’ theory into account, changing social conditions

may reshape the norms of what it means to be a good citizen, and this affects how citizens act and think about politics (Dalton, 2008).

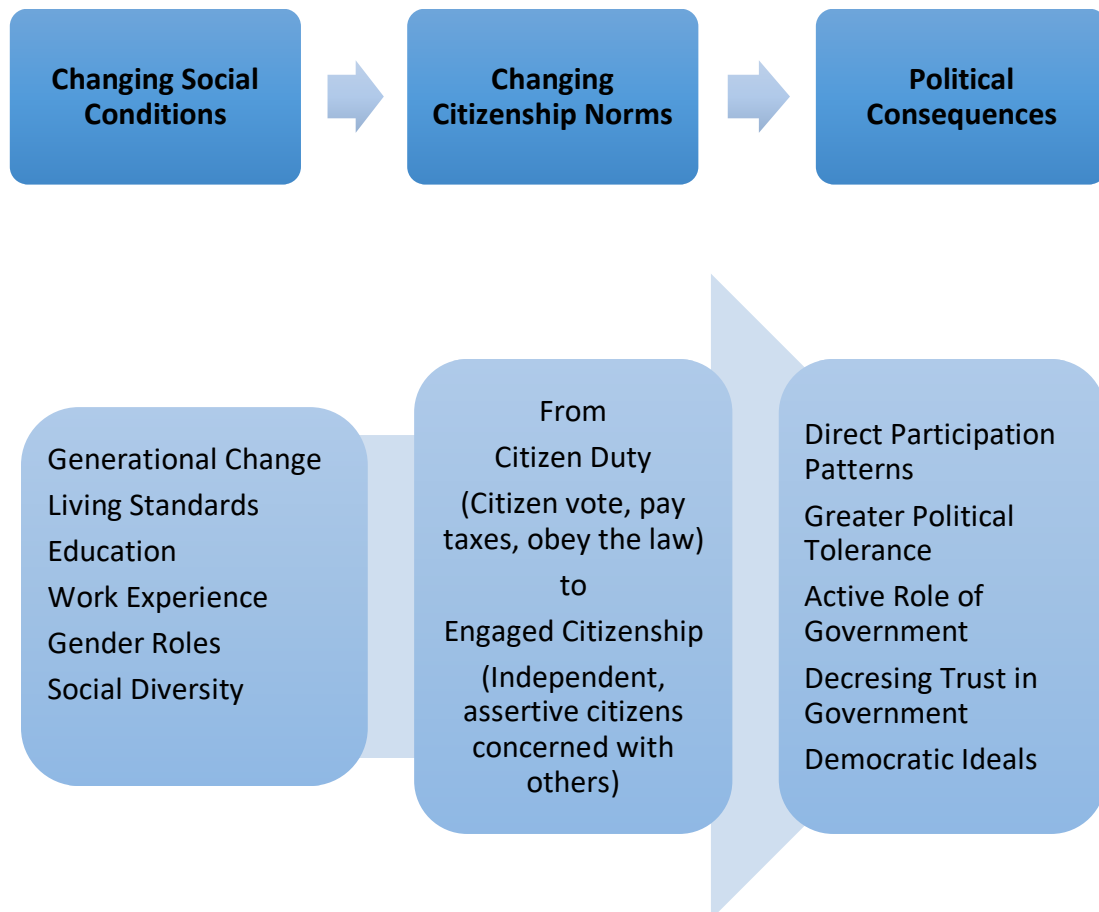


Figure 2. 1 The Changing Public, from Dalton (2008: 4)

As discussed in previous sections, Dalton argues that changing social structure brings to our civil society a number of political consequences and thus one should not simply adhere to traditional patterns of citizenship, but also attempt to understand these consequences. By doing so we can have a better understanding of today’s citizenship and therefore he suggests we are able to categorise different norms of citizenship into two groups: (1) **duty-based citizenship**, which encourages citizens to be law abiding and expects citizens to pay taxes, contribute to the national need;

including things such as compulsory military service and voting; (2) **engaged citizenship**, which stresses the social responsibilities of citizenship; such as understanding others, being involved in elite-challenging activities, and being self-expressive (Dalton, 2008: 29). The norms of engaged citizenship overlap with some patterns of post-material values as identified by Inglehart and other scholars (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). It is important to note that ‘duty-based citizenship’ and ‘engaged citizenship’ are not contradictory. In fact, they both involve a type of participation, but from different perspectives. Both of them define citizenship as a mixture of responsibilities and rights, but each emphasizes these areas dissimilarly. One can achieve both duty-based and engaged citizenship by paying tax (duty) and taking part in social movements (engaged).

At the beginning of this section, it was argued that the modernisation of society might have transformed the notion of citizenship as it affects people’s values and behaviours in politics and life. Postmaterialists tend to be sceptical about social and political institutions but at the same time they are more confident when it comes to democratic values (Dalton, 2004). Additionally, Postmaterialists have higher democratic ideals, and it is here that often, when held to this higher standard, that contemporary politicians and political institutions fall short. Furthermore, a mix of value orientations characterises today’s orientation of citizenship. Such an attitude is more salient amongst young people who grew up in democracy. Compared with Baby Boomers and their older counterparts, young people are probably not as sold as their parents and grandparents on democratic ideas. A 2017 Pew Research found that young people are more likely than older ones to support technocracy as opposed to democracy. In the US, 46 per cent of people aged 18 to 29 say they prefer to be

governed by experts compared with 36 per cent of those aged 50 and above.¹⁹ While in the US, the age gap difference in this area is 10 percentage points, it is even wider in other advanced economies, such as Australia (19 points), Japan (18 points), the UK (14 points), and Canada (13 points).

2.3 Is it possible young citizens' perception of citizenship might have changed?

Following the election of Donald Trump and the passing of the Brexit referendum, politics in the United States and other advanced Western industrial democracies have changed in ways that are not easily comparable to those of the old patterns of democracy. Perhaps then, this adds weight to the argument that the notion of citizenship, along with the development of politics, is also changing. The decline of citizens' engagement in voting or traditional political activities should not be seen as a failure of civic virtue. It needs to be understood in terms of both the elements of social structure and the changing landscape of the citizen's everyday life.

Voting is one area that can be taken into consideration by way of an example. It is evident that the voting turnout, particularly amongst the youth in the West, is decreasing. However, what should be noted is that the repertoire of political action has actually expanded, and people are now more engaged in various forms of political participation (Dalton 2008: 76). In Putnam's Social Capital Survey (2000), he replicates four questions from the Verba-Nie participation series: protest, general interest in politics, attending a rally, and working with a community group. None of these four questions display a statistically significant decrease from the Verba-Nie participation levels of 1989. Perhaps it suggests that the decline of voting turnout

¹⁹ According to the Pew Research, which surveys twenty-three countries, young people in a number of advanced economies are especially attracted to technocracy. The 2017 Pew Research Report on "Globally, Broad Support for Representative and Direct Democracy" is available online: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/10/16/democracy-widely-supported-little-backing-for-rule-by-strong-leader-or-military/>

cannot provide a strong indicator of the direction of the political involvement of today's citizens.

Changes in the media landscape have also transformed the nature of democratic politics, as citizens consume more information from a greater selection of media sources and outlets, many of which did not exist a generation ago. The author of this study shares the views of Chadwick that news media is a massive product of 'assemblages in which the personnel, practices, genres and temporalities of supposedly "new" online media are increasingly integrated with those supposedly "old" broadcast and press media' (Chadwick 2011: 25, 32). The Internet offers citizens an endless list of outlets to access information, as well as tools to express themselves. Shifts in the technology of communication have encouraged citizens to be more informed, as they can use the information they consume and their own social or political identification to develop their own ideals of how democratic governments should function. As a result, the gap between citizens' ideals of how a democracy should work and the reality of what is happening in political institutions might discourage citizens from getting involved in public affairs through traditional methods. If citizens find no satisfaction from the current state of political reality, they might rather find an alternative method to influence politics. The development of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, allows citizens to share their thoughts on the news they are consuming in real time as they watch. Such a changing news consumption behaviour might also change, to some extent, how citizens perceive the information they receive. This research does not intend to simply generalise that citizens in the past merely passively received information as it was presented to them on television. However, one should also not easily dismiss the potential impact of a changing media landscape on citizenship in the twenty-first century. In a similar vein, young citizens might express themselves more comfortably

with more non-traditional or unconventional methods, while their activities still can demonstrate a more engaged norm of citizenship.

Some scholars note that there are signs of new civic engagement in non-governmental areas, including increases in community volunteering work, high levels of consumer activism, and active involvement in social causes from a focus on the environment to economic inequality both on a local and global scale (Lopez et al., 2006). Lopez and his colleagues find that 13 per cent of American youth engage in at least over two different forms of community and political participation respectively. The finding indicates that young people attempt to directly address public issues by taking up activities such as volunteering. These activities include volunteering in a charity, engaging in fundraising events for charity, or serving on boards of non-profit organisations (NGOs). However, the increasing engagement in volunteering activities does not necessarily lead to a decrease in traditional civic activities such as voting. Evidence shows that young people are more likely to vote if they are approached and asked to do so.²⁰

Therefore, one cannot carelessly dismiss the importance of voting. In a democracy, citizens cast their vote to elect representatives, approve democratic legitimacy, and engage in other forms of opinion expression, such as referenda. Apart from voting, citizens' engagement in other arenas may be an indicator of what they perceive their role in a democracy is, and what they consider as an important element to be a good citizen.

Secondly, the changing norms of citizenship reinforces a new style of political participation. As Dahlgren (2009) points out, formal citizenship per se does not always guarantee equality of resources and opportunities for all groups of citizens. Various mechanisms of social and political exclusion might well be placing

²⁰ Young Voter Strategies with CIRCLE, *Young Voter Mobilization Tactics* (September 2006).

challenges on many aspects of citizenship as well. More citizens now engage in increasingly demanding forms of political action, such as individualized activity, with direct action, as well as directly reaching out to politicians or government by writing letters. It is found in Dalton's (2008) research that writing letters to a government official can be more effective in today's politics. One of the reasons is that today's citizens are more informed and educated than before, therefore their direct action hold a larger weight than that of their predecessors. According to Dalton, three-fifths of the populace in their fifties have an education below that of highschool, whereas three-fifths of the populace in more recent times have at least a college degree.

Thirdly, today's citizens are attaching greater importance to activities which might appear to be less relevant to political affairs. Such change is reflected in how citizens participate in politics and how they spend their leisure time. In a modern society, a citizen might choose to spend more time attempting to realise her/his personal ambition or goals, rather than to donate a large amount of time towards political activities. Therefore, citizens might make more effort in investing within other spheres of life other than in politics (Fuchs 2007: 38). The findings of the World Value Survey shows that the most important value to citizens are family, friends, and then work (see in van Deth 2000). As Fuchs argues, from the normative point of view, it is a matter of concern that leisure time is given the same level of importance as that of politics.

That said, citizens might be more willing to take actions that they think could allow them to focus on their own interests while at the same time having the ability to select the means of influencing policymakers at their own convenience. One example is 'political consumerism', as identified by Stolle and her colleagues and defined as the "consumer choice of producers and products based on political and/or ethical considerations" (Micheletti, Follesdal & Stolle, 2003). Citizens choose their purchase

based on the consideration of justice, fairness, or an assessment of business practice or government behaviour. Whether such behaviour is collectively or individually conducted, it nevertheless shows that citizens' market choices can reflect an understanding or awareness of material products as embedded in a social and normative context. This can therefore be called the "politics behind products" (Stolle, Hooghe, and Micheletti 2005).

Fourthly, the changing norms of citizenship and political participation demonstrate a demand for the revival of citizenship to address the problems that face contemporary democracies (Putnam, 2000; Macedo et al. 2005). Macedo and colleagues warn of the danger of today's shallow and polarised public discussion, as well as a decline of civic engagement.²¹ They also explore whether participation in civic engagement is really declining, as Putnam has pointed out. Their findings show that citizens are not only participating less, but also participating more unequally, as poor citizens and minorities continue to be disadvantaged and less likely to take part in politics. The authors in the report also suggest measures to encourage civic participation including voting reform, education, revitalised local politics, and encouraging citizens to further engage in church life or labour unions (Macedo et al., 2005: 169). If Dahl's (1992) argument of citizens' competency were to make sense in today's democracy, measures to increase citizen engagement seem to be even more instrumental to the health of a democratic society.

Despite the concern over a decline in voter turnout and civic engagement, Dalton suggests that, though some norms of citizenship have weakened, others might actually have become strengthened (2006). For Dalton, today's citizens are more creative in terms of their political participation. As he puts it:

²¹ The authors conduct a wide-range of research which finds that American democracy has been eroded by a decline in civic engagement. And yet they also argue that the decline cannot be entirely put down to personal reasons because the design of political institutions discourages more active political involvement from citizens (page 119).

Citizen participation is becoming more closely linked to citizens' influence.

Rather than democracy being at risk, this represents an opportunity to expand and enrich democratic participation (Dalton, 2006: 11).

In summary, the changing pattern of citizens' political engagement and the decline of voting turnout may pose a "is the glass half-full or half-empty?" kind of question. One perspective is that today's citizens, particularly the young ones, are more creative and innovative in finding ways to voice their opinions. Although voting is a major method to ensure the elected representatives are accountable, the infrequent chance to cast a vote for a pre-packaged policy is a limited tool of political influence. Therefore, it might be safe to say that expanding the framework and possibility of political participation means that citizens can convey their opinions, more immediately, and exert more political pressure than they could through traditional norms of participation. Today's youth may be less likely to vote and show little interest in politics, and yet they are more active in 'engaged citizenship', and that taps into participatory norms, which is considered broader than duty-based citizenship (Dalton, 2009). They seem to be more likely to engage in boycotts, demonstrations, and participate in discussion on Internet forums. When it comes to young citizens who have grown up with the Internet as part of their daily lives, it might be prudent to ask, whether the Internet, or the development of ICT, has changed their way of participating in public affairs.

2.4 New Forms of Political Participation

Can we apply ICT to improve the condition of each individual? Can ICT, designed for one-to-one links in telephone networks, or for one-to-many links in radio and television networks, serve to bond us all? And how can new forms of ICT- peer-to-peer, edge-to-edge, many-to-many networks- change the relationship between each and every of us?

- John Gage, quoted in the Global Information Technology Report
(World Economic Forum, 2002)

These questions become particularly relevant given the important role played by Information Communication Technology (ICT) during political upheavals in authoritarian countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, or even China. In an interview with Time Out Hong Kong, Chinese contemporary artist Ai Weiwei asserts that the Jasmine Revolution was a genuine online movement, adding that the tight control of the Chinese government in fact reinforces people's beliefs and desire for change (Ai, 2011). He describes the situation in China as follows:

[t]here's no discussion, no intellectual exchanges or argument. It's so much like Chinese parents from the olden times, where the children just had to listen to them without showing any sign of disagreement, or questioning, or different attitudes. To try and challenge the economic and political situation today is not going to be OK.

And yet, even at this time, Ai still holds the hope that one day young Chinese people can have equal opportunities, commit to challenges, and be free to lead their life rather than sacrifice themselves for other people's excuses. This strong statement

from Ai shows that being free to express her/his view is as important to people living in an authoritarian regime as it is in a democracy. Ai is not alone in these sentiments. Some Chinese bloggers have attempted to challenge local power abuses by facilitating public opinion online to force the Communist Chinese State to change national regulations. Some optimists comment that the Internet and other forms of “liberation technologies” can help expand political, social, and economic freedom, and eventually empower citizens, facilitate communication and information, and strengthen an emergent civil society (Diamond, 2010: 3).²²

The discussion on the normative expectation of online activities is similar to an idea of the “Global Village” which entered into academic and popular discourse with the publication of Marshall McLuhan’s 1962 book, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. In this book McLuhan suggests a transformation from print mass media to electronic mass media and how such transformation might reshape Europe. According to McLuhan, the development of electronic mass media would enable humankind to interact on a global scale, and encourage a global, common identity, and ultimately a form of identity that would be increasingly shaped as people resided in one, same ‘global’ village.

In ways very similar to the concept illustrated by *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, the Internet also brings people closer with instant messaging applications, such as Skype or WhatsApp, allowing people to communicate without the constraints of time and space. But underneath the surface, how do these technologies affect the way people consume political news, as generally speaking political affairs still imply a certain level of “national boundaries”?

²² At the time when this thesis was being revised (2018), the growth of censorship and the use of ICT for surveillance in China had largely dispelled these hopes. It is said that by 2020, China will have a system which allows them a nationwide facial recognition and surveillance network that will enable the achievement of near-total surveillance of urban residents, including their private homes via smart TVs and smartphones (see Radio Free Asia report: “China Aims For Near-Total Surveillance, Including in People’s Homes”: <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/surveillance-03302018111415.html>)

It is difficult to imagine people not having the ability to differentiate domestic news from foreign affairs. When people read local newspapers online, they can also navigate between the “local” and “international” sections and henceforth get a sense of what is going on within both their local community and the global community. Therefore, in order to understand whether the Internet and online technologies affect people’s political behaviour or participation, perhaps, we need to focus less on how the Internet affects society at large, but more on how citizens use the Internet on an individual level. Indeed, the Internet represents a new medium for political participation with its emphasis on user control, openness, and immediacy. These individualized characteristics match the post-material values in which young citizens are more self-expressive and innovative in finding ways of voicing their opinions. However, the data on the Internet’s impact on participation, while abundant, is still somewhat inconclusive (Gibson et al. 2004). As Gibson and her colleagues argue, at the individual level, ‘ICTs should be viewed as a tool for political socialisation’, particularly of younger citizens. As a result, ‘ICT is shaped by forces of societal modernisation that underpin the latest evolution of participation patterns, at least in advanced democracies’ (Gibson et al. 2004: 4-5).

Many examples show how to use the Internet as an alternative, or at least as a supplement, to traditional methods of political participation. For instance, *Meetup.com*, an online community that utilises Foster Putnam’s idea of social capital is just one example of how such online participation has spread throughout the world. This site, which was established in 2002, has received a phenomenal growth in the number of civil and political groups joining, especially during the month of November 2004, just before the American presidential elections. In July 2005, *Meetup.com* had approximately 1.6 million registered members and over 58,000

groups worldwide (Margolis, 2007). For a while they became a standard feature of electoral campaigns.

Nevertheless, one should not take the actions of forwarding emails, blog-browsing, following politicians on Twitter or Facebook as a means to replace social power in the 'real' offline world. Dissimilarly, the potential of the Internet is illustrated on Facebook.com. In Fall 2006, the top ten advocacy groups on Facebook included nearly half a million members in total (see in Dalton 2008: 66). The 2005 CDACS survey found that 17 per cent of American citizens had visited a political website during the past year, 13 per cent had forwarded a political email, and 7 per cent had participated in other political activities over the Internet. Furthermore, those citizens who participated in any of those activities exceeded the percentage of those who had donated money to political parties, worked for a political group, or displayed campaign material over the same time period. Although the percentage seems modest, it is reasonable to argue that online activities might be growing, and that the Internet will become the main tool of political activism, especially among young citizens (Dalton 2008).

Perhaps, it is also reasonable to argue that, while some scholars lament the decline of political participation as Putnam does, their theories on 'decline' only capture one side of a more complex social trend. There are scholars who tend to find answers in suggesting that new media and the Internet can benefit society politically by offering a variety of platforms for citizens to increase their civic participation. Some hold the positive view that new media will energize citizenry and create more opportunities for the exchange of ideas. Norris, in *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communication in Post-industrial Societies* (2000) notes that the Internet and technologies offer citizens new possibilities to engage in politics, interact with policy makers, and engage in public spheres. The space offered by the Internet also

encourages more spontaneous forms of self-driven engagement in politics, and indirectly reduces the traditional and conventional forms of elite-guided engagement (Norris, 2000). This includes possibilities for citizens to obtain information freely on mediums such as personal blogs, Wikipedia or Yahoo answers (Bimber et al, 2009). In the past, information was controlled by elites or media until the Internet and various technologies broke these monopolies. Whereas traditional TV places citizens as information receivers, the Internet turns them also into producers and multipliers, allowing them to both garner and share information, and to further influence the political process.

One key finding from the more optimistic camp is that the Internet seems to have a bigger impact on those who are already active and involved in politics. Norris (2001) analyses US and European societies up until 2000, and argues that Internet usage is linked to high levels of political participation but that this was largely confined to those who were already active offline:

[T]he rise of the virtual political system seems most likely to facilitate further knowledge, interest, and activism of those who are already most predisposed toward civic engagement, reinforcing patterns of political participation (Norris, 2000).

Another interesting finding shows that young citizens can be more easily approached by political groups online than other age groups. They are also more likely to be engaged in online participation than offline forms, such as voting and other active forms of participation (see in Gibson et al., 2004). So, if the essential role of citizens in a traditional representative democratic system is, for example, to take part in regular elections or town hall meetings to decide public matters or choose

representatives who then govern on their behalf, then in the online world the role could be potentially described as taking part in online political forums, signing electronic-petitions, and sharing their political views from their personal social media accounts.

Speaking of dystopia

As Margolis states, ‘the internet changes nothing’ (Margolis 2007: 780). Political use of ICT is just in its its beginning stages. Currently, the Internet is often still treated as an extension of the media we are familiar with, and therefore, people use it in the same way and for the same reasons that they used traditional media before. It is naïve to expect an ‘offline’ person who today does not care about politics to suddenly become someone who is interested in politics because she/he has a computer and Internet connection. For instance, Dekker and Uslaner argue for a ‘nil’ effect of Internet usage on social capital. Their research finds little evidence that the Internet will create new communities to make up for the decline in civic engagement that has occurred over the past four decades in the United States (Dekker & Uslaner, 2001: 22).

Moreover, some argue that the Internet’s role in politics is fairly modest. Margolis & Resnick (2000) in their research argue that although major political actors may engage in online campaign, lobbying, policy advocacy, and so forth, the ultimate political landscape still remains pretty much the same. Online campaigning seems mainly to attract citizens who are already interested in and engaged in politics.

It might be important to note that changes in democracy are in relation with socio-cultural development, and that alterations in the media landscape contribute to such change (Dahlgren, 2009). As Dahlgren puts it, “[D]emocracy today is seen to be precariously at a new historical juncture, and in this context, the impact of the Internet becomes significant” (Dahlgren, 2009: 161). The Internet itself does not change

politics; it serves as an innovative tool in the frontlines of media development and thus a resource for political change. Internet, like other technologies, is just a tool. It is up to both innovation and the extent to which citizens can improve and wisely use these tools that can bring about changes in politics and societies (Diamond, 2010).

Today's citizens have online forums, global networking websites, and information sharing sites that continue to expand and multiply. The Internet serves as a digital public sphere. Websites such as Global Voices or the BBC cover global information by translating significant blogs around the world in to English and seven other major languages. Their integrative work certainly evokes the ideas of global public spheres (Dahlgren, 2009). However, in reality, many aspects of the online world still cannot be comparable with the idea of public sphere. For Habermas, public spheres can be found within autonomous cracks in cafes and pubs, where citizens can speak and act as themselves and get to spend time with friends (Coleman & Blumler, 2009: 165).²³ However, the occasional communication that occurs when elections happen, such as text-messaging elected representatives, or pressing the "Like" button on a politician's Facebook, does not empower citizenship. For example, any individual can enter the White House website and send a message to the President saying 'I think you are an idiot', and expect to receive an auto-reply message saying 'The President thanks you so much for your message'. Such interactions should therefore not be taken as a constructive way of political communication.

²³ As Blumler and Coleman argue, new digital media could be seen as having a vulnerable potential to improve public communication in society. They propose for an online civic commons in cyberspace and call for the creation of an enduring structure of the Web. This could realise more fully the democratic potential of new interactive media (Blumler & Coleman, 2009: 170). As the availability of computers, smart phones, and other gadgets become increasingly intertwined with citizens' lives, so has the citizen's expectation for quick and easy access to information. We are thus becoming digital citizens (Mandarano et al, 2010).

2.5 Is “digital Citizenship” a potential form of citizenship in the online world?

Before this chapter moves on to explore the contemporary civic realities of the online world, it might be helpful to elaborate the focus of citizenship in this research once more. In Kymlica and Norman’s (2000) argument, their definition of citizenship includes three main elements. First, citizenship means a citizen’s legal status. Second, as a political agent, the citizen demonstrates the notion of citizenship by proactively engaging in her/his society’s political institutions. Third, citizenship reflects a membership of a political community that endows a unique source of political identity. As the legal status is not in the scope of the research question of this study, this thesis focuses on the ‘engagement’ of a citizen in the information age and leans upon past research that shows that civil society can play a significant role in politics, such as an initiator of transition to democracy (Thompson, 1976; O’Donnell & Schmitter, 1986; Diamond, 1999). In the United States, for instance, American civil society in the 60s significantly changed civil rights and enhanced women’s rights in politics. As society moves forward, technology also advances and to some extent accelerates social change. As Daniel Bell (1973) describes, advancement in technology encourages the rise of knowledge-based workforces to take on the dominant social position within a society. In turn, given the generally higher level of education of such a grouping, their way of life tends to lead towards a demand for more openness and liberty, thus helping in the reshaping of a society. What Bell describes is essentially what happened during the transition between the industrial and the information ages. As today’s society demands more professional knowledge-based workers, citizens naturally are required to be equipped with new skills and the tools of technology, and also might be required to acquire new civic skills in order to navigate their way in the connected online world.

The previous sections ask whether the Internet can help create an online public sphere for citizens to engage in public events not only locally, but also internationally. However, the distinction between public and private spheres can be elusive and pertain along the political and cultural developments in a society. As Weintraub and Kumar (1997) argue, there is no universal distinction between the vocabulary of public and private spheres, due to the concept of “public” and “private” varying between different cultures or societies. Regardless, the concept of these two spheres can help define people’s action in everyday life. The next section, then, plans to undertake a conceptual review with an aim of exploring the boundaries between the public and private spheres in the online world, and how such distinctions impact the notion of citizenship in a connected society. A particular objective of this section is to integrate conceptual and historical debates.

Conceptual Review on Public & Private Spheres

The concept of the public and private sphere has been contested in different historical and cultural contexts. The term “public sphere” implies a boundary between the “public” and the “private”. However, the concept of public and private can be overlapping and intertwined, depending on the different contexts and theoretical languages deployed in the discussion.

Two traditional schools of thinking on citizenship, namely the Roman republican model and the liberal model, offer a conceptual comparison on the idea of citizenship. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Roman republican model of citizenship was revisited, with social unrest evolving during both industrial and post-industrial times (Walzer, 1989: 200). While the Roman republican model prioritises civic virtue as the end goal in its concept of citizenship, the liberal model assumes that civic virtue will emerge when citizens enjoy the rights granted by the

state. In the Roman republican model, citizens act as a major political agent. In the liberal model, citizens are more active in enjoying their rights in their own private domain, while entrusting the lawmaking process to representatives. On the other end of the spectrum, the liberal traditional notion of citizenship, the public sphere in modern democracies is generally considered as an arena for citizens to express their diverse opinions on public affairs. Such an arena is significant as the essence of democracy is based around the inclusion of different values in a society.

The current look of the public sphere in modern society seems on the surface to be rather gloomy, however. As Jurgen Habermas (1991) argues, the public sphere allows deliberation through which different opinions are contested and argued. Added to this, though, is another key element of the public sphere, which is its apparent commitment to openness and inclusiveness for all citizens, who in theory collectively form public opinion and political ideas within this sphere. In a society, social spaces such as salons, cafes or other public meeting places, have traditionally enabled the public sphere to exist. In this liberal model of the public sphere, the role of mass media in spreading important aspects of public opinion becomes amplified, but at the same time it also opens itself up to the processes of privatisation and commercialisation. Indeed, two key points that arise from his deliberations are that the emergence of digital mass media and the emergence of a consumerist culture have worsened the quality of the public sphere. He laments that commercial activities have caused public space to lose its function as a sphere for meaningful civic engagement, and offers as an example the fact that advertising often dominates the public sphere to conclude that “[T]he world fashioned by the mass media is a public sphere in appearance only” (Habermas, 1991: 170). Such developments have not only eroded the political function of the public sphere but, as Habermas argues, have also made

room for certain interest groups or political parties to manipulate public opinion during elections.

In addition to the gloomy image of the public sphere in the information age, another critique is posed by Feminism, which argues that the distinction between the public and private domains should not be so rigid (Pateman 1989). If any personal and private matter triggers a significant event that can only be resolved collectively in the public political domain, then the public and private are still intertwined. Feminist theory finds that the traditional thinking of citizenship tends to define public life as concentrated heavily on males performing public duties, while the private sphere becomes one of feminized domesticity. That is to say, both public and private domains reinforce the social norm of *female* and restrict the way gender is enacted.

Hybrid space for both the Public and the Private

Reflecting on what constitutes modern society today, Charles Taylor proposes a reflective description of the public sphere:

The public sphere is a common space in which the members of society are deemed to meet through a variety of media: print, electronic, and also face-to-face encounters; to discuss matters of common interest; thus being able to form a common mind.

Taylor, (2004: 83)

That is, the key elements of the public sphere might revolve around the following questions: (a) *A common space*: Where can citizens meet and exchange ideas, or discuss opinions? (b) *Media*; What medium delivers information in such spheres?

(c) *Matters of common interest*; What can citizens discuss and why does it interests them?

Common Space

With regards to *common space*, the characteristics for such a space to be defined as a public sphere have been becoming increasingly abstract and debatable in the digital age. Because of the nature of the Internet and ICT tools, discussion over public affairs can take place nearly anywhere and at any time via the Internet. In the process of receiving, debating, and elaborating views, such participation made by citizens turns the Internet into a “common space” for the public sphere to take place. Taylor’s idea of the modern ‘social imaginary’ can be used to describe how the public sphere can emerge from rational debate and discussion on public affairs by citizens. Such a formation process is similar to the role of the network society on the Internet, which puts “together a plurality of spaces into one large space of non-assembly” (Taylor, 1995: 190) and yet at the same time can be extended endlessly.

Ideally, when citizens read an article or a political op-ed online, they form their own opinion and share their opinion with their fellow citizens both online and offline. Such a back and forth process constitutes debate amongst citizens over public affairs. As the act of reading and discussion becomes part of the opinion forming process, the Internet might encourage more rational deliberation amongst citizens on public affairs, a key function of the public sphere. However, it is problematic to gauge whether online discussion or participation can fit Habermas’ idea of the public sphere as such online discussion and participation can take place at any time and in any place, which is quite different from the public sphere advocated by Habermas.

Media

On *media*, before the Millennium, debates about the role of ICT and new media in the public sphere could be summarised into two camps, with one camp arguing that the commercialised media erodes rational discourse in the public sphere (Rheingold, 1994) and reinforces the already powerful group of people who have been dominating Western societies since the beginning of the last century. Gottlieb (2002) holds a similar view in that the Internet can only help enhance democratic freedom of expression in countries where democracy is already a tradition. Similar to other media, such as newspaper or television, the Internet can become a valuable addition in helping to promote civic participation. However, Gottlieb argues that the Internet can only become a positive tool when the public are well-informed and already used to democratic ideas.²⁴

The other camp argues that new media *is* part of the public sphere, and one should dismiss the democratic potential of new communications technologies (Friedland, 1996). Friedland argues that one should leave aside the concerns about the relations between privatization and convergence in media. Instead, ICT tools, which are termed by Friedland as “new communications technologies”, are used in ways that actually extend democratic communication in social networks and movements. Communication itself can increase social capital in those social networks created by new technologies. When any kind of technology takes on a central role in the mediation of citizens’ social networks, any socially grounded theory of the public sphere will have to take into account the new networks and communication technologies that bind them.

²⁴ Gottlieb argues that for non-democratic countries like China, it is easy for governments to control how the Internet is used to limit political freedom. As long as the government can continue to control the Internet, there is little chance for the Internet to lead to real democratisation (p. 28).

Nevertheless, under the liberal model of citizenship, the capitalist market inevitably commercialises and commodifies media. Such developments, led by information conglomerates like Google and Facebook, will only continue to further reshape the media landscape of the Internet. Under this development, it is possible to see big data analysing and security technology changing people's online behaviour, both public and public-oriented, into entities that could be commodified. In the online world, personal data and private information become a commodity which can be traded between conglomerates with their perspective economic interests. Papacharissi, who borrows Habermas' public and private binary, argues that "private-sector commercial imperatives, having commodified aspects of the public life, which may have brought a demise of the public sphere, further appropriate personal activities of the private domain" (Papacharissi, 2010: 45). Citizens' activities online are both publicly and privately relevant, making the private sphere increasingly intertwined and commercialised, and increasingly difficult to be distinguished from the public sphere at the same time. It is especially the case in public and private spheres on the Internet. For instance, where an individual goes to an online petition sign off her/his name and leaving a comment on the petition on a Facebook page, she/he concurrently functions as a citizen (signing an electronic petition and sharing views on a public matter), consumer (signing of a social media account), audience (reading other people's comments on the Facebook page), and information provider (sharing a comment on the Facebook page). As such, it seems to be problematic to claim the online world can be another public sphere, as what used to be public and private are now commodified through those online interactions mediated by Internet conglomerates and social media firms. Papacharissi (2010) argues, these commercially public spaces "cannot be rendered as public spheres", instead, they provide spaces where citizens can participate in some democratic practices, such as

following politicians online, or expressing or sharing political opinions (Papacharissi, 2010). That is, digital media in the visual space only further makes the distinction between the public and private increasingly elusive. As this section aims to discuss the meaning of media in the concept of the public sphere, a more in-depth analysis on the relations between converged media and modern citizenship will be discussed in later sections.

Common interest

As previous sections show, the Internet and ICTs create new public/private spaces for users to personalise space based on their personal preferences. However, when personalisation and self-expression are generally the core values celebrated and reinforced by the tools of ICT and new media, such trends might have impacted how citizens rationalise their relations with their surroundings and public affairs.

For instance, blogs and vlogs (video blogs) are used by citizens to post content as a means of self-identification, as these activities allow them to post self-focused content and share with their online audience (Papacharissi, 2007)²⁵. These blogs can be popular amongst “netizens”²⁶, a term which is often used to describe citizens who use the Internet, and bear a certain degree of democratising potential (Coleman, 2005). As such, when citizens express their viewpoints related to public affairs on those private online forums (blog/vlog), the act of expression itself challenges what is considered public and what is private in the online space.

²⁵ Papacharissi’s research finds that blogging can reinforce an individual’s self-identification. For instance, when an individual blogs frequently, such high-level of self-disclosure to an online community usually accompanies the blogger’s perception of her/his own identity or even social capital, and in the end promotes the blogger’s social well-being.

²⁶ The term “netizen” has been commonly used to refer to a person who uses the Internet. Please see the definition provided by the Cambridge Dictionary: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/netizen>.

While it is possible to see the content on blog or online media expressed by individuals occasionally create impact on public affairs, these forms of expression are still self-serving and sometimes narcissistically motivated. As the blogosphere online is still segmented and not collaborated, it cannot offer open access to all citizens to engage in deliberation, let alone constitute a public sphere (Dahlgren, 2005). That said, what in the past used to be discussed in the public sphere is now subject to be discussed in the private sphere of the Internet. When discussions on public and private matters overlap, as demonstrated in citizens' online behaviour, the question of what matter is public and what is private becomes a continually contested game between those who blog and those who are their readers.

This study follows Bell's (1973) thinking that information and technology are the force behind social changes. Such a scientific impact on society is even more obvious in today's Information Age when nearly everything can be connected online. Such interconnectivity, blurs the boundaries between the public and private spheres in the online world and also connects nearly every aspect – political, cultural, social, and economic – of civic life through online media and ICT tools. The question of how such an expanded connection enhances citizens' ties with their fellow citizens and what the converged media tells people about their role as citizens in a contemporary reality will be discussed in the following section.

2.6 Converged technology, multiplied networks

The fluidity of information as a commodity places social, economic, political and cultural transactions on a plane that is networked and interconnected

Papacharissi (2010:54)

The growing convergence of different medium (print, TV, radio) on the Internet creates an architectural environment which enables citizens to engage in different media use. This may produce a combination of social and political impacts which cannot be measured easily. Through these different usages, citizens are not only passively receiving or reading information, they also simultaneously produce or provide instant feedback via various online media or ICT tools. For instance, a citizen can instantly tweet her/his views while watching a live-streamed political event on other devices (Vaccari, Chadwick and O’Loughlin, 2015). Converged media architecture not only displays mediated information provided by politicians or individuals from the private sector, but also allows a multi-layered space for “uncut” voices to be heard. In addition, the action of, for example, “tweeting an opinion online” not only conveys an individual’s political tendency, but also indicates a degree of social tendency as the tweet is mostly directed at the individual’ “followers” online.

In a converged media, ICT tools are “rooted in a greater convergence of social, cultural, political and economic tendencies which enable and are enabled by technological convergence” (Papacharissi, 2010: 53). As such, in the digital age, citizenship is embedded in a “multiplied space”, or what Dahlgren (2005) calls, “multisector online spheres”, which includes different layers of social, cultural, political, and economic functions. On the Internet, one can find different kinds of social media or Websites to fulfil various purposes. For instance, Facebook or Twitter allow people to socialise with one another; YouTube allows people to learn and share

different cultures with others; a sea of political forums and blogs allow people to share political views with others; and Websites like eBay or Etsy allow people to make transactions with other users. Based on the different tendencies behind their online behaviour and interactions with other users or organisations, online users are called citizens, netizens, consumers, or content producers (Lewis, Inthom, Wahl-Jorgensen, 2005). The converged behaviour is possible because of the interconnective nature given by new ICT tools. Through the greater complexity in converged media, citizens are enabled to have several different networks of people with differently structured relations, while at the same time, they are also exposed to different information transactional opportunities via various media outlets.

As there is a massive amount of data that is being transmitted on the Internet every day, to look into questions of how the online world can be theoretically understood, it might be useful to borrow the “micro, meso, and macro model” proposed by Schement and Curtis (1997), who try to make sense of the information society by taking an equilibrium model. In the context of public affairs, micro refers to individual factors, such as one’s political leaning, ideologies, or identity; meso refers to the social-cultural, and community environments which might affect the individual, and macro refers to big actors such as government and its policies. Within this context, one can try to make sense of the Internet world using these three perspectives. On the **micro** level of experience, citizens’ personal ties with their friends, families and acquaintances are converged by the various tools of communication technologies. Some researchers find that converged technologies allow people to expand their social capability when interacting with their network of friends, and to some extent, pose a positive impact on the social sphere.²⁷ In other words, citizens’ personal networks can be expanded horizontally in the online world

²⁷ As discussed and supported by Papacharissi’s research on bloggers (Papacharissi, 2007).

easily and quickly. And with various online channels of communication, the converged technology makes citizens' social contact more changeable, or "*fluid*" as argued by Papacharissi (2010: 63). These technologies allow citizens to use new communication tools to deepen the depth of their personal network beyond the boundaries of time and space. The convenience of these technologies also means citizens can use both new and old communication tools to make their personal social connections more flexible.

The meso level of the online world refers to content providers such as those providing content through print and electronic media, and finds that the production of information is key for media outlets to increase global competitiveness in the converged media environment. On the macro level, the focus is how information can be distributed frequently through different mediums available in the digital media environment. Elaborating this perspective, Papacharissi (2010: 65) argues that the *remediation* process allows new media to remediate the information they receive and redistribute. Converged media makes content or information more open and "readily manipulatable for audiences" who are simply used to being the receiver in the information distribution process. As such, this remediation process introduces citizens to a "bottom-up consumer-driven element" in the converged media environment. In such an environment, citizens are enabled to be the information receivers, consumers, and producers by flowing through the remediation process along with different media platforms.

The "multiplied spaces" created by technology and new ICT tools not only expand and deepen citizens' relations with others, but also reshape how citizens imagine their relations with others. In the previous century, Benedict Anderson explained the origin of nationalism by suggesting that a nation is an "imagined community", which was made possible by print media and technology (Anderson,

1983). Novels and newspapers help create a sense of “belonging” for people from all walks of life. Such a sense of belonging, shared by people who read novels or newspapers, is the original form of the imagined community created by mass media. In addition to his contribution in elaborating how nationalism can be formed by mass media, when there are no clear boundaries defining the public and the private in the online world, it is important to continue to theorise and examine the impact of technology on community formation and identity.

As the previous sections argue, converged media creates multiple spaces in which technology virtualises and integrates different forms of social, cultural, political and economic functions into cyberspace. At the same time, citizens are given creativity and autonomy to control the production and performance of the self. In this process, Identity becomes a product which not only results in forming the environment surrounding an individual, but also how the individual attempts to present her/himself. As Goffman (1959) describes, individuals present a planned image to others through a “setting”, which is supplied by what can be considered “furniture, décor, physical layout and/or other backgrounds” within the “backstage” and it is here where one can observe a more authentic identity (Goffman, 1959: 97). In multiplied spaces, citizens are given more “settings”, with which they can create for themselves a planned identity. Sometimes they can create more than one, possibly with greater control of the technology and tools at their disposal. For instance, citizens can present an image of an informed citizen by sharing and discussing intellectual matters or international relations on Twitter, an image of a more artistic side by sharing her/his aesthetic taste and lifestyle on Instagram, and an image of a well-connected individual by befriending over a thousand people on Facebook.

When the image of citizens’ perception of “self” is dependent on what kind of setting is available, the people-to-people relationship formed between these “selves”

in the converged media will inevitably become more difficult to be defined. As a result, citizens' relationship with "others" are not as clear as before, as technology allows citizens to manipulate whether their people-to-people relationships become thinner or thicker. When it is unclear how to define what relationship is formed in the public domain or private domain, citizens' relationships with what used to be *political* also begins to become elusive.

Most Millennials have grown up in an environment which sees the increasing development of technologies and various ICT tools. For them, these social networking sites (SNSs) might be more important to their social networks than the communities they join in their offline reality. Some recent research argues that social networking sites, like Facebook, can help maintain young people's face-to-face relationships and social trust with each other, as well as enhance their civic skills in political engagement (Valenzuela et al. 2009). Young people use these tools to maintain ties with their friends, and strengthen ties with acquaintances from outside their friendship circles (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007). As an individual can join more than one SNSs or online group, it is possible for one to hold more than one community membership and learn her/his civic skills through interacting with other members from different online communities. Without physical boundaries between these groups, the idea of an imagined community becomes more elusive than that of the imagined community suggested by Anderson (1983). As an individual can in most cases easily and freely join or leave a group, it means she/he can easily and (mostly) freely strengthen or weaken ties with certain groups by adjusting the degree of her/his online participation. Digital tools provide individuals access to local and remote spheres of new and old contacts, family and friends, public figures and acquaintances. Through the interaction with those online spheres, civic skills are actualised and thus multiple identities are formed.

As SNSs can be defined as Internet-based services which offer individuals the capacity to create a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, the interaction amongst individuals makes Web-based spheres privately public, and simultaneously publicly private. In this context, not only the boundaries between “self” and “backstage” are blurred, but also the boundaries between different “communities” in the multiplied spheres on the Internet. The interaction between individuals actually allows privately made information to be delivered to a broader public audience, and publicly produced information to private and personal networks (Papacharissi, 2010: 142).

An imagined Community within an imagined community

As Dahlgren (2009) argues, media allows people to form a “we-ness” identity from outlets such as sports or from TV shows. With the characteristic of being borderless, a citizen in the online world might find it difficult not to find a “place” – whether on a Facebook page or on an online forum – where she/he can to a degree get a shared identity. Within these groups/places, individuals can interact with each other in various ways provided by the rapid advancement of technology. Such social interactions to some extent offer opportunities to create a civil society on the Web.

Since ICT development has moved forward quite rapidly over the past ten years, recent research suggests a more positive view of the Internet through the notion of citizenship. For instance, Ho and McLeod (2008) argue that the openness of the Internet encourages citizens to express their true opinion in online forums rather than in face-to-face discussions. As citizens are exposed to more information and different opinions in online groups and forums, the flow of opinion sharing can encourage the skills of good citizenship such as voting. In a study by Mossberger and colleagues

(2008), it is found that online participation (online forum or exchanging emails) can positively increase the likelihood of those participants to vote.²⁸

Digital Social Capital

While ICTs and SNSs are becoming increasingly intertwined with citizens' modern life, it might also be important to discuss the potential impact of new communication technologies on democratic citizenship and social capital.

Much research already suggests that social capital helps cultivate democratic norms, fosters a vibrant civil society, and keep politicians and political institutions/parties more accountable (Putnam, 2000; Verba, Schlozman, & Bradley, 1995). Participating in civil groups can help individuals obtain social and civic skills, which are generally essential for a citizen in a democracy. Through a long history of social capital research in social sciences, most research indicates that the core idea of social capital is the “resources available to people through their social interactions” (Valenzuela et al., 2008: 877). In a modern democracy, individuals not only garner social capital through face-to-face interaction, but also increase their social networks through spending time on SNSs (Ellison et. al, 2007), but of course, people do not go online just to spend time on SNSs or social networking apps.

As the advance of technology continues to expand the possibility of what citizens can do online, such expansion also enhances individuals “virtual political activity” (Mossberger et al., 2008) on the Internet. For example today's citizens can easily follow their district representatives online via different platforms, such as Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook. However, whilst their political activities on the Internet certainly require a certain level of Internet literacy, growing Internet-based

²⁸ Their research finds that the Internet fosters participation in three ways: “by offering information to help make informed decisions and promote discussion, by supplying outlets such as chat rooms that permit individuals to meet and discuss politics, and by providing interest groups, candidates, and parties a means for revitalizing the mobilization efforts of earlier eras through email” (p. 89).

activities can also help citizens generate more social capital. Kittilson and Dalton's research suggests an possibility of an "online civil society", which might also have the potential to be a key source of social capital formation as SNSs can be useful for citizens' political engagement (Kittilson & Dalton, 2010). If citizens can get any sort of news or information they need from the Internet, then it becomes distinctly questionable as to whether it is necessary to have in-person interactions as being the only basis for forming social capital.

While some point out that the Internet renders communicative spaces for public affairs discussion widely configured (Dahlgren, 2005; Papacharissi, 2010), others point out that this also means there are a wide number of different forms of online discussion groups which serve the public sphere online: politicians, political parties, activist groups, e-journalism, civil society, NGOs, or voter education sites (Levine, 2003). When the Internet allows an endless arena for online communication, the flip side is the fragmentation created by these online groups and a lack of unified structure amongst them, as each platform has its own function and layout. Some commentators have further elaborated that these multiplied spaces can help form a mechanism of global public spheres (Sparks, 2001). The connectivity of global media constitutes the basic structure of the global public sphere (ibid, 76).²⁹

As Dahlgren (2005: 155) noted, the Internet is essential to the public sphere because it creates the necessary space for citizens to conduct "horizontal communication". In his "civic culture" theory, Dahlgren uses five elements to describe how the Internet enacts democracy and citizenship in the online world.³⁰ He argues that as the Internet is an evolving public sphere, political deliberation can take

²⁹ However, the argument of a "global public sphere" might seem a little oversimplified within a global media landscape in which countries like China have their own dominating media platforms. The term also invites questions about forms of cultural homogenisation, such as McDonaldisation and Westernisation.

³⁰ The five elements are values, affinity, knowledge, identities and practices.

part in online spaces in many forms. Online discussion might not always follow the Habermasian model, however it still plays an essential role in generating and reinforcing civic culture because such interactions are one of the dimensions of the public sphere. When citizens are empowered to communicate politically to a bigger community, they might be further encouraged to engage with other civic participants in the public sphere.

The Internet not only offers a new arena for citizens to receive information, but also enhances the ability of citizens to better monitor the performance of their elected representatives and governments. When citizens are also information and content creators on the Internet, the relationship between citizen, state, and politician changes. For instance, citizens used to be the information receivers in an environment when print and TV media were still controlled mostly by the state or larger stakeholders, such as political parties. However, the Internet as a borderless arena allows individuals an unprecedented “multidimensionality” which they have never before experienced. On the Internet, citizens are not only able to replicate offline social, economic, or democratic practices, they are enabled to create or construct a multiple decision making structure. During this process, they can even create some degree of impact on society if a significant number of citizens (the number can vary depending on the size of the community or society) in the offline world accept the ideas created and shared online. Here the Internet can be used to facilitate a wide range of public discussion amongst different groups of citizens and achieve “multidimensionality” in the democratic practices.

Citizens’ capacity to impact public affairs is enhanced when their online activities can challenge traditional media outlets. For instance, Swanson (2000) finds that blogs, vlogs or SNSs to some extent dilute the agenda-setting function of traditional news sources. Those personalised ICT tools turn citizens’ privately

engaged activities into a form of contribution to the common good shared by the public. As such, political communication is not only about publicly made information, transactions or exchanges, but, to some extent, relevant to information privately made and shared by citizens who may or may not have political tendencies when creating information. Citizens' blogging or broadcasting behaviour thus broadens both private and public spheres, which can be intertwined together when the privately constructed ideas are widely shared and accepted publicly. As such, citizens in the online world enjoy a certain degree of opinion-shaping privileges, while their roles as information receivers and modifiers become enhanced by communication technologies.

A New form of Social Movement, Activism

Finally, this research considers social movements as another form of political engagement. Diani (1992) once described social movements as “networks of informal relationships” between individuals and organisation, possibly sharing a certain identity, thus mobilising resources on issues concerning them. Social movements in the past could be defined by certain physical or cultural barriers (Tilly, 1978).

In the information age, Diani argues that the Internet plays an instrumental role, providing individuals a ‘virtual extension’ when engaging with domestic or transnational movements (Diani, 2000: 397). As the previous discussions show, Internet and ICT tools stand somewhere between the private and public spheres, they provide citizens a larger scaled form of communication and interaction. Therefore, in this way, technology liberates activists from the constraints of face-to-face interaction, blurs the definition of private and public spheres, as well as affecting how social movements are organised and operated today.

In the civic realm of the internet, large international organisations use SNSs as a new arena to organise events or mobilise their supporters to attend protests. For instance, Amnesty International and Greenpeace have used Facebook to coordinate events within major cities across the world. From an individual's' point of view, civil society is also taking advantage of the Internet's openness and connectivity characteristics to explore ways of fostering civic engagements with citizens. The following section aims to discuss whether the Internet and technology have reshaped the nature or formation of social movements in the information age, and further identify the broader issues arising from the evolution of activism.

When Activism Becomes Fluid

Some existing research discusses how social media reshapes a social movement's structure or formation, information flows, outreaching methods, and transnational coordination (Earl & Kimport, 2011). They stress that people's usage of technology can change social progress by creating "affordances" which activists can creatively leverage in staging protests or a social movements (Kimport, 2011: p.4).

SNSs and ICTs are described as an instrumental tool used by activists to enhance their momentum and influence. Technology and social media enable activists to be more active and effective in the mobilisation process. With simply one click, activists can easily share information on movements or social causes concerning them via social media tools, which connects them quickly with people both near and far. Similarly, some analysts have further explored how SNSs and ICT tools change the organisational dynamics in social movements (Segeberg & Bennett, 2011). Movements such as flash mobs show that mobilisation in the Information Age can be organised spontaneously.

Some critics argue that social media and technology may only serve to cause activism to become “tribalised” or fragmented (Sunstein, 2001). Cass Sunstein argues that as citizens are mostly exposed to online information they would have chosen in an offline setting, they might only end up connecting with like-minded citizens. Put another way, when social movements become loosely organised gatherings or events for like-minded citizens in relatively closed groups, social media and technologies will only generate more “enclaved deliberation”.

It might well be true that the so-called “echo chamber”³¹ exists in SNSs. However, social media platforms, unlike offline communities that all have some form of physical boundary, allow participants and members to come together for shared causes, without simultaneously creating a controlling unified body out of them. As Papacharissi describes, such “contemporary expression of online activism reflects the continued distancing from a shared understanding of the common good and an emphasis on issue-based politics” (2010: p.158). As previous sections discussed, individuals in the online world might create different “selves” for different online imagined communities, their various levels of intensity or involvement in the activist platforms, such as Change.com, reflects different customised preferences held by citizens. Compared with traditional media (print, TV, radio), the Internet offers citizens greater flexibility to interact and communicate with others (one to one, one to many, many to one, and many to many), using a variety of media types (video, audio and text). As such, activism in the digital age to some extent is more reflexive as technologies and social media provide individuals greater flexibility to participate and organise social movements in a “fluid” manner.

With the growth of the Internet, the new generation is far more comfortable in adopting new technologies and ICT tools into their everyday life. It is there quite

³¹ <http://www.wired.co.uk/article/facebook-echo-chamber-study>

conceivable that this generation's idea of activism could be quite different from that of their older counterparts. Such ideas have already been discussed by Howard Rheingold. He coins the term "smart mobs" to describe the ways in which younger generations use different ICT tools and technologies to mobilise activist campaigns (2002). Another similar example is the Occupy Wall Street movement, with the hashtag #wearethe99percent being the key word connecting people around the world and innovatively mobilising supporters on Twitter. Sandor Vegh (2003) describes these Internet-based strategies and tactics as "Cyberactivism", which means there is a range of technology and activities which can only take place online. For instance, *hacktivism* is used by activists to construct a political message through direct subversion and defacement technologies. According to Vegh, activists who use hacktivism tactics often aim to block access to a website by directing or overwhelming the traffic towards the target server, using brute force methods such as DDOS attacks. As these Internet-based tactics mostly require a certain number of users to take part, raising awareness becomes the foundation of these Internet-based campaigns. Vegh uses three categories to describe the formation of cyberactivism: (1) advocating and raising public awareness, (2) organisation and mobilisation and (3) action. Online activists employ Internet-based platforms and seek public attention and visibility, and call for action from like-minded individuals to deliver a political message collectively. All these Internet-based tactics can help connect protesters in ways that are more spontaneous and flexible, as one protester can attract more followers based on her/his personal network in the online world. New technologies make protesting more interconnected and potentially more powerful or "smart".

2.7 Conclusion

The Internet reshapes contemporary reality. In the online world, the words *public* and *private* are no longer able to capture the nature of citizens' online behaviour or information distribution as many social media platforms allow their users a special space, which is both privately public and publicly private (Papacharissi, 2010: 142). It is problematic to use the word *private* to describe the content posted or shared by citizens on their personalised blogs or Facebook pages as part of the motivation behind their privately organised opinion is for deliberate public display.

The preceding sections review and discuss why and how the boundaries between the public and private spheres have become increasingly elusive. Technology and SNSs create multiplied spaces in which citizens may acquire their civic skills through online interaction and engagement which, to some extent, reflect a variety of social, cultural, political and economic tendencies. Their online activities are therefore interconnected in this multi-layered cyberspace, which can be described as reflexive and fluid. Citizens' public and private space in the converged environment therefore can be customised and flexible.

In contemporary reality, citizens' online activities can possess both private and public tendencies, communication can be personal or mediated, and their target audience can be described as having single- or multiple-issue focuses. If it is generally agreed that the public sphere is historically and conceptually situated, then today's public spheres are intertwined with private spheres by the converged mediated structure.

This study tends to argue that the concept of citizenship is becoming increasingly personal in the online world, as a lot of civic engagement can take place within the private sphere online. That said, citizens in the converged media

environment, which can be customised based on individual preferences, respond to public issues in overlapping spheres of both public and private activities. With their SNSs or communicative tools, citizens' personal domains are connected to the political, and as a result, so is their "self" to society.

Therefore, citizens are empowered by technology in this digital reality as they are enabled to express, mobilise, and communicate in ways which were unthinkable in the past. In the online world, the distribution of power is no longer a one-way road, but a networked environment containing different communicative paths created by various modern technologies. In the converged environment, citizens are information receivers, but also journalists, content creators, distributors, and spontaneous campaigners. When the essence of political communication is also reshaped by the advance of technology, the contemporary notion of citizenship might mediate how these multiplied spaces can become transitional environments for individuals to transform their privately networked self into a polity or society.

Chapter 3- Citizenship in Taiwan, a case study

3.1 Introduction

Since the termination of martial law in 1987 offered an opportunity for social movements and protests to grow and thrive in Taiwan's political scene, there has been consistent international and scholarly interest in the social movements that have taken place on this now democratic island. And yet, social movements in Taiwan experienced a period of quiescence after 2000 when the DPP government came to power, as the DPP is usually considered more sympathetic towards activists and NGOs. Bourdieu said it takes the economic, social and other possible relevant conditions for social movements to become possible (Bourdieu, 2000). Taiwan is no exception. Since 1987, the social movements seen in Taiwan so far has seen two major student-led developments: the six-day Wild Lily Movement of 1990 and the twenty-four-day Sunflower Movement of 2014, with the former eventually leading to direct presidential elections (Ho, 2010; Wright, 1999) and the latter stopping a trade pact between Taipei and Beijing (Rowan, 2015). Both of them took place when the KMT government was in power.

It is not the intention of this chapter to discuss whether the KMT is more likely to trigger youth-led social movements. Instead, this chapter will focus on **the development of Taiwan's democratisation, civil society, and the current political reality, with an aim of exploring how the Internet might have reshaped Taiwanese Millennials' political engagement and their perception of their role as citizens in a modern society.** Following discussion in the previous chapter on the traditional theory of citizenship and how technology has changed citizens' political engagement in the information age,³² this chapter moves forward and further explores

³² The term "information age" is used loosely in this research to emphasise the key role played by technology in the twenty-first century. The Internet equips citizens with the ability to access

the concept of citizenship in East Asia, by reviewing Taiwan's social movements, a salient character in the story of Taiwan's democratisation.

Third Wave Democracies

According to Samuel P. Huntington (1993), there have been three successful 'waves' of democratisation at a global level, with domestic and international contextual factors being the driving force behind the development of this process. It has also been found that in East Asia, economic development and Confucian Asian values are the most distinctive characteristics (Shelly, 2005).

In East Asia, instead of unconditionally adopting the Western political system of competitive elections and institutions of civil society or the accountability of governance, many countries emphasize "Asian values" as the core proponent of their governance. In an "Asian style democracy", traditional Confucianism concerns for securing the basic means of material life have meant that many East Asian leaders to become emotionally and intellectually committed to relatively egalitarian forms of economic development (Bell, 2006a). Confucian values, generally emphasise group orientation, and attach greater importance towards the community over individualism, hierarchy over freedom and equality, and consensus and harmony over diversity and conflict (Huntington, 1993; Ketcham, R. 2004; Bell, 2006a). These values promote the idea that citizens should prioritise their political leaders over themselves. For instance, ordinary individuals are not presumed to possess the capacity for substantial political participation (Bell, 2006a: 12), it's common to see countries attach great importance to the sense of community in its political structure.

and contribute to the massive collection of information online. Evidence shows that the online world in this century has become a vibrant social universe, where many online users enjoy "serious and satisfying contact with online communities", with many users using the Internet to take part in traditional social groups such as professional groups or trade associations. Young citizens in the information age have tended to turn to the online world as an outlet for community activity (Horrigan, 2003: 26).

Confucian Asian values also impact the leadership style of many countries in East Asia. For instance, Lee Kuan Yew, former Prime Minister of Singapore, applauded and advocated the term “Asian values”, and argued that these values make Asian cultures fundamentally incompatible with Western liberal democratic values. Lee was sceptical about democracy as a political system, saying “the exuberance of democracy leads to undisciplined and disorderly conditions which are inimical to development” (Allison et al, 2013). Similarly, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) justifies its non-democratic rule and the party’s legitimacy by stressing Confucianism as a symbol of Chinese society. The Chinese revival on emphasising Confucianism is ironic as it took place decades after the red guards of the Mao Zedong-led Cultural Revolution smashed the graves and statues of Confucius in 1966. Beginning in early 2007, the Chinese government officially began sponsoring the ‘worshiping of Confucius’ birthday with a nation-wide broadcasting programme dedicated to the event. Culturally, Beijing established Confucius Institutes around the world to promote Chinese language and culture. Bell (2006b) describes that Beijing has made such efforts in response to the decline of communism, with the aim of trying to revive Confucianism as a way to fill the “ideology vacuum” that has come to appear in the country. In the name of protecting “social stability” and a “harmonious society”, Confucianism allows the CCP to continue its goal of cementing legitimacy in the country and strengthening its control over society.

Countries like China use the “Asian values” argument to dismiss the compatibility of Western democratic values within East Asian countries, arguing that Western values are not appropriate in the relatively more collectivist and consensual preferences of Asian societies. This relatively stable form of capitalist-authoritarianism, as seen in China and Singapore, has made achievement of a consistently high level of per capita income over the past

decades, which has also helped to strengthen belief in this manner of governance. However, despite the apparent strengths of China and Singapore, it currently remains unanswered as to whether new democratic countries in East Asia will eventually choose to allow Asian values or Western democratic thinking to dominate the continued shaping of their societies.

When the third wave of democratisation hit the shores of East Asian countries during the last century, it introduced several new democracies to the world. For example, in 1986 the people of the Philippines removed the dictator Ferdinand Marcos during a social movement, and in 1987, Roh Tae Woo was elected as President. His first act was the pronouncing of the ‘Declaration of Democratization and Reforms’, which included constitutional revision for direct presidential elections, the restoration of political dissidents’ civil rights, as well as freedom of the press and political amnesty. During the same year, Taiwan’s then President Chiang Ching-kuo proclaimed the lifting of martial law, ending the thirty-eight-year-long authoritarian rule.³³

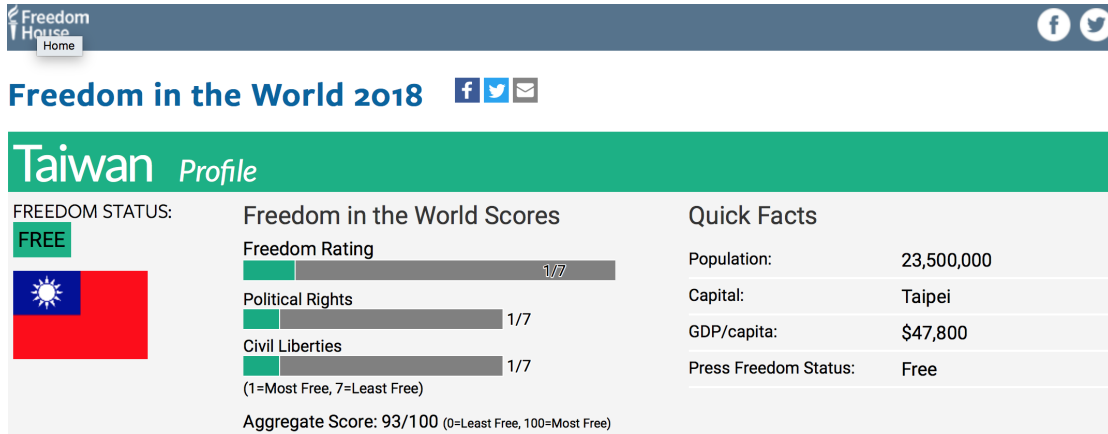
There are a number of other examples. In 1990, Mongolia became a democracy through peaceful democratic revolution. The following year, the October 1991 Paris Accord offered a political settlement aimed at “ending the tragic conflict and continuing bloodshed in Cambodia” (OHCHR, 2011). 1992 saw an end of military rule in Thailand and the beginning of democratisation, and in 1999 Indonesia held its first free and fair democratic election since 1955, signalling the end of three decades of Suharto’s dictatorship.

³³ A report from New York Times’ archives states “[T]he Nationalist Government ended thirty-eight years of martial law today and called the move ‘a new milestone’ for democracy on this island still technically at war with the Chinese mainland.” Following the announcement, twenty-three prisoners including dissidents were released. The report notes that Chiang made the decision in response to the growing dissident movement and in hopes of consolidating public support for his party before he retires. <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/07/15/world/taiwan-ends-4-decades-of-martial-law.html>

Already though, some Third Wave democracies have experienced challenges to their processes of democratisation. In 2006 the government of Thailand was overthrown by a military coup and the following year saw Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan listed as the only remaining liberal democracies in Asia by the World Bank in its report *Governance Matters 2007: Worldwide Governance Indicators* (World Bank 2007, see in Dalton, Shin, and Chu, 2008). However, while many of these newly emerging Asian democracies in East Asia show little sign of moving closer towards a Western style liberal democracy, the case of Taiwan stands out..

Taiwan's democracy outperforms its third-wave democratic peers quite considerably. In its "World Press Freedom Index 2018", the French-based non-governmental organisation Reporters without Borders ranks Taiwan 42nd overall and as the highest ranking amongst all Asian countries (Reporters without Freedom, 2018).³⁴ In a report titled "Freedom in the World 2018" by Freedom House, Taiwan is given top scores for its Freedom Rating, Political Rights, and Civil Liberties. The report also lists Taiwan's overall freedom status and press freedom statuses as "Free". Overall, Freedom House gave Taiwan a ranking of 93 out of 100, the second highest in Asia after Japan and an improvement of two positions compared to the a year before. So, as mentioned in the introduction, despite Freedom House (2018) reporting that democracy seems to be facing its most serious crisis in decades, the case of Taiwan helps provide potential proof that democracy can continue to move forward, even in a society which is still generally rooted in what is considered as containing "Asian culture" values.

³⁴ Taiwan prides itself on its high degree of press freedom, with President Tsai Ing-wen on 25th April 2018 tweeting, "my administration is committed to ensuring that all journalists in Taiwan can work in a free and safe environment".
<https://twitter.com/iingwen/status/989058289597145093>



Picture 3-1: Freedom House’s profile report for Taiwan

Before China revived its celebration of the birthday of Confucius, Taiwan had already marked the day as “Teachers’ Day”, which is recognised on the 28th September by the government of Taiwan. As Confucius’ teaching still places great importance on family and social hierarchy, Taiwan’s celebration of Confucius’ birthday indicates that “Asian values” might still play a big part in its society. For instance, the Confucius Temple in Taiwan’s capital city, Taipei, was first established in 1884 during the Qing Dynasty. Under the government of the Republic of China (ROC), the Taipei City government has been holding annual worship ceremonies on Teacher’s Day since 1970.³⁵ This may suggest that although the effect of economic and political factors often seem to be quite eminent in Taiwan’s democratisation process, the impact of Asian values should not be discounted as they still appear to resonate quite largely within society. A BBC article discussed the culture of “*buhaoyisi*” which implies “I am worry to slightly bother you” and such a habit

³⁵ Taipei Confucius Temple is under the management of the “Taipei Confucius Temple Governing Board, managed by Taipei City Government. <https://english.tct.gov.taipei/Default.aspx>

mainly originated from Japan's sumimasen apology culture and Chinese culture.³⁶

Taking into account that predominant Asian cultures running in Taiwanese society and the successful democratisation in Taiwan, it might be useful to discuss why it has been possible for Western liberal democratic values to take root on East Asian soil. So by taking Taiwan as a case study, this research hopes to examine whether the democratising potential of the Internet can be realised in an Asian Confucian context. However, before examining the case of Taiwan's democratic citizenship, the following sections will review Taiwan's democratisation process and the current state of both its political reality and its civil society. Later sections will then focus on youth-led social movements, which have drawn much attention over the past ten years as a starting point to see if this Internet-savvy generation exhibits a different set of civic skills and understanding of citizenship.

3.2 Taiwan's democratisation development

Democracy is not a given, and nor is it not always created easily or peacefully. This case is especially true for those countries in the third wave of democratisation, which have benefited from global economic growth and the ideas of human rights and democracy that have already had much time to spread on an international level. Consolidation of democracy in these countries usually requires several rounds of power transition and effort from both the government and general public to achieve a reasonably stabilised level of success. Given that within just three decades Taiwan has managed to avoid many of the issues faced by other countries in similar

³⁶ In an article titled "The island that never stops apologising" by BBC argues that Taiwan's overly-apologising culture shows that Taiwan is confrontation-averse and a country "constantly striving to avoid conflicts and preserve harmony at all costs". Available online: <http://www.bbc.com/travel/story/20181031-the-island-that-never-stops-apologising>.

positions, and at the same time move from nation ruled by martial law to beacon of democracy, it certainly makes for one of the more interesting stories of democratisation in the region. In May 2018, The American Institute in Taiwan's Chairman Jim Moriarty gave a speech at Stanford University. He applauded and called the democratisation of Taiwan one of the great stories of the 20th and 21st centuries. Taiwan's story, in Moriarty's words, sets an example to the region and to the entire world (Moriarty, 2018).³⁷ And this section is going to review the democratic story of Taiwan, and discuss why it matters to the region.

Taiwan under martial law

After Japan's surrender in 1945, the Kuomintang (KMT) sent Chen Yi (陳儀) to Taiwan as the first Administrator on behalf of the Republic of China (ROC). Even though the KMT administration was welcomed by the people of Taiwan in the initial months, its corruption and lack of governance capabilities resulted in mounting disappointment amongst Taiwanese citizens. On 28 February 1947, the KMT consolidated its control over Taiwanese society by suppressing a native revolt, and engaging in island-wide mass killings. The biggest number of mass killings occurred in March 1947, under the guise of several martial law decrees announced by Chen Yi (Hwang, 2016: 169-170). A report conducted by the Executive Yuan in the early 90s estimated the death number toll to be between 18,000 and 28,000, with the actual number remaining unconfirmed (Chang, 2006: 486).³⁸

³⁷ Moriarty gave the lecture at a time when tensions between Taiwan and China continue to mount, with Beijing attempting to further diminish Taiwan's international space. In May 2018 alone, Beijing engaged in 'dollar diplomacy', stealing two diplomatic allies of Taiwan, reducing the total number of countries recognising Taiwan to 18.

³⁸ In 1992, former President Lee Teng-hui issued an official apology to the victims and their families affected by the 228 Incident. Ever since, all of Lee's successors have extended government apologies on behalf of the government. The pursuit to uncover the truth of events from the 228 Incident and to achieve justice for the victims is still an ongoing effort.

In terms of societal issues, economic policies introduced by Chen largely favoured people originating from mainland China, (they are classed as Mainlanders in the rest of this paper) worsening the social divide between mainlanders and Taiwanese. Meanwhile, party factional fights, corruption, and the low morale of the KMT also weakened its legitimate authority in other parts of mainland China³⁹. This was not made any better by the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek. Bush and Rigger comment that his ultimate goal was to return to the mainland, replace the Chinese Communist Party state, and re-establish the KMT's authority over entire China. To him, economic means were merely a tool to mobilise support amongst Taiwanese people so they could help achieve his ambition of returning to the home victoriously. Democracy, to the KMT, was only a "lip service" and not a high priority. (Bush & Rigger, 2019).⁴⁰

Feeling excluded and discriminated by the KMT administration, Taiwanese people began to grow strong resentment towards these newcomers from the mainland, or as some people called them, the "49ers" (ibid.). This feeling grew as Chiang's party consolidated its position. Economically, the KMT-introduced a land reform policy which severely diminished the status of Taiwanese landlords, stymying a group that could potentially have formed a sizable opposition against the KMT, but also causing much anger in the process. At the same time, most important governmental positions were filled by mainlanders, further fuelling Taiwanese

³⁹ Chiang Kai-shek was aware of the deep-seated problem within his party. In his diary in 1949, after retiring from the presidency of the ROC, he wrote "[T]he biggest problem and the biggest reason for our defeat was that we have never been able to establish a new, solid organizational system. The old one had long deteriorated and collapsed. In the current, crucial phase between the old and the new, we have lost the basic means to rebuild and save our country. This is why we have been defeated" (Myers & Lin, 2007: 2).

⁴⁰ In a joint paper, Richard Bush and Shelley Rigger review the forty-year history of US-Taiwan relations and the normalisation of US-China Relations: <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/The-Taiwan-Issue-and-the-Normalization-of-US-China-Relations-Bush-Rigger1.pdf>.

discontent (Fell, 2018: 18-19). As well as these economic and political factors the KMT treated Taiwanese culture as being both inferior and vulgar, and set out to use education systems for the purpose of establishing a “China-centric” identity. For instance, school administrators were replaced by mainlanders, whilst their Taiwanese counterparts were required to act only as secondary assistants. Furthermore, whilst prior to the establishment of the KMT administration most Taiwanese were able to converse in Japanese and other languages⁴¹ under the KMT administration using any languages other than Mandarin became punishable by law and the potential use of public shaming. For instance, students who were “caught” Taiwanese would be asked by school teachers to wear signs that displayed “I spoke Taiwanese” in public. These measures created a sentiment amongst students that speaking Taiwanese was “shameful, ungraceful, and of a lower class” (Chen, 2008: 204).

All this resentment led to the KMT imposing a state of martial law across Taiwan, and policies to wipe off the Taiwanese culture. Between the 1940s and 1960s, the KMT launched a series of policies to culturally assimilate Taiwanese people, with measures including prohibiting the performance of Taiwanese opera and using TV programmes to promote the Mandarin language. Meanwhile in order to gain support from the Taiwanese people towards KMT’s goal of return to mainland China, the KMT introduced some policies aiming at bettering the economy. In the 1960s, Taiwan’s economy began to take off, while society continued to experience a high degree of political repression, known as the White Terror (Fell, 2018: 35).

It was not until the end of 1970 that the political repression began to wane as the KMT government’s legitimacy came to be seriously challenged. Firstly, in 1969

⁴¹ Other languages spoken by Taiwanese during the Japanese governance included Hakka and Hoklo, in addition to other Indigenous languages/dialects.

the US agreed to transfer the Senkaku Islands (known as Diaoyutai/釣魚台 in Mandarin) to Japan. Then in October 1971 the admission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations further weakened the KMT's legitimacy and following that, the historic visit made by then US President Nixon to Beijing in 1972 was the strongest diplomatic setback the KMT had faced. In addition to all this growing external pressure, the political system established by the KMT in Taiwan was also now appearing to be obsolete, with the average age of parliamentary representatives standing at 63 in the National Assembly, 67 in the Legislative Yuan, and 73 in the Control Yuan (Ngo, 1989). Furthermore, most of the representatives were originally from mainland China and had been elected there before the KMT government fled to Taiwan, bringing the validity of these representatives under even more scrutiny. Economically, the private sector which as mentioned above, had expanded rapidly throughout the 1960s, had come to generate about 80 per cent of the total added value of industrial production. This further weakened KMT-influence as a significantly larger private sector meant that the demands and opinions of big business now had to be taken into account by the KMT government (Ngo, 1989). During this period, and acting as a potential sign of the weakening of the regime, a group of elites composed of intellectuals and university students braved themselves and criticised the authoritarian KMT government for its poor handling of the Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands situation. Though the movement, called *Baodiao Yundong* (保釣運動 /Protecting the Diaoyutai Islands Movement), only focused on the territorial dispute and rarely on the legitimacy of the KMT government itself, open criticism of the government had been quite difficult until this point

Before the 1970s, the term *Dangwai* (meaning outside the party - meaning the KMT) was used to describe non-KMT candidates in local elections. Slowly,

Taiwan saw more and more of these *Dangwais* as the 1970s saw more non-KMT members organise electoral campaigns and demonstrations to articulate the aspirations of a large segment within the middle class and bourgeoisie that had been asking for more political participation (Gold, 1996). Later on in the late 1970s, a “*Dangwai* movement” emerged when a group of non-KMT candidates ran for elected seats in 1979 local elections with all of them presenting the same policy platform: democratisation, human rights, and ethnic justice (Fell, 2018: 27). Altogether they were not, they appeared to be candidates representing a unified political party as they all were running on the same political platform and promises, and that they did not belong to the KMT. The *dangwai* candidates ended up winning four local executive seats and twenty-one provincial Assembly seats, outperforming any other non-KMT political group that had run prior to that. Such a performance was significant as at the time the *dangwai* were denied any access to mass media, which was under the control of the ruling KMT, or under the influence of private enterprises associated with the KMT (Rawnsley and Rawnsley, 2001).

During this period of time, an important driver of change was due to the KMT’s new leadership, which came about after Chiang Kai-shek’s death in 1975. His son, Chiang Ching-kuo, who took control of the country from his father, appeared to be more pragmatic and flexible. One of the most significant changes he brought into the political scene was to appoint Lee Teng-hui, a first native Taiwanese person who has even been appointed such an important position, to be his vice president. . In 1988 President Chiang Ching-kuo passed away, and his baton was passed to Lee.

The opposition movement gained further momentum in 1980, particularly in the wake of the Philippines’ People’s Power Revolution, and this movement grew until in 1986 the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was established, becoming the first opposition party (still actively considered illegal at the time) in Taiwan to

challenge the KMT under the martial law period. On 12th June 1987, the DPP staged a protest against the National Security Law in front of the Legislative Yuan. In the face of growing public support for the DPP and increasing pressure from the U.S. Congress to build a democratic institution in Taiwan, President Chiang Ching-kuo lifted martial law on 14 July 1987, and thus Taiwan's journey towards possible democratisation was finally free to begin (Shih, 2008: 102).

Taiwan's democracy after 1987

Yet the lifting of martial law did not change the political climate in Taiwan overnight. Some argue that the political elite in Taiwan did, to a certain degree, contribute to the democratisation that occurred in this era, with the then KMT leaders tolerating the calls from then opposition party, namely the DPP, for greater participation in the decision making processes by the citizens (Tien and Shiao, 1992).

In 1988, KMT President Lee Teng-hui further pushed forward liberalisation and democratisation reforms despite opposition from the military and conservative elites within the party (Tien and Shiao, 1992: 62). Bush and Rigger (2019) argue that Lee, despite the fact that he was chosen by Chiang Ching-kuo to be his successor, was not liked by the "49er group". In order to consolidate his support and momentum, in the face of the hostility coming from within the 49er-dominated KMT, Lee turned towards the island's Taiwanese majority and accelerated the implementation of democratic institutional reforms.

During this process, economic development played a significant role. When the democratisation process began around the 1980s, the KMT was faced with mounting pressure from the emerging middle class and other social forces, who demanded better representation and participation. However, the rapid economic growth and development provided the KMT with the confidence that they could still

perform well in democratic elections. For instance, between the 1960s and 1980s, the GDP growth in Taiwan was about 8.8 per cent on average, while the GDP per capita during the same period increased to USD 3,290 from USD 164, a nearly twenty-fold growth in just twenty years. The economic growth provided the KMT material-based legitimacy and confidence when facing continued challenges from the opposition DPP and the civil society. Certainly, then, the efforts of the elite from the opposition should not be ignored, though it should also be noted that the increased *dangwai* movement during the 1980s, instigated by the DPP, also pressured the KMT in lifting its control over political activities.

Gradually, as open criticism of the government became possible, student activists, who had until this point mainly concerned themselves with issues relating to education, turned their focus to politics when they began taking part in movements connected to environmental protection and farmers' rights. Some of them held forums and memorials to commemorate the long-suppressed 228 Incident, which took place on 28 February 1947. Momentum was accumulated thanks to more and more student protest activities, including a series of silent protests. Tieng and Shiao (1992) call these activities a “warm-up” for major events to come.

The prelude to the major event, the Wild Lily Movement, took place in December 1988, when Cheng Nylon (鄭南榕), a pro-independent activist coming from a half-Taiwanese-half-mainlander family, published a “draft Constitution of the Republic of Taiwan” on *Ziyou Shidai Zhoukan* (The Era of Freedom Magazine/自由時代週刊), of which he was editor-in-chief. Despite the fact that Taiwanese society was no longer under martial law, there existed no real freedom of speech. The government still closely monitored and censored the publication of any print media. For instance, publication of *Ziyou Shidai Zhoukan* (自由時代週刊) alone was

suspended thirty-four times between 1987 and 1989.⁴² Similarly, Cheng's activities were closely monitored by the government and he was summoned to court on multiple occasions. On 7 April 1989, Cheng again refused to appear in court and when police attempted to arrest him at the magazine headquarters, he chose to self-immolate in a show against the government's suppression of freedom of speech⁴³. This meant that 1989 was a year when Taiwan's democratisation process did not make any substantial progress (Rigger, 1999). It was during this time, however, as Huntington (1993) points out, that the intervention of the United States contributed to democratisation in Taiwan. As authoritarian rulers in the region were eager to have their countries become recognised as developed countries within the international community, such international variables directly impacted the democratic transition in East Asian nations such as Taiwan, as well as the Philippines and South Korea.

In January, 1989, the government passed a Law on the Organisation of Civil Groups, allowing citizens to form opposition parties for the first time in Taiwan. Rigger notes that in the space of one year, over fifty parties had registered (Rigger, 1999: 32). Parties, some of which were illegally founded before this ruling, were now free to actively engage in local elections and Taiwan's democracy finally saw some budding signs of diversity.

For instance, the left-leaning Workers' Party and *Laodongdang* (勞動黨 /Labour Party) were founded in 1987 and 1988, respectively, though in the 1989 legislative election the two parties combined received only 98,629 votes (1.08 per

⁴² Further details can be found in a report by the Cheng Nylon Foundation http://www.228.org.tw/228_overview_e.html.

⁴³ During that time, any advocacy or demand to replace the Republic of China with a new nation was prohibited under Article 100 of the Criminal Code, with the maximum penalty being life imprisonment. The article was amended in 1992 to stipulate that it was a crime only when such advocacy promotes the use of violence.

cent), and none of the candidates were elected.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, public support for the DPP continued to increase. The DPP's performance in the national elections of 1989 and 1992 helped locally-born opposition parties build political foundations for their future expansion inside the political landscape of Taiwan. In addition, it might be worth noting that the elections in December 1992 was the first time that Taiwan held a full election for its highest law-making body, the Legislative Yuan.

In the elections of 1980, 1981, 1983, and 1985, *dangwai* candidates from the DPP received over 30 per cent of the total votes (Wright, 1999: 991), and then in 1997 the DPP outperformed the KMT for the first time in Taiwan's local county and city head elections (Rigger, 1999). Giving the opposition a majority in local executive positions was a considerable milestone, particularly for a young democracy which had left a period of martial law only era ten years previously.

Taiwan's first direct presidential election

On 23 March 1996, Taiwan held its first direct presidential elections, allowing its last non-elected political position – the presidency – to be directly chosen by the populace. Since then, Taiwan has experienced three rounds of power turnover, with the first one being in 2000, when the DPP won the presidential election for the first time since its establishment. The second took place in 2008, with the KMT winning the presidency, with the most recent taking place in 2016, when the DPP won the presidential election once more.

⁴⁴ Seen in "Movement Parties in Taiwan, 1987-2016", by Ho Ming-sho and Huang Chun-hao (2017), available at: <http://homepage.ntu.edu.tw/~msho/book.files/journal/I/J55.pdf>. Even though the two parties' electoral activities gradually faded away, the participation of labour-oriented parties still resembled an important step taken by Taiwan's society.

The first power turnover saw Taiwan's second *benshengran* president, and Taiwan's first ever non-KMT President, the DPP candidate Chen Shui-bian. Cross-Strait relations under Chen went through numerous ups and downs during his eight-year tenure from 2000 to 2008 (Hao, 2008). To China, Chen is remembered as a troublemaker across the Taiwan Strait, despite the fact that he pushed forward direct flights between Taiwan and China and increased Cross-Strait investment during his tenure.⁴⁵

The lack of mutual trust between the DPP and the CCP resulted in political turmoil during Chen's time in power. Chen began his first term by offering Beijing an olive branch and pledging the "Four No's Plus One" spirit: no declaration of independence, no change in the name of the government, no placing the two-state theory in the constitution, and no reference on self-determination. However, cross-Strait relations started to deteriorate after Beijing unexpectedly forged diplomatic ties with Nauru, one of Taiwan's South Pacific allies in 2002⁴⁶. In 2005 during Chen's second term, Beijing passed the *Anti-Recession Law* (*fan fen lie fa*, 反分裂法), and the two sides reached their lowest level of mutual trust when Chen ordered the 'National Unification Council' and the 'Guidelines for National Unification' to cease functioning in 2006 (Hao, 2008: 5). Before Chen's second term ended, the mounting tension between

⁴⁵ During Chen's second term, he suggested that it might be about time for the central government to consider scrapping Taiwan's guidelines on unification. In response, Li Weiyl, spokesman for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, said that "Mr Chen's remarks showed he remained committed to moving the island towards formal independence", and that Chen was "the troublemaker and saboteur of cross-Straits ties and Asia-Pacific peace and stability". <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4692134.stm>

⁴⁶ China officially established diplomatic ties with one of Taiwan's Pacific allies, Nauru, on the day Chen Shui-bian assumed the chairmanship of the DPP. It was from this moment that Chen appeared to harden his position on Taiwan's sovereignty and announced the "One Side, One Country" statement in August 2002.

Taiwan and China and the perceived risk of armed conflict across the Taiwan Strait lasted until the election of Ma Ying-jeou in March 2008 (Sutter, 2012).

2008: KMT back in power

On 22 March 2008, Ma Ying-Jeou of the KMT won the presidential election with 58.4 per cent of the vote as opposed to the 41.6 per cent won by Frank Hsieh of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The voter turnout rate was roughly 76 per cent⁴⁷. The 2008 presidential election is believed to be a milestone in Taiwan's democratisation development, as it showed that Taiwan had passed Huntington's (1993) "two-turnover test" for democratic consolidation. That Taiwan took only twenty-one years to achieve democratic consolidation since the lifting of martial law makes the country Asia's most successful third wave democracy. Nevertheless, achieving democratic consolidation does not mean the completion of the democratisation process. There is no end point in such a process as developed democracies can face setbacks as well.⁴⁸

Given the fragile state of Cross-Strait relations, improving ties with China became one of the major policies under Ma's administration. In his inauguration speech, Ma vowed to promote reconciliation in Taiwan's politics, repairing ties

⁴⁷ See Taiwan's Central Election Commission

<http://db.cec.gov.tw/histQuery.jsp?voteCode=20080301P1A1&qryType=ctks>

⁴⁸ The *Democracy Index* published by Economist Intelligence (2018) states that "2016 was notable for the populist insurgency against mainstream political parties and politicians in the developed democracies of Europe and North America, whereas 2017 was defined by a backlash against populism". <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2018/01/31/democracy-continues-its-disturbing-retreat>

with the US and improving cross-Strait relations.⁴⁹ He further pledged the “Three Noes” principle- no unification, no independence and no use of force to outline his approach to achieve peace and co-prosperity across the Strait⁵⁰. The Beijing-friendly president stated that Beijing and Taipei in 1992 reached a consensus with the declaration of ‘one China, respective interpretations’ and reiterated that the “1992 Consensus” should help the two sides resume negotiations at the earliest time possible.⁵¹ During the eight years under the Ma Ying-Jeou’s administration, cross-Strait relations did improve rapidly with the signing of twenty-three agreements.⁵² In the historic meeting between Ma and his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, on 7 November, 2015, Ma told Xi that the twenty-three agreements as a whole could be seen as forms of ‘peace agreements’.⁵³ He also addressed the importance of the two sides working together on creating a better future for people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. However, Ma’s enthusiasm did not achieve much in terms of closing the distance between the two sides, most likely due to his progressively weakening political position, something that had come to be significantly challenged by the revival of social movements in Taiwanese society.

⁴⁹ See China Post’s report for Ma’s inauguration full text in English <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2008/05/21/157332/Full-text.htm>

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² See Hsia, Andrew (2015) MAC Media Release <http://www.mac.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=112987&ctNode=6337&mp=3>. The twenty-three agreements covered areas including transportation, economy and trade, food safety, medicine and health, mutual judicial assistance, taxation, meteorology, seismological monitoring and flight safety.

⁵³ See full text of Ma’s speech at Ma-Xi meeting held in Singapore on 7 November 2015: <http://www.mac.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=113323&ctNode=6337&mp=3>

Many scholars have pointed out that social movements saw a remarkable renaissance after Ma's election (Fell, 2016; Ho, 2014; Hsiao & Ho, 2010).⁵⁴ As the occurrence of a social movement requires the economic, social and other possible relevant conditions (Bourdieu, 2000), two possible factors came into play during Ma's first year. First, in 2009, the Ma administration failed to swiftly respond to Typhoon Morakot and failure to adequately provide support for the victims hugely cost him a huge amount of political capital (Ho, 2014; Gold, 2010: 74). Second, on the economic front, the global financial tsunami that began in 2008 led to negative economic growth rate in Taiwan, a slap in the face for Ma's campaign promise of "633" - a six per cent annual growth rate, an unemployment rate lower than three per cent, and per capita income reaching USD 30,000 (Ho, *ibid*). These factors acted as triggers and the stirrings of resentment could once again be felt within, while at the same time, civil groups had also become somewhat wary of Ma's Beijing-friendly policies.

During Ma's two terms, a lot of social movements were centered around the theme of citizens' rights and justice. Examples include; "land justice", "farmers' rights", "residence justice", and "generational justice" (Ho, 2014: 102-103). Ho points out three possible key factors why the Ma administration triggered such a wave of social contentions. First, the KMT's conservative-leaning and pro-business agenda raised concerns that the rights of minority groups might be sacrificed and that progressive human rights values, such as anti-capital punishment, might be weakened. Second, the "narrowed policy channel", which mean government bodies such as the Human Rights Advisory

⁵⁴ See Fell, Dafydd (2014) Importance of social movements in Taiwan, Taipei Times. <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2014/03/20/2003586080>

Committee and the Committee of Women's Rights Promotion became virtually silent or "ineffective". For instance, the first report issued by the human rights committee was heavily criticized by human rights NGOs, argued that argued that the report overlooked a lot of cases of explicit human rights violations. Third, the DPP increased its efforts to voice pro-movement rhetoric in a bid to gain support. Under Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen, the DPP re-established its Department of Social Movement in 2009, a seemingly political strategy to align with the re-emergent social movements after 2008 (Ho, 2014: 108-114). These three factors renewed the social movement momentum, and pressured the government to face the demands of the movements head on.

While most of these student-led social movements in Taiwan have centered on the issue of social justice, another issue concerning activists was the "China factor" (Harrison, 2012; Xu, 2014).⁵⁵ Xu comments that Taiwan's civil society in recent years regards 'anti-China' and 'pro-Democracy' as two sides of the same coin and thus such developments would further generate greater momentum for pro-independence movements throughout the second-wave democratisation process in Taiwan.⁵⁶ These social movements indicate a disconnect between the Taiwanese people's expectation over how cross-Strait relations should advance and President Ma's vision of future cross-Strait relations. Furthermore, civil society shoulders an increasingly important role in Taiwan's democracy when the traditional political representatives in the

⁵⁵ See Xu Qing (2014) *Cong Liangan Jiaodu Kan Taiwan Min Zhu De Tezheng* (Analyze Taiwan's democracy from the cross-Strait perspective), *Guangcha Zazhi* (Observer Magazine), No. 16 (Dec). pp.34-36

⁵⁶ *ibid.* P.35.

government or other mainstream political parties cannot adequately reflect the public's voice in the political arena.

3.3 Taiwan after 2016

Meanwhile, Taiwan's democracy has been taking steady steps in moving forward, with the 2016 general elections generally considered by some as a second milestone. In the general elections of 2016, Tsai Ing-wen of the DPP won the presidency, and her party won the majority of the Legislative Yuan seats for the first time in Taiwan's history. The result is significant as for decades the KMT's control over the Legislative Yuan machine had hindered the Legislature from accurately reflecting Taiwan's changing political landscape and dealing with controversial policies and events that had occurred under one-party rule. An important example being the 228 incident, a government crackdown (some called it a massacre) that began on 28 February 1947, and in which an estimated 2,000 people lost their lives. The KMT's monopoly of the Legislative Yuan since the introduction of democracy to Taiwan had resulted in a lack of direct apology and concrete action taken by the Legislature to compensate the victims and their families, let alone any open acknowledgement of the wrongdoings by the previous KMT administration of the martial law era (Hwang, 2018: 181).

Tsai's administration did not wait too long before they brought about an unprecedented change to Taiwan's politics. In August 2016, the administration appointed Audrey Tang, a self-taught programmer who left school at the age of twelve to learn coding, as a Minister without portfolio to head Taiwan's first e-Rulemaking project. The appointment is unprecedented in Taiwan as Tang, at thirty-seven years-old (as of 2019), is Taiwan's first ever transgender Cabinet member (the Taiwanese Cabinet is known as the Executive Yuan), as well as the youngest in

Taiwan's history. Politicians across party lines generally applauded this appointment, with former National Development Council Minister Kuan Chong-ming commenting that Taiwan needed innovative young people to take the initiative to face the rapidly changing digital environment. The appointment is significant for Asia as Taiwan, a young third-wave democracy took a bold step forward and embraced Tang, a "civic hacker" and an unconventional public figure, as one of its ministers.

Compared with presidential elections, which generally receive more international attention, the 2016 legislative elections should also, then, be considered a second milestone in the development of Taiwan's democratisation. The 2016 legislative election saw the DPP winning sixty-eight seats in the 113-seat Legislature, terminating the KMT-monopoly and relegating them to becoming the main opposition with only thirty-five seats. In addition, the new dynamics of the Legislature were not only reflected in the new DPP majority, but also in the number of first-time legislators, who are now a relatively younger, more diverse, and more gender-balanced combination of representatives when compared to those from before (Wang, 2016).

Generational Shift

The Legislative Yuan saw forty-three first-time legislators, many of whom have never held public office before. This marked quite a sea change as the nineteen KMT incumbents who lost their elections collectively held sixty-eight terms of office between them and were replaced by non-KMT challengers who had only six.⁵⁷ It is clear from Table 3-1 that two non-KMT challengers managed to successfully defeat senior KMT legislators (both of whom had served seven terms) when neither had

⁵⁷ The twenty-four KMT candidates who won district or indigenous seats have a total of forty-eight terms combined. With a DPP majority, and with over one-third of the legislators having no experience in the Legislature before, this Legislature represents one of the biggest showing of new faces in its history.

had enjoyed any prior experience in the Legislature. This demonstrates that Taiwanese voters were looking for fresh faces and willing to replace veteran politicians, even if that meant selecting a first time legislator. Public sphere participation in these elections indicates voters are moving away from traditional Asian thinking, which tends to attach great value to seniority and experience.

Name	Term	Successor	Term
Ting Shou-chung(丁守中)	7	DPP Wu Su-yao (吳思瑤) *	0
Lin Yu-fang(林郁方)	5	NPP Freddy Lim (林昶佐)	0
Wu Yu-sheng (吳育昇)	3	DPP Lu Sun-lin (呂孫綾)	0
Huang Chih-hsiung (黃志雄)	2	DPP Su Chiao-hui (蘇巧慧)	0
Chiang Hui-chen (江惠貞)	1	DPP Lo Chih-cheng (羅致政)	0
Chang Ching-chung (張慶忠)	3	DPP Chiang Yung-chang (江永昌) *	0
Lu Chia-chen (盧嘉辰)	2	DPP Wu Chi-ming (吳琪銘)*	0
Lee Ching-hua (李慶華)	7	NPP Huang Kuo-chang (黃國昌)	0
Chen Ken-te (陳根德)	5	DPP Cheng Yun-peng (鄭運鵬)	1
Liao Cheng-ching (廖正井)	2	DPP Chen Lai Su-mei (陳賴素美) *	0
Yang Li-huan (楊麗環)	4	DPP Cheng Pao-ching (鄭寶清)	2
Sun Ta-chien (孫大千)	4	Independent Chao Cheng-yu (趙正宇) *	0
Yang Chiung-ying (楊瓊瓔)	5	NPP Hung Tzu-yung (洪慈庸)	0
Tsai Chin-lung (蔡錦隆)	3	DPP Chang Liao Wan-chien (張廖萬堅) *	0
Lin Kuo-cheng (林國正)	1	DPP Lai Rui-lung (賴瑞隆)	0
Lin Tsang-min (林滄敏)	3	DPP Huang Hsiu-fang (黃秀芳)*	0
Cheng Ju-fen (鄭汝芬)	2	DPP Hung Tsung-yi (洪宗熠)*	0
Wang Chin-shih (王進士)	2	DPP Chung Chia-ping (鍾佳濱)	0
Wang Ting-sheng (王廷升)	2	DPP Hsiao Bi-khim (蕭美琴)	3

	68		6
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Table 3-1: from “A ‘Green’ Legislature: Taiwan’s New Parliament More Different Than Ever”, (Wang, 2016)

Another aspect of the generational shift is reflected in the election of a younger generation of representatives. The average age of the representatives is fifty, younger than that of the previous Legislature, which was fifty-two. The youngest legislator is twenty-eight-year-old Lu Sun-lin (呂孫綾) of the DPP, who beat KMT legislator Wu Yu-sheng (吳育昇), a fifty-seven-year-old veteran politician who was seeking his fourth consecutive term. Amongst the legislators aged under-forty, twelve were born in the late 1970s when Taiwan was still under martial law. Many of them were born around 1977, a year when the KMT lost, for the first time, four city/county heads in local elections, also a year described by Rigger (1999) as a “turning point” for Taiwan as the election result showed that the KMT did not have absolute control of its electoral machine. The victories of these young Legislators, born in the late-martial law, era shows the possibility that a new generation has risen and is potentially beginning to break the KMT-dominated political landscape.

Gender-balanced

The Legislature saw the percentage of female representative increase to 38 per cent (forty-three seats), from 34 per cent (thirty-eight seats) in the previous one. It is the highest percentage in the history of Taiwan’s Legislature. The steady increase in Taiwan’s female representatives in the Legislature (see Table 3-2) shows that women are more active in Taiwan’s political institutions.

Legislative Election in Taiwan	1995	1998	2001	2004	2008	2012	2016
Seats of Female Legislators	23	43	50	47	34	38	43

Total Seats in the Legislative Yuan	164	225	225	225	113	113	113
% of Female Legislators	14%	19%	22%	21%	30%	34%	38%

Tale 3-2: Female representation in Taiwan’s Legislative Yuan

It is worth mentioning that Taiwan’s effort to promote gender equality has been recognised by the international community. In World Bank’s 2019 report on “Women, Business and the Law”, Taiwan scored full marks in five of the eight indexes, and was recognised as the leader in Asia in terms of giving women and men equal rights (World Bank, 2019)⁵⁸.

Diversity

Indigenous representation is another new achievement in the history of Taiwan’s legislative elections. In addition to the six reserved seats for indigenous legislators, two more were elected on the party lists of the DPP and the New Power Party (NPP). Even though indigenous people only account for about 2 per cent of Taiwan’s total population, the eight seats account for 7 per cent of the Legislature. Such achievement shows that Taiwanese people are now more willing to see previously disadvantaged groups have a voice in the Legislature.

Another aspect of diversity is the introduction of the NPP, a party which was established in the aftermath of the 2014 Sunflower movement. The NPP is not, however, the first young party to enter the Legislature. For instance, two years after its establishment in 1993, the New Party (NP) won twenty-one legislative seats and became the second largest opposition party in parliament. In 2001, the second largest opposition party was the People First Party (PFP), which won forty-six legislative seats just one year after its formation in 2000. However, the NPP did make history as

⁵⁸ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/31327>

it is the first time in Taiwan that a young party became the second largest opposition party in the parliament with all of its legislators being first-time politicians. None of them has run or been elected to any official office before. The victory of the NPP legislators, three male and two female, shows that Taiwanese voters were using their ballot papers to reshape Taiwan's political landscape.⁵⁹

Nevertheless, as Taiwan's electoral system tends to favour a two-party system, it isn't sufficient for the NPP to rely on their past cooperation with Sunflower Movement student activists to consolidate its support amongst Taiwanese voters. Once they enter the Legislature, these first-time politicians are facing the same scrutiny as their DPP and KMT counterparts. It remains unknown whether the NPP can become the real "Third Force" as is their self-claim.

A changing Taiwanese society

Apart from the Legislature, today's demographics in Taiwan also look quite different, to the extent that Chiang Kai-shek might not even be able to recognise the country he ruled. Today's Taiwan has over 23 million people, with a population density of about 650 inhabitants per square kilometre. There are also a total of 287 registered political parties (Chen & Chung, 2017).⁶⁰ In the past, the KMT authoritarian regime banned the usage of non-Mandarin languages. Today, it is common to see politicians in Taiwan try to engage with their voters more effectively by learning how to conduct basic conversation in other languages, such as Taiwanese, Hakka, and possibly even Indigenous languages depending on the politician's constituency. It was particularly

⁵⁹ Two of the NPP legislators, Huang Kuo-chang (黃國昌) and Freddy Lim (林昶佐), were previously deeply involved in the 2014 student-led Sunflower Movement. Their effort was awarded with support from voters and won them both seats at the Legislative Yuan.

⁶⁰ The openness of Taiwan's society allow all sorts of political parties, including some voting unification, or even communism. 2017 saw the sixth communist party founded in Taiwan, with the first one, the Taiwan Communist Party, established in 2008.
<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2068236/taiwans-sixth-communist-party-seeks-forge-close-ties>

evident in recent televised debates amongst presidential candidates in 2016, with all of them (then candidate Tsai Ing-wen of the DPP, Eric Chu of the KMT, and James Soong of the PFP) using Mandarin, Taiwanese, Hakka, and one kind of Indigenous languages as their opening greeting lines.⁶¹ Today's Taiwan has sixteen officially recognised indigenous Austronesian peoples, and one-tenth of Taiwanese elementary and middle school children were born to a foreign mother, most likely to be from Southeast Asia. The growing number of foreign wives results from policies dating back to former President Lee Teng-hui, who introduced the "Going South" policy in the early 90s, and encouraged more businessmen to increase investment to Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam (Wang and Hsiao, 2002). The enhanced trade and economic ties came with an increasing demographic connection. For instance, in 2010, Vietnamese women made up around 20 per cent of non-Taiwanese wives in Taiwan (MOI, 2010). Lastly, Taiwan's freedom of press even outperformed that of the US in 2018 (Reporters without Borders, 2018). Prior to the lifting of the martial law, there were only 31 licenced newspapers. According to a report by American Chamber in Taipei, Taiwan now has over 2,000 newspapers, over 4,000 magazines, and a cable-TV industry which has 277 channels via fifty-six operators (Rickard, 2016). Today's vibrant media landscape in Taiwan perhaps is what Cheng Nylon would be pleased to see.

On the politics front, the KMT in 2016 lost control over both the presidency and the Legislature. Chiang Kai-shek probably could not have imagined that one day his party, which once dominated and controlled Taiwan with a one-party rule for decades, might slowly be losing its grip and popularity in Taiwan. All of this took only thirty years.

⁶¹ For example, one of the televised debates can be found on the Public TV's online YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Je8f4yfDUxo>

3.4 Key factors behind Taiwan's democratisation process

Civil society is often praised as a key element in the democratisation process in Taiwan. As Ho notes, civil society can be seen as a realm of voluntary associations where citizens are free to pursue their aspirations. In a vibrant civil society, non-elites can have the space to challenge non-democratic rulers (Ho, 2012). Based on the previous discussion on Taiwan's transition from authoritarianism to democracy, a couple of factors should be taken into account when reviewing the the role of civil society in the democratisation process: the rise of the middle class and the presence of student activists.

The middle class

Existing literature on the relations between the middle class and democratisation generally suggest that certain social and economic preconditions will lead to the emergence of the middle class, whose political stance can become an important element in a country's democratisation process. In order to protect their individual interests and rights over their properties, they tend to favour democratic systems, which in principle provides protection over their rights and private properties (Lipset, 1959; Dahl, 1971).

The economic boom in the 70s created a new group of people, whose wealth and influence in the market allows them to be relatively independent of the party-state. It was not until around the time when democratisation developments began to take place in Taiwan that some members from the middle class began to participate in new political debates and started to make political demands. It is mentioned in the previous sections that Rigger (1999) described 1977 as a "turning point" in Taiwan, as the KMT's absolute control over local politics began to see fragmentation. It was also in this same election that Taiwanese people used their ballot papers to express

their dissatisfaction over authoritarian rule. When the KMT's control of society was gradually weakened by both internal and external factors (the rising challenge from *dangwai* and decreasing support from the US, especially in the cases of Senkaku/Diaoyutai Island and the CCP's UN membership), President Chiang Ching-kuo became aware of the potential political price he would have to pay if he did not consolidate his support among the middle class. In an effort to present himself as a reformer to the international community and to the domestic public, in late 1986 Chiang told Katherine Graham, then publisher of the *Washington Post*, that he was going to lift martial law (Hsiao, 2005). During the process, as Hsiao points out, liberal intellectuals and pro-democracy professionals from the middle class actively organised social movements, in an effort to demand democracy for Taiwanese people. Hsiao goes so far as to say, "without this middle class struggle, you cannot have democracy" (Hsiao, 2005: 4), highlighting the contribution made by some members of the middle class to Taiwan's democracy.

After martial law was lifted, the growing middle class continued to play a key role in pushing forward the development of democratisation in Taiwan. Tien and Shiao (1992) found that the middle class accounted for about 40 per cent of Taiwan's population in the early 90s, and such an increasingly different social structure made a distinctly positive impact on Taiwan's democratisation process (p.59). Of course, this impact still required a good amount of time to take effect and so it is best to look at democratisation in Taiwan arriving as a result of different phases: liberalisation, transition, and consolidation. The middle class in Taiwan were favourably inclined towards a progressive, liberalised, democratic system, hence they supported these values by becoming active supporters (Hsiao & Koo, 1997).

Another driving force behind the rise of Taiwan's civil society was the existence of non-profit organisations (NGOs). Some argue that the history of

Taiwan's NGOs, starting from the 1980s, is in direct alignment with the progress of democratisation of the island's political system (Hsiao, 2007). According to Hsiao, before Taiwan's democratisation development began, the extent of Taiwan's NGO participation in policy decision-making process had been impossible as during the 50s, 60s and 70s Taiwan was still under an authoritarianism rule. In his research, he analyses the impact of Taiwanese NGOs by studying how their size, focus and function grew over the course of the 20th century.

The rise of social movements from the 80s onwards offered a democratic opening in Taiwan's democratisation, with quite a number of NGOs operating to promote political and social reform. Since then, NGOs have continued to play an important role in terms of advocating issues of environmental protection, consumer protection, women's rights, and human rights in Taiwan. As Hsiao puts it, NGOs in Taiwan not only help facilitate and foster democratisation by raising public awareness in social issues, but also get "benefited and aided" in the consolidation of democratisation (Hsiao, 2007: 61). Under the authoritarian rule of the KMT, the NGO sector questioned state control by applying pressure where it was possible. The social issues advocated by the NGO sector were generally safe to pursue, as no regime could really openly stand in favour of abusing consumers' rights, discriminating women, or even polluting the environment. The NGO groups in Taiwan began with a single-issue focus which later on evolved into long-term commitments. For instance, the Taiwan Association for Human Rights, founded in 1984, has been involved in many major political reforms, ranging from the lifting up of martial law to pushing Taiwan's government to ratify the two UN Human Rights covenants. This association, along with other NGO groups, have been closely correlated with the democratisation of Taiwan by broadening the range of public opinion that could potentially impact the policy decision-making process. The result is that the NGO sector in Taiwan became

quite vibrant and robust. According to Hsiao (Hsiao, 2007: 63), there were about 3,000 NGOs dedicated to all sorts of issues in Taiwan during 2001. Amongst them, 75 per cent had been established during the 80s.

Founding Year	Associations	Foundations	Total No.	%
Pre-1949	13	0	13	5.2
1950-9	1	8	3.2	3.2
1960-9	14	2	16	6.4
1970-9	18	6	24	9.6
1980-9	39	23	62	24.8
1990-9	103	24	127	50.8
Total	194	56	250	100.0

Table 3-3: Numbers of NGOs in Taiwan between pre-1949 and 1999
Source: Hsiao (2007: 65)

Over the past few decades, the NGO sector has changed the relationship between state and civil society and therefore helped consolidate democratisation in Taiwan. A more empowered Taiwanese civil society has helped advance democracy by equipping its own citizens with the knowledge and skills required to monitor their elected representatives and engage more effectively in the political process. As Robert Dahl once argued, if citizens are the real rulers of a democratic country, then it is reasonable to ask that the rulers be politically competent (Dahl, 1992: 46). The robustness of civil society in Taiwan therefore plays an essential role in encouraging citizens to be active in the public sphere, instead of limiting their role to merely electing their representatives in the political system.

Student Activists

Another important aspect of Taiwan's civil society is student-led movement, which is also deeply intertwined with the democratisation progress. Before the lifting of martial law, the *dangwai* movement had already inspired and encouraged the rise of

student movements and young intellectuals were increasingly more engaged in public affairs. On 11 May 1985, university students protested at National Taiwan University (NTU)⁶², calling for “general elections (普選)”. During the early 80s, student movement was only limited to unorganised small groups who called for greater freedom of speech through underground posters, graffiti and campus rallies and speeches. Outside campus, student activists helped *dangwai* campaigns and activists under the risk of being punished should their schools find out (Teng, 1993). As Teng notes, the difference between before and after the lifting of martial law was the degree of uncertainty and risk facing the student activists, who did not know what would happen to them.⁶³

The lifting of martial law in 1987 marked a watershed moment for citizens’ participation in social movements. Research by Chu Yun-han (1994) finds that in 1983 there were 143 independent social and political movements. In 1987, the year when martial law was lifted, the number jumped to 676. Although Taiwan had only just left the martial law era, those movements were already focusing on a much wider range of issues, including consumers’ rights, anti-pollution issues, women’s rights, Indigenous people’s rights, teachers’ rights, Hakka people’s rights, and property ownership rights (Chu, 1994: 99-113). During the post-martial law era, more Taiwanese citizens were willing to stand up and speak up for what they wanted, behaving as the “rights conscious citizens” referred to in Schudson’s (1998) *The Good Citizen*.

⁶² NTU was founded in 1928 and named Taihoku Imperial University by the Japanese administration, with the first president being Shidehara Tan Tairaka. On 15 November 1945, Taihoku Imperial University was renamed as National Taiwan University after the KMT administration came to Taiwan. <http://www.ntu.edu.tw/english/about/about.html>

⁶³ For instance, Teng writes, before the first organised movement took place in September 1982, several NTU clubs were banned. With their publications confiscated and activities prohibited, the members could only privately distribute brochures and fliers, including one that appeared on election day that urged the class representatives to boycott the election.

At the beginning, these movements, due to a lack of power provided by law, could not easily achieved what they ambitiously hoped for (Hsiao, 2001). However, the political atmosphere saw a change after Lee Teng-hui succeeded President Chiang Ching-kuo upon Chiang's death in January 1988. Lee was the very first *bensheng* (本省人/Native Taiwanese) President to hold office since the KMT had arrived in Taiwan. A political development of this nature gave the student activists a reasonable confidence that their reform movements would be tolerated in a freer political atmosphere (Wright, 1999: 997). As such, student journals, newspapers, and student groups began to mushroom in various universities and colleges across Taiwan. In 1989, the Legislature passed the Civic Organizations Law, which meant the DPP could become legalised, alongside the formation of many other civil groups. From this point onward, these groups and political parties of opposition had officially entered Taiwan's politics.

In the few years before and after the lifting of martial law, with these new actors beginning to play key roles in promoting the rights and welfare of the public, it did not take long until civil society achieved something big. Inspired by Cheng Nylon's pursuit of freedom and democracy, on 14 March 1990, Taiwan's largest and most symbolic student-led movement in over a century, *Yebaihe Yundong* (the Wild Lily Movement/野百合運動), was started by a group of NTU students staging a protest near the KMT headquarters. Their demands from the government were as follows: (1) the re-election of the National Assembly; (2) to abolish the old Constitution; (3) to present a schedule for political reform; and (4) to convene a National Affairs Conference to discuss political reform. A few days later, more student protesters joined the movement and staged an open-ended sit-in at Chiang Kai-shek (CKS) Memorial Hall. The sit-in was in turn supported by students from

other universities and professors, but the KMT government still gave no response. In the face of this silence from the government, on 19 March, a group of students started a hunger strike. By 20 March, over five thousand students had gathered at CKS Memorial Hall, and another group of nearly sixty students had joined the hunger strike. On 21 March, Lee Teng-hui was elected president by the National Assembly. In the same day evening, Lee met with student movement representatives at the Presidential Office, agreeing to convene a National Affairs Conference to discuss political reforms. On 22 March, protesting students ended the protest and left the CKS Memorial Hall. The Lee government kept its promises made to the students and held the National Affairs Conference in June and July in the same year, and in 1991 amended the Constitution and re-elected the representatives of the National Assembly (Wright, 2001: 3-4).⁶⁴ Examining the results achieved by the Wild Lily Movement, Fan Yun (2004) commented that the Wild Lily Movement represented the “first time in Taiwan’s post-war history that a social movement group had emerged as a negotiator for the opposition to the ruling government” (Fan, 2004: 170). According to Fan, those protesting students did not just go back to school after the movement concluded, they continued to promote the welfare of the citizens, and focused on issues including crime prevention, community security, and youth education.

Perhaps it is safe to argue that one of the achievements of the Wild Lily Movement was the injection of new blood into Taiwan’s civil society, as many students decided to get involved and engage with public affairs after the movement. Many of them held their first elections for campus representative groups later that spring. A lot of the elected students were those who had participated in the Wild Lily

⁶⁴ In her book, Wright (2001) comments that the political climate of China in 1989 and Taiwan in 1990 shared a lot of important similarities, engendering commonalities in students’ protest behaviour. She further notes that as the political environment in Taiwan was relatively less oppressive than that in China, in Taiwan these aspects of student behaviour were more muted. Comparing her comment with today’s Taiwan and China, it is obvious that Taiwanese society has taken a completely different trajectory from China.

Movement. Wright (1999) describes the year 1999 as the time when a civil society had “finally risen in Taiwan’s universities” (p.1999). At this point, schools became what Habermas called, a “public sphere” in which people engage in discussion over issues concerning their community, and form opinions that could help keep their government accountable.

From the aforementioned discussion, it is worth noting that it took years for Taiwan’s civil society to take root in schools and campuses across the island. This is because change not only requires political elites or leaders to embrace it openly, but also sustained effort from the ground up. A civil society is not a foregone by-product of the political transition from authoritarianism to democracy, and the rise of a vibrant civil society in Taiwan’s campuses is, perhaps, a force that emerged from a democratic opening only possible under certain political and economic conditions.

Compared with other types of social movements, the thrust of this research attempts to argue that student-led movement is deserving of more attention in the analysis of Taiwan’s democratisation. As previous sections point out, Taiwan’s continued celebration of Confucius’s birthday and other traditional “Asian values” means that on the surface Taiwanese society appears quite similar to other East Asian countries. However, the growing public support for student-led movement in Taiwan shows a drastic contrast from Confucian teaching, which often stresses the importance of “respecting teachers and cherishing virtues” (zunshizhongdao/尊師重道). If Confucian teaching is still deeply rooted in the thinking of the Taiwan, society would not have seen a strong surge in the continuation of student-led social movements during the Chen Shui-bian administration of the DPP (2000-2008), or under the most recent KMT government (2008-2016).

During the first DPP administration, an NTU student led a group of protesting students from other universities, following the format used by the WildLily

Movement, and staged a peaceful opened-end sit-in at the CKS Memorial Hall on 2 April 2004. They called the movement “Amaryllis Movement” (Hu, 2005). The protesting students demanded the Chen administration investigate the “319 shooting incident”, which accused Chen of staging this incident in order to garner support and win re-election in 2004. They also demanded the government pass an act governing ethnic equality, and asked both the ruling and opposition parties to apologise for causing political turbulence over the past four years. However, the Amaryllis Movement did not receive enough public support and only lasted one month and three days. Compared with their predecessors, both its scale and public support were too small to generate any change in politics. And no big scale movement took place between this point and the end of the DPP administration.

After Ma Ying-jeou of the KMT came into power another, much bigger, student-led social movement occurred, with students from universities and high schools taking to the street to voice their opinion on the issue of freedom of assembly. As discussed in previous sections, three factors contributed to the revival of social movements: the KMT government’s conservative agenda, the closing of government policy channels to social movement activists, and the DPP’s alliance and support of the activists (Ho, 2014). In 2008, the first year of Ma Ying-jeou’s presidency, students staged the “Wild Strawberry Movement”. And in the following years, student-led movements took place across Taiwan, demanding a more open, just and inclusive society.

The student activists under the Ma administration, received more popular support, both physically and financially, than their predecessors during the 1990s. As Cole noted in his essay collection on the resurgence of youth-led social movements in Taiwan, since 2008, people from all walks of lives pledged their support for the student activists by donating money, renting tents, providing shelter, food, and

spiritual encouragement (Cole, 2015). The growing public support for student-led social movement was unimaginable during the 1990s.

Hsiao's (1997) research explores Taiwanese people's attitude toward different kinds of social movements, which were led by different groups ranging from environmentalists, students, farmers, feminists, labourers, Indigenous people, people asking for judiciary reform, handicapped people, and NGOs asking for consumers' rights. His findings show, however, that the student-led movements were less understood by local Taiwanese people, with little support coming from the 40-49 age group.⁶⁵

But, throughout the eight years of Ma's tenure, the demands made by the student activists, who provided support for many of the movements mentioned above, to some extent, reflect their vision of how a democratic Taiwan should look. Their action, similarly, reflects their perception of what does it means to be a citizen in a democratic society.

Political Communication in Taiwan

In many ways similar to the development of the NGO sector in Taiwan, the evolution of political communication in Taiwan has been engaged closely with the island's democratisation process. Such a trend is similar to Blumer and Kavanagh's (1999) research which finds that political communication in democracies generally advances through three stages: (1) party-controlled media, (2) television-based communications expansion, and (3) media proliferation. Taiwan's democratisation has allowed its

⁶⁵ By contrast, the environmental movement was supported by more than 80 per cent of the survey respondents, and the consumers' movement receive the second highest amount of popular support, with 70 per cent of those polled saying they support consumers' rights (Hsiao, 1997).

political communication to progress through all three stages. First of all, the media landscape has changed substantially since Taiwan's democratisation.

Democratisation also acts to reshape the power dimension of political communication between the Taiwanese government and its people. When the source of politicians' legitimacy comes from the voting ballot papers, the general public is no longer the powerless one in the existing political communication ecology. It seems most likely the case that the 1996 presidential election revolutionarily shifted the power of political communication from the state to the public, as the very first direct general election marked arrival of the third stage of political communication.

During the martial law period, print media was the main source of political information in Taiwan (Wang, 1972). Wang's (1972) survey found that nearly 90 per cent of voters in central Taiwan's Chia-Yi city took newspaper as their main news source during the 1969 election campaigns. After 1987, media proliferation saw television (TV) rise to become the main medium for political communication. As the growing media outlets around that time intensified the competition between different media outlets, the content of news coverage also became more likely to publish critical commentary from political opinion leaders and public opinion surveys.

After the third stage took off, the rapid growth of cable TV and the Internet penetration rates in Taiwan changed the media environment and political communication dramatically. For instance, during the 1998 legislative elections, candidates in cities were more likely to set up a website than those in the rural areas (Chuang, 2000). Since then, the importance of campaign websites have only become bigger and bigger in line with the growing population of Internet users in Taiwan. For instance, Wang's (2003) research found that candidates during the 2000 election campaigns generally used their Web sites to offer political content, whereas in the

2002 election campaign they tended to engage with voters more actively on their Web sites.

In the past ten years, with the growing number of social media users in Taiwan, especially on Facebook, social media platforms have become increasingly important for politicians and public figures to communicate with their target audience. Consequently, development of ICT and proliferation of social media transformed the political communication process in Taiwan. Wen's (2014) analysis of political communication on Facebook found that Taiwanese politicians also strategically used Facebook posts to communicate, attack their opponents, or defend themselves. An interesting finding of Wen's research on the 2012 presidential election shows that most Facebook posts made by both President Ma, and his challenger, Tsai, delivered positive messages, while only around 20 per cent of their posts were used to attack others. After Ma won the 2012 race, their Facebook communication strategy changed, with Ma significantly reducing his attacks on his opponents while Tsai continued to increase her criticism over Ma. Another research on European politicians also found that politicians mostly post "informative" rather than "personal" content on their social media pages as a way to broadcast news (Grčić, Babac & Podobnik, 2017). A lot of political communication studies looking at Taiwan mostly focus on the interpretive analysis on empirical materials, which may well result from the rapid development of the media landscape in Taiwan. However, as political communication and democratisation development were closely correlated with each other in Taiwan, this study hopes to take the research scope towards a higher level. That is, exploring the impact of ICT tools on citizenship through the current political communication process in Taiwan. In addition, as there is already a rich body of literature on political communication during the election periods in Taiwan, but significantly less from non-election periods, this research hopes to bring about more analytical insight into

political communication during social movements, with a special focus on how young Taiwanese young people enhance their influence via ICT tools.

ICT tools and their place in Taiwan

Another aspect of change in Taiwan’s politics is the diversity and speed of political communication. This change has largely been triggered by the development of information and communication tools (ICTs) and the fact that the Internet penetration rate in Taiwan is quite high compared with other Asian countries. According to the Internet World Stats (2013), Taiwan is listed as number 34 in a report titled Top 50 Counties with the Highest Internet Penetration Rate, 2013. Over the past ten years, Internet usage in Taiwan has grown fourfold.

Year	Internet Users	Total Population	Percentage
2004	12,200,000	22,794,795	53.5%
2006	14,500,000	23,001,442	63.0%
2014	18,687,942	23,359,928	80.0%
2016	19,666,364	23,464,787	83.8%

Table 3-4 Internet Users and Population in Taiwan 2004-2016
Source: Internet World Stats (2014)

In 2016, Google’s Consumer Barometer report found that in Asia-Pacific, 96 per cent of Taiwanese people surf the Internet on a daily basis, falling behind Hong Kong only, which sees 97 per cent of its population browsing Internet web pages every day.⁶⁶ In addition, Google’s research found that smartphone penetration rates in Taiwan reached a record high of 82 percent. Amongst these people, the 25-34 age group registered a smartphone penetration rate of 100%, meaning that every young respondent had a smartphone. Within this heavy Internet usage among Taiwanese people, smartphones are the number one Internet access device as shown by the NGO

⁶⁶ This report was reported by the Taiwan-based CNA: <https://tw.stock.yahoo.com/news/亞太瘋上網-台灣人排第2還更懂消費-072230504.html>

Taiwan Network Information Centre's (TWNIC) June 2015 research, which reports that 68.8 per cent of Internet users use their smartphones as the main device to access to the Internet.⁶⁷ Such high Internet and smartphone penetration rates in Taiwan likely indicates people's strong reliance on ICTs and, thusly, online media as a major source of news consumption, such as the information provided through the platform Facebook. In an article titled "Facebook still dominates Taiwan's social media" released by the American Chamber in Taipei (AmCham), it is found that Facebook is "unusually dominant" in Taiwan, with a penetration rate of 82 per cent, higher than anywhere else in the world (AmCham, 2017)⁶⁸.

In terms of young people's media usage, social media platforms on the Internet seem to have overtaken traditional media outlets, such as TV, as top news sources. With the Internet becoming people's major news source, such trends inevitably pose a challenge for traditional media outlets, which have been the main channel for political communication between state and civil society. Such a challenge is shared by many governments around the world.

3.5 Research Method

Methodology

As the beginning of this chapter stated, this research hopes to explore how the Internet might have reshaped Taiwanese Millennials' political engagement and their perception of their roles in a democratic society. As such, citizens who were born a few years before 1987 and after 1987 are the focus of this research. With most of them having grown up with the Internet, these Taiwanese Millennials, naturally well

⁶⁷ <https://www.twNIC.net.tw>

⁶⁸ This article also argues that as Facebook and LINE have been the most popular social and messaging apps in Taiwan, other platforms such as WeChat will find it very difficult to gain traction in Taiwan. <https://topics.amcham.com.tw/2017/04/facebook-still-dominates-taiwans-social-media/>

versed with technology and social media, along with their creative usage of ICT tools, and the way they communicate with other age groups during social movements might be helpful in terms of indicating their understanding and expectation of the democratic system of their country.

A multiple-case design is going to be used to study the dynamics in different social movements under the previous KMT government. The advantage of doing a multiple-case design is that the material derived from the cases could offer a broader picture of a trend in a particular time frame. Furthermore, the strength of a multiple-case design is that the analysis can be more convincing, compared with solely relying on one event or single case. The following chapters will proceed to discuss major social movements which took place between 2008 and 2016, under the Ma Ying-jeou administration of the KMT.

Analysing data

With the aim of exploring the impact of the ICTs on Taiwanese people's perception of citizenship and political engagement, this research attempts to find out the answer with three main research methods- (1) an analytical review of Taiwanese student-led movements from 2008-2016 when President Ma Ying-jeou of the KMT was in power, (2) a discourse analysis of the official blogs of several major social movements taking place in the past eight years, and (3) semi-structured interviews with three sets of actors – politicians, activists and media professionals – to determine their assessment of the notion of citizenship, as well as their observation of the Taiwanese youth's political participation. The following chapters, then, to offer a more detailed outlook of the development of citizens' participation in Taiwan's social movements, will take separate reviews of the two terms under former President Ma Ying-jeou. As quite a number of the movements were mainly initiated or led by

university or college students in Taiwan, this study hopes to sketch an accurate outlook of the notion of citizenship in the minds of Taiwanese young people.

It is difficult to apply one singular research method to analyse all social movements, as each movement has its own social media and communication strategy. Some of them only used blogging to generate support, some of them used both blogging and other social media sites which are less well-known amongst Taiwanese, and some of them used a wide range of social media tools to engage with the public at home and abroad. In an effort to accommodate these various social media strategies, different methods were applied to explore and analyse each movement, depending on which one was the main digital tool used during the mobilisation and organisation process.

For instance, in Chapter 4, the author uses discourse analysis to explore the political messages conveyed by nearly 200 blog entries of the Wild Strawberry Movement official English blog. In order to gauge the material carefully, the author uses Nvivo, a computer-aided qualitative analytical tool, to analyse the first student-led social movement which heavily relied on blogging to communicate with Taiwanese people and the international community. Each piece of the blog post was coded as a descriptive node, for instance a phrase meaning “democracy in Taiwan” or a sentence meaning “human rights being violated”, a paragraph of “how to mobilise and spread the words”, or a slogan shows “discontent with the ruling government”. These descriptive codes are used to help provide a closer outlook of each event or each statement issued by certain social movement participants.

The originality of this study comes from the first-hand expert-insider perspective concerning political communication and citizenship. This original material is presented and discussed in chapters 4, 5, and 6. The materials gathered from this study’s semi-structured interviews, and detailed documentation of how

different ICT tools were deployed during the movement, are expected to offer useful data and deep insights into the subject of the investigation.

The author also conducted semi-structured interviews with people who took part in the social movements occurring in the years from 2008-2016, as well as the two most recent elections in Taiwan - the 2014 November local elections and the 2016 January presidential and legislative elections. The interviewees include university graduates, student activists, journalists, news reporters, and scholars. Furthermore, the interview method of this study allows the interviewees to do most of the talking, after a short introduction of the purpose of this research.

In order to supplement the research material, this research also relies on printed and digital media as alternative sources to obtain documented information, direct quotes from protest participants, or analyses from scholars and experts. Overall, this research aims to offer a broad and engaging outlook of a vibrant Taiwanese civil society, particularly regarding the phenomenon of student-led social movements. As the study of social movements remains a multidisciplinary intellectual project (Ho Huang, and Juan, 2018), it is noteworthy that this study should be no exception. This study has benefitted from prior scholarly research focusing on a wide range of topics: sociology, democratisation, social media, social movement, Taiwan studies, communication studies, and e-democracy. Although qualitative-driven research forms the bulk of the study of social movements, most of their research questions are about why social movements took place and what impacts movements had on Taiwanese society (Ho, Huang, and Juan, 2018: 134-135).

3.6 Conclusion

Over the past three decades, Taiwan's democratisation development has been consolidated through a series of political events, including student-led social movements, direct elections. Within these events, two major factors often come into play: political communication, which in this study refers to how elites receive feedback from citizens as well as responding with further information; and citizens' participation in politics. ICT tools and social media platforms to some extent have reshaped Taiwanese people's political engagement and, related to this, the impact of ICT tools on the notion of citizenship can be viewed from two perspectives: one point of departure is how citizens use the ICT tools, with the other side of the equation being the nature of the political communication between the political elites and the public. As there is growing literature about how ICT is adopted by activists to organise social movements, and the need for an overarching theory to address it (Hess, 2005; Klein, 2012), this study hopes to take a small step by contributing to this demand by exploring the following question: what effects do ICT tools and social media have, compared with traditional media, on the interaction between political elites and the general public? The research method of this study relies on an extensive literature review, material gathered in semi-structured interviews, which were conducted with a focus on political agents and civil society, and secondary data garnered from extensive media monitoring of Taiwan's recent political events and changes over the past five years.

The contribution of this study is to synthesise what is known to date about digital media in Taiwan within an analytical and systematic review of Taiwan's social movements and the interaction between the political elite and the public on social media platforms. It might be worth emphasising the potential contribution of this study, as there is a current gap not only in data available in non-Western examples,

but also as a framework that can identify the changes that have taken place by means of historical analysis of political communication and citizenship as a whole. And the last potential this study wishes to achieve, is the niche focus of how social media changes or reshape citizens' participation in the events of social movements.

Furthermore, this research hopes to offer a relatively in-depth outlook of the development of democratisation in Taiwan. Over the past 30 years of, Taiwan's society has progressively become more open, diverse, and free. Shirley Lin, a professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, once called Taiwan's democracy "the first in the Chinese-speaking world". By taking Taiwan as a case study, a young and vibrant democracy with a majority of Chinese-speaking people in its society, this study hopes to shed new light on whether democratic values can take root in an East Asian society. Through vigorously analysing the social movements of Taiwan's recent past, this research hopes to contribute to the understanding of how Taiwan has evolved into the most successful example of third wave democracy in Asia. To do so, the findings of this study, hopefully can help further the understanding of the current young generation in Taiwan and reflect whether East Asian societies are really like Singapore's former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew once claimed, not compatible with the Western democratic values.

Chapter 4 Resurgence of Social Movement in Taiwan

4.1. Introduction

The preceding chapter discussed the roles played by Taiwan's civil society, its middle class, and students in the democratisation process. This chapter will take a closer look at young Taiwanese people's participation and engagement in student-led social movements, as their behaviour may offer a useful indication of their perception of citizenship and their corresponding patterns of communication patterns the influence of ICT. The focus of this chapter will take civil society and student-led social movements as a starting point to gauge the collective activities that facilitate the political engagement of citizens, such as forming a rally or online mobilisation for a public cause. This chapter will also discuss what has changed or not changed in the student-led social movements within a digital context. This chapter asks how the growing convergence of ICT tools and social media may affect the patterns, methods or behaviors behind student-led social movements in Taiwan. It also aims to offer an analytical review of the extent and narrative of the social movements during former President Ma Ying-jeou's first term, of 2008 to 2012, by extensively concentrating on written sources, both in English and Mandarin, and supplementing them where necessary or possible with interviews. It will subsequently implement a discourse analysis on the narrative of the movements as a means to understand the arguments held by the participants, as their arguments might reflect Taiwanese citizens' perception of the relations between themselves and the government. Furthermore, this chapter will also explore the use and effectiveness of ICT tools and social media sites during the movements.

It might be worth noting that although Taiwan has its own cultural and historical features in its democratisation movement and governmental organisations, many of the challenges and frustrations facing its civil society may also be shared by other democracies around the world also.

4.2. Resurgence of Social Movement during Ma's first term

Shortly after the KMT came to power in May 2008, its neoliberal oriented policies such as legalizing casinos, strengthening state control over public television and cutting pensions for farmers put civil groups firmly into opposition with the government (Hsiao, 2012). The first notable and large scale student-led movement was the “Wild Strawberries Movement”, which took place in November, only six months after Ma Ying-jeou took office. Following this particular movement, there was at least one major social movement every year that took place during Ma's first term (2008-2012), and a number of others that can be considered noteworthy. The focuses of those movements might vary, but they all centred around the essence of democratic values: social justice, transparency, and freedom of speech. A common characteristic shared by these movements is that they were all initiated and organised by students. The Wild Strawberries Movement was significant as it indicated a resurgence of social participation in public protest, and a sign of the changing shift in terms of how Taiwanese young people perceive their role in the society. The shift also indicates that it would be wrong to describe Taiwan as a traditional society which is deeply affected by Confucian thinking. As Confucius prescribes that one must act in accordance with their ascribed public role⁶⁹ (e.g., ruler, father, son, teacher, student), his words have probably fallen on deaf ears when it comes to many Taiwanese youth.

⁶⁹ In *Lunyu* (論語), Confucius said people should act appropriately in accordance to their assigned role within society. The passage simply reads *junjun, chenchen, fufu, zizi* (君君, 臣臣, 父父, 子子).

The following table lists major large-scale social movements that occurred during the four years (May 2008 – April 2012):

Year	Movement
2008-2009	The Wild Strawberries Movement, led by university students to protest the KMT government's deployment of the police force during the visit by Chinese negotiator Chen Yunlin (陳雲林) to Taipei in November.
2010	The Losheng Sanatorium Preservation Movement, led by students to preserve the Losheng Sanatorium Institution from being forcibly relocated. ⁷⁰
2010	The Da Pu Incident, led by students to protest against illegal grabs of farmland. ⁷¹ (The movement continued until 2013 when the government dispatched police and officials to forcefully demolish the Dapu Borough).
2011	Anti-Kuokuang Petrochemical Movement, led by students to protest the company Kuokuang Petrochemical Technology Co. in building a refinery project that might have damaged the environment.

Table 4-1 Major social movement in Ma's first term 2008- 2012(made by author)

The following sections will first discuss how activists used social media sites and ICT tools to engage with the public, spread messages amongst society and generate momentum.

父父，子子), which is usually translated as "the ruler should rule, the minister should minister, the father should be a father, and the son should behave like a son".

⁷⁰ The Losheng Sanatorium was built during 1929 in northern Taiwan's New Taipei City. As society's attitude towards individuals with Hansen's Disease was still not welcoming, many Losheng residents who were allowed to leave chose to stay so that they could avoid facing social discrimination. In 1994, a mass transportation line was planned to be built where the Sanatorium lies. In the face of government pressure to evict the Losheng residents, many intellectuals, artists, and students started to openly defend the rights of the Losheng residents. Starting in 2005, students began to stage demonstrations and sit-ins, in an effort to call for the preservation of the sanatorium. For more details about the history of Losheng Sanatorium see:

<https://daybreak.newbloommag.net/2017/07/25/the-losheng-sanatorium-struggle/>.

⁷¹ The Da Pu Movement involved a case of the government forcing land expropriation in Taiwan's Miaoli County. Since 2009, the local government had attempted to convert elderly farmers' houses and agricultural land towards commercial use. The culmination of these attempts resulted in a suicide, in which a native Da Pu resident Chu Feng was found dead on a chair next to an empty bottle of insecticide. She did not leave a suicide note. Although the suicide case forced the then central government to intervene to protect the rights of the four land owners who opposed the land expropriation, in 2013 the Miaoli County Government disregarded the promise and demolished the remaining houses.

2008 Wild Strawberries Movement (November – December)

In November, Chen Yun-lin (陳雲林), the Chairperson and negotiator of China's Association for Relations across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS), was headed to Taiwan for negotiations regarding an effort to forge a direct flight agreement with Taipei. Prior to Chen's arrival, the Ma administration prohibited public demonstrations and ordered police to remove all national flags of the Republic of China (Taiwan) near the hotel where Chen would stay.

Ma's order infuriated the Taiwanese people and triggered public irritation with hundreds of citizens staging a protest,⁷² and on 3 November, Chen's visit was met with protesters led by the then opposition party, the DPP. In response to the protest, the government deployed riot police to handle the protesters and, in doing so, turned the protest into a violent confrontation between protesters and police. During Chen's five-day visit, around 10,00 police officers were dispatched across Taipei City to ensure there were no displays of national flags (Cole, 2017). According to a report by Amnesty International, a total of 149 police officers and between 200 to 300 Taiwanese were reported injured along with the occurrence of 18 arrests.

Following the violent clash between the protesters and the police, hundreds of students staged a sit-in in front of the Executive Yuan (Taiwan's Cabinet) on 6 November, condemning the police's response and handling of the protests during Chinese negotiator Chen's visit, and opposing former President Ma's rapprochement with Beijing. The students called themselves the Wild Strawberries (see photo 4-1), in reference both to the derogatory connotation of Taiwanese young people as strawberries (pretty on the outside but fragile on the inside, and quick to rot),⁷³ and

⁷² See Reuters (2008) Protesters mob Taipei hotel in anti-China demo
<http://in.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-36347620081105>

⁷³ The term *caomeizu* (草莓族/ the strawberry generation) is used to describe Taiwanese people born after the 80s and beyond. This generation is viewed by their senior counterparts as "less

also to the student-led Wild Lily Movement of the 90s. According to interviewee Chang Sheng-han (張勝涵, coded as A2 in the remaining paper), a participant at the time and a student at NTU (National Taiwan University), there were about 500 protesters involved in the sit-in. Of this group, around one-fifth were students from NTU. A1 said:

A lot us (protesting students) already knew each other as many of us came from different student clubs which focused mostly on public affairs. Back then, we argued a lot. (author: about what?) Over everything. Because we didn't have an organisation structured in a strict hierarchy, so we had to vote over every single issue... also as we wanted to avoid anyone taking advantage of the protest and [making] her/himself a public figure or some sort of celebrity, we were quite critical over whoever behaved like a spokesperson and spoke to media.

The protesting students had three demands: (1) amending the Assembly and Parade Act, (2) punishment of all the police officers who acted inappropriately during the DPP protests and the resignation of government heads in charge of national security and the police agency, and (3) an apology from then President Ma for the police repression and transgressions of human rights. In response, the KMT government deployed police enforcement against the peaceful protesting students (Hsu, Zong, & Hsiao, 2008). During the eviction, many students live-streamed the event, allowing anyone on the Internet to witness first-hand what was happening in front of the Executive Yuan. The response in return brought the protesters even more support pledged by students and professors from universities and colleges across

tough” and having thin skin. It began to be widely used by the Taiwanese media around early 2000.

Taiwan. Around 7 o'clock pm, protesters and their supporters moved to CKS Memorial Hall to continue their sit-in. In the space of a just few days, the sit-in turned into a nationwide movement (Wang, 2008), with universities across Taiwan joining forces together and adopting the moniker "Wild Strawberries Movement". Between 8 and 12 November, cities including Tainan, Taichung, Hsinchu, Kaohsiung, and Chiayi also saw students stage sit-in protests, in a show of support for the protesters in Taipei. Many of them used Yahoo! Live to livestream the protests, and used Mandarin, Taiwanese, and English to explain the protest and their cause online. During an interview with Lin Fei-fan (林飛帆, coded as A2 in the remaining paper), then a protesting student at National Cheng Kung University in Tainan, he described how he ended up joining the event:

So when the police [were] removing the protesters from the sit-in, I was watching the live-broadcasting and stunned by how police treated the protesters who were just sitting there peacefully. And I thought to myself, 'should students in Tainan also do something?' And I remember around 6pm on the same evening, someone on the Internet said 'if you are in Tainan, let's meet in front of the Student Activity Centre in front of the Cheng Kung University!' And that was how the protest in Tainan began. We didn't know each other. We briefly introduced ourselves, discussed an action plan in case the police came and evicted us, and started to stage a sit-in protest.

The efforts of the students won them support from their professors. 484 professors from NTU and 50 other universities across Taiwan also openly pledged their support for the protest, calling on the Ma administration to respond to the three demands raised by the protesting students. At a press conference, Professor Hung

Cheng-ling of NTU Journalism Graduate Institute further pointed out that the protest had helped raise public awareness of the necessity for amending the Act on Assembly and Parade (Hsu & Yang: 2008).



Picture 4-1 Snapshot of a news clip on YouTube⁷⁴

This was a very student-led movement, as well as the very first social movement in Taiwan to adopt multiple digital tools, including bilingual blogs to have its voice heard not only domestically but also internationally. An article by state-owned online media outlet *Taiwan Today* comments that Taiwanese youth “employed technology they were already adept at using, to get their message across, and in the process, sidestepped any barriers, such as newsworthiness, that traditional media outlets might put in their way”.⁷⁵ According to Tang Chih-chieh, an assistant research fellow at Academia Sinica’s Institute of Sociology, a characteristic of Taiwanese youth who are growing up in the age of Internet and information is that they tend to

⁷⁴ See Handomest (2008), *Dongsen chabo xuesheng kangyi yijoufa xingdong* (ETTV Breaking news on protesting students against Act on assembly and parade), *YouTube*, retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NK08xQzKJN0>

⁷⁵ See *Taiwan Today*: <https://taiwantoday.tw/news.php?unit=18&post=24279>. *Taiwan Today* is an online media outlet funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Taiwan, and is designed to share with a global audience the most up-to-date news and reports on Taiwan.

engage in public issue debates based on reason rather than any specific attachment to party affiliation. He further notes that the heavy usage of blogging by the movement's participants, online streaming sites, and other ICT tools was recognized and applauded by local media, which then announced the arrival of the “Web 2.0 social movement”.⁷⁶ Tang added that these young protesters are seen to be more open-minded and ready to take into consideration those who hold different opinions. For instance, Tang noted, these protesting students who had never met each other before could work together remotely for a common goal. They adopted the idea of deliberative democracy into their decision making process even though it could make the group less effective. To Tang, that the protesting students managed to work together while preserving their respective differences is unimaginable for his generation who grew up under authoritarian rule.

The next section will introduce how ICT tools or social media sites were used by protesters involved in the Wild Strawberries Movement, and analyse the role and function of these digital tools during the protest.

Blog

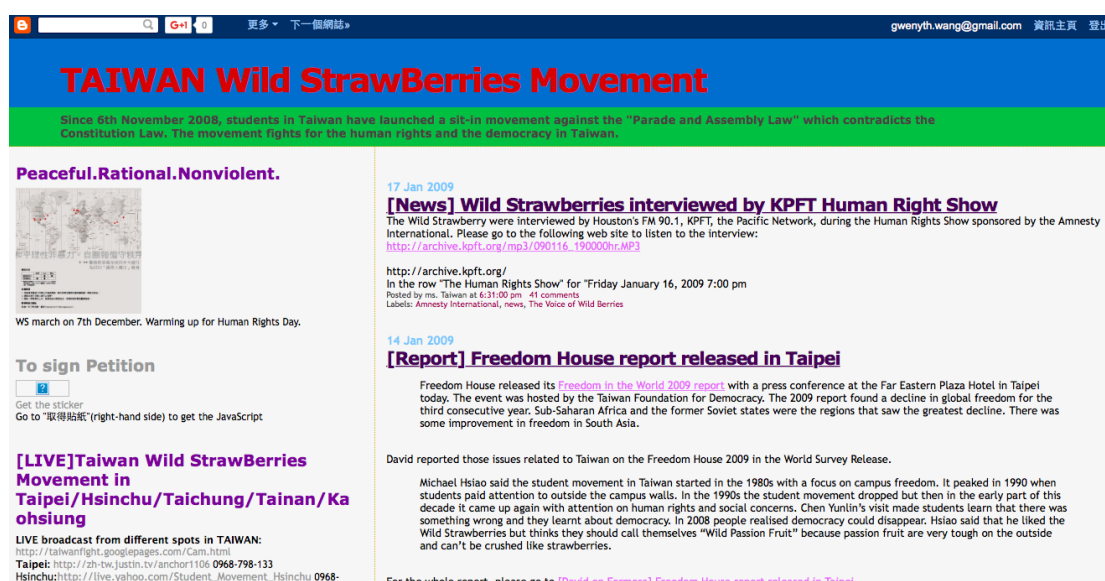
Three days into the sit-in event, the protesting students launched an English blog titled “Taiwan’s Wild Berries Movement”⁷⁷, in an effort to complement another official Mandarin blog for a bigger audience. In addition to the two blogs, the young protesters shared live broadcasts of the protests on Yahoo Live, uploaded videos of the protest to a YouTube channel, as well as photos taken during the movement to a

⁷⁶ See Tsai, J. (2008) “Web movements herald new dawn for political engagement” Taiwan Info 4 December, 2008 <http://taiwanstudentmovement2008.blogspot.tw/2008/11/movement-needs-your-help-to-be-heard.html>

⁷⁷ See “TAIWAN Wild Strawberries Movement” <http://taiwanstudentmovement2008.blogspot.tw> During the movement, the blog published a total of 109 entries.

joint photo group on Flickr, an online photo sharing Web site.⁷⁸ Between the first photo uploaded on 10 November 2008 and 2009, nearly 3,000 photos were uploaded.

What makes the usage of blogs particularly interesting in the case of the Wild Strawberries Movement is that for the first time in Taiwan, blogs were chosen by protesting students as a mobilising tool to generate more public support and to engage with the international community.



Picture 4-2 Snapshot of the official blog of the Wild Strawberries Movement

Outside Taiwan, blogs had already been used by politicians and political parties in election campaigns starting around the early 2000s. A study by Kerbal and Bloom on Howard Dean's campaign blog, "Blog for America", during the 2004 US Democratic presidential primary found that Dean's blog successfully mobilised politically disaffected American voters, especially the youth, by using ICT tools, and blogging turned out to be the key tool for doing this (Kerbal & Bloom, 2005). Their research, finds that many supporters of Howard Dean became interested in politics for the first time in their lives. Those supporters also found themselves belonging to a

⁷⁸ See The wild strawberries *Yecaomei Xueyun Jilu Zhaopian* (Wild Strawberries Movement Documentary Photos) <https://www.flickr.com/groups/thewildstrawberryies/>

community through participating in discussion on Blog for America. However, Kerbal and Bloom also note that the key for a blog to succeed in a campaign requires a cause about which people feel strongly, and functions that allow blog members or visitors to initiate events by themselves.

The findings of Kerbal and Bloom can also be applied to the blogs maintained by the Wild Strawberries Movement. The role of blogging here had multiple functions. First, it helped generate greater public support and participation, including amongst foreigners living in Taiwan. On its launch day, a blog entry titled *Movement needs your help to be heard* openly asked people to help translate their Mandarin statements into other languages:

If you can read Mandarin and you know any of the languages other than Mandarin and you are willing to help, please email us: taiwanstudentmovement2008@gmail.com. I will assign you an article to translate to avoid double translation. Or if you can please write your feedback and observations on this movement and send it to me as well.

Thanks a lot!!⁷⁹

In less than a day, three bloggers replied in the comment thread asking for more information. One of them was a long-term Taiwan affairs observer, Michael Turton, who in his blog titled “*The View from Taiwan*” has been rigorously discussing political, social and economic affairs in Taiwan since 2005.⁸⁰

Second, blogging plays a role as an information hub, which provides the public and the international community with official statements published in different foreign languages, such as German and Spanish. Every week, the blog offered a

⁷⁹ See <http://taiwanstudentmovement2008.blogspot.tw/2008/11/movement-needs-your-help-to-be-heard.html>

⁸⁰ See <http://michaelturton.blogspot.com>

steadily increasing supply of updates or statements on the protest and took advantage of the blog format to facilitate discussion with blog members or visitors online.

Third, blogs also share media reports from foreign media outlets, some of which are internationally known, including Reuters and the South China Morning Post (SCMP). Sharing reports from well-known international media outlets helped the Wild Strawberries Movement receive even more attention from local media as the protest became a big event under the spotlight of foreign media and drew international attention to the domestic movement taking place on an island in East Asia.

Fourth, the protesting students used blogs and the Flickr group to broaden their outreach. Occasionally, the Flickr group shared news releases from English blogs in an effort to deliver their message to a different Web site. For instance, a discussion on the Flickr group shared a statement in many different languages, including English, Japanese, Korean, and German.⁸¹

Live streaming site

Within the first couple of days after the launch of the Wild Strawberries Movement blog, a blogger used Y!Live, an online social media site programme – to livestream the development of the protest via his laptop (Chen, 2012).⁸² The blogger also explained the development of the movement throughout the livestream in Mandarin, and at the same time he asked another student to introduce the development in English (Chen, 2012: 26). Interviewee A1 said that at first, he didn't understand why people were live-streaming the protest:

⁸¹ See <https://www.flickr.com/groups/thewildstrawberryies/discuss/72157608817305476/>

⁸² See Chen, Shun-Hsiao (2012) *Wanglu shehui Dongyuan De Jiwangkailai: Fan Guoguangshihua Yundong de Shehui Keji Jichu He Xingdong Celue Yanhua (Processes of Web Society Movement: Foundation of Social Technologies and Evolution of Action Strategies in Opposing Kuokuang Petrochemical Park Project)*, in Chuanbo Yanjiu Yu Shijian (Journal of Communication Research and Practice), 2(1), January, pp.19-34

I saw some people using both English and Mandarin to introduce the event through a webcam, and I had no idea why they did that. And I didn't get involved (in their live-broadcasting) either.

According to the media outlet *Taiwan Today*, an estimate of 3,000 to 4,000 online users logged on during peak hours to follow the live broadcasting of the event.⁸³ Online streaming, along with messages transferred through various social networking sites such as bulletin board systems (BBS), Facebook and Twitter, were instrumental to the protesters' innovative mobilization methods and garnered attention from students across Taiwan in just a couple of hours. Meanwhile, other students used their laptops to conduct interviews with the movement's participants.⁸⁴

Other Social Media and ICT Tool usage

Moreover, the protesting students of the Wild Strawberries Movement also made a theme song, "Voice of Wild Berries", and uploaded it to many YouTube channels as a way to broaden outreach. The protesters even made an English song, "Idealism", to convey their message to the international community.

The information of the movement was delivered and transmitted via different social media sites. As such, protesting students on different social media sites altogether created a complicated and multi-layered network which enhanced the outreach of the protest with multiple layers of personal networks. Mainstream media, on the other hand, picked up the information, which went viral across the Internet and re-delivered or re-distributed it through their mediums. The way information from the Wild Strawberries Movement was delivered to the general public was more complicated than that of previous protests, as participants could use social media sites

⁸³ See footnote 7.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

and ICT tools to share information with people from their personal networks. Even though the protesters never received a response from the Ma administration to their three demands, their creative and innovative mobilization methods impacted later social movements, such as the Losheng Sanatorium Movement in 2009-2013, which also heavily relied on blogging to generate public support.

Quotes from protesting students

This section will collect quotes from students as supplement to enrich research material.

Freedom, democracy, and human rights mean our way of life, as we (Taiwanese) make a collective decisions on what kind of country we want to live in, what kind of life we want to lead. Even if we can ensure that everyone is fed and given a chance to lead a good life, we are still nothing but like animals if we can't even defend our basic freedom. It (defending freedom) defines what human being are, and differentiate human beings from others. In particularly, intellectuals including (university and college) students should bear some social responsibility (to defend democracy and freedom).

Student named Lin Yi-hsuan/林邑軒 (Epochtimes, 2009)⁸⁵

The name 'Wild Strawberries' was decided by students at the sit-in protests across Taiwan... a lot of people in the society call us born after the 80s "generation of strawberries", saying that we are just like strawberries growing up in a greenhouse, and that we not tough enough to bear any pressure. We want to challenge such stereotype and show people that we are not only strawberries, we are WILD strawberries!

Student named Lo Hsih-hsiang (羅士翔)⁸⁶

⁸⁵ See <http://www.epochtimes.com/b5/9/1/4/n2384794.htm>.

We share the same stance on the values of freedom and human rights. Perhaps, we have different political opinions. But now since we are here, let us leave aside the differences, as we are fighting for a very important value, which is human rights.

Unknown student at the Wild Strawberries protest (Chiang, 2011)⁸⁷

4.3 Anti-Kuokuang Petrochemical Movement (October 2010 – April 2011)



Picture 4-3 Snapshot of the official site of the National Youth Alliance Against KuoKuang Petrochemical Project

The case of Taiwan's anti-petrochemical protest does not receive as much internationally scholarly attention as the island's anti-nuclear movement. Perhaps it is because the nuclear energy issue has been a much more high profile environmental issue for Taiwan over past decades. However, since the emergence of Taiwan's environmental movement during the mid-1980s, protests against the petrochemical

⁸⁶ *ibid.*

⁸⁷ See documentary *The Right Thing*. Dir. Chiang Wei-hua (江偉華), Tongxiwenhua (同喜文化), 22 December, 2011. DVD.

industry have received increasing attention and support in Taiwan (Ho, 2014). As such, understanding Taiwan's recent anti-petrochemical industry movement could help shed some light in the understanding of the mobilisation capacity of local NGOs in a digital context and introduce why the key factors to the success of protests rests in the hands of NGOs.

Petrochemical investment in Taiwan has incurred local resistance since the 1980s (Ho, 2014). Since the Kyoto Protocol became effective in 2005, local NGOs and environmental groups stepped up efforts in opposing the then DPP government's support for petrochemical expansion and argued that the DPP failed to take into account the impact on climate change when assessing its petrochemical industry policy. When state-owned China Petroleum Corporation and some private companies co-launched an investment project to form the Kuokuang Petrochemical (*guoguang shihua* 國光石化) Company in January, 2006, there were only five active members taking action to oppose the Kuokuang project around that time (Ho, 2014: 9).

Starting in 2008, however, many local bloggers began to closely monitor and report the development of the Kuokuang project in Chang-Hua County in central Taiwan. Their efforts were noticed and promoted by local NGOs, who shared the blog articles on their own web pages. (Chen, 2012:27). One of the bloggers, Zhu Shu-Juan, used to be a journalist for the United Daily News (UDN), one of the three biggest major newspapers in Taiwan, before she became a citizen journalist. Her blog, *Huanjing Baodao* (環境報導/reports on the environment)⁸⁸, has focused largely on the impact of the petrochemical industry on the environment, particularly in non-urban areas of Taiwan. As of 2016, since her launch of the blog in 2009, Zhu's continued efforts had drawn her a total of nearly two million viewers.

⁸⁸ See <http://shuchuan7.blogspot.tw>

Before 2010, most protesters in the anti-Kuokuang petrochemical movement were environmental activists or journalists like Zhu herself. It wasn't until 2010 when a group of university students decided to form a "National Youth Alliance Against Kuokuang Petrochemical Project", the anti-petrochemical movement began to benefit from the mobilising potential of ICT tools and social media sites. Following in the footsteps of the Wild Strawberries protesters, the students also launched an official blog, "National Youth Alliance Against KuoKuang Petrochemical Project"⁸⁹, to mobilise young people across the island to join forces in opposing the petrochemical industry in Taiwan. It took them seven months to successfully convince President Ma to terminate the controversial project. In the end, Ma went even further and pledged his support to build a wetland conservation in Chang-Hua County instead of a petrochemical plant. The following section will review how ICT tools and social media sites became part of the recipe for this movement's success.

Google Online Group

According to Chen (2012), the protesting students launched a group titled the "National Youth Alliance Against KuoKuang Petrochemical" and used a Google online group for internal communication and to conduct their decision-making process. They mainly communicated with each other via e-mail in this closed group.

Facebook Group

For core members and their friends, a Facebook group was created for them to share information, discuss timely issues, and foster bonding among members (Chen, 2012: 11). In this online group, members engaged with each other without any physical barriers such as space, as well as beyond their personal networks. The Facebook

⁸⁹ See <http://fangyuan-tache.blogspot.tw>

group also helped coordinate efforts coming from students attending different universities and colleges.

Blog

The blog, “National Youth Alliance Against KuoKuang Petrochemical Project” was used as the official Web page of the movement. Given that the issue of the anti-petrochemical movement did not receive widespread public attention from all of Taiwan, the blog chose to use Mandarin as the main language to communicate with its only target audience, the Taiwanese public. In the space of seven months, they had published a total of 90 blog entries and attracted over 182,000 viewers as of 2016. In addition to their official statements, the blog also shared information on public seminars on topics related to the petrochemical industry, online petitions, videos of the protest, and impact of the industry on the environment, as well as live stream events.

Live Streaming Tools

Diverging slightly from the Wild Strawberries Movement, which live streamed the protest events through ICT tools, the anti-Kuokuang petrochemical movement used these tools to live broadcast public hearings and meetings between environmental groups and government agencies. When the government became the subject in the live streaming videos, they consequently received greater public scrutiny and pressure throughout the live streaming process (Chen: *ibid*). The officials not only had to face pressure from activists and protesting students at public hearings and meetings, but also through greater “public scrutiny” coming from online viewers who could remain anonymous while watching the hearings.

Other ICT tools and social media sites

The blog movements also featured other social media sites, such as Facebook and Google online data pages, to encourage visitors to take action and engage with protest members via different online platforms. Chen summarises the different usage and roles of the ICT tools and social media sites as per the following picture:



Picture 4-4: Internet-based platforms used by National Youth Alliance Against KuoKuang Petrochemical (Chen, 2012: 28)

The group “National Youth Alliance Against KuoKuang Petrochemical” used different online platforms to extend the range of participatory action in an effort to engage with a bigger audience and the public. In picture 4-4, the inner circle is used for core members’ internal communication, the middle mobilization, and the third for outreaching purposes. One element which makes the group interesting is that there are clear boundaries between these circles. An individual is considered a core member when she/he helps make a YouTube video. A core member can also be moved to the second or third circle when the individual becomes less active in engaging with the

inner circle (Chen: 2012: 30). The membership of the group is not clearly defined. For instance, when asked about the total number of the groups, a member simply replied: “we are all netizens” (Lu: 2012: 73). The comment shows the flexibility of the membership as the core group allows its member to stay or leave freely, and such flexibility might indicate a key strategy in encouraging more political participation from the general public. Furthermore, such flexibility not only helps reduce the cost of participation (time, money, or labour), but also the transaction costs (which can be the time travelling to sign a petition or the effort spent in acquiring information about an environmental group) between the actual participation and the preparation before taking actions (Margetts et al., 2016: 52).

4.4 Unfold the Events, Unwrap the Political Communication

As earlier sections demonstrate, ICT tools and social media – particularly blogs – play a significant role in mobilising participants in social movements within Taiwan. As university and college students made up the majority of protesters during the Ma administration this should not be such a great surprise, but, since the Wild Strawberries Movement of 2008, what is of interest is that the ICT tools utilized have become a powerful mobilizing weapon for the young generation to mobilise people beyond their age group and friend circles in social movements. With the help of technology, protesters no longer need to rely on handing out leaflets on the streets or giving “soapbox talks”, as today’s social media sites and blogs can offer better, cheaper, and faster tools to mobilise participants.

The previous discussion also reveals that blogs were one of the main mobilizing tools in the student-led movement during former President Ma’s first term (2008-2012). The aim of the following section, then, is to examine the use of blogs in mobilization, with a special focus on how events are framed by protesting students in

their blog entries. Through these blog entries, it can be seen how the protesters made the cause of each movement relevant to the audience, often managing to reach a general public outside Taiwan.

With the aforementioned aim in mind, discourse analysis shall be used as a tool here to explore the political meaning, which lurks behind the language and tone used by the protesting students. The findings and evidence derived from the two major events of President Ma's first term (2008 – 2012) may help offer an outline of Taiwanese youth's perception of citizenship.

Why use Discourse Analysis in this Study

In many societies, citizens and civil society are part of political activities and political processes, in which participants make sense and reproduce reality through discourses. To understand what is being discussed throughout the discourses and the changing dynamic context, some researchers explore changes in social ideas by adopting discourse analysis as a method in their research (Schmidt, 2011). In the same fashion, the subject of this chapter is the protesting students, who take part in the political process and henceforth are proactively engaged in political discourse. In the study of social movements, there are different levels of discourses, with one of them focusing on the individual production of text and speech by participants and activists (Johnston, 2002:68). Such qualitative discourse analysis on social movements therefore is usually defined as an intensive focus on movement-related context to identify communication patterns and structures of ideas.

As such, a critical discourse analysis (CDA) method is applied to examine the meanings and context generated throughout the political process. This section hopes to follow the CDA method in obtaining further understanding of citizens' engagement in social movements within a digital environment. By critically reviewing the

engagement through the use of ICT tools and social media sites, the findings of the discourse that took place during the movements can hopefully shed new light on how citizens think of their role as a citizen in a democratic society.

Another reason why discourse analysis can help understand Taiwanese people's understanding of citizenship is that discourse is a form of language involved in the context of social interaction or social situation. The outcome of discourse, therefore, can be seen as part of the process of building meaning, which may result in a form of action. In Habermas' theory, the foundation of public discourse is forging mutual understanding. Following a mutual understanding, individuals can collectively take other social activities, or become involved in the organisation of social actions (Habermas, 1989). As ICT tools help citizens easily discuss matters related to the public sphere (social, political, economic or cultural issues) anytime and anywhere, communication discourse becomes essential in terms of forging mutual understanding or agreement on public matters. After the formation of such agreements, citizens then take collective action to achieve the shared meaning which is then forged through the discourse enabled by ICT tools.

Decoded Discourse and its Implication by CDA analysis

As the aim of this chapter is to understand the meaning forged through the process of discourse taking place on social medias, the CDA method is used to understand the use of language and its implication for emancipation. This study hopes to achieve what has been described by Bastone (1995):

“Critical Discourse Analysis seeks to reveal how texts are constructed so that particular (and potentially indoctrinating) perspectives can be expressed delicately and covertly; because they are covert, they are elusive of direct

challenge, facilitating what Kress calls the “retreat into mystification and impersonality” (Bastone, 1995: 198-199).

Material and Data Analysis

Based on the aforementioned goal, this section will analyse the Wild Strawberries Movement by studying their 193 blog articles which were published in the space of two months on their English official blog. As this blog’s main language is English, the author created word documents of the articles posted on the blog and reviewed the post extensively to gauge a certain familiarity and understanding of the event. Then, the official statements and messages posted by protesting students were selected for further analysis. They were copied and pasted on a word document and then imported into Nvivo software for qualitative analysis. Like other computer-mediated discourse Analysis programmes, Nvivo allows qualitative analysis to be conducted through text, videos, pictures and graphs.

Unveiling the narratives behind the Wild Strawberries Movement

To analyse the narrative and rationale of the student-led Wild Strawberries Movement, this research analysed 193 blog articles published between 6 November 2008 (when the sit-in took place) and 31 December 2008. In this period of time, these articles documented protesting students’ statements, event information, and demands made of the government. As most of the articles were written in English with a few exceptions published in German or French, all blog articles were created as Word documents and imported into the NVivo program for further qualitative analysis. Some researchers comment that NVivo, a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software

(CAQDAS) can help categorise data, producing more accurate data analysis and in turn providing a reliable outlook of the data (Welsh, 2002).⁹⁰

Analysis process and approach of the Wild Strawberries Movement's narrative

To explore the texts of the citizens' demand for political change and/or social change during the Wild Strawberries Movement, this research used NVivo to analyse and code the messages delivered by the official blog of the movement. The author coded each article comprehensively with an aim of searching for any descriptions that have appeared repeatedly in the blog. As has been previously set out, this research aims to find out a communication pattern which might mirror the protesting citizens' idea of citizenship. The official statements issued by the protesters will receive further analysis, as they represent the key message the protesting students hoped to deliver to the general public and the international community. Finally, the codes will be used for frequency analysis.

Findings

Out of the 193 articles, two were contributed by scholars (one is a retired college professor living in the US, and the other is a professor at the National Taiwan University), two from bloggers (both non-Taiwanese), ninety-four were from protesting students, twenty-seven were news reports from local English paper the *Taipei Times*, ten were from local English news platform *Taiwan News*, two were from English articles from Radio Taiwan International (RTI), two were translated from a local paper *Liberty Times* (only printed in Mandarin), five were news reports

⁹⁰ See Welsh, Elaine (2002) Dealing with Data: Using NVivo in the Qualitative Data Analysis process, *Foriym: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 3(2), Art 26, May,

from the oldest English paper in Taiwan the *China Post*⁹¹, twelve were derived from foreign media news reports (such as Reuters), thirty-six were articles re-posted or translated from other sources such as NGO Freedom House statements and one article from Hong Kong-based news agency South China Morning Post (SCMP).

In their seventeen posts categorised “wanted”, the protesters sought support from the public in areas of mobilisation, event promotion and translation. They actively sought people to help translate their posts into English, as well as translate foreign news reports from other foreign languages into English. Such a strategy to some extent can be regarded as effective, as the movement drew attention from several Western media outlets, including Reuters, Huffington Post, as well as the SCMP.

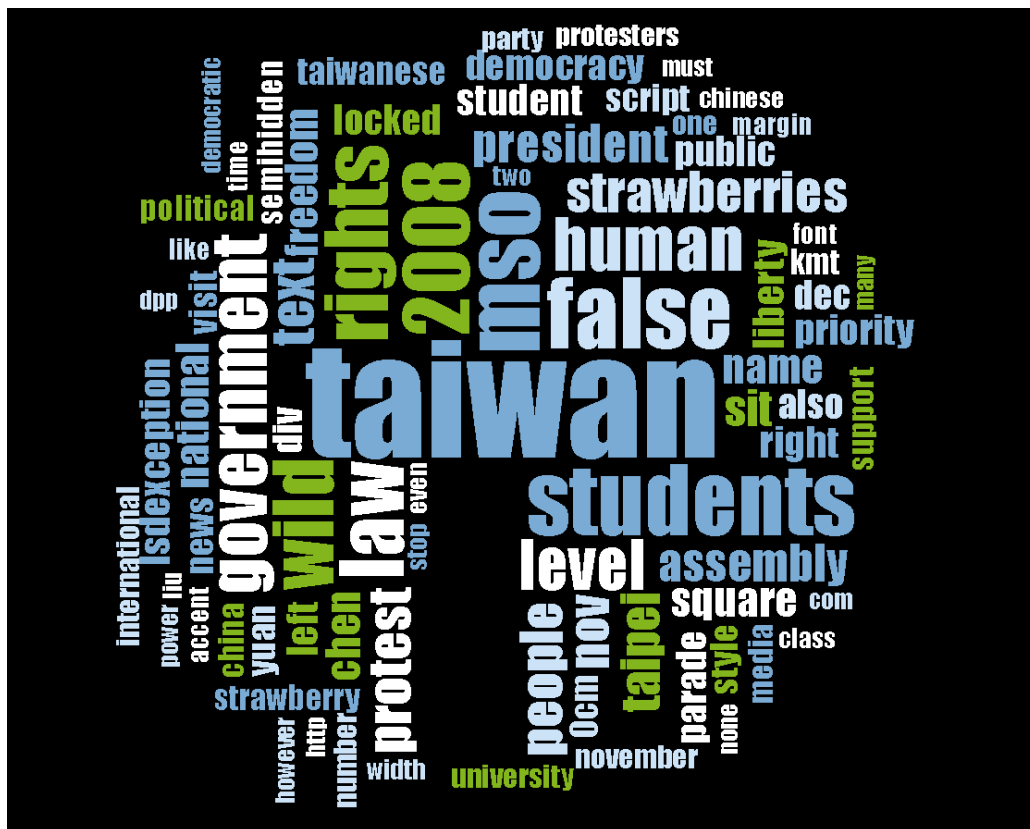
The ninety-four articles posted by students accounted for about 48 per cent of total posts, whereas the rest were mainly from other media outlets or statements from international NGOs. The ninety-four articles were mainly first-hand reports on how the event developed (such as what happened when the police forced eviction) or arguments/rationale of the movements. Two of the official statements were in foreign languages (one in French and one in German). It might be worth noting that some of these posts included YouTube videos, Wikipedia pages or links to podcasts as alternative ways to provide detailed information on the event. They even asked viewers to help update several relevant Wikipedia pages relating to the Wild Strawberries Movement.⁹² Showing reciprocal appreciation, the protesting students lent support to exiled Tibetans in Taiwan as some Tibetans and Tibet-focused NGO members previously also expressed their support by joining the demonstration. A blog post featured an open letter from Tibetan refugees, who sought political asylum and

⁹¹ The 66-year-old *China Times*, which used to be printed its last print edition on May 15, 2017, and after which it was changed into an all-digital news platform:

<http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aedu/201705150036.aspx>

⁹² See <http://taiwanstudentmovement2008.blogspot.tw/search/label/Wikipedia>

support from the Taiwanese government.⁹³ In addition, many posts also mentioned participation from Tibetans at the event, including an event where the police forced the protesters to be removed from the Ketagalan Boulevard in front of the presidential office. The police officers reportedly told the students that “if only you (protesting students) had not given them support, we wouldn’t have even touched a finger on them” (Civil Media, 2008). The mutual support between a student-led movement and a foreign activism groups might indicate that Taiwanese young activists are capable of reaching out to a larger audience including not only Taiwanese people but also foreign communities based in Taiwan.



Picture 4-5 Word Cloud tab (exported from NVivo)

⁹³ See [Open Letter] From Tibetan Immigrant Refugees in Taiwan
<http://taiwanstudentmovement2008.blogspot.tw/2008/12/open-letter-from-tibetan-immigrant.html>

The finding from picture 4.5 shows that the words “Taiwan” and “police” tops the list of those used the most in all blog posts. The frequency of the usage of the word “police” in the posts reflected that the protesting students were targeting the police’s management of the event (for instance, forced eviction) and the authorities behind them. As the post⁹⁴ dated 10 November stated:

Police are supposed to be civil servants charged with protecting the people. Yet under the outrageous requests issued from above, they have become thugs restricting and punishing the people from expressing their opinions. We have no intention of blaming individual police officers who can only obey orders issued by their superiors. Rather, we solemnly demand that the highest authorities in the government bear the largest share of political responsibility for these abuses.

Those police related articles also highlighted some of the following words – “brutality”, “forced removal”, “police overreaction”, “mob”, “thug” or “excessive power” – in the same posts. Throughout the month-long event, protesters, activists from civil society and academics argued that the police were given inappropriate power, which invaded people’s human rights, especially those connected to the act of assembly. As such, one of the main demands of the movement was to amend the “Parade and Assembly Law”, which contradicted the right of assembly as stipulated in the Constitution.

Similarly, fourteen local NGOs issued a joint press release, which was also posted on their blog, arguing that when peaceful protesters were “brutally served by the police force with fists, kicks and sticks”, Taiwan’s democracy had reached a

⁹⁴ See protest statement <http://taiwanstudentmovement2008.blogspot.tw/2008/11/protest-statement.html>.

critical point that tended towards a dire situation.⁹⁵ A mood of urgency, such as that described in this press release, was frequently mentioned in other movement statements or reports.

In their three statements published in November, protesters demanded President Ma to openly apologise for the inappropriate handling of the situation by the police during the protest. Their narrative mostly centred around how the police enforcement during the visit of Chinese negotiator Chen Yunlin had threatened human rights. As the right of assembly was stipulated in the Constitution, the people of Taiwan should be allowed to stage demonstrations without any intervention by the government or any authority, particularly by the police who, in this instance, were also instigating violent behaviour. They demanded the government to amend the Parade and Assembly Act to ensure that the right of assembly would be protected and upheld, as well as calling on the President and Premier to offer an apology to the protesters who were injured by the police. In addition, they further demanded that the then heads of the National Police Agency and the National Security Bureau step down as a gesture to shoulder the responsibility. They reasoned their demands by stating how precious Taiwan's democracy is:

In a mature democratic society, any unreasonable violence should be condemned; at the same time government forces that hold the power given to them would be wise to consider policies discreetly to avoid restraining the citizens' basic rights. The Taiwanese democracy did not fall from the sky, thus we insist the heads of the National Policy Agency and National Security bureau must resign and apologise for their inaptness.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ See [Supporting action] Vigil in Solidarity Support the "Wild Strawberries Student Movement" Safeguard our beloved Taiwan <http://taiwanstudentmovement2008.blogspot.tw/2008/11/vigil-in-supporting-action-solidarity.html>

⁹⁶ See [Rationale] Why the National Security Bureau director and National Police Agency Director-General Must Take Responsibility – A Tribune to the Police

The quoted sentences were the main narratives used recurrently in different statements issued at various stages of the movement.

The CDA Analysis

The critical discourse analysis can be used to explore the relationship between the discourse and social change that occurred in the aftermath of this movement, especially in relation to how events and texts reflect the social institutions within which people live and function. The aim of conducting the CDA in this research is to capture the perception of citizenship amongst the Taiwanese public, especially the youth and the citizens that were engaged in social movement during the first term of former President Ma. With this aim in mind, the following sections attempt to interpret the relationship between the discursive process and the text, as well as the development of the Wild Strawberries Movement.

Overall, amongst the sixteen statements issued by the protesters, the word “police” emerged as the ‘champion’ from the word count (see Table 4.2) with its absolute number of occurrences having reached 140. This could well be attributed to the police enforcement that led to the injury of a number of citizens. This is in turn followed by the word “student”, a word which exhibits an image that could be placed in this context in opposition to the word “police”. A student is considered powerless compared with the power authorised to the police. Subsequently, during the movement, the students were the ones targeted, arrested, or beaten by the police. The constant mentioning of police abuse and the peaceful protesting of the students delivered a narrative of unbalance in power relations between the two main players during the movement.

In addition, NVivo finds that the term “Parade and Assembly Law” saw a density of 0.93 per cent, which means this term was also more heavily used than other terms. The protesters acknowledged the main problem lay in this imperfect law,

which did not ensure people the absolute right of assembly and demonstration. Therefore, the students argued that the problem would require a major change in the legal system. And, being as how such a change still relies on the government to take action, the word count of the word “government” closely follows that of the word law.

Interestingly, words relating to the value of democracy or civic rights did not receive as much attention as the other four words - police, student, law, & government - discussed in preceding paragraphs. “Human Rights” was mentioned thirty times, slightly higher than other words; including liberty, freedom and democracy. It would seem at this stage that the protesters were putting more effort in condemning the police and the government, rather than elaborating their belief in democratic values.

Word/phrase	Word count	Density
Police	140	2.24%
Student	80	1.28%
Parade and Assembly Law	58	0.93%
Government	39	0.62%
Human Rights	30	0.48%
Liberty	29	0.46%
Freedom	16	0.26%
Democracy	13	0.13%

Table 4.2 Keyword density report for protesters’ statement (made by author, based on findings generated by Nvivo)

Five days after the violent confrontation between the police and the protesters outside the hotel where the visiting Chinese negotiator stayed, a statement dated 10 November argued that Taiwan's democracy and freedom should not be compromised at the cost of closer cross-Strait exchanges.⁹⁷ It states:

We must ask: does increasing Cross-Strait exchange require Taiwan to lower its standards of freedom and democracy in order to achieve the same level of repressive authoritarian rule that China has?

The problem addressed by the protesters is not new to the Taiwanese society. Since the 1990s, there had been a demand for the right of assembly. However, as Fell (2014) comments, the government failed to respond to the demand that would have required the updating of the Parade and Assembly Act. Chinese negotiator Chen Yunlin's visit triggered the rebirth of such demands in 2008 and the resurrection of the pro-democracy movement against the KMT government's anti-democratic policies.

As the ultimate demand of the students though was to protect Taiwan's democracy and freedom of assembly, the protesters shifted their main emphasis to the amendment of the Parade and Assembly Law. This was marked by the introduction of the slogan "Parade and Assembly Law is unconstitutional, human rights are vanishing" in statements published during the second half of the protest. The slogan attempted to frame the confrontation as a constitutional crisis and helped the movement attract hundreds of thousands of students to join the sit-in across the island on November 10 2008.

⁹⁷ See "Protest Statement" <http://taiwanstudentmovement2008.blogspot.tw/2008/11/protest-statement.html>

Following comments from then Premier Liu Zhao-xuan (劉兆玄) who said that he would not apologise “as the movement would end in a day or two”⁹⁸, the blog written on 11 November immediately published an English translation of the news report on Liu’s statement.⁹⁹ A follow-up statement responded to Liu’s comments as saying:

Liu’s comments” show that the government has consistently avoided the students demand face on. Full of political trickery and calculation, if they are really concerned about us, then they should make an effort and reply to our demand.

The students not only responded to the Premier’s comments immediately with two statements published on both their Mandarin and English official blogs, they also seized the opportunity to brand the Premier as an arrogant politician who refused to communicate with people. Their statement described the relations between the government and demonstrators as a one-way exchange, with one end demanding better democratic practices in Taiwan with the other end remaining arrogantly powerful and trying only to avoid any responsibility which might force the bringing about of political change.

On the same day, the protesters shared on the Internet a broadcasting channel that livestreamed the sit-in event with the aim of to gaining more support.¹⁰⁰ The video presented a peaceful sit-in protest, with university students discussing the state

⁹⁸ See *Ma Zhengfu Quanmian Weidu Yecaomei Yuezhanyueyong (Ma government attempted to stop the event; Wild Strawberries became braver)*, Xin Taiwan Xinwen Zhoukan (New Taiwan News Magazine). 21 November, 2008

<http://www.newtaiwan.com.tw/bulletinview.jsp?bulletinid=85656>

⁹⁹ See [News] Apologise? Liou: Takes all of two days to blow over.
<http://www.newtaiwan.com.tw/bulletinview.jsp?bulletinid=85656>

¹⁰⁰ See [Live] 21:50 Nov11 <http://taiwanstudentmovement2008.blogspot.tw/2008/11/live-2150-nov-11.html>

of Taiwan's human rights and civil rights. Following the live stream, more students from central Taiwan's Chia-yi County began a sit-in at a local memorial park in a show of solidarity with the Wild Strawberries protesters. On 14 November, some twenty students from Hong Kong Polytechnic University staged a sit-in protest and livestreamed their event showing the protesting students in Taipei. The unity displayed between the protesting students from Taiwan and Hong Kong further strengthened the momentum of the movement and attracted more students from both sides to join the event. To expand their presence on the Internet, the protesters on 15 November launched their Wikipedia page in English and Mandarin.¹⁰¹ The development following the Premier's comments and the protesters' response showed that the narrative of the protesting students was effective enough to attract more people to pledge their support, including students from Hong Kong.

To mobilise and engage with more people, the protesting students held a "Funeral of Human Rights" in Taipei and welcomed the public to "mourn" the death of human rights.¹⁰² The statement invited all citizens including international residents in Taiwan to take part at the event, encouraging people to "wear black, grey or white if possible as a symbol of mourning". The "funeral" event saw attendance from then DPP Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen, who publicly apologized on behalf of her party for not amending the Parade and Assembly Law when the DPP was in power (2000 – 2008).¹⁰³

The highlight of the Wild Strawberries Movement was the rally which took place on December 7, the rally also marked the first month's anniversary of the movement. Some 5,000 participants marched in front of the Presidential Office, with

¹⁰¹ See Wild Strawberries Movement:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_Strawberries_Movement

¹⁰² See Lament FOR civil rights <http://taiwanstudentmovement2008.blogspot.tw/2008/11/ode-to-death-of-civil-rights.html>

¹⁰³ See Tsai Ingwen Wei Guoqu Daoqian bing Qianxia Renquan Yongjiu Baogushu (Tsai Ing-wen apologized for the past) 23 Nov, Cooloud <http://www.cooloud.org.tw/node/30562>

some wearing costumes of ancient Chinese emperors and calling on the Ma administration to amend the Parade and Assembly Law. The protesters argued that Ma was behaving like an emperor from an ancient history but ironically, he was also a democratically elected president in a modern society. The event called on then President Ma to face the mounting pressure and criticism of his human rights record. NGOs, including Freedom House and the International Federation of Journalists, issued public statements showing support for the students and expressing their strong concern over the state of human rights in Taiwan.¹⁰⁴

4.5 Analysis: Understanding Social Movements in a Digital Context

From the previous discussion, it is evident that the innovative mobilising tools adopted by the Wild Strawberries Movement's protesting students made a significant impact on later social movements in Taiwan as many of the techniques deployed in this protest can be seen in movements that have followed. Furthermore, the massive amount of information gathered for this chapter also proves that a cross-disciplinary research is vital in the understanding of the complicated implications for a government in the digital context. From the literature cited throughout this study, the scope of the research focus covers issues concerning democratisation, Taiwan studies, social movement, social media, and even e-democracy. With such a background, the analytical review of this chapter is going to respond to the aims set at its beginning: reviewing how social media and ICT reshape Taiwanese young citizens' collective actions in social movements and the changing mobilising method of social movements.

In Ketty Chen's words, the level of activism in the years of the Ma administration is a "demonstration of the thriving civil society, and the consolidation

¹⁰⁴ See Call for Taiwan police to stop pressuring media for protest information <http://taiwanstudentmovement2008.blogspot.tw/search/label/IFJ>

of the country's liberal democracy in Taiwan" (Chen, 2017: 108). Young people are able to utilise their skills and knowledge with social media and instant communication apps to make social movements more attractive to ordinary people and to increase mobilisation more effectively. As a student said in Chiang's (2011) documentary film, "The Right Thing", the students' efforts and their cause transcended Taiwan's partisan rivalry between KMT and DPP. Between 2008 and 2012, the developments in political activities calling for improvements to democratic and social rights saw a resurgence in Taiwan. This resurgence also opened a new chapter in Taiwan's social movement history. The very first large scale student-led social movement which took place during the Ma administration, the Wild Strawberries Movement, garnered a significant amount of public attention and support with the assistance of social media and ICT tools. The protest, which did not even last for two months, still managed to bring Taiwan's domestic issues under an international spotlight.

In Taiwan, the information for social movements has traditionally been distributed and delivered by conventional mediums, such as television, print media, and privately owned media outlets. The two protests examined in the preceding sections show that young activists in Taiwan utilized the potential of social media, and provided the public with first-hand information about the development of social movements or political events. Such a strategy increased the perceived visibility of the mobilisation both locally and internationally as citizens could easily follow the events with their personal gadgets or computers. Furthermore, the example of the Wild Strawberries Movement showed that when citizens are exposed to more information about a certain movement, even though they might be scattered across the country, they would be more likely to grow an attachment to the event. As interviewee A2 noted, he was "stunned" when he watched the live-streaming of the event in which the police brutally removed peaceful protestors away from the square

in front of the Executive Yuan. The “stunned” feeling infuriated and motivated him to take part in a separate sit-in over in Tainan, which is 265 kilometres away from Taipei, where the Wild Strawberries Movement was taking place.

Such an effect can also be seen during the live streaming of the protest itself and another live stream event co-held by the protesting students from Hong Kong and Taiwan. By watching the live stream online, people from Taiwan and even Hong Kong were exposed to the narratives and arguments provided directly by the protesting students. Such information exposure also **increased the incentives of the general public**, who then decided to participate in or pledge their support for the Wild Strawberries Movement.

An example of this was how the protesting students suddenly received a lot of supplies just within a few hours after they live broadcasted the police’s eviction of the sit-in. In a magazine article, a student recalled the day when he and other protesting students were evicted by the police:

Students used online tools to livestream the forced eviction. Within two hours, a flock of people, a lot more than us, went to the CKS Memorial Hall and a lot of supplies were sent to the CKS Hall for us.

(Hsieh, 2009: 284).

This effect was also shared by another protester, who during an interview pointed out that many people were inspired to join the sit-in simply because some of their friends on Facebook were sharing posts about the Wild Strawberries Movement (Lee, 2012: 103):

We are different from the Wild Lily generation. Without sharing a similar background, today's students might have less incentive (to join a protest), However, today's protesters can garner spiritual support through online mobilisation, as well as physically support and form a sizable pressure to the government by having people to join the protest at certain point of time (Lee, 2012: 105).

During the Wild Strawberries Movement, each protester's personal network became a potential supporter base. As A1 said:

*When we protesting students texted our friends to join us at the sit-in protest in front of the Executive Yuan on 6th November, we didn't know whether they would really come as we didn't have an organisation or a group leader to instruct people to come. But somehow, if you added up the personal networks of all protesters, you can get a big web of network in which people somehow know each other and some people chose to come to the event simply because they had friends at the sit-in. I feel like the movement can be described as a **'networked'** movement.*

A1

Because technology makes sharing information in the online world a lot easier and faster than in the offline world, **mobilisation henceforth becomes easier, faster, and cheaper for activists.** The unique nature of an online world makes the boundaries between the public and private sphere elusive, and also allows a greater audience to "access" events easily. When the protesters reveal their activities by making their social media updates "visible" to strangers, such open information

becomes available in ordinary people's private sphere, including their personal blogosphere (blogs they subscribe to) or news feeds on their personal social media sites. People can then use the information that appears inside their private spheres to decide whether they want to take part in the activities within a public sphere. Therefore, it might be safe to argue that such contemplation activates people's civic skills. **Through developing their civic skills by pondering on other people's activities, people then further examine the necessity of spending their time and effort on such collective activities for a public cause.**

The design of social media allows protesters an option to turn their activities into a special "life event". If people choose to make the participation photos of a protest or YouTube videos open for the general public on the Internet, they are not only sharing their life events with friends but also with strangers online. Naturally, if a person gets more "views" (and thus a viewership) and "likes", their incentives to share such information will be stronger, and their motivation to take part in social movements will in turn become bigger. However, it does not mean that people who use social media will tend to participate in social movements more. As Fan (2003) notes, deciding whether to take part in a social movement is not a one-off decision. It is, instead, a constant stream of choices about being part of it or being an outsider like most people are (Fan, 2003: 157). Or, some people may not want to easily disclose their social movement participation on social media, because they do not want to be labelled as an "activist". These decisions reflect an individual's constant self-reflection of her/his role as a citizen, and how she/he perceives social movements and its significance in a society.

Moreover, the action of sharing her/his activities in a social movement on a personal blog or a shared social media account reflects **a tendency to personalise political stories, and at times, a self-satisfied activity** (Kerbal & Bloom, 2005:34).

In the case of the Wild Strawberries Movement, many protesting students shared their photos on the Flickr group or uploaded footage of the sit-in events to their personal YouTube channels. Through these activities, the protesters personalise the event, at the same time they also further enhance the outreach of the protests through multiple social media sites.

As the thresholds for mobilisation become lower, **the need for a traditional charismatic leader might become less essential in the Internet-based mobilisation process**. As a result, the protesting students even took conscious efforts to avoid anyone from being labelled as the face of the Wild Strawberries Movement and stealing the spotlight away from the protest itself. As A1 noted:

We didn't want to have a leader or a face for the protest. Somehow we ended up having issues of trusting people during the event, as we tend to question the motivation behind the person who was willingly speaking to media or journalists.

During the development of these movements, people can contribute to its momentum by sharing an image, clicking “like” on a photo or a Facebook page, choosing “join” when asked to join an event on Facebook invite, or retweeting a political opinion. As the preceding sections argue, the momentum of the Wild Strawberries Movement was an accumulated effort resulting from hundreds of blog articles, thousands of photo shared on Flickr, songs and footage posted on YouTube, and live streaming events watched by viewers from any part of the world. The need for an active figurehead then is significantly reduced, and perhaps a noteworthy effect

can be identified, whereby more effort is put into the avoidance of identifying a specific leader than is perhaps necessary.

If leaders play less essential roles in the movements, it means **online collective action can play an important role in policy agenda settings**. One month after the Wild Strawberries Movement, the momentum accumulated through the social media sites was undeniable. Seeing the protesting students actually have the upper hand, the DPP decided to weigh in and stand by the protesting students by promising that they would take action to ensure that human rights and democratic values would be protected and upheld in Taiwan. Similarly, the Ma administration also decided to hold public hearings on the amendments of the Parade and Assembly Act.¹⁰⁵

In general, the development of the Wild Strawberries Movement demonstrates how citizens can use ICT tools such as blogs, Google Groups, or YouTube to encourage other citizens from different parts of a country to participate in communication discourse and social movements. A new generation of technology-savvy activists has emerged in Taiwan and demands changes in political and social affairs by participating in social movements via more creative, innovative, and non-traditional methods.

4.6 Conclusion

In the online world, people are constantly exposed to a massive sea of information, of which some can be contradictory or overlapping. Facing this huge body of online information, individuals are now living in a sphere which offers different arenas for different sets of private and public spheres. These “public spheres” allow citizens to

¹⁰⁵ On 11 November, 2008, then KMT Legislator Wu Yu-sheng (吳育昇) invited students from the Wild Strawberries Movement to attend a public hearing on the Assembly and Parade Act. See report by Liberty Times: <http://news.ltn.com.tw/news/politics/breakingnews/148627>.

collectively demand the government to respond to calls for political change, as well as form pressure to challenge the government's narratives or arguments. Also in many ways, the cost of participating in these online campaigns is being reduced. During the 1990s, people had to go on the streets and stand on "soap boxes", a confined public sphere in the offline world, to share their views with their fellow citizens. In today's online world, the definition of activism is getting blurred through activities like the sharing of photos at a social movement or following a blog dedicated to a political issue. That is to say, the individual, in a way, is taking part in *promoting* and *advocating* the causes behind the movements. It should be argued that today's citizens are not taking smaller actions when engaging in political events, but are actually making **smarter choices** when they want to show different degrees of support to a cause.

Nevertheless, social media sites do not necessarily reinvent the Habermasian public sphere or lead to a completely new form of a deliberative. Instead, it is actions such as clicking "Like" or "share" on Facebook, sharing campaign slogans on their personal social media sites, or retweeting a politician's tweet that blurs people's boundaries of their private and public lives, and hence the public and private spheres as whole.

What might have been created, in the online world, is a new sphere for citizens to engage with public affairs at their convenience without being constrained by time and space. With the growing convergence of ICT tools, citizens in Taiwan, especially the youth, are ready to adopt ICTs and social media sites as their new mobilisation tool. The available information on social movements and public affairs in the online world to some extent helps close the gap between the public and politics, as well private and public spheres. For people living in Taiwan between 2008 and

2012, the resurgence of social movements indicates a new phase of civil society, as citizens became equipped with better mobilising capacities with the help of ICT tools.

Cole (2017) once pointed out that the initial wave of protests during Chinese negotiator Chen Yunlin's 2008 visit was a "one-off affair" sparked by deep suspicions about China and the high-level exchanges between Taipei and Beijing. This claim was made due to the fact that during President Ma's first four-year tenure Chen made repeated visits to Taiwan with the size of protest reducing with each visit. In hindsight however, these social movements in fact reflected Taiwanese young people's expanded focus on public affairs, ranging from cross-Strait affairs (Wild Strawberries), freedom of speech (Wild Strawberries), human rights (Losheng Sanatorium), and land rights (Da Pu incident). The size of these protests may have been relatively small, but their focus was not. They were paying strong attention to a wide range of social justice issues, which had been unfortunately ignored by the government for a long time.

Chapter 5 Sophisticating Usage of ICT in Social Movement

5.1 Introduction

Starting with the Wild Strawberries Movement of 2008, large networks of Taiwanese young citizens began a new phase of social movements and in doing so also provided considerable force in bringing these movements under the spotlight of the international community. The previous chapter offered an analytical review of major social movements under Ma's first term (2008 – 2012), and discussed how social media sites and ICT tools played an important role in the mobilization process of those movements. The ICTs were instrumental in mobilising people to join social movements and creating new arenas for citizens to show their support and voice their opinion creatively and spontaneously.

The resurgence of social movement in the period between 2008 and 2012 was triggered by a conservative and Beijing-friendly KMT government. As Ho argues, the Ma administration's policy agenda did not allow activists a chance to influence policy, and was at odds with the goals of those who participated in the social movements (Ho, 2014). As such, the resurgence of social movements during Ma's first term reflects how democratic values have taken root in Taiwanese society, especially if seen from the perspective of some who argue that the KMT government's conservative agenda might have been eroding Taiwan's democratic consolidation (Hughes, 2014).¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Christopher Hughes in his book argues that Ma's Beijing-friendly policies in fact created instabilities and risked weakening both Taiwan's national identity and the island's international relations. He says Ma's strong advocacy of a China-centric agenda contradicted the public's support for a Taiwan identity. See Hughes, Christopher (2014) "Revisiting identity politics under Ma Ying-jeou", in *Taiwan President Ma Ying-Jeou's First Term in Office (2008-2012)*, eds, by Jean-Pierre Cabestan and Jacques DeLisle. PP. 120-136. London: Routledge

As Buechler (1993) notes, the way a social movement is formed reflects the culture and social context of that particular time when the movement is taking place. Following his line of thinking, this chapter is going to take a closer look at several major social movements and discuss whether and how they reflect Taiwanese Millennials' perception of citizenship under the KMT administration. By studying youth-led social movements, this chapter and the following one hope to find indicators as to Taiwan's democratisation consolidation, and discuss whether democratic values have taken root in Taiwan, which is a Mandarin speaking society, a young democracy, and a country that is on its way to transform itself into a more open and diverse society.¹⁰⁷

Despite the resurgence of social movements under President Ma Ying-jeou's first term, he still managed to win re-election with 51.6 per cent of the vote in 2012.¹⁰⁸ The table (5-1) below lists all the major social movements which took place during Ma's second term (May 2012- April 2016). This chapter will continue to deploy the same approach as the previous chapter to further analyse the social movements of Ma's second term.

¹⁰⁷ As of 2017, indigenous languages have been officially recognised, with Mandarin, Taiwanese, and Hakka being the standard languages played on public transportation announcements in major cities, such as Taipei and Kaohsiung. According to the Ministry of Interior, there were over 520,000 foreign spouses, 610,000 blue-collar migrant workers, and about 30,000 white-collar migrant workers. Altogether they account for 5 per cent of the total population. In addition, during 2017, there were 5,366 naturalised citizens, of which 3,907 were from Vietnam, 533 from Indonesia, 471 from the Philippines, 122 from Thailand, 56 from Malaysia, 40 from Myanmar, 12 from Cambodia, and six from Singapore. The total number of naturalised citizens represented a 65 per cent increase from 2016. Vietnamese accounted for 72.8 per cent of the total number of people in Taiwan who gained citizenship in 2017, with most of them being spouses of Taiwan nationals. See: <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/asoc/201806240013.aspx>. For the first time in Taiwan, there is a "immigrant" legislator, named Lin Li-chan, originally from Cambodia. See: <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/from-foreign-bride-to-first-new-immigrant-lawmaker-in-taiwan>.

¹⁰⁸ See Taiwan's Central Election Commission. With approximately 90% of votes counted, Ma won 51.6 per cent against 46.3 per cent for his challenger, Tsai Ing-Wen of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) <http://www.cec.gov.tw>.

Year	Movement
2012 July – 2013 June	The Anti-Media Monopoly Movement, led by students to protest against a pro-Beijing conglomerate’s attempt to purchase local major media outlets
2013 July-August	The White Shirt Movement, led by the group Citizen 1985 to protest the case of a young soldier who passed away at a military detention centre, and advocate human rights in military
2013	Da-Pu Movement, rural social movement in Taiwan’s Miaoli County, was supported by people from all walks of lives, such as local farmers, students, scholars, and artists. They joined forces and protest against the government’s brutality in land appropriation.
2014	The Sunflower Movement, led by university students to occupy Taiwan’s Legislature to protest the government’s hasty passage of a trade pact with China
2015	The history textbook protest, led by high school students to protest the government’s amendment of high school textbook guidelines, which were described by protesting students as “too China-centric”.

Table 5-1 Social Movement under Ma Ying-jeou’s Second Term (2012 – 2016)
*made by author

5.2 Anti-Media Monopoly Movement

The six-month-long Anti-Media Monopoly protest was a series of events focusing on media ownership, press freedom, and the China factor. According to Rawnsley & Feng (2014), this movement was more than a “second wave of democratisation”, which attempted to change Taiwan’s political system, and also a “second wave” of

media democratization, which called for a better and freer media environment.¹⁰⁹ As the movement lasted for about six months, the following section will first introduce the background and political context of the movement, and then how participants used ICT tools during the movement.

Background

In late July 2012, only a few months after Ma's re-election in May, then Academia Sinica legal scholar Huang Kuo-Chang (黃國昌) and a group of scholars and students staged a protest calling on the Ma government not to allow a Taiwan-based food conglomerate, the Want Want Group (旺旺集團), to acquire Taiwan's second biggest cable operator China Network Systems Co. (CNS) for NTD 76 billion.¹¹⁰ Huang criticized the acquisition as a harmful media "monster" which would monopolise Taiwan's media market and undermine Taiwan's freedom of press (Hsu, 2017; Fell, 2017). The protesting students' concerns over the acquisition derived from the strong China-friendly stance adopted by the Want Want Group Chair, Tsai Eng-meng (蔡衍明). Previously, Tsai, the Taiwanese billionaire and media mogul, said to the *Washington Post* in an interview published on 21 January, 2012, that, "not that many people died" during the 1989 Tiananmen Incident, stressing that the infamous tank incident displayed the Chinese military's "humanity".¹¹¹ In addition, Tsai's huge business operation and interests in China (he hires over 50,000 people in China,

¹⁰⁹ See Rawnsley, Ming-Yeh T. and Chien-San Feng (2014), Anti-Media Monopoly Policies and Further Democratisation in Taiwan, in *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 43(3), pp 105-128.

¹¹⁰ On 25 July, Huang Kuo-Chang and a group of scholars and students protested outside the building of the National Communication Commission (NCC). They called on the NCC to turn down an application of the Want Want Group over an acquisition.

¹¹¹ During the interview, Tsai claimed that the lone protester standing in front of a People's Liberation Army tank didn't die. The fact that the man wasn't killed showed that reports of a massacre on June 4 weren't true. See

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/tycoon-prods-taiwan-closer-to-china/2012/01/20/gIQAhswmFQ_story.html?utm_term=.33977a575f0a

compared with 6,000 in Taiwan) also raised some eyebrows, with many Taiwanese people taking it as proof that “he is loyal to China”.¹¹²

Tsai’s Beijing-leaning attitude had already been underlined by his acquisition of the China Times, a Taiwanese local paper, in 2008. A Wang Want Group internal newsletter published in December 2008 reportedly stated that Tsai told Wang Yi (王毅), then head of China’s Taiwan Affairs Office, that he acquired the China Times Group “in order to use the power of the press to advance relations between China and Taiwan” (Enav, 2013). Tsai’s long-standing pro-China stance intensified worries expressed by Taiwanese academics and students, who then called on people to join forces and stop Tsai from further expanding his media empire in Taiwan.

In 2012, Huang and the protesters expressed their strong concern over the “China factor” behind the planned acquisition, protesting against media monopoly and any media owner with enormous business interest in China (Harrison, 2012; Rawnsley & Feng, 2014). Should the acquisition succeed, they argued, the Want Want Group will become a powerful proxy for the authoritarian CCP and the China’s territorial claims over Taiwan.

In response, the Want Want Group media outlets circulated reports spearing Huang and the protesters. For instance, one report stated that a woman allegedly distributed money to the protesting students as payment for pretending to be protesters.¹¹³ Outraged by the smear reports from the affiliated media outlets owned by the pro-China Taiwanese billionaire, students from 28 universities across the

¹¹² See <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1100230/tsai-eng-meng-lived-his-bulldog-reputation-next-purchase>

¹¹³ A report by the *China Times* stated that many protesting students were paid to attend Huang’s protest. The report said a woman discreetly distributed money to students at the protest. When confronted, the woman simply ran away without answering any questions posed by a *China Times* journalist. In addition, some students reportedly said they had no idea about the reason behind the demonstration. See *NCC Xianchang Huangguochang Daitou Fan Wangzhong Zhiji Zoulugong Faqian Xianchang (At the scene of NCC protest, Huang Kuo-Chang leading the anti-Want Want protest; witnessing a staff distributing money)*, 27 July, 2012. <http://magazine.chinatimes.com/ctweekly/20120727003340-300106>

island started a protest called “I am a student, I do not want Want Want China Times” (我是學生，我反旺中) and formed a group called the “Youth Coalition Against Media Giant” at a demonstration against the Want Want Group on 31 July. Despite the challenging weather (a typhoon called Saola was approaching Taiwan on the same day), over 700 students showed up and joined the demonstration in the rain. The protesting students gathered together and chanted slogans: “unprofessional media, go back to making biscuits” (媒體不專業，回去做仙貝), “defend news freedom against media giants” (拒絕媒體巨獸，捍衛新聞自由), “defend freedom of speech against chilling effect” (拒絕寒蟬效應，捍衛言論自由).¹¹⁴ However, their protest did not draw a lot of attention from local media at the initial stage of the movement. Out of seven of the biggest cable television news channels, only three of them reported the event.¹¹⁵

Soon after the demonstration, many seniors editors and staffers left the *China Times* citing a move by management towards a Beijing-leaning stance and erosion of media freedom.¹¹⁶ That included Deputy Managing Editor, Ho Rong-hsing (何榮幸), Deputy Editorial page Editor Chuang Pei-chang (莊佩璋) and Junior reporter Yo Wan-chi (游婉琪). Ho on 9 August shared on his Facebook that Taiwan’s hard-earned freedom of press should be cherished and that the media should apologise

¹¹⁴ See *Jujue Meiti Jushou 700 Xuesheng Yuzhong Nuhou (Refecting Media Tremendous Monster, 700 students roaring in the rain)* Next TV report, <http://www.nexttv.com.tw/news/realtime/politics/10342250>

¹¹⁵ Only three out of the seven biggest cable television channels reported the anti-Want Want group demonstration. See *Xuesheng Kangyi Zhontian 4 Xinwentai Bubaodao* (Students protest Want Want, four television news channel did not report) reported by Apple Daily <http://www.appledaily.com.tw/appledaily/article/headline/20120801/34408560>

¹¹⁶ See *Zhongshi bao Lizhichao Fuzong Herongxin Ji Zhubi Qingci (China Times sees a wave of staffers leaving Deputy Manager and Chief Editor resign)* report by the Apple Daily on 9 August 2012 <http://www.appledaily.com.tw/realtimenews/article/new/20120809/136640/>

when its report failed to reveal the truth. Both Ho and Chuang had been working for the China Times Group for over 20 years (Shan, 2012).¹¹⁷

A month later it was proven that the Want Want Group fabricated the smearing reports. The company on 29 August finally issued an open apology to Huang.¹¹⁸ However, their belated apology did not pacify the angry Taiwanese people. The public anger resulted in nearly ten thousand people taking part in a rally titled “901 Anti-Media Monopoly Alliance” on 1 September 2012. The rally, which took place only about 100 days after Ma’s second presidential inauguration, attracted students, scholars, as well as civil and media reform groups to join forces. Interviewee A1 (who also participated in the Wild Strawberries Movement and shared his insight in the previous chapter) said they were quite surprised the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement went from a 600 to 700-people protest in July to a large scale social movement in September. A1 said:

The Anti-Media Monopoly Movement received a lot of attention from media because it is something [the freedom of the the press] they also cared about. A journalist from Apple Daily told me that this protest is probably the biggest student-led social movement since the White Lily Movement in the 90s, and a turning point which changed people’s perception of social movements. I agreed with him as since the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement, more and more young people began to place social movement or demonstration in a positive light. And more and more young people agreed that if we cared about the country, when necessary, we have to take it to the streets to voice our opinion.

¹¹⁷ See <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2012/08/10/2003539928>.

¹¹⁸ See Wangzhong: Zoulugong Queyu Huangguochang Wuguan (Want China Times: The money distributor has no relations with Huang Kuo-Chang), 29 August, 2012 <http://www.cna.com.tw/news/firstnews/201208290014-1.aspx>

The protesting students demanded four things from the government: (1) media monopolies should be stopped, and all media owners should respect journalistic professionals; (2) the Want Want Group should publicly apologise to the public for eroding the freedom of the press, and; (3) the NCC should step up efforts in regulating the media conglomerate. It might also be worth noting that the rally did not involve any political parties (Chou, 2013).¹¹⁹

In November, 2012, the Want Want Group announced another acquisition plan saying that it planned to purchase Next Media, a Hong Kong based media group. As Next Media had been advocating its pro-democracy and anti-Chinese Communist Party (CCP) stance, many Taiwanese students worried that such a deal would allow Tsai and his affiliated companies to control more than 50% of news media by market share. They also argued that the deal would make Next Media lose its independence and henceforth erode Taiwan's media environment.

On 26 November, a group of Taiwanese students decided to stage a sit-in in front of the Executive Yuan with the aim of raising public awareness of this matter. Three days later, they staged another protest in front of the Fair Trade Commission and asked the commission to scrutinize the deal. Between then and January 2013, the youth alliance initiated a series of events, including a sit-in in front of the Presidential Office, events on New Year day, and a protest on 11 January, with forty Alliance members gathering at the Legislative Yuan to call for an explanation from two legislators who attempted to obstruct a draft bill on the anti-media monopoly proposal.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ See Taiwan's Anti-Media Monopoly Movement: Achievements and The Future in China Policy Institute, University of Nottingham <https://cpianalysis.org/2013/05/02/taiwans-anti-media-monopoly-movement-achievements-and-the-future/>

¹²⁰ Ibid.

On 4 April, the NCC passed a draft Anti-Media Monopoly bill, which was later approved by the Executive Yuan.¹²¹ The then Premier Jiang Yi-Huah (江宜樺) said the aim of the bill was to promote the healthy development of a diverse society, with regulations on mergers and acquisitions within and across the broadcasting and newspaper industries. Under the bill, mergers of radio stations boasting a local listenership rate over 15 per cent or national listenership exceeding 10 per cent would not be permitted. However, the bill never passed the Legislative Yuan before the KMT lost the presidency and legislature in 2016.

5.3 Usage of ICTs and Social Media

This section will examine the tactical social media usage by the activists during the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement. According to a series of interviews conducted as part of Wong's (2014) research, protesting students generally agreed that the usage of social media sites was important, particularly given the poor local media coverage of the media monopolization issue. Among all social media platforms, Facebook was the prime platform for the movement's participants to discuss their goals, timely issues and for making public announcements.

¹²¹ See Kuo, Grace (2013) "ROC Cabinet approves anti-media monopoly bill", *Taiwan Today*. <http://www.taiwantoday.tw/ct.asp?xItem=204516&ctNode=2175>



Picture 5.1 A snapshot of the Facebook page of “901 Anti-Media Monopoly Movement”¹²²

Major Social Media Site- Facebook

As Harrison has analysed, the main function of their Facebook page was to share relevant media reports, videos, op-ed and ‘likes’ (Harrison, 2012). The function of Facebook during the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement was similar to what Bennett and Segerberg (2012:38) describe as the “political impacts of emerging technologies reflect[ing] the changing social, psychological, and economic conditions experienced by citizens who used them (social media)”. The Facebook page allowed the activists to share posts and formulate their arguments through discussion in the comment threads. Ketty Chen, then a visiting scholar at the National Taiwan University (NTU) and now the Vice President of the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, also notes that the protesting students used social media sites, mainly Facebook, to communicate and mobilise supporters (Ho, 2013).¹²³ She told the *Taipei Times*, “when I was there, there were about 20 to 50 students ... They all had their computers and were on their mobile

¹²² See <http://www.facebook/antimonopoly>

¹²³ See Ho, Yi (2013) ‘Student, activism and social networks’, *Taipei Times*, 14 February

phones. As time progressed, more and more people started showing up”. The activists also use their Facebook page to announce their action plans and mobilise people through the multiple-direction communication channels on social media sites. Supporters could express their endorsement by clicking ‘Like’ on posts on the page. The accumulated number of ‘Likes’, in a way, also displays public support for the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement.

To further engage with more supporters, several alliance members based in Europe designed a template (see photo 5.2) which stated “Opposing Media Monopoly; Rejecting the black hand of China, I safeguard Taiwan’s media freedom at (a place, filled out by supporters who download and print out the template)”.

**反對媒體壟斷
拒絕中國黑手
捍衛新聞自由**

我在_____守護台灣

Picture 5.2 Template of Anti-Media Monopoly Photo Campaign

They invited people to share photos of themselves holding the template on the Facebook page “What’s Next”.¹²⁴ The page received hundreds of photos with some taken in front of famous spots around the world, including the Tiananmen Square in China. The campaign received snowballing support and inspired students in Taiwan to launch more similar campaigns displaying photos being taken at different campuses across the island.

Interestingly, interviewee A1 pointed out that he believed this photo campaign was first started by a group of Taiwanese students studying in Japan. Those overseas students on Facebook told A1 that even though they were not in Taiwan, they wanted to take part. Instead of flying back to Taiwan, they sent photos of themselves to A1 holding signs saying “I support Taiwan’s freedom of the press”. According to A1, their gesture “changed the definition of social movement participation”.

In the past, you had to physically go to the protest to show your support. But now with the Internet and social media, as long as you show your support via posting photos, comments, or joining a fan page of a certain movement, you can be somewhat considered a part of a social movement.

To increase the media exposure of the event, some supporters even asked public figures to lend their support and then received positive responses from Noam Chomsky and Chinese artist Ai Weiwei. Endorsements from different campaigns were collected and shared on the movement’s main Facebook page. The photos of supporters created both an atmosphere and a digital community, which shared the same goal, “stopping media monopoly”. Social media sites also allowed people to “participate” in the movement without physically being involved in the actual

¹²⁴ See <https://www.facebook.com/TaiwanWhatsNext>

demonstration. As more interactive and self-configurable communication made the social movements' organization less hierarchical, and at the same time more participatory (Castel, 2012: 15), social media therefore created new channels for people to take part in the social movement. With different ICT tools and Facebook easily accessible online, the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement in the end spread far beyond the geographic space of Taipei and reached different corners of Taiwan.

Finally, another key element in the organisation of the movement were the existing personal networks, formed by people who had previously joined the 2008 Wild Strawberries Movement. In a report by the Taipei Times, many interviewees from the movement revealed that they had participated in previous movements such as the Wild Strawberries Movement or the Losheng Sanatorium movement during President Ma Ying-jeou's first term (Ho, 2013).

5.4 Analysing the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement

Writing in an article, Chen Wei-ting, one of the key organizers of the Anti-Media Monopoly movement, expressed hope that the anti-media monopoly youth alliance could unify efforts from the 700 people who joined the 31 July rally, the 2,000 supporters of their "901 Alliance petition", as well as the 20,000 people who clicked "attend" on the Facebook page of the 31 July rally (Chen, 2012).¹²⁵ For activists like Chen, the boundaries of personal and public were disappearing as they began to pay more attention to the potential momentum they could garner on social media sites, which are a tool for people to maintain and expand their networks personally, professionally, and publicly. Social media sites also allowed supporters of the Anti-Media Monopoly movement to express their opinion and share relevant information through various digital communities such as Facebook. With the openness of the

¹²⁵ See Chen, Wei-Ting (2012) 'Women Ruhen Fan Wangzhong' (How do we oppose Want China Times?), *Xinshenhui Zhengci (Journal of New Social Policy)*, 23, 15 August 2012, pp 45-46.

Facebook pages, for example, helping to display and generate more public support with posts and photos contributed by people from different parts of Taiwan and around the world.

One key argument of the movement was to ensure and preserve the freedom of the press. According to an annual “Freedom of the World” report issued in February 2016 by the US-based Freedom House, Taiwan has been classified as “free” for 18 years in a row and Taiwan’s media is usually considered as being amongst the freest in Asia. However, during the eight years under the Ma administration, Taiwan’s freedom of the press score gradually declined from 20 in 2008 to 27 in 2015 (Freedom House, 2016).¹²⁶

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Press Status	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free
Press Freedom Score (0=best, 100=worst)	20	23	24	25	25	26	26	27
Legal Environment (0=best, 100=worst)	7	7	7	7	8	9	9	9
Political Environment (0=best, 100=worst)	7	9	9	9	9	9	9	10
Economic Environment (0=best, 100=worst)	6	7	8	9	8	8	8	8

Table 5.1 Taiwan in Freedom House report- 2008-2015 (made by author)

The decline of Taiwan’s freedom of the press can be traced back to 2008, when the Beijing-leaning Want Want Group purchased one of Taiwan’s major local newspapers, the China Times, and sent legal notifications to journalists and NGOs,

¹²⁶ See Freedom House (2016) Freedom in the World 2016
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2016>

threatening to file lawsuits for their criticism of the company's pro-Beijing political stance. The concern expressed by the local journalists was shared by international NGOs. For instance, a report from Freedom House (2016) stated that "indirect Chinese influence somewhat limits the variety of opinion represented in mainstream media" in Taiwan. It further noted, "advertising from Chinese companies or business groups with significant interest in China has taken on an increasingly important role and also contributes to self-censorship" (Freedom House, 2016).¹²⁷

With a skeptical view over Chinese investment in Taiwan's media sector, the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement did not receive a lot of coverage from traditional mainstream media at the start. Despite this small media exposure however, the momentum garnered by the protesters through Facebook successfully transformed this movement into both an island-wide movement, and an international event. Meanwhile, scholars from both public and private colleges and universities in Taiwan pledged their support for this student-led movement via a petition. Their creative usage of social media paid handsome dividends and helped connect Taiwan's social movement with the global community. For instance, the Overseas Taiwanese students as well as some internationally well-known figures including Ai Weiwei lent their endorsement to the movement.

As A1 said, the Anti-Media Monopoly was a milestone in the history of social movements in Taiwan, with people calling it the biggest student-led social movement since the White Lily Movement in the 90s. Compared with the Wild Strawberries Movement, A1 noted, young activists of the Anti-Media Monopoly showed how they sophisticated and improved their mobilisation and organisation skills. Together, these movements opened a new stage for social movements in Taiwan and impacted later movements in the remaining years of President Ma's remaining tenure.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

5.5 White Shirt Movement in 2013

On 4 July, only three days before Corporal Hung Chung-Chiu was due to complete his obligatory military service, the twenty-four-year-old soldier died of internal bleeding and multiple organ failure (Cole, 2013). Hung's death sparked public outcry and a major political storm, resulting in the formation of a movement called the White Shirt Movement, which saw thousands of Taiwanese take to the streets in solidarity and demand the military reveal the truth about Hung's death (Hou and Lee, 2013).¹²⁸

The following sections will provide an analytical review on the background and political context of the event, as well as the usage of social media and ICTs by the organisers and protesters. Semi-structured interviews of key movement organizers and relevant stakeholders were also conducted in an effort to offer in-depth insight of the mobilisation process and their opinion of citizens' political engagement in Taiwan.

Background- Formation of Citizen 1985

Shortly after the tragic death of Hung Chung-Chiu, 39 netizens, who originally did not know each other in real life prior to the event, formed a group called "Citizen 1985" (Gongming 1985 Liangmeng, 公民 1985 聯盟) and demanded that the government disclose the truth of Hung's death (Li, 2013).¹²⁹ They argued that Hung was punished by his supervisors in an inhumane manner, pointing out that Hung passed away in hospital after being subjected to days of demanding exercises under extreme condition with great heat and humidity. He was asked to perform a rigorous

¹²⁸ Thousands of Taiwanese – mostly in white t-shirts – staged a protest in front of the Ministry of National Defence, chanting slogans such as "give justice to the victim's family", "ensure human rights in the military" and "without the truth, there is no forgiveness". See Hou, Elaine and Hsin Yin Lin (2013) 'Thousands protest over soldier's death', in the CNA, 20 July, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/asoc/201307200005.aspx>

¹²⁹ The group members told local paper the *China Post* that the name "1985" in its name derived from the Defence Ministry's hotline number for filing complaints in the military. Anyone who files a complaint has to reveal her or his identity to the hotline. The group founding members believed it was not in the interests of mistreated military personnel. Li, Lauly (2013) 'Citizen 1985: The mysterious group behind Hung protests', 5 August, the *China Post*.

series of push-ups, sit-ups, and other exercises under extremely humid and high temperature environment. In addition to that, Hung was not given any water while in detention for the ostensible crime of smuggling a mobile phone into the military base (Cole, 2013).

Initially the military explained that Hung's death was a pure accident caused by normal physical training requested by standard military routine. However, the family of the victim refused to accept the explanation and requested the government to investigate, and publish a report of the case.

To pacify public outrage against overly rigorous discipline in the military, President Ma said the death of Hung was a result of "absolute power leading to absolute corruption" and instructed the Ministry of National Defence (MND) to thoroughly investigate the case (Hsu and Chang, 2013). Despite the fact that military prosecutors did launch an investigation into the case following Ma's comment, the group Citizen 1985 demanded the MND agree allow a third and independent party also take part in the investigation. Facing no direct response to their demand, on 20 July, members of the group mobilised over 30,000 people to stage a protest in front of the MND in Taipei (Chen, 2015:70). Many of the protesters took to the streets for the first time in their lives. They did so in an effort to force the government to disclose the truth behind the death of Hung and ensure human rights in the military. On 24 July, nearly ten days after the news of Hung's had been broken, President Ma visited the soldier's family, apologised publicly and reassured that the government would launch a complete investigation into the tragedy (Hung, 2014).

As one commentator's (Lin, 2013) described, most of the rally's participants were young men wearing white t-shirts showing solidarity with the protest which lasted about one and a half hours, The protest, was organised purely through

communication taking place on social media.¹³⁰ They took to the streets asking the government to improve the military system and offer better protection over the human rights of all men and women in uniforms.

According to an interview with Chen Yu-An (coded as A3 in this study), spokesperson of Citizen 1985, they did not expect to see such big turnout when the thirty-nine founders planned the 20 July protest at a café in Taipei. He pointed out that to start with his group was barely discussed or mentioned by any local mainstream media outlets. In order to obtain more media coverage and public attention, they used social media and ICTs to communicate and mobilise supporters:

At the beginning, we were aiming for 5,000 people to join us. We did not expect to see so many people (Note: 30,000) show up in the end because it is unprecedented for ordinary people to organise a protest in front of the Ministry of Defence. No one in Taiwan has ever done that. We thought if nobody shows up, at least we still had thirty-nine of us to stage the protest... Because no mainstream media cared to report about us, Liu Lin-Wei, one of our founding members, called a meeting at a café and distributed tasks amongst the group members...Afterwards, we used Facebook, PTT and LINE to communicate and people used those platforms to express their anger (towards the event). Later on our efforts were paid off as we began to draw attention from mainstream media (A3).

Regardless of the importance of social media in their internal and external communication, Chen noted that mainstream media still played a significant role in terms of promoting their group and their event to Taiwanese society. He was invited

¹³⁰ See Lin, Paul (2013) 'People must battle to change military', in *Taipei Times*, page 8

to attend television political talk shows nearly everyday since local media had begun to discuss group Citizen 1985. Gradually though, the mainstream media lost its interest in the group. After the 20 July rally, Chen found that public attention began to wane and he did not receive any further invites to talk shows for days.

Their momentum was revived after the military offered no convincing explanation of why all recorded footage from the sixteen closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs) at the base displayed nothing but black screens (TVBS, 2013).¹³¹ The best reason the military could offer was that the CCTVs would automatically turn off when they sensed pouring rain or thunder. Such an explanation only further infuriated the public and triggered the second wave of this White Shirt Movement. An interviewee who was in charge of issuing press releases on behalf of the movement revealed that the ill management of the military in this case angered many Taiwanese people and helped the movement generate more momentum (A4). Out of frustration, the family of Hung on 1 August said they had lost all hope in the military prosecutors' capacity in bringing justice for their lost family member (Cole, 2013). Their sentiment was shared by a large segment of Taiwanese people, with more than 250,000 people attending the rally on 3 August on Ketagalan Boulevard in front of the Presidential Office.

Outcome

The White Shirt Movement did lead to significant political changes in Taiwan. Apart from the resignation of then Minister of Defence Kao Hua-Chu (高華柱), three days after the second rally, a modification of the "Code of Court Martial Procedure" was passed by the government and contributed to a "de facto abrogation of martial

¹³¹ See TVBS (2013) 'Bunengshuo De Mimi! Yinan Huoshengsheng Nuesi Dazhuizong' (Unspoken secret! Military soldier tortured to death), TVBS, 27 July <http://news.tvbs.com.tw/entry/222934>

procedure system in Taiwan” (Chou, 2013).¹³² The MND in the end punished twenty-seven military officers involving in Hung’s case.

5.5.1 Usage of ICTs and Social Media

Blog

Following previous social movements, Citizen 1985 launched a blog titled “Citizen 1985” to release their official media statements, publish their financial statements, and archive their event photos and videos.¹³³

On the database of the blog, fourteen official statements were published and fifty-five YouTube videos were archived. Among the fifty-five videos, seven were recorded from the events organised for the White Shirt Movement which focused on Hung’s death, ten were about later events calling for constitutional reform, eight were about government officials statements and public hearings on reforming the military, twenty-five were related to the 2014 Sunflower Movement, and the remaining five were about recent social movements that have occurred in the past two years.¹³⁴

¹³² See Chou, Huan-Jung (2013) ‘The Young Stand Up, Pursue Hope and Reform’, *Taipei Times*, 20 August <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2013/08/20/2003570111>

¹³³ See <http://pttcitizen1985.blogspot.tw>

¹³⁴ The total number of the blog posts and archived videos was calculated in August 2016.

公民 1985 行動聯盟

繼續監督軍審法的後續審查、軍事冤案申訴委員會的健全，以及家屬在訴訟過程的公平待遇。

[公民 1985 行動聯盟](#) [臉書專頁](#) [8/3 活動說明](#) [8/03 演說錄影](#) [Google Site](#) [收支明細](#) [YouTube](#) [公民覺醒聯盟](#)

2013年7月31日 星期三

7/31回應軍事檢察署於偵結起訴聲明

公民1985行動聯盟新聞稿

針對國防部軍檢軍事檢察署於今日早上偵結起訴，本單位聲明如下：

1. 軍檢察署在未完成全部調查、了解犯案動機前，草率偵結起訴，公民1985行動聯盟表達遺憾與憤怒之意。過去三周，軍檢在偵查時不斷透過曹檢察長對外放話，除言行舉止有如跳樑小丑，對於案情說詞前後矛盾外；今日軍檢又在真相未白、未偵查出犯案動機、以及立法院修法之際前草率偵結起訴。軍事檢察體系身為國家司法體制及國防的一環，種種行為已讓人民對於軍事檢察體系失去耐心及信任。我方強烈主張，若軍事司法體系已不合乎台灣社會現況，人員素質未能隨國家司法改革提升，應被廢除。相關案件應回歸一般司法體系偵查、審理。
2. 對於起訴內容，我方深感不以為然。全案竟然只肇因於一個中士的凌虐及幾位禁閉室幹部的業務疏失，對於其他

Picture 5.3 A snapshot of the official blog of Citizen 1985

It is worth noting that they published very detailed statements of their income and expenditure during every event. They even published a complete list of donators (without disclosing their full names) and the total amount of their donation (see Photo 6.3). The transparent statements deepened the public's trust towards the activists and the movement itself.

ptcitizen1985 財務明細

2016/02 新國會監督計劃 2015/11 國會調查兵團立委選前密業監督計畫 公民覺醒 2014/7 ~ 2014/8/03 活動預算 2014/8/03 收入明細 公民覺醒 2013/10 ~ 2014/6 十月十日天下為公 8/3-7 帳戶明細 8/1帳戶明細 8/2帳戶明細 7/31帳戶明細 7/30帳戶明細 7/29帳戶明細 7/28帳戶明細 7/27-7/27帳戶明細 7/19-7/20帳戶明細 7/15-7/18帳戶明細 活動費用 損益表,建置中 整理中 費用明細, 建置中

交易日期	摘要	提款金額	存款金額	帳戶餘額	尾碼	支出項目	會計科目
1020719	跨行轉入	200	578,216	77198			4111銀貨
1020719	存摺轉來	800	579,016	81702			4111銀貨
1020719	跨行轉入	3,000	582,016	77774			4111銀貨
1020719	跨行轉入	100	582,116	16765			4111銀貨
1020719	存摺轉來	300	582,416	60004			4111銀貨
1020719	跨行轉入	1,000	583,416	60216			4111銀貨
1020719	跨行轉入	500	583,916	64671			4111銀貨
1020719	跨行轉入	150	584,066	51010			4111銀貨
1020719	跨行轉入	3,000	587,066	15968			4111銀貨
1020719	跨行轉入	5,000	592,066	48255			4111銀貨
1020719	跨行轉入	398	592,464	39919			4111銀貨
1020719	存摺轉來	1,985	594,449	64991			4111銀貨
1020719	無摺存款	10,000	604,449	19150			4111銀貨
1020719	存摺轉來	550	604,999	41791			4111銀貨
1020719	存摺轉來	1,450	606,449	25141			4111銀貨
1020719	無摺存款	2,000	608,449	44102			4111銀貨
1020719	跨行轉入	1,000	609,449	07769			4111銀貨
1020719	跨行轉入	300	609,749	03559			4111銀貨
1020719	跨行轉入	1,000	610,749	06702			4111銀貨
1020719	存摺轉來	300	611,049	14381			4111銀貨
1020719	跨行轉入	898	611,937	46220			4111銀貨
1020719	跨行轉入	500	612,437	12113			4111銀貨
1020719	跨行轉入	1,000	613,437	07692			4111銀貨
1020719	存摺轉來	1,600	615,037	71591			4111銀貨
1020719	跨行轉入	2,000	617,037	64299			4111銀貨
1020719	存摺轉來	200	617,237	21217			4111銀貨
1020719	跨行轉入	1,000	618,237	01085			4111銀貨
1020719	存摺轉來	1,000	619,237	00061			4111銀貨
1020719	跨行轉入	500	619,737	85186			4111銀貨
1020719	跨行轉入	300	620,037	32010			4111銀貨
1020719	卡機轉帳	720	620,757	49417			4111銀貨

Picture 5.4 Financial statement of Citizen 1985 (source: Citizen 1985 Blog)

Facebook

Their Facebook page was mainly used for mobilisation and sharing relevant news reports on the White Shirt Movement. For instance, 23,000 people on the event page said they would attend the 3 August rally, and some seven thousands people said they were interested in the event. As NTU professor Hou Han-Jyun commented, protests are usually mobilized by political parties, however the organizers of the White Shirt Movement “just posted something on Facebook” and such action required “nothing” at all (Wan, 2013).¹³⁵ It was with the help from Facebook and reports from mainstream media that Citizen 1985 in the end mobilised far more people than what they had expected.

Facebook also provided a space for people to engage in political discussion. As A4 noted, she observed that more and more people began to show interest and engage in the discussion of Hung’s case since Citizen 1985 launched its Facebook page:

Slowly, more discussion and debate were happening on Facebook... social media allows the public to express their opinion and receive opinion from other people at the same time. (Social media) becomes the biggest news source for people. (A4)

The comments of A4 echoed that of A3, who said that Taiwanese youth mostly do not trust mainstream media, especially those favouring the KMT or showing pro-Beijing attitudes. According to A3, the news circulated on Facebook and

¹³⁵ See Wan, William (2013) ‘Taiwan’s White Shirt Army’, spurred by Facebook, takes on political parties’, in *Washington Post*, 10 November
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/taiwans-white-shirt-army-spurred-by-facebook-takes-on-political-parties/2013/11/10/4a1fde52-46e4-11e3-bf0c-cebf37c6f484_story.html

other social media sites are generally critical of the KMT government, suggesting that Taiwanese young people aged 18 – 35 were exposed to this anti-KMT atmosphere on the Internet.

According to A3 and A4, social media and mainstream media play complementary roles in the mobilisation of a social movement. When people were called on to join the protest, their momentum attracted the attention from traditional media, which is always after eye-catching news reports and updated its audience on the event with a series of reports. In Liu and Hu's (2015) interview research, it was found that there existed positive correlation between the mainstream media's reports on the White Shirt Movement and the number of participants. The more media coverage of the event from traditional mainstream media (such as TV, paper, radio), the bigger the number of participants who turned out to join the movement.

Other ICT tools

The thirty-nine-people group held meetings at cafés in Taipei or online via Skype. When they conducted votes on major decisions of the event during the Skype meeting, the participants typed in “+1” or “-1” (Wan, 2013).¹³⁶ Separately, the participants of the movement edited a Wikipedia page Hung Chung-Chiu's case and collected a total of 220 sources from news reports and government announcements.¹³⁷ The Wikipedia page is an outcome from a group of editors who share a common goal (which is to disclose the truth behind Hung's death) and created by an “order” in which “everyone is the editor” (McGrady, 2009). In the creation process of their Wikipedia page and other online sites, no managing organization with absolute authority is needed.

¹³⁶ See Wan, William (2013) 'Taiwan's White Shirt Army', spurred by Facebook, takes on political parties', in *Washington Post*, 10 November
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/taiwans-white-shirt-army-spurred-by-facebook-takes-on-political-parties/2013/11/10/4a1fde52-46e4-11e3-bf0c-cebf37c6f484_story.html

¹³⁷ See <https://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/洪仲丘事件>

New Organization of Social Movement, New Mobilization, New Citizenship?

Following the preceding sections, it might be safe to say that one of the distinguishing characteristics, and also one of the more remarkable perspectives, of the two movements was their success at keeping political parties, politicians or their affiliated groups away from them. In fact, the movement's participants considered the then ruling party and other political parties as the main source of negative forces facing both Taiwan's media freedom and military human rights. Another key characteristic is the nature of digitally mediated organization (Chadwick, 2011) demonstrated by the two movements' organisations, as such nature had rarely been seen in Taiwan's social movements in the past. Even during the Wild Strawberries Movement, the mediated coordination between protests held in different campuses was in a minimal level. The two major actors of the movements – Anti-Media Monopoly Youth Alliance and Citizen 1985 – heavily relied on the ICT tools and interpersonal social media sites for internal and external communication.

Thanks to the fact that ICT tools and social media are generally interactive and easy-to-be-personalised, the organisation of the two social movements discussed in this chapter, can arguably be described as “successful”. The Anti-Media Monopoly Movement saw a draft bill on anti-media monopoly pass the Cabinet, while the White Shirt Movement led to a de facto abrogation of martial procedure system in Taiwan. In Bennett and Segerberg's (2012) research, they identify two organizational patterns which can be used to characterize the increasingly common digitally mobilized and enabled movements: 1) interactive digital media and personal action themes for citizens to spread the word over their “personal networks”; 2) political demand could be conveyed and shared via various technology platforms and applications (p. 742). For instance, the slogan used during the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement, “I am a student; I don't want Want Want China Times”, easily helped

illustrate the main argument of the social movement and was quickly adopted by the ordinary public. The slogan then went viral on social media sites in Taiwan, and parts of the world where a considerable number of overseas Taiwanese were residing, such as in the US. The photo campaign also conveyed a powerful message, which was delivered by thousands of images shared by students and people around the world. Such digitally mediated action and messages scaled up quickly through different layers of personal social media accounts that were used to share, post, and re-post the campaign. In the end, the campaign multiplied itself through a massive web composed by hundreds of thousands of personal networks.

In the case of the White Shirt Movement, the announcement published on their official blogs and Facebook fan page often got picked up by mainstream media outlets in Taiwan as the protest helped local media generate higher viewership. An interviewee, who is a news anchor and also a political talk show host from one of the biggest cable television channels, SETTV,¹³⁸ said that as the Internet accelerates the speed of news report cycles, most conventional journalists had to turn to social media sites for breaking news in an effort to keep up with the speed with which information circulated online (M1). She further notes that Taiwan's new media environment has entered a very competitive stage, with many cable TV stations trying to grab a bigger share of the pie by using social media as a source for breaking news. As a result, the digitally mediated action of sharing and posting information about certain social movement not only generates a considerable collective outcome, but also forces the mainstream conventional media outlets to keep up with the sweeping speed of the development of a movement.

Similarly, NTU Professor Tao Yi-fen, notes in a paper that the potential of online mobilisation is something people in the 1990s could not imagine. She

¹³⁸ see <http://www.settv.com.tw/#!/>

compared the White Lily Movement and the White Shirt Movement, saying that the former had attracted a maximum of 10,000 people to join the sit-in at the CKS hall, whereas the latter garnered over 300,000 people to take to the streets in protest. The Internet helps reduce the coordination costs of a demonstration, and makes it easier for people to follow an event remotely and creatively.

Another example is the Facebook photo campaign, “What’s Next” during the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement, which invited people to copy the message (to download a premade PDF template) and personalise (to include the location of the individual who downloads the template) the message and share via social media sites. The accumulated photos coming from thousands of young students built up a network and connect different individuals into an imagined community which crossed physical borders. In that community, people come together as they shared one common idea, which was opposing media monopoly and safeguarding the freedom of press in Taiwan. They repeated the same action by taking and sharing the photos which conveyed and reinforced the message of such idea. The photos travelled interpersonally, transmitting through Facebook, international media (such as Epoch Times, 2012)¹³⁹, local newspapers (Liberty Times, 2012)¹⁴⁰, blogs (Zhang, 2013)¹⁴¹ and other social media sites on the Internet. Through these personal actions, people showed each other how they participated and shared the campaign. In the process of

¹³⁹ See Epoch Times (2012) “Tai Fan Meiti Longduan Langchao Yi Manyan Zhi Boshidun” (Taiwan’s anti-media monopoly movement has spreaded to Boston), *Epoch Times*, 7 December, <http://www.epochtimes.com/b5/12/12/7/n3747187.htm>

¹⁴⁰ See Liberty Times (2012) “Beiye Xuesheng Haozhao Fan Meiti Jushou Shouji Zhaopian Hecheng Freedom” (Taipei Medical Students call for opposing media monster collecting photos to make the word Freedom), Liberty Times, 9 December, <http://news.ltn.com.tw/news/politics/breakingnews/735076>

¹⁴¹ A Chinese blogger picked up the anti-media monopoly movement in Taiwan and voiced his challenges by asking whether the movement had become a festival as Taiwanese students were only focusing on getting more people to take photos with the movement slogan. He argued that such “social movement” only simplified the problems facing Taiwan’s media environment and blamed everything on the so-called “China factor”. See Zhang, Fangyuan (2013) “Xushi Zhijian: Fan Wangzhong/ Fan Meiti Longduan Yundong De Zhenzhenjiajia” (The real and not-real about Anti-Want China Times and anti-media monopoly movement), *Women de Ge Shi Qinchun De Huoyan (Our song is the fire of youth)*, 3 August, <http://blog.chinatide.net/fangyuan/?p=53>

personalization, that is to say the message and sharing a message of a certain idea online, collectively the messages posted online become a strong voice in the online world, forging a considerable force pushing forward the idea in real life.

As one of the functions of social media sites is to allow users to share their activities or life events, and receive feedback, such tendencies cause people to follow, imitate, and share information about a protest and then find satisfaction from other people's re-posting in the cyber-community (Chen & Liao, 2014). This process of personalising, sharing, and communicating with one another enables the supporting base for a social movement to grow organically through countless multi-layered social media accounts on the Internet.

Visualized argument, visualized information, visualized movement

According to A4, chief press release drafter and news content curator of the White Shirt Movement, infographics were used to convey simple event slogans and also helped simplified information as the main strategy of the organisers was to draw ordinary people's attention. They also used catchy phrases or slogans to encourage people to share event information through their personal social media sites or tools, such as Facebook or LINE. A4 and the press team used Prezi, an online cloud-based presentation software, to create eye-catching YouTube videos to visualise the reason why they started the movement, as well as their arguments and demands.¹⁴²

This kind of all-in-one video mentioned above provides viewers or outsiders with easy-to-understand information about the development of certain events or movements and is usually referred to as a "lazy people package" in Taiwan. This kind of information pack, which can come as a collection of infographics, pictures, photographs or video, is designed for complete outsiders of an event or people who do

¹⁴² See <http://prezi.com>

not have time to collect and analyze a huge amount of information. It does not take too long for people to obtain a basic level of understanding of certain events or movements by reading the lazy people pack or watching the video. The three-minute long “lazy people pack” video of the White Shirt Movement attracted a total of 14,660 views.¹⁴³

What makes this visualized data so important is that in the information age, nearly everything can be turned into a piece of digital information transmitted on the Internet. The information can be the background or historical context of a certain social movement, the demands of the protesters, as well as, in one of the cases above, a demonstration of the public support coming from thousands of overseas Taiwanese students who joined the photo campaign and took photos with a slogan and shared them on their personal Facebook pages. The examples from the cases presented in this chapter demonstrate a significant level of technology-enabled networking (Livingston & Asmolov, 2010) which can make personalized information and digitally mediated communication processes “fundamental structuring elements” in the organisation and mobilization of a movement (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012: 749).

Protesting without an Absolute Leadership

Similarly to the previous social movements already discussed in the preceding chapters, the cases in this chapter saw a declining need for a traditional charismatic leader to take a lead in the digitally enabled mobilisation process. The White Shirt Movement surprised Taiwanese society by successfully mobilizing hundreds of thousands of participants in two consecutive rallies mostly with the assistance of

¹⁴³ This three-minute long video provides information on Hung, key arguments and questions raised by the group Citizen 1985, and why people who care about human rights in the military should stand up to voice their support for Hung’s family and many more people who might suffered from inhumane treatment in the Taiwanese military. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHI--4AUeUA>

social media and ICT tools. Thirty-nine people, who had never led a social movement before, successfully organised and mobilised significant numbers of participants during the two rallies during the White Shirt Movement. In addition to the characteristics of avoiding associating with any political parties, lacking a well-known charismatic leader, and the heavy reliance on online sources to mobilise people, the White Shirt Movement managed to attract supporters across party lines and led to a real political change.

Movement Spokesperson A3 said that at the very beginning of the movement, every member of the thirty-nine-people Citizen 1985 always turned their back to camera or wore face masks when being interviewed by local media outlets. A3 noted that “the movement is for the people; therefore, we do not want to have any charismatic leader. We want to show people that we (members of Citizen 1985) are like every ordinary citizen, who only wants to know about the truth of Hung’s death” (A3). To mobilise the Internet-based movement, a new type of leadership with both technology skills and political knowledge will be needed in the organization process (Chen & Liao, 2014). Separately, a member of Citizen 1985 affirmed that the protesters avoided to have a distinguishable leader during the whole event:

We don't support any side or leader. We are for civil rights, common values, democracy. And we make it very simple to join. You just put on a white shirt (Wan, 2013).¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ See Wan, William (2013) “Taiwan’s ‘White Shirt Army’, spurred by Facebook, takes on political parties”, *the Washington Post*, 10 November. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/taiwans-white-shirt-army-spurred-by-facebook-takes-on-political-parties/2013/11/10/4a1fde52-46e4-11e3-bf0c-cebf37c6f484_story.html

His comment shows that today's citizens, including those non-political actors, are willing to and capable of initiating a movement or large-scale demonstration, if their civic rights are being challenged. In the case of the 2013 White Shirt Movement, 39 individuals without any political party affiliation successfully organised rallies by mobilizing on Facebook, online blogs, and other ICT tools. In order to gain movement legitimacy, the 39 movement initiators avoided involvement from political parties and politicians. Their efforts resulted in 30,000 participants coming out showing their support for the first demonstration at the Ministry of Defence in July, 2013. In less than two weeks, they further mobilised over 250,000 people to stage a second demonstration in front of the Presidential Office in August. It might be worth noting that the success of the Citizen 1985 proved that a social movement does not necessarily require a charismatic leader to gather momentum, as their momentum was built upon the accumulated and collected efforts of hundreds of thousands of unknown individuals who pledged their support online. During the White Shirt Movement, a multi-layered cyberspace became a public realm for citizens to broadcast their opinion on military human rights through various digital tools and channels.

It is hard to identify the true leaders of the Citizen 1985, and it is also difficult to pinpoint the main leader of the Anti-Media Monopoly Facebook photo campaign as the outcome derived from a vast network of multi-layered personal social media accounts. Although leaders are not an essential element of the two cases presented in this chapter, a group of leaders or 'starters' taking initiative are still important at the initial stage of a movement (Margetts, John Hale and Reissfelder, 2015),¹⁴⁵ though it

¹⁴⁵ See Margetts, Helen, Peter John, Scott Hale and Stephane Reissfelder (2015) "Leadership without Leaders? Starters and Followers in Online Collective Action", in *Political Studies*, DOI: 10.1111/1467-9248.1275 Pp. 278-299.

could be better to argue that the role a leader plays during a social movement is different from those in the last century.

Perhaps, then, it is safe to borrow the idea of Bennett & Segerberg (2012) that movements can be defined into three different connective and collective action networks. In their proposed model “connective action organizationally enable networks”, a movement can be mostly organized by loose coordination of action, with organizers offering social technology outlays for participants to spread the word of the event. The communication process of the movement generally centres around organisationally inclusive person action frames, with mild organizational moderation by personal expression travelled through social media sites (p.756). Take the White Shirt Movement, for instance, the founding members of Citizen 1985 generally stayed behind the scenes with one simple task, providing supporters and the public rally details and simple-to-understand information for people to share. Meanwhile, different social media sites such as various Facebook campaign groups also helped amplify the network and henceforth the scale of the support base. The ICTs allowed individuals who did not belong to the Citizen 1985 to participate in the social movement without committing to every engagement.

All the information shared and transmitted throughout multi-layered social media sites created a loose public sphere for people to engage in public affairs in their private capacity. The vast personal networks of participants became a new semi-public and semi-private sphere for people to express their views on the movement with a tendency to copy other people’s engagement within the same movement, while at the same time expecting to receive feedback on their view from their followers. In one of the “lazy people packs” of the White Shirt Movement, a video calls on citizens from all walks of life to support and participate in the event, and argues that as

citizens, no matter whether they are soldiers or not, people want their tax money to be spent wisely, and corrupted officials to be sacked from the system.



Picture 5.4 Snapshot of “lazy people pack” of Citizen 1985

As Inglehart (1997) argues, young citizens exhibit individualism in their social and political orientation. Since the decline of membership in traditional social groups and clubs, citizens have begun to show individual-focused orientation when expressing their political views. As a result, the major component of societies has gradually moved from social groups into individualized and personalized networks. The shift might also impact the way citizens evaluate an event and whether to engage in public affairs. Perhaps a part of the speech at the 3 August White Shirt Movement Rally can help shed new light on how citizens envision their role in a democratic society:

We are all parts of the civil society
Therefore when we begin to organize this event
Our goal is to emphasize equality
We hope this society
Starting from today
Will not only allow politicians
But also ordinary people like you and me
With the citizenship given by the Constitution
*To initiate an agenda.*¹⁴⁶

The aforementioned speech shows that contemporary Taiwanese citizens in contemporary democratic society are calling for the autonomy and power to initiate a political agenda. When citizens are enabled digitally to communicate in their own terms with each other and with their political representatives, they are no longer at the receiving end of the political policy making process. Instead, they are rejecting fixed political agenda determined by politicians, and at the same time they are using social media to make their political demands heard by their elected representatives and the government.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter attempts to give a close-to-complete picture and an exploratory review of the development of social movements under the second term of former KMT President Ma Ying-Jeou. With a qualitative research as its main approach, this study

¹⁴⁶ The text is from the speech transcript at the 3 August rally in front of the Presidential Office. The event attracted 250,000 participants. See <http://pttcitizen1985.blogspot.tw/2013/08/803.html>

carefully examines two social movements with a special focus on their communication patterns amongst its followers and outsiders through a digitally enabled mobilisation process. Reviewing the social movements analytically helps provide an opportunity to examine new forms of movement mobilisation and how people's engagement in a social movement reflects their view on their role as citizens in a democratic society.

Compared with other social movements which took place during Ma's first term, social movements in his second term saw more sophisticated usage of ICT and social media tools. As discussed in the preceding sections, ICTs and social media enable people to personalise the mobilisation and formation process of a large-scale social movement. The multi-layered personal networks on the social media sites also allow individuals to develop flexible political identifications while partaking in an event (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012: 744). In 2008, The Wild Strawberry Movement managed to gain attention from the foreign community in Taiwan through its English blog. Four years later, social movements such as the White Shirt Movement deployed more sophisticated social media strategies and organised various contentious collective actions to mobilise people more effectively.

In the case of 2012, the calling for the freedom of the press was demonstrated in the rise of the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement, which used social media sites to reach out to the public and connect with the global community more effectively. Moreover, the White Shirt Movement, following the tragic death of a young soldier, intensively campaigned for military reform and gathered their momentum by relying heavily on digital coordination. The success of the White Shirt Movement is also a good example to show how a group like Citizen 1985, which does not have any charismatic leaders, managed to use ICTs to successfully mobilise hundreds of

thousands of supporters and form a large variety of social groups through the creation of movement networks.

Under former President Ma Ying-jeou's eight-year tenure, Taiwanese students took to the streets en masse, scuffling with police, and forcing their way into government buildings. In 2008, they protested against the KMT government's Beijing-friendly policies and argued the government were promoting closer cross-Strait economic ties at the cost of people's freedom of assembly. During Ma's second term, students scaled up their actions and argued that media owners with massive businesses interests with China should not be allowed to acquire or have control over any media outlets as their interest might lead to erosion of press freedom in the country. They also mobilised citizens to demand the government improve human rights policies and practices in the military. All these movements with different focuses happened in the space of only five years. Amongst the social movements discussed so far, the recurring theme is all about freedom and human rights, with the overlying argument being that the Ma administration failed and disappointed the ordinary people.

The in-depth interviews from key members of Citizen 1985 show that social media sites and ICTs allow people to express their opinion in a liberal manner which is disconnected from hierarchical structural positions. People do not necessarily need to become a well-known activist or public figure, and yet people can still broadcast their voice through various digital channels. In addition, in the organisation and mobilisation process of a social movement, it is not a must to have a leader like Che Guevara. Instead, cases of contemporary social movements show that momentum can be accumulated by a series of collective action from lots of unnamed individuals with one or a few key main actors who intentionally stay behind the scene. Like the

Hollywood film, *V for Vendetta* (McTeigue, 2005)¹⁴⁷, most of the participants did not need to have a name. Instead, they and a few “initiators” can share one identity when promoting political or social change.

Up until the first half of 2013, social media sites played an important role in agglomerating civic participations in Taiwan. The social movements discussed in the preceding sections showed that Taiwanese citizens were paying more attention to democratic values – freedom of speech, assembly, and press, as well as human rights – and were willing to stand up and take action if these values were being eroded or challenged by a democratically elected government. These social movements also help illustrate a clear generational gap.

In an article published by the *Washington Post*, a scholar from NTU commented that the White Shirt Movement activists simply posted comments on Facebook and then successfully mobilised enough people to join the movement. He said, “it required nothing”.¹⁴⁸ His comments reflect a generational gap. The gap can be found when some older Taiwanese lament the decline of social capital and citizens’ political participation, whereas many younger Taiwanese are actually to be found creatively engaging in public affairs in unconventional ways, and in ways which sometimes can be difficult to grasp by their older counterparts. The gap also reflects the different understanding and perception about what community means to people, how to measure social capital through online and offline people-to-people relations, as well as the way people mobilise supporters to join an event for a political cause. The gap, perhaps, can indicate the resistance of some older citizens, who often refuse to understand or embrace the social changes generated by technology.

¹⁴⁷ Based on a comic book by Alan Moore and David Lloyd (1988), the film is about an anarchist hero who goes by the name of V. It is set in London during the aftermath of a fictionalised atomic war and in the film, V manages to bring down a future totalitarian government. V is always wearing a Guy Fawkes mask.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

The underlying analytical concepts in this chapter are citizens' usage of ICTs and the new nature of social movement. Technology is the backbone of the organisation and mobilisation in these social movements, with Facebook and blogs becoming crucial tools which empower and enable supporters and participants to enhance their influence across boundaries of time and space. Some existing research points out that ICTs enable and strengthen civil society to mobilise grassroots democracy (Jensen, Danziger & Venkatesh, 2007) and thusly that increasing political engagement in the online and offline worlds can consolidate democratic values and transform them into practices in the political arena. In the cases of the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement and the White Shirt Movement, ICT and social media encouraged citizens to engage, debate, and participate in public affairs in a modern democracy. For instance, Taiwan citizens who took part in online discussion and debate over the tragic death of Hung Chung-Chiu exhibited a strong awareness of the issues of human rights. They applied ICTs in their political engagement and forced their political representatives to look squarely into the eye of the island's new "civic-oriented social movements" (Hung, 2014: 69). As the entire White Shirt Movement was initiated by a total of just thirty-nine people who had never led any civic movements before, their success in challenging the long-standing military court has led some to refer the movement as the 'Taiwanese Spring' (Lin, 2013: 8). As key members of Citizen 1986 stated in separate interviews that the event was mostly initiated and organised on the Internet (A3, A4), it might be safe to argue that the White Shirt Movement officially introduced a new page in the social movement in Taiwan for 'civic renewal' on the island (Hung, 2014: 72). The contribution of this chapter lies in the empirical evidence which helps bridge the gap between the literature of the impact of ICT on citizens' political engagement in modern democracies.

Chapter 6 - When Sunflower Seeds take Root in Democratic Soil

6.1. Introduction

As has been discussed in the preceding chapters, during former President Ma Ying-jeou's first term (2008 – 2012), student-led social movements re-emerged in Taiwan and focused on issues relating to different political, social and economic aspects of Taiwan. They impacted Taiwanese society by raising public awareness of the importance of democracy, freedom, and human rights, and the momentum behind these movements was accumulated by a series of small- or large-scale movements which took place between 2008 and 2013. The combined effect of these social movements created an undeniably significant force that challenged the Ma administration on issues concerning the democratic way of life enjoyed by the 23.5 million people in Taiwan. These democratic values, including things such as the right of assembly or the freedoms of speech and press, have become deeply integrated into the daily life of Taiwanese people since the end of martial law. In 2014, Taiwanese civil society responded to the hasty passage of the cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA) by a legislative committee with the unprecedented move to occupy the Parliament chamber for twenty-four days. After a flower shop owner delivered flowers to the protesters as a form of support, the media began to call the occupation the "Sunflower Movement" by movement. This Chapter builds on the methods and approach of previous chapters and proceeds to analyse the Sunflower Movement with the aim of examining the digital context behind the usage of ICT tools and social media. This chapter will examine protesting citizens' activities during the movement and discuss the implication of their political and civic engagement in a modern democracy. It then draws on several interviews with activists, members of

ruling and opposition political parties, media, and citizens who voluntarily participated in the movement. When the organization and mobilisation process of a social movement can be enabled digitally, citizens can easily “join” the movement by “sharing” or “clicking” the “Like” button on social media (Chadwick, 2013). The aim of this Chapter is to shed new light on how the convergence of old and new media outlets might have changed the way citizens participate in, organise, and perceive social movements.

6.2. Sunflower Movement: the origin and implication

In 2010, President Ma inked the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) with the Chinese government in an effort to normalise the already vibrant trade and economic relations between Taiwan and China.¹⁴⁹ Article 4 of the ECFA stipulated that both governments would negotiate further agreements on service trade in the following years. After several rounds of negotiations and discussions, Beijing and Taipei finally reached an agreement under the ECFA framework and signed the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA) on 21 July in 2013 in Shanghai, China.

Background

Before the Executive Yuan sent the CSSTA to the Legislative Yuan for ratification, the government held sixteen public hearings, which raised growing concerns from scholars and civil groups. They argued that the agreement may cause negative impact on Taiwan’s small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and generate greater economic

¹⁴⁹ Take tourism, for instance, during the early 90s, the number of tourists from Taiwan to China only just exceeded one million per year. In 2014, the number increased to approximately 5.37 million. Growing tourism and business interactions somehow made an increasing number of Taiwanese people feel that the pace at which this relationship moved forward was getting too “fast”. Gradually, a stronger sense of a Taiwanese identity derived from the increased social contact between the peoples from the two sides. See Matsuda (2015), ‘Cross-Strait Relations under the Ma Ying-jeou administration: From Economic to Political Dependence?’

dependence on China. In addition, some Taiwanese business representatives also argued that the signing of the CSSTA showed procedural controversies as many of the SME representatives were either not invited to attend or only received invitations to those public hearings at the last minute, making their participation impossible. Despite the mounting public concern, on 17 March, then ruling KMT legislator Chang Ching-Chung (張慶忠), in his capacity as convener of the Internal Administration Committee of the Legislative Yuan, took all of thirty seconds to read out the draft CSSTA and then announced the completion of the review process (Cole, 2014). Straight after Chang's announcement, the Executive Yuan (Taiwan's Cabinet) in an official statement expressed appreciation and congratulated Chang for completing the committee review of the agreement.¹⁵⁰ With sixty-five members in the 113-seat Legislature, the KMT was confident that the CSSTA could be implemented as early as June 2014.

The sudden announcement and the procedural controversy surprised and antagonised the public, with students accusing the KMT legislative caucus of manoeuvring and manipulating the review procedure at the committee. They said the KMT legislators purposely avoided a proper clause-by-clause review of the CSSTA and expedited the ratification process of the agreement. They also criticised and blamed the ruling party for a lack of transparency during the review process of the committee. That evening, a group of students staged a sit-in protest right next to the Legislative Yuan and this protest was followed by a bigger-scale one the next evening

¹⁵⁰ In the statement, the Executive Yuan spokesperson, Sun Li-chun (孫立群), thanked Legislator Chang for making great efforts to help the passage of the CSSTA at the committee. Sun further noted that the passage could help Taiwan position itself to join future negotiations regarding the possibility of joining of the TPP and RCEP. See *Fumao Xieyi Songchu Weiyuanhui Xingzhengyuan Ganxie Lifayuan Lianxi Weiyuanhui Ji Zhaowei Zhangqingchong De Xinglao (The CSSTA passed the legislative committee, the Executive Yuan appreciated the efforts of the committee and convener Chang)*, the Executive Yuan http://www.ey.gov.tw/News_Content.aspx?n=F8BAEBE9491FC830&s=206A8AB0B6124714

on 18 March. At this protest some 300 people consisting of students, academics, activists, and people from other sectors broke into the Legislature and staged another sit-in protest, and then broke into the parliament building, and then, by around 21:00, managed to occupy the Floor. A few hundred others stayed outside the building to protect those in the compound.

The protesting students used chairs and furniture to block the entrances to the Floor of the Legislative Yuan. According to interviewee A1, they were quite lucky as there were already piles of chairs at the compound when they broke in. The chairs had been left by opposition members of the DPP, which had been planning to block the next day's sitting by using the chairs and furniture to fill entrances into the compound.

Shortly after, the National Police Administration dispatched the police force to evict the protesters. But the police were too late to stop the protest and when they arrived at the Legislative Yuan, the Floor was already occupied by hundreds of people. Cole observed that young people, who accounted for about 90 per cent of the entire group, used various kinds of social media to live broadcast and share photos and videos of the protest. On 19 March, the number of protesters swelled to 12,000 (Cole, 2014c :256).

After the protesters had successfully occupied the Legislature Floor for five consecutive days, local media dubbed the occupation as the "Sunflower movement", now considered the largest student-led movement since the Wild Lily movement in 1990 (Wang, 2014a). Many key student members (some of them are interviewed in the following sections) of the protest were called "seasoned veterans social movements", as a lot of them had taken part in previous social movements such as the While Strawberries Movement and the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement in 2008 and 2012, respectively.

“Sunflowers” Occupy the Parliament

The protesting students expressed worries over Beijing’s growing influence on Taiwan’s economy and argued that the CSSTA would further endanger Taiwan’s job market and increase Taiwan’s economic reliance on China (VOA, 2014).¹⁵¹ As of the morning of 19 March, the number of the protesters had swelled to several thousand. They occupied the Floor and live broadcasted the event via Facebook.¹⁵² In the evening of the same day, live streaming brought the protesters to an approximate number of 12,000 (Cole, 2014).

At the beginning, the student organisers did not expect to see so many people support the occupation movement. Lin Fei-fan (林飛帆, coded as A2 in the remaining paper), later widely recognised as the “student leader” of the Sunflower Movement, told the author that a day before the occupation, 17 March, he and other organisers were still discussing how to make more people aware of the potential damage the CSSTA could cause the society. A2 said:

When KMT Legislator Chang took the advantage of being a committee convener, expedited the review process and passed the draft CSSTA at the meeting, the public seemed to be rather aloof to the outcome. There were some NGOs planning to start a petition and trying to raise public awareness of this matter... and then on 18 March, between 5 and 7 pm, we contacted our friends and asked them to come to the Legislative Yuan. As the police were guarding the front door, we broke in through a side door on Qingdao East Road. After

¹⁵¹ See VOA (2014) “Taiwan Protesters Occupy Legislature Over China Trade Pact”, 19 March, on VOA <http://www.voanews.com/a/taiwan-protesters-occupy-legislature-demand-end-to-china-trade-pact/1874277.html>

¹⁵² They used UStream.tv (<http://www.ustream.tv/channel/longson3000>) as the main online channel to broadcast the occupation of the Legislature. Meanwhile, many photos and short videos were uploaded and shared on Facebook (Taiwan is one of the countries with the highest Facebook penetration rate in the World).

*some of us at the Floor checked in on Facebook, we started to see more people join us.*¹⁵³

As they began to see their momentum grow, the protesters announced their four demands to the government: 1) withdraw the CSSTA and send it back to the Executive Yuan; 2) legislate a scrutiny mechanism to monitor all cross-Strait agreements; 3) host a Citizen Constitutional Conference (*gongmin xianzheng huiyi*/國民憲政會議) to discuss matters about Constitutional, electoral and party systems and 4) all legislators to support that the CSSTA should be left aside until a scrutiny mechanism is legislated. The students believed that the government could be held accountable only through a transparent negotiation process with China. After a long six days of inaction an international press conference was finally convened at which Ma said the protest had to end, so that “other countries would not start to question Taiwan’s sincerity and credibility in signing further agreements”. A few days later, after the momentum of the protesters continued to grow bigger, Ma finally said that he would agree to have a clause-by-clause review of the CSSTA and call a National Conference on Trade and Economics to address issues of cross-Strait economic and trade relations. However, he declined to agree to withdraw the CSSTA from the Legislature.

Ma’s press conference did not resolve the deadlock, but only further intensified the tension between the government and protesters. His statement also generated more support, not for the government, but for the occupy movement. Following Ma’s press conference, fifteen professors from four top universities in Taiwan held a joint press conference lending their support to the protesting students.

¹⁵³ It’s quite interesting that Lin during the interview used the term *qiyi* (起義), meaning “uprising” in English, to describe the Sunflower Movement. The choice of wording elevates the importance of this unprecedented occupy movement.

They called on President Ma to legislate a scrutiny mechanism on cross-Strait agreements before the government proceeded to review the CSSTA. As there was scholarly evidence showing that the CSSTA could cause Taiwan a potentially negative impact, and they argued that the government should face criticism from the public otherwise and the government's attitude could be considered to constitute a "democratic crisis".¹⁵⁴

Ma's responses, in addition to the statements from the protesting students, and the press conference held by the scholars, reflect the fundamentally different concerns between the government and the public. The protesters were particularly concerned about the transparency issues existing in any negotiations or trade agreements Taiwan has with China and other foreign countries. To the students, Ma was a leader who only attached importance to Taiwan's reputation in the international community but not the consequences of the trade pact or any negative impact which could be caused by the CSSTA. On the other hand, for Ma, the trade pact was just a follow-up deal to the ECFA, which had been signed four years before. He argued that the ECFA had successfully helped Taiwan sign free trade agreements (FTAs) with New Zealand and Singapore, respectively. As such, he was resolute in his intent to ratify the CSSTA and felt that the failure of the ratification would affect a future signing of a trade in goods agreement with China, as well as other trade agreements with other countries in the future. During an interview with the Economist in late March, Ma once more argued that failing to ratify the CSSTA at the Legislature would only lead the international community to question Taiwan's "sincerity and determination" to sign a trade pact with other countries.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ See *Xueshujiu Huiying Mayingjiu Zongtong Jizhehui Shengminggao Yuanwen* (Full text of the response from academics to President Ma's Press Conference), *Apple Daily*, 23 March, <http://www.appledaily.com.tw/realitimenews/article/new/20140323/365505>

¹⁵⁵ See <https://www.economist.com/banyan/2014/03/28/straight-from-mr-mas-mouth>

One thing Ma failed to notice was that the protesting students did not just focus on the controversies surrounding the CSSTA. Additionally, they also aimed at calling for a broader public participation in politics so that the general public could monitor any future arrangements or agreements between Taiwan and China. Such intent was demonstrated in every statement issued by the students, who always placed “withdraw the CSSTA” (*tuihui fumaof*/ 退回服貿) as the number one priority of their list of demands. The students believed that only by the legislation of a scrutiny mechanism to oversee cross-Strait agreements, would it increase the accountability and transparency of the government of Taiwan.

Frustrated by Ma’s response, some protesters attempted to storm the Executive Yuan (Taiwan’s Cabinet) on 23 March. However, this time they were forcefully evicted by riot police deployed by then Premier Yi-Hua Jiang (江宜樺) within less than three hours of the incident. As over a hundred protesters were arrested and injured during the eviction, student unions from forty universities across the country issued a joint statement pledging their support to the Sunflower Movement, and condemning the police brutality during the forced eviction. They announced that the students would be dismissed from all classes to protest against police brutality.

It was found out through an interview that the protesting students did not expect to be evicted by riot police. When asked if there was any fear or anxiety when the students broke into the Legislature, interviewee A1 said, “no, we thought maybe the worse case is that the police will force their way onto the Floor and drag us out”. “We were busy trying to block all the entrances and distributing tasks among ourselves anyways”. A1 said:

That is why everyone was shocked and enraged when the government dispatched riot police to evict the protesters from the Executive Yuan. We have heard stories from older activists saying that they used to be beaten up or

*tortured by the police when they took to the streets to fight for democracy. We thought that was something which only happened during the martial law era. None of us expected that our friends would get beaten up or kicked repeatedly by the police, especially when we are living in a democracy.*¹⁵⁶

The occupation and political impasse further spurred the public's distrust in the government's accountability and transparency. A poll conducted by TVBS (which is generally considered to be a pro-KMT media station) and Apple Daily (one of the biggest local newspapers in Taiwan) found that the majority of the Taiwanese people approved and supported the Sunflower Movement's occupation of the Legislative Yuan (Liberty Times, 2014).¹⁵⁷ On 30 March, the students organised a rally with attracted around 350,000 to 500,000 participants to reiterate their four demands in front of the Presidential Office (Cole, 2014b).¹⁵⁸

The deadlock of the situation lasted until 6 April, when then Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-Pyng (王金平) of the KMT promised the protesters that the Legislature would not put the CSSTA back on the agenda unless a scrutiny mechanism of cross-Strait agreements was established (Tiezzi, 2014). In response to Wang's promise, one of the student leaders, Wei-Ting Chen (陳為廷), claimed victory. He said, "the students and civil groups have halted the forced passage of the

¹⁵⁶ Some protesters described their experience during the eviction saying that they were knocked to the ground, while riot police used their shields and boots to kick and hit them repeatedly. See <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2015/03/25/2003614363>

¹⁵⁷ See Liberty Times (2014) "Yu 8 Cheng Renwei Ma Gaiyu Xuesheng Goutong" (Over 80 Taiwan people think Ma should communicate with students), TVBS, 24 March <http://news.ltn.com.tw/news/politics/breakingnews/974764>

¹⁵⁸ Lin Fei-fan, announced on 29 March that the "330" protest could be called off if the President met their demands. However Ma and his administration remained adamant in their support of the CSSTA. When the rally kicked off around 1pm on 30 March, Ma argued that he had already responded to the protesters' demands, and wanted them to dismiss the rally and leave the Legislature so the government could resume its operations. See Cole, Michael (2014b) "Hundreds of Thousands Protest Against Trade Pact in Taiwan", in *The Diplomat*, 31 March. <http://thediplomat.com/2014/03/hundreds-of-thousands-protest-against-trade-pact-in-taiwan/>

agreement (CSSTA) and demonstrated that Ma’s administration’s has lost legitimacy” (ibid). On 7 April, the protesters announced that as their demands had been partially met, they would leave the Legislature on 10 April.

The momentum of the Sunflower Movement was not only reflected in its number of participants, but also in many public opinion polls conducted by local media (See Table 6.1). And such support was not only reflected in the polling numbers, many of them donated money, provided tents, food, shelter, and even spiritual encourage (Cole, 2015).

Media	Poll Date	Finding	
TVBS ¹⁵⁹	31 March	46% said supported students’ demands	35% said they opposed the students’ demands
Apple Daily ¹⁶⁰	31 March	52.2% said the students should not leave the Legislature until their demands are met	39.41% said the students should leave the Legislature as they had expressed their concern.
TISR ¹⁶¹	24-26 March	63.0% said the students’ occupation of the Legislature helps protect democracy	19.6% said the students’ occupation of the Legislature erode democracy
Business Today ¹⁶²	22-23 March	64.9% said they support the students’ occupation of the Legislature	26.5% said they opposed the students’ occupation of the Legislature

Table 6.1 Public opinion surveys on the Sunflower Movement¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ See TVBS poll conducted on 31 March, one day after the 330 rally. The poll also found that 42 per cent of respondents were opposed to the signing of CSSTA.

¹⁶⁰ The Apple Daily poll only gave respondents two options.
<http://www.appledaily.com.tw/appledaily/article/headline/20140331/35736521/>

¹⁶¹ Taiwan Indicator Survey Research (TISR) also found 35.4% of respondents agreed with the demand of the students that the CSSTA should be reviewed in a clause-by-clause manner.
<http://www.tisr.com.tw/?p=3992>

¹⁶² In the breakdown of the survey data, respondents aged 20-39 generally expressed a positive view of the Sunflower Movement, with more than 70% of them supporting the occupation of the Legislature. Older respondents were less likely to support the occupation. For respondents aged 40-49, 67.5% of them supported the movement whereas 32.6% did not support it. For respondents aged 50-59, 62.4% of them supported the movement whereas 32.6% expressed otherwise. For respondents aged 60-69, 59.8% supported the movement whereas 28.9% did not support it. For respondents aged 70 and above, less than half, 46.4% supported the movement, whereas 26% said they did not support the occupation of the Legislature. See
<http://www.businesstoday.com.tw/list-content-80440>

6.3. A More Sophisticated Usage of ICTs and Social Media

It is the cultivation of the students' effort in the past two years, during which they defied conventional views about the younger generation – that they could not care less about politics and the world they live in – and showed Taiwanese that they do care and they would take action to make the country a better place – anytime and anywhere (Wang, 2014a).

While it was not the first time under the Ma administration that citizens had occupied a government building – in 2013, some 20,000 protesters occupied the ministry of Education for 20 hours to protest government demolitions and land seizures (Wang, 2013)¹⁶⁴ – it was, however, unprecedented for Taiwan's Legislature to be occupied for twenty-four consecutive days. As a quote from a Liberty Times report put it (Wang, 2014a), the Sunflower Movement, however, had not just happened overnight. The organisational and mobilisation skills demonstrated by the protesting students were the accumulated knowledge and experiences from their involvement in the previous social movements. From their previous engagement, they polished and sophisticated their usage of the ICTs and social media.

Significantly, the high Internet penetration rate shows that many aspects of Taiwanese people's life can be digitally enabled and connected. For instance in 2014, the total number of Taiwanese people who had access to the Internet reached 17 million (Taiwan Network Information Centre, 2014), which accounted for over 75 per

¹⁶³ The surveys were conducted by both pro-government and opposition media outlets, as well as the independent research organization (TISR). They were conducted in the first two weeks of the movement. The findings revealed a general support from the people of Taiwan towards the demands proposed by the protesting students.

¹⁶⁴ See Wang, Chris (2013) "Protesters occupy government building", *Taipei Times*, page 1 <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2013/08/20/2003570116>

cent of the entire population on the island.¹⁶⁵ With this background in mind, this section will review their ICT and social media usage and how technologies enabled the protesting students to increase their momentum domestically and internationally. In terms of the main research methods, this section will carefully analyse the context and development in the Sunflower Movement, with the supplement data from several semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders from different sectors of society.

Social Media as Alternative News Channel

When the students broke onto the Floor of the Legislature, they organised small teams with each in charge of different tasks, such as security, press, social media and research (Chao, 2014). Those who were too young to have taken part in the Wild Lily Movement to obtain mobilisation skills back in the 1990s certainly knew how to take full advantage of the ICT tools and social networking platforms now at their disposal. For instance, they used social media sites including Facebook and Reddit's "Ask Me Anything" forum to share first-hand information and announcements with both the Taiwanese public and the international community, respectively.¹⁶⁶ As mainstream media's reports might be affected by their political leanings, the protesters took control of how the event would be reported by using social media as the major channel to communicate with the public. They also operated twenty-four-hour live streaming via twelve online Web sites such as Ustream, livehouse.in, and YouTube, so online viewers could see what was happening inside the Legislature. From the live

¹⁶⁵ See Taiwan Network Information Centre (2014) 'Survey on Taiwan broadband users'.
<http://www.twNIC.net.tw/NEWS4/135.pdf>

¹⁶⁶ Although Reddit is not considered a social media site commonly used by Taiwanese people, Sunflower protesting students set up official accounts to post and answer questions from netizens around the world about the development of the event. They set up the page two weeks after they broke into the Legislature. By the end of the event, they had received 798 comments asking questions about topics ranging from the arguments and rationale of the movement to the issue of Taiwanese identity.
https://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/21xsaz/we_are_students_that_have_taken_over_taiwans

streaming video, the general public could obtain the most up-to-date information about the development of the protest, and decide whether they should join the event by following the real time developments of the event (Guan, 2013).

In a way similar to the Wild Strawberries Movement, local mainstream media did not pay much attention during the initial stages of the Sunflower movement, including Tuesday, 18 March, when the students first broke into the Legislature. In an effort to make their voice heard, they began to post articles and photos on CNN iReport. Their efforts successfully drew the wider attention of many overseas students and attracted many volunteers to help translate articles and statements, and post them on various foreign media platforms. Starting from 19 March, Taiwanese local media picked up foreign media reports and began paying much closer attention to the student movement.

With a 65 per cent rate of penetration in Taiwan, there are about 15 million active Facebook users in Taiwan every month.¹⁶⁷ The protesting students and citizens who supported the Sunflower Movement spontaneously set up several Facebook pages in both Mandarin and English to publish information about the movement and update their mobilisation plans. For instance, two Facebook pages “Occupy Taiwan’s Parliament Action” and “Taiwan Voice” frequently shared English information and foreign news agencies’ reports on the movement. It might be worth noting that the group “Citizen 1985” from the 2015 White Shirt Movement also used its Facebook page to publish first-hand information from the Legislature and the development of the event. Lastly, the Graduate Institute of Journalism of National Taiwan University also set up a Facebook page, “NTU Journalism E Forum” (*Taida Xinwen E Luntan*), to offer around the clock comprehensive and instant reports. The “NTU Journalism E

¹⁶⁷ Facebook Director for North Asia Jayne Leung told CNA that Facebook’s penetration rate in Taiwan was the highest in the world, edging out Hong Kong’s 61%. See <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/biz/archives/2014/02/28/2003584495>

Forum” (台大 e 論壇) was originally run by only three students from the NTU Journalism Graduate Institute. During the Sunflower Movement, over eighty students from different universities joined forces writing reports for the forum together. Throughout the event, there were several different Facebook pages managed by different groups of people. All of them shared a common aim, which was to help the movement generate more public support and media exposure.

In an effort to have the protest seen on more mainstream media outlets locally and globally, students on 24 March organised an online crowdfunding campaign. They successfully reached their target (NTD 6,330,000) collecting a total of NTD 6,947,166 within three hours (Yang, 2014) of launching the campaign.¹⁶⁸ The fund was used to purchase a full-page of advertising space on the New York Times, as well as one full-page in the Apple Daily. It is also the first time in Taiwan’s social movement history that protesters successfully raised a substantial amount of money to purchase the front page of a major foreign newspaper.

24/7 translation team

The students formed a translation team which consisted of some eighty people who translated the event statements and information into a total of ten different languages. Another Facebook page “Taiwan News”, on the other hand, was run and managed by several professionals living in Taiwan. The page managers included Taiwanese and non-Taiwanese. They offered up-to-date news summary in at least four different languages (Mandarin, English, French, and German). One of the movement-related Facebook pages, “Sunflower Movement, Taiyanghua Xueyun” (Sunflower Movement, Sunflower Student-led Movement), even had a team of translators who translated

¹⁶⁸ A total of 3,621 donors contributed to the crowd-funding campaign organized by netizens who supported the Sunflower Movement. They used Flying V as an online fundraising platform to launch such campaign. See <https://www.thenewslens.com/article/2866>

their statements into at least six languages (English, French, German, Portuguese, Arabic and Korean).¹⁶⁹

Political party involvement

It might be important to note that during the occupation, political parties' involvement remained ambiguous. Although the then opposition DPP did help the activists at the Legislature by negotiating with then Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-Pyng of the ruling KMT, the DPP politicians were still not welcomed to give any speech at the 30 March rally or jointly publish any statements with the protesters. It might be safe to argue that, the legitimacy and momentum of the Sunflower Movement came from the fact that participants mostly consisted of scholars, students, and activists. As A2 told the author, the general public expected the student movement to go beyond the traditional "blue and green political rivalry". As a result, A2 said they made a conscious effort to avoid any direct affiliation with political parties and prevent the event from being labelled as a "DPP-backed political activity".

Support from professionals and scholars also helped the protesters gain greater public support. For instance, Chang Hsiu-ling, an economics professor at National Taiwan University, in her research had criticised the government's hasty passage of the CSSTA and the potential negative impact the CSSTA could cause.¹⁷⁰ Another example was the joint press conference held by 15 scholars coming from different universities. They pledged their support for the protest and helped strengthen the

¹⁶⁹ See <https://www.facebook.com/sunflowermovement/posts>

¹⁷⁰ Professor Cheng Hsiu-Ling during the Sunflower Movement actively published op-eds criticising the CSSTA and the government's handling of the trade pact. She argued that Taiwanese youth initiated the Sunflower Movement not only in an attempt to stop the CSSTA from being implemented, but also in order to call on the government to respect the Constitutional order and respect the core values of democracy. See her op-ed at Coolloud, a website focusing on labour rights in Taiwan: <http://www.coolloud.org.tw/node/78064>

legitimacy of the movement. Their support resulted in attracting wider support from people across the political spectrum.

6.4. Discussion and Analysis

The previous chapter touched upon how social media and technology can digitally empower activists and generate a new form of mobilisation that is called “connective action” by Bennett and Segerberg (2013). They identify how citizens can use ICTs to personalise information of social movements and digitally share with their personal networks through social media sites. What remains unanswered is whether this connected action will help generate a form of common ground which can contribute to a “collective identity”. The aim of this section is to explore the formation of the collective solidarity of the Sunflower Movement and conceptualise the mobilisation processes which triggers collective identity formation. In this section, press releases and published statements during the Sunflower Movement were supplemented with the conducting of several interviews. This evidence and material provides an interesting and useful supplement to the oral sources of information in the quest for an organizational ‘ideology’ of citizenship.

Conceptualized Framework: CCO and citizenship

The digitally enabled communication process is more than a process of organising a social movement. The communication and mobilisation process is especially significant to a social movement as the process to some extent speaks for the “we” as a unit, a collective noun (Putnam, Nicotera, & McPhee, 2009). To them, the process can be called “communication constitutive of organizing” (CCO), in which “text” or “codes” are used to encapsulate the movement’s identity. Laura Putnam and her colleagues take a social construction lens to this idea, arguing that organisation stems

from communication. In other words, **organisation cannot exist without communication**. In their CCO theory, communication constitutes organisations which also reflect social construction of reality, and organising itself is a process of communicating. Such an idea is similar to a theory proposed by Hawes (1974), who argues that communication is not only an organisational activity, but also a form of creating and recreating social structures. The recreation process could be carried out through the use of language, symbols or co-constructed meanings.

As Langlois, Elmer, McKelvey and Devereaux (2009) note, social media has become a site of political communication and action in many other parts of the world. The growing political activities taking place on social media sites create a space where citizens can be informed and also participate in debates or events about public affairs. These social media sites then offer citizens a place where they potentially influence the political decision-making process. The Habermasian type of public sphere to some extent might be able to describe the democratic potential of social media, however, the personalised information and the multilayers of personal and public spaces in the architecture of social media makes it difficult to understand how citizens perceive and discuss political information through social media sites where political communication, political contexts and communication patterns are somewhat intertwined altogether. As they argue, ‘there is a need to pay attention on how politics mobilises code at the same time as code formalises politics according to specific informational logic’ (ibid., p.417). According to their argument, ‘code’ includes the software, networks, information dynamics and other relevant elements of digital media through which communication takes place.

This section attempts to suggest that the idea of ‘code’ or ‘text’ could be an indicator for one to analyse the underlying perception of citizenship. Such perception can be exhibited by the ‘code’ and ‘text’ creators, who can be the participants,

activists or citizens who pay attention to a certain event or a social movement. This chapter, based on the foregoing discussion, suggests that the idea of “digital citizenship” can be potentially conceptualised as the interconnected texts and conversations that take place on digitally enabled social media sites on which citizens come together to share and discuss public matters. The following section will draw its empirical evidence from semi-structured interviews with several Sunflower Movement activists, party staff, as well as online material gathered through social media sites or other relevant platforms established with an aim of supporting the Sunflower Movement.

6.5 When citizens publicly express their private me-centricity

As previous chapters revealed, many Taiwanese young activists used ICTs and social media to harness their collective action and express their views without the support of traditional mainstream media outlets, especially when their action was downplayed or ignored by traditional media. As such, the rise of social movement, to some extent, can be attributed to the rise of ICTs which digitally enable citizens to change the way they advocate a political or social issue, and further change the relationship between citizens and their democratically elected representatives in the parliament.

In terms of the usage of Facebook during the Sunflower Movement, their English page “Occupy Taiwan’s Parliament Action” by default provided the following methods for people to express their support or views on the movement: citizens could become “fans” of their page” or supporters of the movement leaders’ public Facebook profiles, citizens could create or join a Facebook group or page, or citizens could share their political views on their personal Facebook account. These methods thus helped any one who expressed interest in her/his Facebook page become part of the members of the social movement. When one clicked the “like”

button on the Facebook fan page, she/he would begin to receive updates in the news feed of her/his personal account. She/he then would be exposed to the narratives and arguments posed by activists calling for the government to respond to “our demands”.

As this multi-layered cyberspace creates a new arena for individuals to express the “self” and recreate the territory of “self” through different expressive tools, technology has reshaped citizens’ communication and the definition of “public” and “private”. By liking a fan page about the Sunflower Movement, or following some activist’s personal page, these **collective actions help reinforce a collective voice, and then a collective identity, “we”, which is used repeatedly by the activist.** On many occasions, the activists used “we” in their narratives and created a sense of belonging for their followers, both offline or online. One of the movement’s related Facebook fan pages “Sunflower Movement Taiwanyanghua Xueyun” (Sunflower Movement, Sunflower Student-led Movement) in its press release dated 4 April stated:

We are in the process of discussing and planning what is next for the movement. We aim to dig roots around the country, using speeches, marches, grassroots forums, Internet-based civic movements, and monitoring of the Legislature, to augment our dual goals of resisting CSSTA and the legalization of the oversight mechanism.

(4 April, 2014, published on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/sunflowermovement/posts/322737267851435>)

Similarly, the concept of “we” was repeatedly reiterated in the cover photo of another Facebook fan page “Occupy Taiwan’s Parliament Action”. In its cover photo a statement in the photo states:

With the protest now on our fifth day, our demands include:

- 1. Send back the cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement*
- 2. Pass a bill to monitor cross-Strait agreements*
- 3. President Ma must answer our demands*

(22 March 2014, published on the Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Occupy-Taiwans-Parliament-Action-666530176737131/?fref=ts>)

Similarly, the word “we” was used twenty-six times in the speech by one of the student leaders, Lin Fei-fang, at the 30 March rally:

Now, we must give direct orders to a government that has lost self-control... We have made this very clear since day one: Taiwan’s representative system and democracy has been thoroughly destroyed by an autocratic and dominant authority. (Lin: 2014)¹⁷¹

The texts above show that the idea of “we” was created by the statements issued on the Facebook pages, as well as the Sunflower Movement leaders in their speeches. And such an idea was recreated and reinforced when supporters shared or “liked” the posts on social media sites. Lin’s speech and the Facebook page cover photo created a distinction between “we” and those who were not part of the Sunflower Movement, meaning the Ma administration. The protestors claimed that they spoke on behalf of the people of Taiwan and that they were fighting for the rights supposedly given to

¹⁷¹ In his concluding speech at 7pm at the 30 March rally, Lin Fei-fan reiterated the four demands that the Ma administration must withdraw the CSSTA and directly respond to the protesters. The full text in English can be found at “March 30, 2014 Sunflower Movement Speech in Taiwan [English Translation], CNN, iReportert, 30 March, <http://ireport.cnn.com/docs/DOC-1114540>

the people in a democracy. As a journalist told the author, the younger generation was calling for a “dialogue” between the people and the government during the Sunflower Movement (M2):

The new generation wants dialogue directly with the government. However, the Ma administration was seemingly defending the corporates. In the past 16 years, Ma has been quite popular in Taiwanese society as a mayor of Taipei and then as president. However, the Internet allows people to challenge such popularity and forces god to leave his altar (M2).

That the Internet provides social movement activists a new public sphere to call for direct communication and dialogue with politicians helps the common people elevate their position in the relationship between citizen and politicians. As M2 argues, during the Sunflower Movement, people formed a collective voice which basically called for direct communication and dialogue with the government.

This elevated position also helped further reinforce the idea of “we” – the public – vs. “them”, which is the Ma government. The emphasis of this collective “me” could be found in the activists’ usage of “we” in their social media posts and statements published on other platforms at different social media sites. The distinction between the activists and the government was therefore reinforced by the personal networks between movement participants, who via the various social media sites saw their friends occupy the Legislature and henceforth decided to take action to join their friends, as well as the Sunflower Movement. A key member told the author that the personal networks of young people were crucial to the mobilization process:

Before we broke into the Legislature (note: on 18 March), the period of time between 5pm and 7pm was quite critical because many people began to share with their friends on social media about the break-in plan. We assigned some people to gather near the Legislature's entrance near Qingdao East Road to distract the police. Meanwhile, another group was assigned to gather at the other entrance near Jinan Road and force into the Legislature building. When we broke into the Legislature, some journalists also came along with us. I think there were about 100 to 200 people inside the Floor. A lot of us checked-in on Facebook, took photos and selfies, and then shared the photos on Facebook. Our sharing activity attracted more people to come join us in the Legislature (A5).

As an outspoken member of the Sunflower Movement, A5 was invited to debate with politicians and public officials on various live televised political talk shows during the twenty-four day of occupation. The level of the user interface was described by A5 as an important element in the organisational process of the movement. Of course, such an organisational process did not rely on digital network alone. It began with a few people who knew each other and shared certain level of mutual trust. His comments echoed that of A1, personal networks became the supporter base of a protest or demonstration, particularly during the social movements of recent years in Taiwan. While people invite their friends to join a protest together, such an invitation makes attending a protest look like going to a big gathering where all your friends are probably there already.

Another interviewee, who is currently an aide of a then ruling KMT legislator, told the author that the Sunflower Movement was initiated by a closed group in which members had already attended previous social movements in the past together:

On 18 March, I think there were about nearly 100 people who closely communicated with each other through their personal LINE messaging groups or Facebook groups. Those groups are usually exclusive for invited members only. And my friend who joined the movement told me that they have been organising the event for a long time since previous social movements (P1)

The personal networks reinforced this me-centric focus by transmitting images, texts and video of the movement through multi-layered social media sites. As A5 mentioned, the first thing they did when they broke into the Legislature was to take selfies and check in on Facebook. The interviews with A5 and P1 reaffirm the role of Facebook in the organisational process, as the popular social media site enables people to spread relevant information and their political demands through their “personal networks” embedded in the interactive digital media environment (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012: 742). As A5 notes, the protesting students’ activities on Facebook turned the social media platform into the most important “medium” in the organisational process. The activists not only shared the event with their instant contacts on social media, but also with people they did not know by changing their account privacy setting from “personal” to “public”, and thus allowing people including their friends’ friends or strangers to see what was posted on their personal Facebook accounts. It is through the action of “turning privacy setting from private to public” that protesters turned their private social media account into a public avenue for outsiders to receive updates about their personal activities. During the process, a common identity, “we” was forged, particularly if other people also liked or shared their posts about the protest. Here, the boundaries between what is private and what is

public become elusive, the identities between “me” and “we” also become blurred in the digitally enabled social movement.

Crafting an Imagined Community and Social Movement

In digital space, everything is transmitted in the form of data. In a digitally enabled and organised movement, activists communicate with each other through countless data transmission on the Internet, in which their demands, statements and views to certain degrees reflect the movement’s identity, and how the participants understand their role as citizens in a society. The preceding section argued how citizens’ personal networks provide a rich network to be analysed, reviewed the communication through which political-information dynamics are presented, and discussed the communication taking place in the online world.

In the same vein, this section aims to explore how social media, especially Facebook, personalises the digitally enabled representational interface as the communication process taking place on the Internet may affect the way people perceive themselves and others as members of a public, as well as the way they experience their social and political world online. The challenge facing the pursuit of this section is the growing interactive functions and multiple-layers of convergent social media sites. A post on Facebook can be the recreation of posts from other social networking sites, such as Twitter, LinkedIn or Instagram. Therefore, the proliferation of social media sites makes it quite difficult to gauge all communication flow online. However, by taking an analytical view over the informational dynamics of Facebook during a social movement, this section hopes to contribute to the existing research of the social and cultural assumptions about social media.

According to an interview with Huang Shou-da¹⁷² (coded as P2), then director of the Department of Youth of the DPP, during the Sunflower Movement Facebook created an online and collective identity, which is similar to Anderson's (1983) notion of "imagined communities":

Facebook creates an imaginary space in which people share an illusion that they think they are being progressive altogether. Take recent social movements (note: in Taiwan) for instance, Facebook opened up and extended every Taiwanese personal network. For example, I knew A so I can learn about A's personal network through her/his social media account. A person's private network can be shared and extended to a national scale. (P2)

When one followed the Sunflower Movement through a Facebook fan page, she/he would be provided with information about the number of participants who expressed interest in a certain event, pictures or updates about the participatory behaviour of her/his fellow followers of the same page, and comments made by active contributors to the page. The individual could also express her/his views or share information on the page. It is these "easy actions", such as sharing, clicking the "Like" button, following, tweeting, or retweeting on social media sites, that facilitated closer ties amongst members or followers of a certain online social media group. The ties might not be as strong as some created by face-to-face interactions (Kavada, 2015), however, in the digitally enabled and created community, the nature of interpersonal ties might be fundamentally different from that of the offline world. As Gladwell (2010) in a New Yorker article argues, the platforms of social media are mainly based on weak ties, which allows people to make small changes through easy actions but not

¹⁷² Huang is one of those Sunflower activists who joined the 2018 local elections and became a local councillor. He is based in Taichung: <https://www.facebook.com/taichungedada/>.

big enough to challenge reality.¹⁷³ Despite the fact that it was the “small acts” which helped Sunflower Movement activists successfully raise NTD 6.33 million in less than three hours and mobilize over 500,000 people to stage a rally in front of the Presidential Office, weak ties are still central to collective action when technology, to some extent, has changed the way people interact with each other and perceive information with their gadgets.

Such a view is shared by P1, who in the interview commented that social media makes it easier to begin a social movement:

Social media allows activists to mobilize people quicker and more easily. It also makes the speed of information on movements sharing a lot faster. (P1)

What P1 described is the low threshold of starting a social movement. One can start a social movement simply by creating a Facebook page and asking her/his contacts to join or share with their personal contacts until there is a sufficient number of registered participants. On the digitally enabled platform, everyone can create content, collaborate and recreate more content, which can potentially lean to an “empowerment of citizens” with the potential to generate economic or social changes (Benkler, 2006).

When interviewed by the author, P2 even shared an idea about how to start a social movement via Facebook:

If you have at least 50 to 100 friends on your Facebook account, then you have reached the basic threshold of starting a movement. You can call on them

¹⁷³ See Gladwell, Malcolm (2010) “Small Change”, Why the revolution will not be tweeted, *the New Yorker*, 4 October, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/10/04/small-change-malcolm-gladwell>

to support your action, as long as your cause is reasonable and convincing. It is how easy you can create a small scale social movement on social media
(P2).

P2's comments might help shed new light on how social media reshapes the way people think they can form a social movement, how they consume political information, and the way people decide whether to participate politically. In other words, the context in which people operate and influence each other in terms of participating in a political event might be changed in the digital age. However, it does not mean that social media has become the main driving force behind a collective action or social movement. What P2 and this study find is that social media and ICTs have the potential to generate disruptive social or political change without the traditional organisational process. Similarly, A5 noted the importance of social media, particularly Facebook, in the case of Taiwan's recent social movements:

Facebook is quite important as it connects different social circles and expands people's networks. It also creates new types of opinion leaders, who can garner momentum through such expanded networks created online. (A5)

The aforementioned comments from politicians and Sunflower Movement activists somewhat indicate the decreasingly important role of traditional media in the multifaceted relationship between citizens and social movements. If in the last century traditional media helped contribute to the building of 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983) by making their products appeal to the public's nationalistic attitude, in the digital age ICT and social media enable people to form their own "imagined communities" without the mediation from mainstream media organizations. The

Sunflower Movement activists and supporters on several Facebook pages – “Taiwan Voice”, “Occupy Taiwan’s Parliament Action” and “Sunflower Movement Xueyun” – issued statements and news releases in different languages in an attempt to control how traditional media may cover the movement. As texts, pictures and videos can travel quickly from one follower’s social network to another, activists use the Facebook pages to diffuse the information on the movement beyond their personal networks. Similarly, Mattoni and Trere’s (2014) research on an Italian student-led movement finds that social media enables activists to “act, negotiate and engage” with the media through flows of multiple communication technologies in the continuum between mainstream media and new media (ibid., 264). As such, activists of the Sunflower Movement were offered plenty of alternative media combination that student activists of the 1990s could not even imagine. It is through the constant exchange, discussion and transmission of digital information of the Sunflower Movement that activists and their followers on social media together formed an “imagined community”. The community of the Sunflower activists changed Taiwan’s political landscape, as demonstrated in local elections occurring later that same year in November, 2014, and they also changed general public’s perception of social movement. This community also successfully attracted people from all walks of life, with A2 commenting:

Since the Sunflower Movement, a lot of people who used to be aloof about politics now became more interested in public affairs.

Perhaps it is useful to borrow Mattoni and Trere’s comment that ‘social movements were said to “take place as conversation” in which activists and their followers interact with “multiple audiences” on the multi-layered social media

platforms' (ibid., 253). When people politically engage with each other on social media sites, the information and discussion they exchange and share constitute a collective voice, a collective action, and then a collective identity. Just like in this post written by Sunflower activists on Reddit:

To be honest, we are all really tired. It's been like a never-ending camping trip, except we're in a fluorescent lighted building in the middle of the city. But we keep ourselves busy and organise... We're definitely building momentum though.

(Posted on Reddit:

https://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/21xsaz/we_are_students_that_have_taken_over_taiwans/cghz9ym)

Perhaps, the strong momentum of the Sunflower Movement can be possibly attributed to empowered individualism as technologies provide citizens with various expressive tools to voice their opinion, being it personal, political or social. Individualism, as Inglehart (1997) notes, is embraced and exhibited by young citizens in their social and political orientation. The self-oriented social media reinforces people's attention on her/himself by making small, creative actions such as taking selfie photos, checking-in at every place she/he visits or sharing personal feeling or updates on the Facebook "status" with their followers. Nevertheless, it is interesting that under this sense of growing individualism, loosely connected individuals somehow manage to organise or mobilise enough people to cause substantial social or political changes, such as was the case with the Arab Spring.

Taking together the foregoing discussion and evidence gathered by the interviews, it is evident that social media helps facilitate a loose organisational

process of personalised information shared and distributed by diverse individuals through their own networks. To conceptualise how these individuals form a collective identity throughout the organization process, maybe Melucci's (1996) 'collective identity' can be helpful, particularly in how to analytically describe the identity forming process in a movement. He argues that collective identity is formed through an interactive and shared definition produced by a group of individuals. Melucci further notes that by 'interactive and shared', he means a recurrent process in which individuals form a collective identity through negotiating, interacting, communicating, and influencing each other. In addition to the communication process, a certain level of 'emotional investment' enables individuals to "feel themselves part of a common unity" (Ibid., 71). His idea of 'emotional investment' is similar to what was described by P2 as "emotional mobilisation":

In many social movements such as a 2012 movement opposing the Wenlin Yuan condominium project, the live broadcasting of the event made a lot of people remotely feel that they were part of the movement. When protesters used Facebook to live-stream the event where a group of young people trying to stop the city government to demolish an old residential apartment, they also broadcasted the feeling of crisis, urgency to people who watched the event online. The whole live broadcasting process became a collective experience.¹⁷⁴ (P2)

¹⁷⁴ In 2012, a family surnamed Wang refused to be relocated while their neighbours all agreed to do so for a city renewal project led by the Taipei City Government. When the government sent a team to demolish the Wang's house many college and university students went and supported the Wang family by staging a sit-in as a way to stop the team. The students live streamed their protest for over twelve hours, showing people the development of the whole event, including when the police came to fight the students.

In the same vein, what social media offered activists during the Sunflower Movement was this interactive and communicative environment, through which people emotionally and politically engage and communicate with each other. Their collective actions took place in these interactive relationships and interconnected conversations on the various multi-layered digital platforms. It henceforth loosely formed a digitally enabled, imagined community in which individuals shared a collective identity while they tried to generate social and political change through the actions of creating and recreating content on social media.

From Online to Offline; From Private to Public

So far, the cases discussed in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 have focused on the usage of social media, how social movement organisations in Taiwan are similar to the idea of communication constitute organisation (CCO), and the collective identity shared by members of the digitally enabled social movements. It might be appropriate to argue that Facebook and other online social media sites create a democratising impact on people's interaction online, by offering them information at their fingertips, providing them a platform for diverse demographics and equipping them with a wide variety of expressive tools.

The role of social media has been a focus for many researchers who attempt to unfold the relationship between citizens and the technological infrastructures in a society (Costanza-Chock, 2012) and social media in contemporary democracy (Castells, 2012; Chadwick, 2013). This section, however, attempts to argue that citizens, especially the technology-savvy ones, are digitally enabled to express their personal views, be that social, cultural, or political, with the private sphere embedded in their personal social media accounts. When the private sphere can be partially or temporarily turned into a space with an access to the public, the private space is no

longer what it used to be. Mediated communication is complicated by the multi-layered personal networks on the Internet, with ICTs and other technology turning people's personal views expressed on social media or other online activities and communication into commodifiable data (Turow, 2001).¹⁷⁵ The commodifiable data, transmitted on the Internet in the forms as pictures, videos, or texts, somehow become part of the driving force behind social and political change in modern democracy.

When I am weak, then I am strong

A6, an activist and translator during Sunflower Movement in an interview said that she did not meet many of her personal contacts on social media until she broke into the Legislature along with the protesting students:

In the past social movements mostly relied on people you already knew.

However, technologies allow people to know each other without meeting each other. As such, I met a lot of people through Facebook and other social media and many of the contacts I have on social media share similar values with me.

(A6)

In the case of A6, the bonding between her and her contacts on social media did not need to be based on face-to-face meetings but a set of shared values. Social media reshapes the way people choose to befriend each other. Not only that, social media also allow those people who never met but are digitally connected with each other a realm to take their private relations to another level, which is, in this instance, to participate in a social movement.

¹⁷⁵ Turow's (2001) research focuses on how people set up boundaries about family information when the surveillance and targeting marketing are working together in the convergent media environment. See Turow, Joseph (2001) Family boundaries, commercialism, and the Internet, *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 22(I), pp.73-16.

Based on the experience of A6, the interpersonal relations created over social media did not require face-to-face interaction. Such interpersonal relations are similar to the term ‘weak ties’ coined by Mark Granovetter. In his paper “Notes on the strength of weak ties” (Granovetter, 1983), Granovetter defines interpersonal relations with friends as strong ties, and personal relations with acquaintances created over social media as ‘weak ties’. Although strong ties might help one feel a deep sense of belonging to a church or certain goal-oriented groups, he argues that weak ties “are actually vital for an individual’s integration into modern society” (ibid., p. 203) as weak ties can also play a role in an individual’s opportunity for mobility. The more weak ties an individual has, the less likely she/he will be deprived of information from distant parts of the society. In the same vein, the accumulation of connections on social media might play a similar role as they help bring different groups of personal networks into contact with each other.

A7, a graphic designer who said watching the protestors’ Facebook live stream was the key reason he decided to join the movement. Growing up in Belgium and speaking French as his first language, A7 mainly helped translate press statements into French, and occasionally helped design pictures for social media. When asked how had not known about the occupy movement already, A7 said:

During the night (note: 19 March), while I was loitering on the Internet during one of my insomnia sessions, I clicked on a link on Facebook. It was a live streaming of the legislative yuan. I thought: “why is it still going on? WTF”! Without thinking too much, I began to watch the live streaming. Little by little my eyes opened, I couldn't believe my eyes. It wasn't what I was thinking. My eyes were glued to the screen for two hours. After which I began to look for news and info. And in few hours I found myself in a group of online translators

translating all that was happening by the minute on each corner of the street surrounding the Legislative Yuan”.

(A7)

A7 did not know whether any of his friends were occupying the Floor of the Legislature. However, his attention was caught by a link, probably shared by his friends and became available on his Facebook news feed, and the link led him to watch the livestream for two consecutive hours. And later on, he became one of the members translating and writing articles for the Facebook Page “Taiwan Voice”. In the interview, he seemed to still remember the emotion he had when watching the live stream. Some might argue that people with strong ties are more likely to influence each other through communication (Haythornthwaite, 2002)¹⁷⁶. However, from A7’s interview, it might be safe to argue that the accessible information about activities of an individual’s acquaintances (weak ties) can arguably become a source of information and a driving force which nudges the individual to react. Another example is the Sunflower Rally which took place on 30 March, for instance, about 70,000 people clicked “join” on the Facebook event page, while a further 16,700 people indicated that they may join the rally by clicking on the event page’s “interested” button. In the end the rally attracted nearly 500,000 people. The number of people who openly expressed willingness to go to the rally on Facebook was a key signal of viability to those who came later but did not click join on the Facebook page (see Photo 6.1).

¹⁷⁶ Haythornthwaite argues that a new medium can create positive effects on strongly tied pairs where it adds another means of communicating. However, a new medium might make weak-tied networks more susceptible to dissolution. See Haythornthwaite, Caroline (2002) Strong, Weak and Latent Ties and the Impact of New Media, *The Information Society*, Vol. 18, pp. 385-401.



Picture 6.1 Facebook event page of 330 Anti-CSSTA Rally

The trend of how people can easily connect with and influence each without actually knowing each other goes hand in hand with the decline of the traditional sense of membership of social groups, or what Robert Putnam (1995) would refer to as “social capital”. Social media focuses on the individual, and reinforces people’s “me-centric” orientation by enabling them to choose who to follow, what to share and what group to join. The threshold of joining a group becomes flexible as individuals can freely decide whether to join or leave a group. Such flexibility also allows people to have looser concept about “belonging to a group” than the traditional concept of membership to groups such as a political party. Take the Sunflower Movement, for instance, there were more than five Facebook pages set up by supporters or activists, with each attracting a minimum of 5,000 followers. Through these Facebook pages or other similar social media platforms, people can easily “participate” in the movement by sharing personalized information or making ‘micro-acts’ of participation, such as sharing a post on their personal Facebook accounts, retweeting a politician’s statement, posting on a social media site or watching live streaming of a protest online

(Margetts, John, Hale & Yasseri, 2016: 52).¹⁷⁷ The ‘micro-acts’ proposed by Margetts and her colleagues not only reduce the threshold for a citizen to engage in a political event, but also lower the transaction costs both in relative terms and as a proportion of the participation might cost the individual (ibid.).

When the ‘micro-acts’ can be shared with a wider audience, the visibility of one’s activity is no longer an item solely restricted or limited to her/his private sphere. To some extent, the public and private spheres become interconnected or, sometimes, interchangeable, on the Internet, as Facebook and other social media platforms allow people to publicize their activities through a closed circle of personal contacts, as well as the outside world. And such interconnected public and private spheres triggered many, such as A7, who were in that complex sphere to join the movement.

With the evidence and interviews discussed and presented in the preceding sections, it is clear that an individual can easily share her/his political view with strangers on Facebook simply by changing the privacy setting of their personal account. Or, the individual can choose to comment or post something on a public page, which can be accessed by anyone who has a Facebook account. When people comment on a post from the open Facebook page of a politician or public figure, her/his privately made opinion becomes publicly accessible in a digitally enabled semi-public sphere where everyone is free to comment or express political view.

In the interconnected online community, an individual’s existence is neither entirely private nor entirely public. In the multi-layered personal networks created on social media, one’s thoughts about political, economic, or social matters can be merged into the sea of information created by millions of individuals. When these converged technologies are intertwined with the way people express their private and public tendencies, the way people internalise the convergence of what is public and

¹⁷⁷ See Margetts, Helen, John, Peter, Hale, Scott & Yasseri, Taha (2016) *Political Turbulence: How Social Media Shape Collective Action*. Oxford: Princeton University Press

what is private can offer a useful indicator of how they engage with the society politically, culturally and economically.

6.6. Conclusion

This chapter is not arguing that the organisational and communication process of social movements have been changed fundamentally by the convergence of social media and ICTs. It does, however, try to bridge the gap between existing research when most of the focus is currently aimed towards looking at how information diffuses on the Internet, how activists can be empowered by ICTs, or if social media usage increases one's civic engagement. This chapter's underlying argument is that ICTs create possibilities for citizens to engage in multiple arenas at the same time. The case of the Sunflower Movement provides a grand example of how a generation who were born into a democracy use social media to voice their pursuit of democratic values, and, at the same time, how technology transforms the way these young people engage with each other, engage with public affairs, and engage with the government.

To start with, the key message delivered by the "Sunflowers", the activists of the Sunflower Movement, has been its pursuit of democratic values. For the protesters, Democracy is not just about the freedom of speech. Democracy, they argued repeatedly during the event, means allowing the public direct channels to scrutinise the government's policies and performance. This means that they put more emphasis on democratic values. Compared with older generations in society, the protesting students born in the 1980s exhibit a different perception of democracy and their role as a citizen in the information age.

The four demands of Sunflower Movement were not met by the government completely. However, they did successfully reject the CSSTA that the Ma administration had struck with Beijing. If the metric is policy achievements, then the

Sunflower activists did achieve political concessions (Bush & Rigger, 2019; Rowan, 2018). Nevertheless, the publicity and visibility this event received in Taiwan and in the international community introduced the revival of political participation by the youth in this young democracy. Moreover, the achievement of the movement can be found in the shifting political landscape in Taiwan (Liu, 2015)¹⁷⁸ and the reviving political participation of the Taiwanese young people. One year after the 2014 Sunflower Movement, one of the movement spokespersons reportedly told reporters, “I think young people are no longer indifferent to politics and so many of them came out to vote in the November elections (note: in 2014), which affected the outcome” (AFP, 2015).¹⁷⁹ Similarly, the Taiwanese society in return also paid more attention on the voice of the youth. A survey conducted by one of the leading local newspaper United Daily News (UDN) found that 64 per cent of respondents agreed that the society paid more attention on the opinion of the younger generation. The same poll also showed that 47 per cent, nearly half, of those polled said that Sunflower Movement brought out positive impact on the Taiwanese society.¹⁸⁰

The picture of people’s relations with social media and ICT is complex and difficult to be illustrated clearly. Based on the interviews with key stakeholders such as active members of Sunflower Movement and politicians, this Chapter finds that

¹⁷⁸ Liu in his op-ed titled “Taiwan’s Shifting Political Landscape” argues that the Ma administration’s mishandling of the occupation resulted in its falling public support. The impact of Ma’s declining approval was first seen in the 2014 November local elections and then, emphatically, in the 2016 general elections. See Liu, Fu-Kuo (2015) “Taiwan’s Shifting Political Landscape”, in East Asia Forum, 18 January, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2015/01/18/taiwans-shifting-political-landscape/>

¹⁷⁹ See AFP (2015) “Enduring impact of Taiwan’s ‘Sunflower Movement’ one year on”, in SCMP, 17 March, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1740013/one-year-impact-sunflower-movement-protests-taiwan-continue-blossom>

¹⁸⁰ One year after the 2014 Sunflower Movement, the UDN poll found that 64% of respondents said society paid more attention on the opinion of young people, 23% expressed otherwise and 13% had no opinion. Further analysis of the poll found that 68% of the respondents aged under 30 felt that their opinion received more attention from society. The poll was conducted on 11-15 March. See UDN (2015) “Lianhebao Mindiao: Shehui Geng Zhongshi Nianqingren Shengyin” (UDN poll: Society pays more attention on young people’s opinion), 18 March, <http://paper.udn.com/udnpaper/PID0001/275292/web/#2L-5672813L>

social media extends people’s personal networks and blurs the boundaries between their private and public spaces on the Internet. An individual’s communication, discussion, or participation can be transmitted in the form of digital data. That means, when data becomes the currency of people’s transaction in a political event, it is therefore more difficult to put people’s behaviour into different categories.

Apart from its impact on Taiwanese society, the Sunflower Movement also reshaped relations between the public and their democratic representatives. During Taiwan’s 2014 local elections, the money spent on traditional media by political campaigns dropped to NTD 95 million from NTD 242 million in 2010 (see table 6.1).

As technology has changed the way people receive and react to political information, many politicians have shifted resources and capital to spreading information via the Internet.

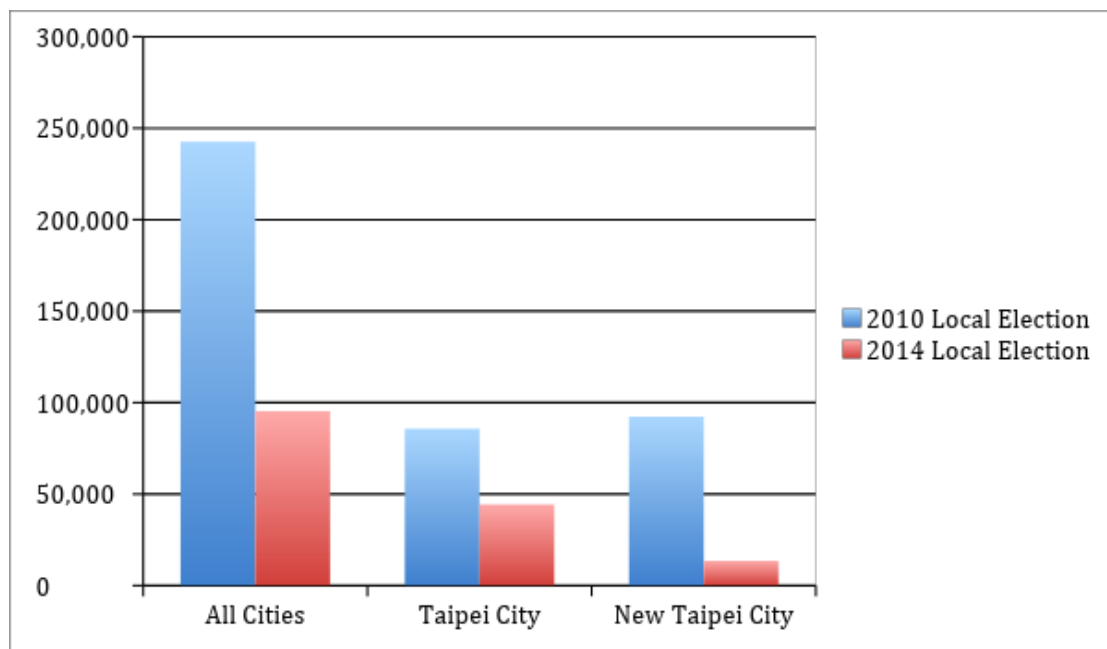


Table 6.1 Money spent on campaign advertisement on traditional media outlets-TV, print, radio. (Source: Data from Nielsen Ratings, Taiwan 2010 & 2014 Jan-2014 Nov)¹⁸¹

¹⁸¹ See Journalist Magazine (2014) Sheyun Tuidong Xinmeiti Langchao (Social Media push forward the trend of new media), *Journalist Magazine*, No. 1452, pp. 70-75.

This is one area of potential concern. When the online world becomes another “public arena” for politicians to engage with people, share their policies and messages with their constituencies, and criticise their opponent, it is important for democracy researchers or activists to understand how the Internet might have changed the relations between politicians and the public. At a time when democracy is under attack worldwide, some have begun to worry about the division created by the use of social media in society and argue for greater social responsibility from the big firms such as Facebook.¹⁸² To combat fake news, the *Economist* even suggested that perhaps social media firms should push click bait further down the news feed. The idea that social media conglomerates should work harder seems convincing when democracies around the world are complaining about fake news. For instance, a UK parliamentary committee in 2018 issued a report and warned that disinformation and the spread of fake news online threatens the future of democracy in the UK.¹⁸³ However, such a remedy is against the funding purpose of those companies, making profit. Perhaps, a real solution requires all stakeholders - big firms, governments, and all netizens alike - to explore ways to improve the public sphere in the online world, while at the same time ensuring the freedom of citizens in the online private sphere.

Another area to take into account is the connectivity created by the Internet and social media. As the case of the Sunflower Movement revealed, activists generated momentum and support from both people at home and from abroad. Amongst their supporters, some shared strong ties with the activists while some only shared weak ties with them. As online communication can take place easily in the private or public sphere, or private AND public spheres at the same time, the potential

¹⁸² An article titled “Does social media threaten democracy?”, the *Economist* (2017) suggests that social media companies should make clear on their websites if a post comes from a friend or a trusted newsworthy source, as a way to remind users to be more aware of the possibility of reading fake news.

¹⁸³ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmccumeds/363/363.pdf>

of citizens to generate positive (or negative) impact on democracy through their online collective actions remains untested. The Sunflower Movement offered a positive example in which citizens worked together to stop the government from ratifying a trade pact which might potentially damage their democratic way of life and harnessing their reliance on China's economy. However, as it takes certain conditions to make a social movement possible and successful (Bourdieu, 2000), the Sunflower Movement's success resulted from accumulated public resentment towards the KMT government, a weakening economy, and a growing awareness of Taiwanese identity amongst Millennials. Whether Taiwanese society will see another big scale of youth-led social movement in the future, perhaps only time will tell.

Chapter 7- Analysis & Conclusion

7.1 Summary of the Study

The occupation, dubbed the “Sunflower Movement”, was not a single event, but a climax of a series of social movements, which began taking place when Ma Ying-jeou of the KMT won the presidency in 2008. The timing of the resurgence of social movements is significant. Theoretically speaking, Ma’s election signified the passing of what Huntington termed the “two-turnover test”, and should therefore function as evidence that Taiwan’s democracy has reached a point of consolidation. Why then, when Taiwan’s democracy has been consolidated, did people still choose to take to the streets to have voices heard? What does the resurgence of social movement mean? And what can we learn from this series of social movements in Taiwan and the participation of Taiwanese people during the events?

This study has aimed to explore the resurgence of social movements and to **explore whether Taiwanese people’s political engagement in the online and offline worlds offers some clues about young people’s perception of democracy and roles as citizens in a democracy.** During the eight years of President Ma Ying-jeou’s administration, the development of ICTs, along with the more converged nature of media architecture, gradually reshaped the way people have taken part in politics, expressed their views on public affairs, and communicated with each other and their elected representatives. This being said, the main purpose of this study is not about extolling the changes triggered by technology, but, rather, it is to revisit the idea of citizenship in a digital context. The following sections will review and analyse the theoretical framework discussed in the preceding chapters, as well as the evidence and findings drawn from the case studies on citizens’ political and civic engagement in Taiwan under the Ma government.

Overall, the qualitative data of this research offers an outlook of how a network of organisers and protesting students worked together to make the government respond to their demands. A key takeaway this study hopes to deliver is that the notion of citizenship, particularly the way citizens define what is public and private, has been vastly reshaped and changed by the rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

7.2 Contribution, Validity, and Limitation of the Study

Contribution

The major contribution of this study is the documented review of the development of social movement in Taiwan and the impact of ICTs and social media on Taiwanese people's political participation and communication under the KMT administration. Another contribution can be demonstrated from considering the following perspectives: how technology has revolutionised the way citizens communicate with each other; how technology enables social movement and strengthen citizens; as well as how technology has reshaped and redefined the notion of public and private spheres.

In this study, first-hand insight shared by Taiwanese activists who took part in the major social movements are particularly useful in shedding new light on how people perceive their role as citizens in a democracy. The comments made by movement activists, members from both ruling and opposition political parties, and journalists also offer useful perspectives from different aspects of society. From a theoretical and philosophical perspective, those views are significant as they indicate a shift in citizens' perception of their civil duties, as well as the definition of what constitutes public sphere and what constitutes private sphere. Conventional theorists

such as Putnam often argue that a vibrant civil society can help democracy become more stable and sustainable (Putnam, 2000; Almond and Verba, 1963). If their argument is still to make sense in today's digitally connected society, then it is important to examine whether today's research on citizenship has taken into account the contemporary context and people's changing behaviour in the information age. With a research method which is mainly qualitative-focused, this study probes the usage of ICTs by citizens in a social movement and provides, as a result, intensive documented reports of the social movements that occurred under the Ma administration, as well as first-hand experience shared by leaders of the movements and other participants.

Validity

The validity of this study comes from its multiple-case design and mixed research methods, which were deployed by the author with an aim of offering an overall analysis and a more complete picture of social movements in Taiwan. The cases chosen for this study help illustrate a significant development in social movements in Taiwanese society, particularly during the years when the KMT government was last in power (2008 – 2016). The social movements under the first term of President Ma Ying-Jeou (2008 – 2012), benefitted from the growing mobilisation potential of online blogs and social media. These movements also signalled a shift from a traditional approach to a digitally enabled approach in movement mobilisation. The social movements then gathered pace during Ma's second term (2012 – 2016) and amplified the usage of ICT tools and social media to an even greater extent. During these events, citizens' private, social, and political engagements and activists' activities were all embedded in the same multi-layered and convergent media environment. This also reveals a gradual trend of how ICTs and social media sites are

becoming an undeniable element in social movement organisation and the mobilisation process. Such trends echo what Ying explains in his *Case Study Research* that mixed methods allow researchers to probe complicated research questions and obtain a 'richer and stronger array of evidence' (Ying, 2009: 63). Because of the nature of the research question, a single method alone might not have been sufficient enough to gain a holistic picture of what the author was hoping for, and, as such, mixed methods became a reasonable choice for conducting this study.

In this research, these methods are utilised to document the development of digitally enabled social movements in Taiwan. In addition, the author deployed semi-constructed interviews and archive study to obtain an in-depth look at specific developments within the events. The author also used software to analyse the content and discourse of one of the student-led movements. As it is difficult to examine all the 'micro-acts' conducted by all actors during the movements, this study relies on the materials and evidence archived by the social media sites (namely, Facebook), news reports, and remarks made by the movement activists to obtain insight about how movement organisers communicated with the public and generated momentum through their creative usage of ICT tools. By this means, this study offers an outlook of how ICTs and social media were used strategically by activists to engage with the public and their target audience. Following the same logic, this study investigates how the public responded to the digitally enabled movements via different ICT tools.

Limitations

The first limitation of this study is the scope and range of the interviews and the data collection method deployed by the author. As this research ambitiously included a mixed research method in order to review a number of social movements under President Ma's two terms, it was difficult to interview all activists from all

movements. Such a limitation means that a wide pool of activists or movement participants could not be included in the final analysis of this study. In an effort to mitigate the limitation, this study chose to focus on activists who were in charge of mobilisation and organisation during the major social movements. Given the momentum they successfully drew from the public, their remarks and comments are useful for the analysis of how ICTs and social media can enable and strengthen citizens in terms of organising a large-scale social movement. Nevertheless, the liability and accuracy of the interviews still rely on the interviewees. As most of the social movements studied by this research did bring about a certain level of change in society, the interviewees might tend to offer mostly positive feedback on the impact caused by the ICTs, and give relatively little criticism. An exception is interviewee P2, who didn't praise the role the Internet played during the movements. Instead, P2 merely pointed out how the Internet might have lowered the threshold for organising a protest or movement, as a few dozen people who are willing to support the same cause can be sufficient to stage a protest.

Another limitation is that some interviewees later on changed their minds and refused to allow the author to use the interview materials after their affiliated political parties had won the general election in 2016 and they in turn became public servants or public figures. That some interviews in the end could not be included in this research certainly impacts the quality of this study, as the analysis missed out insight from some people who had figured quite prominently in social movements. To offset the impact, this study reviewed a lot of media reports from local newspapers and news channels. These reports supplemented the research materials and helped build a more rounded picture of the political reality from when the social movements were taking place in Taiwan.

Finally, a common limitation when conducting research based on qualitative methods is the difficulty of identifying causal relationships. This limitation hinders the capacity of this study to explore the causes (if they exist) in the changing notion of citizenship (if it does change) in a modern democracy. However, qualitative research also allows the research materials to have an enhanced level of detail to it, and gives the author more opportunity to gain insight from the examination of the research materials. As citizens' engagement in politics is never a fixed form of action, the author takes a qualitative approach to investigate the research subject in a detailed manner, and this has enhanced the overall research material and database that have been collected and created. **For instance, the author reviewed relevant blog pages and, Facebook pages of the movements assessed in this study. In the case of the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement, the author read and coded every blog entry published by the activists and explored what were the key terms were used in the activists' external communication.** SAs such, it is probably safe to argue that the scope of this research helps provide a broad holistic picture of how technology might have affected young Taiwanese citizens' political engagement, as well as their perception of citizenship and their role in a modern and contemporary democratic society.

7.3 Analysis

The theoretical discussion in this research reviewed how the orientation of citizenship was affected by the development of changing social structure (Dalton, 2008). In a modern American society, Dalton finds that citizens attach more attention and importance to forms of participation which reflect an idea of "engaged citizenship", something which stresses the social responsibility of being a citizen and getting involved in elite-challenging activities. An example is "political consumerism", which

means that citizens express their political views through making conscious choices about their consumer products (Micheletti, Follesdal & Stolle, 2003). Such changing orientation of citizenship seems to challenge what is argued by some theorists that today's public discussion and civic engagement have been in decline (Macedo et al, 2005; Putnam, 2000). They based their argument on the fact that today's citizens vote less, spend less time in social clubs, and show little interest in public affairs, such as the physical act of joining a political party.

However, if we generally agree that the development of technology is correlated to contemporary social change (Bell, 1973; Castells, 2010), then perhaps it is we should also necessary to re-examine the way we gauge civic engagement in relation to this idea. In the so-called information age, citizens might need to develop new civil skills in order to resolve new problems that arise from within a new social structure. One of the most obvious changes generated by the development of technologies is the increasingly elusive boundaries between the public and private spheres.

First, on the concept of the public sphere, Taylor (1992) argues that:

[t]he public sphere is a common space in which the members of a society are deemed to meet through a variety of media: print, electronic, and also face-to-face encounters; to discuss matters of common interest; thus to be able to form a common mind about these.

Based on his comments it can be surmised that, people in a democratic society gather in a common place, the so-called the public sphere, to exchange and form their opinions freely at both individual and collective levels. And the common opinions shared by the public are important, as they help the government formulate appropriate

policies to meet the demand from their people. In Taylor's argument, the public sphere is not only an important feature of any modern society, but also a crucial element in the self-justification of a free self-governing society.

This study borrows Taylor's idea that a "digital public sphere" can emerge from the debate and discussion on public affairs carried out by citizens on the Internet. Citizens can find various kinds of forums, blogs, or websites to join their fellow citizens' discussion on public affairs. Their opinion also helps the government form the most appropriate policies for both society and country. Furthermore, this opinion exchange and formation process is somewhat similar to Habermas' idea of the public sphere. Even though according to Habermas, the idea of public sphere means physical places, such as coffee shops or pubs, where citizens can meet up to discuss and share their views on politics (Coleman & Blumler, 2009: 165), the Internet seems to offer citizens a bigger digital arena for deliberation through which opinions can be contested and argued.

On the surface, the digital public sphere creates an environment for citizens to practice their civic skills and deliberate their political opinion online. However, technology also enables citizens to augment or extend their private sphere, as well as allowing them to decide whether to make their private sphere public or not. Their perception of citizenship, therefore, is demonstrated in the 'micro acts' carried out by citizens online and expanded by technology. These action can be as simple as sharing or liking a post on Facebook or in an online forum. To citizens who welcome this digitally connected and enabled reality online, their understanding of citizenship in the modern democracy might even transcend the personal and public domains. With no fixed boundaries to define their public and private spheres, citizens now are embracing new civil habits and reshaping the notion of citizenship into a networked,

digitally enabled idea which is more fluid, flexible, reflexive, and personal than the traditional concept of citizenship.

That is why a main argument, which has been constantly discussed and contested throughout this study is the blurring of boundaries between the public and private spheres. In the information age, technology creates new arenas for citizens to carry out their discussion on public matters on the Internet. Online platforms connect citizens with their friends and family, acquaintances, and strangers. Essentially, citizens can have a plethora of strong and weak ties in the online world and the connectivity potential becomes a source of civil legitimacy with the online private sphere, as individuals can speak to multiple audiences through the same convergent media environment. It is in such a multi-layered and convergent media environment that the boundaries between the public and private spheres are blurred and maybe even have collapsed, or are at least showing clear signs that they are beginning to.

In the case of social movements in Taiwan, citizens express their opinion or support via their private spheres which are mediated by ICTs and social media. By clicking the “Like” or “Follow” button on Facebook or Twitter, citizens conducted thousands of ‘micro acts’ to respond to both public or private matters during the movements taking place during the KMT administration between 2008 and 2016. These ‘micro acts’ constitute an enormous amount of fleeting engagements and at the same time reflect collective aspirations. On Facebook, blogs, YouTube or Twitter, these different platforms suggest different levels of intensity of engagement based on citizens’ preferences (Papacharissi, 2010).

Part of the new civic engagement citizens seem to have developed in the information age are described by Castells (2012) as a “new species of social movement” (p. 15). The evidence and discussion from the preceding chapters also show that digital communication *is* organisation. Bennett & Segerberg (2012) coin the

term “connective action” to explain the changing nature of the mobilisation process of social movements in the information age. That is to say, the phenomenon of Internet-based mobilisation and social movement that is evidenced in the does not simply come from the interviews conducted for this research also supports the general argument that people can use digital tools to strengthen their weak ties with their acquaintances (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007). At times when they require support for a public event or social movement they support, citizens can strengthen their weak ties spontaneously and turn their acquaintances into fellow supporters of the same cause.

This shift of movement organisation makes it difficult to use traditional methods to gauge the level of support and momentum of a protest, a demonstration, or a public movement. Traditionally, one can easily assess the momentum of a member-based civic organisation by looking at the number of the members or the frequency of their regular gatherings. For instance, in the 1990s, the Wild Lily Movement in Taiwan was mostly participated in by people who were already active in certain student groups or clubs at the universities. Or put another way, the movement was mostly organised and joined by people who already shared strong ties. However, with the coming of the information age this began to change. At first it seemed to be plausible to argue that this new media was becoming a tool for individuals to express opinions of their own, instead of listening to that of others. The worry was that technology might further isolate individuals if the usage of ICT was mainly centred around expressing personal opinion and reinforcing an individual’s self-identification (Papacharissi, 2007). Some scholars such as Putnam (2000) attribute the growth of self-focused activities and the notion of decreasing community engagement to media proliferation. He laments the decline of the ‘in-person’ exchange and interaction, arguing that such decline will lead to more Americans disengaging themselves from

community activities and political involvement. In other words, if more people prefer to spend time on certain media platforms than interacting with their fellow citizens in a community, the public sphere will begin to erode if the number of participants in community life begins to decline.

However, as ICT tools seem to be encouraging a more spontaneous form of self-driven engagement in politics, the consequence of this is that these tools are also indirectly reducing the traditional and conventional forms of elite-guided engagement (Norris, 2000). That means citizens can express their support or criticism over a social movement or public matter through self-driven activity. Their reliance on mass media or a traditional leader to form their public opinion is therefore reduced as well. Indeed, early 2000, when Norris was writing on this matter, was the time that social media began to make its mark upon the online world. Friendster was launched in 2002, MySpace and LinkedIn in 2003, Facebook in 2004, Flickr (a photo sharing site, which was used heavily by the Wild Strawberries Movement activists in 2008) in 2005, and Twitter in 2006.

So, what if the decline of community life reflects the decline of people's participation in old forms of community but not in the new types of community and personal ties? As the Internet has by now deeply infiltrated life, many traditional forms of community have either lost their charm or embedded themselves in the online world. Such change is also discussed by analysts, including Wellman & Haase (1999), who argue that people's online interaction can supplement their face-to-face and telephone communication. In the same vein, they argue that the Internet actually can enhance face-to-face and telephone communication as people might (1) develop better understanding of each other; (2) share with each other different life aspects by exchanging photos, videos and other forms of files; and (3) arrange their offline activities through online communication (*ibid.*, p. 438).

Building on the aforementioned theoretical discussion, it might be safe to say that ICT tools enable people to create different sets of personal networks in multi-layered cyberspace. Such multiple personal networks formed on the social media sites further allow citizens to develop flexible political identification when they participate in a political event. For instance, citizens do not need to belong to a certain political party to demonstrate or affirm their political belief or stance. In fact, they can use these expressive tools and online channels to elaborate their political opinions and stances by making these so-called ‘micro acts’. To a certain degree, such expression can arguably compensate the declining membership of political parties. In student-led movements in Taiwan, activists tried not to be affiliated with any political parties as they did not want to be labeled by any certain political belief. As a result, many of the movements attracted participants across party lines, such as the 2013 White Shirt Movement and the 2014 Sunflower Movement.

Social Movements in Taiwan

As the previous sections have noted, the main contribution of this study is the effort made to document and review the major social movements that occurred in Taiwan between 2008 and 2016, and to offer an exploratory analysis of whether democratic values can be compatible with an East Asian society.

For social movements under the Ma administration in Taiwan, multi-layered and convergent digital media environment served three instrumental roles: (1) organising and mobilising a movement; (2) shaping an online community and identity, and; (3) enabling activists and participants to join the movement in a spontaneous manner. More importantly, citizens’ private spaces on the Internet became more closely embedded with their public spaces. The following will further discuss and

analyse the evidence and research materials presented in the empirical Chapters of 4, 5, and 6.

Since former Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew launched the debate of “Asian values” within the international community, advocates of “Asian values” often take these elements to defend their undemocratic practices in politics. They also argue that Western liberal democracy may be merely a culturally-specific morality, rather than a universal form of governance or political practice which can be applied by people across all cultures. They claim that Asian values, particularly those influenced by the hierarchy-oriented nature of Confucian thinking, make Asian cultures fundamentally incompatible with Western liberal values of democracy and human rights. When countries like China use the “Asian values” argument to dismiss the compatibility and practicality of Western democratic thinking with countries in East Asia, the story of Taiwan’s democratisation seems to gain more credence as being an important outlier that stands in opposition to this notion and differentiates Taiwan from many of its neighbouring countries. Of all third wave democracies in East Asia, Taiwan has both the greatest press freedom and the most dynamic democratic institution. In recent years, major international NGOs, such as Reporters without Borders, have been choosing Taiwan as their its base in East Asia, showing their recognition of Taiwan’s evolving democratisation.¹⁸⁴ At the same time, the biggest authoritarian regime in the region, China, continues to cast a large shadow over other Asian countries with both its military and economic might. With China consistently achieving high levels of economic growth over the past few decades, it raises the

¹⁸⁴ Unfortunately, more recently the Secretary-General of Reporters without Borders, Christophe Deloire, said in an interview that the group had decided to abandon its original idea of setting up a branch in Taipei due to “a lack of legal certainty for our entity and activities”. As the report comments, the decision is a reversal of fortune for both Hong Kong and Taiwan: When Reporters Without Borders was founded in 1985, Hong Kong was a British colony with a high degree of press freedom, while Taiwan was at the tail end of four decades of martial law. See <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/06/world/asia/reporters-without-borders-asia-hong-kong.html>.

important question as to why people in Taiwan still choose democracy as their core values, and whether Taiwan's case can help demonstrate how democratic values and non-Western culture can be compatible in an East Asian society.

Since Taiwan ended martial law in 1987, its democratic development has been moving forward at a steady pace, with democratic values gradually taking root in the soil of the Taiwanese society in East Asia. Traditionally, Taiwanese society is considered to have been influenced by both Japanese culture (during World War II when Japan colonized Taiwan) and Chinese culture (especially after 1949 when the KMT withdrew from China and brought hundreds of thousands of military personnel from China to Taiwan). Despite these two very distinct, and authoritarian, influences, it has only taken three decades for Taiwanese society to become a vibrant democracy, in which social movements are gradually being accepted and celebrated as a way of civic expression.

This study discussed several major movements including: The Wild Strawberries Movement in 2008, the Anti-Kuokuang Petrochemical Movement in 2010-2011, the 2012 Anti-Media Monopoly Movement in 2012, the White Shirt Movement in 2013, and the Sunflower Movement in 2014. During these social movements, the usage of ICTs in the processes of organisation and mobilisation, as well as communication between the activists and the public, created a huge network consisting of multi-layered communication channels that presented themselves as being worthy of examination. This is summarised nicely by Papacharissi:

Democracy naturally combines these personal trajectories of advancement and failures in every life through a commonly shared system of decision-making (Papacharissi, 2010: 3).

Chapter 4 discussed that during the first term of former President Ma Ying-Jeou (2008 – 2012), Taiwan saw a resurgence of social movements, which were mostly initiated and led by college and university students. The discourse analysis of the Wild Strawberries Movement found a recurrent argument of “safeguarding the freedom of speech” and “protecting rights of assembly”. In the Wild Strawberries Movement, young activists demonstrated their budding potential in terms of their capacity to build networks and mobilise by utilising blogs, online streaming tools and Google groups to communicate internally amongst activists, as well as reaching out to a wide range of audiences both domestically and internationally. Two years later, another major movement to take place during Ma’s first term, the Anti-Kuokuang Petrochemical Movement, also followed suit and used live streaming tools to live broadcast the protests or their communications with the government officials, such as public hearings. Such low-cost and expressive tools became significant in the early stages of the movements, as activists were trying to form a counter force against the power holders, namely the government.

In particular, in the case of the Wild Strawberries Movement in 2008, protesters used ICT tools to create a networked alliance consisting of young people in Hong Kong and Taiwan. The two live broadcasting events held in Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Liberty Square in Taipei allowed participants to see each other synchronously and express support to each other throughout the course of the live streaming. The solidarity shown by the participants in the event later became the backbone of closer personal relations shared by the young activists from the two sides. This bonding was not only shared by the protesting students from Hong Kong and Taiwan, but could also potentially be accessed by those interested citizens who wanted to watch the events online remotely as well. This allows for the case to be made that during the live streaming event the weak ties shared between people from

Hong Kong and Taiwan were strengthened and transformed into strong ties, opening the possibility for this sharing to happen again in the future, and allowing the generation of positive changes for to their respective societies.

The Wild Strawberries Movement shows several important elements of a digitally enabled movement. First, the low threshold for mobilisation enabled citizens to initiate an event or social movement without relying on an established political party or a traditionally charismatic leader. In addition, the low threshold for mobilisation also meant a lower threshold for participation as citizens could easily become part of the movement by making ‘micro-acts’ like clicking “join” on a protest’s Facebook page or joining an online campaign (Margetts et al, 2016).

As people can easily see the number of participants or supporters on a Facebook page, the number to some degree can indicate the momentum of a protest or an event. Such information can also be an incentive for other interested citizens to consider whether they want to join the protest or not. Take the Wild Strawberries Movement, for instance, interested individuals might have had stronger incentives to join the same event after seeing their classmates update and upload photos and videos of the protest. At the same time, when citizens’ personal updates on Facebook (such as taking photos at a sit-in) became an incentive for their fellow friends or followers to pay attention or participate in an event, the personal updates caused the online private sphere to entwine itself with the public no longer private. This is because by revealing their personal updates and involvement of a political event on social media sites, such action blurs the boundaries between people’s private and public spheres on cyberspace. Their private sphere also serves the purpose of expressing their political views with their friends in a social setting. That is to say, a massive amount of information on a social movement in the online world closes the distance between the general public and politics in cyberspace.

The way protesters utilised ICT tools during the Wild Strawberries Movement laid a foundation for activists in later movements. Blogs helped the Wild Strawberries gain attention from the foreign community in Taiwan, as well as overseas Taiwanese students around the world. In 2011, the anti-KuoKuang Petrochemical Project activists also launched an official blog to share updates of their movement and information about the petrochemical industry, online petitions, as well as live stream videos of the protest. The Anti-KuoKuang protesters further utilised different social media platform to create different communication channels with three different groups: their core members, followers, and general public. One thing they did differently from previous environmental movements is that they allowed individuals to move between the three groups spontaneously. Such flexibility allows a great level of autonomy for an individual to engage or step out of the movement by taking self-driven actions. Social media platforms also helped reduce the cost of participation, such as time, money, or labour. As a result, the Anti-KuoKuang Petrochemical Project Movement achieved what their predecessors failed to achieve: forcing the cancellation of the petrochemical project. The activists took just seven months to successfully convince the government to terminate this project, with President Ma even publicly pledging his support to build a wetland conservation area in the location where the petrochemical project was supposed to have been built on.

In-between the Wild Strawberries Movement and the Anti-KuoKuang Petrochemical Project Movement, the year of 2010 saw two other small-scaled social movements, the Losheng Sanatorium Preservation Movement and the Anti-Dapu Demolition Protest utilise social media tools to generate greater public support. The four movements might have focused on different issues, but one thing they share in common is that their supporters blended their disparate political leanings and ideologies around the idea of social justice to come together through these events.

Triggered by the conservative and Beijing-friendly policies implemented by the Ma administration, the resurgence of social movements inspired more young activists to continue to ride the momentum accumulated through online mobilisation and pose further challenge to the government. Chapter 5 discussed how the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement in 2012 took the scale and impact of digitally enabled movements to another level, with a successful Facebook campaign drawing support from overseas Taiwanese students around the world, including Europe. Many activists from the Wild Strawberries Movement carried their experience into the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement in 2012. In 2008, they relied on blogs to communicate with domestic and international audiences. In 2012, these tech-savvy activists switched to Facebook as the main online tool for sharing information on the development of the event and to mobilise supporters. A key strategy used by the activists is how they framed their argument by using easy-to-remember slogans such as “ni hao da, wo bu pa” (you are so big, I am not afraid/ 你好大, 我不怕) to describe the contrast between the seemingly powerless activists and the powerful conglomerates they were fighting against. In order to generate bigger momentum, they created different online campaigns allowing everyone to take part by making “micro acts”. For example, the Facebook photo campaign they began attracted thousands of submissions, with some famous public figures like Chinese artist Ai Weiwei expressing support and even providing a photo of himself holding a poster with a slogan stating “I protect freedom of speech”. The creative usage of online tools easily attracted a considerable number of participants both domestically and internationally. The momentum of the campaign elevated a local social movement to a global level that posed an ever mounting challenge towards the government and at the same greatly increased public criticism against it. Simply put, compared to the demonstrations that had gone before them, the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement activists took the usage of ICT tools to a new level,

by collaborating with different groups online (such as the photo campaign initiators, who were mostly overseas Taiwanese students) and helped enhance the scale of the movement from local to international.

The protesting students' use of social media in the process of mobilising and organising online campaigns and offline demonstrations during the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement was more sophisticated than those of previous movements which took place under Ma's first term. In an article written by him, Chen Wei-Ting, one of the movement's leaders, acknowledged the power of ICTs and social media and how online mobilisation can help generate a considerable momentum for offline demonstration. Chen argues that the momentum generated by online mobilisation is successfully shared by offline events. As the Facebook page of the movement helped display growing public support with its increasing number of followers and post "Likes", the swelling numbers of on-the-ground supporters equally played back into helping those online figures grow and, as a result, the 2012 Anti-Media Monopoly Movement arguably became the very first convincing example of how personal networks on social media sites can help protesters organise a networked movement, and how citizens' private spheres can be interconnected with the public sphere in a converged media environment. Through the collective actions taken by people from different personal networks and social groups, a series of events were initiated and launched by students across Taiwan from over 20 universities and colleges. In a show of solidarity, these online and offline campaigns echoed each other and synergised a solid network consisting of students, ordinary citizens as well as scholars, such as legal scholar Hung Kuo-Chang of the Academia Sinica (the highest research institute in Taiwan). Their network later even generated sufficient momentum to pressure the government to respond to their demand and agree to set up a higher threshold for conglomerates to purchase media outlets in Taiwan.

In 2013, the White Shirt Movement was initiated by thirty-nine people who came from all walks of life. For instance, their members included housewives, guys who had just finished compulsory military services, a journalist, and even a doctor. These activists were not from the same group of people as the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement and they did not have prior experience in initiating a demonstration like the people who had joined the Wild Strawberries Movement in 2008. The thirty-nine people who formed the group Citizen 1985 did so also without receiving any support or resources from political parties. They gained their legitimacy and public trust by being transparent in terms of how they spent the resources and the money donated by people through constantly publishing their financial statements online. Such a gesture was unprecedented and created a positive image of the movement, and made their supporters believe that every penny they donated was used for a good cause.

During the White Shirt Movement, activists expanded their usage of social media to other online platforms, such as PTT, a popular electronic bulletin board system, Wikipedia, LINE (a messaging app, similar to Whatsapp, designed for mobile phone users), Skype, and YouTube. They understood that in the information age, the speed with which information can be shared is key to the success of any event. In an effort to reach a bigger audience, they took the initiative and created the Wikipedia pages of the movement in both Mandarin and English. They frequently uploaded event videos to popular video sharing platforms, such as YouTube. In addition to including popular online platforms into their social media strategy, they created a three-minute long video, also known as a “lazy-people package”, to offer interested individuals an easy-to-understand way to gain essential information about the origin and development of the movement. Without any form of support from political parties, the White Shirt Movement in the end successfully managed to get over 250,000 people to join a rally in front of the Presidential Office, with many of the participants

political function of the public sphere. He also warns that commercialised mass media can be used by interest groups or political parties to manipulate the public opinion. However, with more and more citizens beginning to follow public affairs and exchange their political views in the online world, the Internet becomes a digital public sphere for citizens in a modern democracy. In addition, cyberspace also ticks all the elements of Charles Taylor's reflective description on the public sphere: (a) a common space, (b) media, and (c) matters of common interest. In a modern democracy, where the Internet infiltrates nearly every aspect of people's life, one can stay at her/his own place and generate social change by engaging with an event or a social movement online. She/he can demonstrate support by making "micro-acts" online and making their actions public on their social media sites.

In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, it was seen how many social movements achieved success because of the accumulation of countless "micro-acts" conducted by citizens on the Internet. The evidences and materials drawn from the digitally enabled movements between 2012 and – 2014 show how these movements have gradually become an indispensable force in pushing forward social and political change in Taiwanese society. Based on the foregoing discussion, this study argues that digital citizenship could be conceptualised as being the **interconnected texts and conversations** that take place in cyberspace. Today's citizens can simply take to Facebook or Twitter to discuss public matters with their fellow citizens. Such online discussion and communication can be generated out of their self-oriented purposes, while at the same time creating real incentives for other people to take action to support, disapprove of, or join a political event.

Moreover, in the online world, a citizen's personal network can easily go beyond the limitation of physical boundaries. During the Wild Strawberries Movement, young activists from Taiwan and Hong Kong and their personal (perhaps

weak) ties were forged without actual in-personal contact. This demonstrates that in the the mobilisation and organisation processes of an event, people's online interaction *becomes* an online community, which also has the potential to mobilise and become a fully fledged become a mobilisation, or even a campaign (and the online community can continue to play a role in all three of these stages).

Communication itself becomes a “connectivity action” as defined by Bennett & Segerberg (2012). Such a trend was clearly evident during the Sunflower Movement. A4 used different closed Facebook message groups and other online communication tools to form a wide and exclusive community with fellow organisers or translators, which serves as just one example of how. As such, the key component in social movements and societies has begun to move from social groups into individualised and personalised networks.

Of course, the personal ties created through these networks might not stay forever. Just as Flickr is slowly losing its charm amongst young people and being outperformed by other photo sharing apps like Instagram, citizens might continue forging these connective activities and digital public sphere in other upcoming social media sites in the future. Not only are the boundaries between the public and private spheres elusive, the communication between citizens and their close friends or acquaintances are also merged into one massive multi-layered media environment, in which, no action can be easily defined, because a micro-act can be both public and private, both politically and personal driven, or a bit of everything.

7.4 Conclusion

This study tries to integrate the theoretical debates over citizenship and the public sphere and argue that the analysis of digitally enabled social movements can help shed new light on the notion of citizenship in a contemporary democracy.

Since early 2000, Taiwan has seen a resurgence of social movements which were mostly organised and mobilised with the assistance of ICT and technology. While some might argue that social movements act as a highly contentious form of politics against the political institutions and those who control the governing power, growing Internet-based movements can also reflect the fact that the private sphere on the Internet is becoming increasingly closer to the idea of the public sphere. As the preceding section notes, ICT tools and social media play three instrumental roles in social movements in Taiwan, the following sections will further elaborate each role.

With the high penetration rate of the Internet in Taiwan, there is no doubt that technology and ICTs will only continue to gradually integrate further within to most, if not eventually all, aspects of people's daily life. Today's citizens can freely engage with their fellow citizens without the constraints of time and space meaning that. Both their strong and weak ties with their contacts can be built and maintained through various kinds of ICT tools, a process which allow citizens to form personal relationships without face-to-face interaction. As technology provides citizens a wide range of ways to communicate with each other instantly, this new communication style henceforth changes relations between citizens and their community. So, when When citizens' reliance on traditional communities can be supplemented by the virtual connection enabled by ICTs and social media, the orientation of citizens' behaviour inevitably becomes more self-focused rather than community-focused. It seems logical then, that as the way citizens engage with each other has been changed due to the rapid development of ICTs, the way they engage in public affairs or with

their democratic representatives and government must also be strongly considered to have become susceptible to large degrees of drastic change.

This study also shows that Taiwanese Millennials attach a greater deal of importance to on issues concerning justice and democratic values and are willing to spend much more time on activities which reflect what Dalton calls “engaged citizenship”. As Dalton argues, today’s postmaterialists tend to be more sceptical about political institutions, and as such, their participation in conventional political activities such as joining a political party has declined. Other research also finds that young people tend to directly address public issues by taking up activities which allow them to see instant or tangible results, with one example being an activity such as volunteering (Lopez et al., 2006). These activities when compared acts such as to voting or paying tax can be said to be more self-focused and self-oriented, as they can bring about an instant feeling of self-realisation. Similarly, the “micro-acts” conducted by citizens online seem to generate the same feeling as can be attained by taking part in a charitable act of volunteering for an afternoon. When citizens click the “join” button of a social movement’s Facebook page, they might feel good about this micro-act and feel that they have (digitally) taken part in the event. Of course, when a considerable number of citizens share the same Facebook post, their combined micro-acts can potentially generate a big impact as they help increase the readership of the same post. **However, one can never argue that “micro-acts” will replace citizens’ political participation in the offline world as it often still requires people to physically stage a demonstration to force a change to happen in society.**

From the materials obtained from the social media websites of several social movements’ social media websites, it is evident that the communication between activists and the public on the Internet helps constitute a collective identity as the digitally enabled communication and mobilisation processes are not just about

organising or mobilising people. **To some extent, the importance of a leader was reduced, when the Internet empowered the participants and provided them with more autonomy in terms of how they want to contribute to the event.** As the interviews and evidence drawn from the 2014 Sunflower Movement demonstrate, the process of movement organisation cannot be separated from the process of movement communication. That said, Putnam and her colleagues' (2009) idea of 'communication constitutive of organising' (CCO) is also realised in digitally enabled social movements in which the process of forming a collective identity and the process of communication are both taking place on the Internet at the same time.

Through this process, **an imagined community can be established through the online communication carried out by the activists and the public.** A digitally enabled movement is similar to an imagined community, in which citizens can freely join or leave without the limitation of time and space. Such flexibility helps movement activists form supporting groups and strengthen their momentum by building from the support from online "imagined communities". Furthermore, technology enables activists to creatively participate in political campaigns. These "micro-acts" not only lower the threshold for citizens to engage in a social movement or a political event (Margetts, John, Hale & Yasseri, 2016), but also make joining a social movement easy and interesting. In summary, technology makes social movements appealing to people who used to be aloof to public affairs, and enables activists or movement organisers to take creative approaches to organise an event and mobilise and communicate with the public.

Given the scale and usage of ICT tools, the social movements that took place during the KMT administration show a gradual, progressive process whereby each those Millennial protesters perfected their online communication and mobilisation skills each time they took part in a movement. From blog to live streaming, from

sharing press releases in multiple languages to asking people around the world to join a photo campaign to show solidarity, the techniques used in each campaign displayed an ability to quickly adapt and utilise new tools and technology to help further each respective cause. During the eight years that are focused on in this study, the result of this phenomenon was that Taiwanese Millennials achieved the enforcement of a number of key policy changes, such as the abolishment of the military court, and stopping the government from pushing Taiwan economically closer to mainland China. They wrote an unforgettable chapter in the story of Taiwan, and laid new groundwork for the possibility of future democratic development that is yet to come.

7.5 Suggestions for future studies

Based on the analysis and discussion in the preceding chapters, there are a number of potential research areas which can be built upon from the analysis of this study.

Firstly, if the Internet does offer citizens a digital public sphere in the cyber community, then it is important to critically examine the democratic quality of the public sphere in the online world. Such research will have to rely on a large-n quantitative research design as social media platforms have provided citizens a sea of possibilities to engage in public affairs spontaneously, creatively, and innovatively. Due to the various designs of different social media platforms, it might be useful for future research to design different research methods for different platforms. Some research on the role of social media in a democracy has already been conducted in Western developed democratic countries. However, due to the language barrier or different usage of ICT tools, the specific cases of East Asian democracies, such as South Korea or Taiwan, have so far rarely been the focus of any such research. Taking this into account, a comparative study on new democracies, especially the

third wave democracies in Asia, and the nature of their civic engagement within a digital context might well be worthy of further investigation.

Second, a more in-depth study on a specific digitally enabled social movement in Taiwan might provide a considerable contribution to the literature on democracy in the information age. The findings of this study, therefore, might be a useful baseline for further researchers to further analyse how technology can empower citizens during a certain social movement at a certain point of time. Future research could also include quantitative methods to explore potential causal relationships between the changes of public spheres and their impact on citizens' perception of citizenship in the information age.

Third, it is important to understand the communicational dynamics in the mobilisation and organisation process in a successful social movement, but it is equally important to analyse social movements which failed. To fully understand the evolution of the mobilisation process in the information age in Taiwan, it is important to ask why technology has not been able to help all social movements generate the same momentum as it did in the case of 2014 Sunflower Movement. Perhaps it is necessary to define what it means to be a successful digitally enabled social movement before such research is conducted.

Finally, future research can focus on theoretical debate as to whether digital citizenship really exists and if so, how? Such debate could involve reviewing the development of democracy in third wave democracies and how citizens in these democracies participate in politics in both the online and offline worlds. It might be interesting to include pro-democracy social movements taking place in a non-democratic societies, such as Hong Kong.

This study, then, has tried to integrate the theoretical debates over citizenship and the public sphere and argue that the analysis of digitally enabled social

movements can help shed new light on the notion of citizenship in a contemporary democracy. The original findings and discussion presented in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 show a gradual development in “connective action” and how Taiwanese activists polished their skills in utilising social media to organise a social movement and mobilise supporters. The social movements discussed and reviewed in this study are not always focused on the same subject of protest, however, the activists behind these movements show that Taiwanese society, and the international community that today’s Taiwanese youth are remain very much committed to democratic values. They show this commitment through creative, spontaneous, and sometimes unexpected approaches. They are not afraid of taking to the streets so that they can ensure the government will not pursue its own political agenda at the cost of sacrificing a hard-earned democracy and freedom. Though the personal ties of current activists might not be as strong as those who participated in the White Lily Movement in the 1990s, they have demonstrated a new level of creativity and a strong mobilisation capability through and within their digitally enabled social movements. Under the eight-year tenure of then President Ma, these activists proactively led a resurgence in the practice of social movement in Taiwan, culminating in the 2014 occupation of the Legislature. At the same time, they have managed to awaken a large part of the general public and inspire them to take a collective stance to defend democratic values on issues ranging from land rights to press freedom, and from political transparency to military human rights. They might be loud, but they enrich and drive forward Taiwan’s vibrant democracy.

In closing, perhaps, it is appropriate to borrow a quote from Shakespeare to describe the influence of digitally practiced democracy on the island of Taiwan:

Be not afeard. The isle is full of noises
(Shakespeare, the Tempest: Act 3, Scene 2, page 7).

Appendix

Interview Schedule

Activists

A1: Chang Sheng-han, activist during the Wild Strawberries Movement (2008), Anti-Media Monopoly Movement (2012), and the Sunflower Movement (2014).

A2: Lin Fei-fan, activist during the Wild Strawberries Movement and Anti Media Monopoly Movement in 2008 and 2012, respectively; interviewed 28 August, 2016.

A3: Chen Yu-An, Spokesperson of the Citizen 1985; interviewed 30 July 2016

A4: Tao Hsiao-Man, Chief of News centre, Citizen 1985; interviewed 4 August 2016.

A5: Wu Cheng, Sunflower Movement activist, now staff of Freddy Lim, Legislator, New Power Party; interviewed 28 August.

A6: Karen Cheng, activist and translator, Sunflower Movement; interviewed 24 July 2016.

A7: Tay Hsu, activist, designer, and translator, Sunflower Movement; interviewed 3 December, 2018.

Media

M1: Lin Chu-Yin, News anchor and political talk show host, interviewed 17 August 2016.

M2: Anonymous Journalist from the Journalist Magazine, interviewed 4 August 2016.

Politician

P1: Anonymous, aide of the office of a KMT Legislator, interviewed 20 August, 2016.

P2: Huang Shou-Da, Director, Department of Youth, Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), interviewed 14 August 2016.

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