

Hong Kong's umbrella movement in search of self- determination

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Executive summary

In the latter half of 2014, the world watched the peaceful 2.5 months long pro-democratic occupation of Hong Kong by hundreds of thousands of young people. One year later, this paper summarizes the core demands of the “Umbrella Movement” and examines its successes and failures: While the world press focused on the Umbrella Movement’s core demand for electoral reform of Hong Kong’s Chief Executive selection, the demonstrations have to be seen in the broader context of the protesters’ desire for the city’s self-determination. Hence, the Umbrella Movement was not only a pro-democratic one but also one that aimed at more autonomy for Hong Kong from mainland China. While self-determination and democracy are closely intertwined, the protesters called not only for electoral reform but for (more) social and economic independence and autonomous political institutions holding a distinct Hong Kong identity. Evaluating the results and predicting the foreseeable future, this paper argues that the movement was partly successful in terms of electoral democracy and social issues. It failed with regards to institutional self-determination while questions of identity remain completely open to this day.

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Keywords

Hong Kong; Umbrella Movement; China; self-determination; democracy



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Introduction

It is the evening of 26 September 2014 in Hong Kong's Admiralty district. A few thousand secondary school and university students strike because they demand a real democratization of Hong Kong's elections for the city's Chief Executive.¹ At 10 pm the gathering officially ends but some half an hour later, a seventeen-year old boy re-enters the stage. His name is Joshua Wong; he is the leader of a student protest organization called *Scholarism*. To the surprise of almost everyone, Wong calls on the crowd not to leave but to re-take Civic Square located in front of the city's parliament, the Legislative Council. Civic Square is a symbolic place in Hong Kong. Once built as a public space in front of the Legislative Council that is open to all citizens,² Civic Square was closed in July 2014 following protests against infrastructural projects in Hong Kong's north, the New Territories (The Standard 2014). Although the square was partly re-opened from 6 am to 11 pm in early September 2014, Joshua Wong's call to reclaim Civic Square is a symbol for the movement's desire for democracy, civil liberties and self-determination of the Hong Kong people (MacLeod/Dastagir 2014).

About 3,000 students – most of them around the same age as Joshua Wong himself – spend this night in front of the Legislative Council and some hundred students climb the fences and retake Civic Square. The security forces react with a heavy-handed intervention using pepper spray and – in the course of the night and the next day – tear gas as well (South China Morning Post 2014). One protester suffers a heart attack but the police deny the medics to entry to Civic Square in the first instance. Many other protesters suffer injuries, including Joshua Wong who gets arrested at around 11 pm (Jacobs 2014b). He and many others are sent to hospital.

Local media reports about the police's actions and the news go viral on Facebook and other social media. As a result of that tens of thousands of young people – students, trainees and young workers – hit the streets in support of the protesters at Civic Square.³ They use their umbrellas to protect themselves against the police's pepper spray, which gives the movement its name. On 29 September the riot police withdraws and the situation calms down (Branigan 2014; Mullen/Shoichet 2014). But the streets of three districts in Hong Kong remain occupied by the young protesters for the next two and a half months.

This was the beginning of the umbrella movement that turned into the largest and most important demonstration for democracy on Chinese soil ever since the crackdown at Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989.

¹ The Chief Executive is the most influential political office in Hong Kong's polity which is dominated by the executive.

² Author's interview with a moderate student activist, Hong Kong 2015-06-27.

³ Author's interviews with a radical secondary school student, Hong Kong, 2015-07-19, and an expert on civil society and protests, Hong Kong, 2015-06-24.

Hong Kong is a contentious city with many demonstrations (Lee et al. 2013). In the last years, the city's youth was especially concerned about an education reform package that aimed to introduce a 'national education' plan trying to enhance Hong Kong students' patriotic feelings towards the People's Republic of China (PRC) (Kit 2014).⁴ Thousands of students demonstrated against the government's plan to introduce the 'national education' reform. Joshua Wong was one of them, founding *Scholarism*. The movement succeeded and in 2012 the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) made the implementation of its plans optional.

At first glance, the two protests – the umbrella movement in 2014 and the anti-national education demonstrations in 2012 – seemed to be very different. In 2012, the young people rejected an educational bill and two years later they aimed at true democracy. However, both protests are closely interrelated: Talking to the supporters and activists of the umbrella movement elucidates that this movement called for true electoral democracy but aimed at more: self-determination. While the international perception of the umbrella movement characterized it as a pro-democracy movement, it narrowed it down to the core demand voiced by the protesters and missed the overall intention and motivation of Hong Kong's youth.

While the perception of the umbrella movement as a pro-democracy protest is not wrong, we must understand the intentions of the activists in terms of *self-determination*, which plays out in four dimensions: democratic self-determination and the reform of the Chief Executive elections; social and economic self-determination; self-determination in terms of Hong Kong's unique identity; and institutional and political self-determination aiming at a far-reaching autonomy, if not independence, of the city. All of these four dimensions are interrelated and constitute a much broader agenda compared to the narrow focus of the public's perception of Hong Kong's Chief Executive electoral reform. Accordingly, I argue in this paper that we should not assess the successes and failures of the umbrella movement only in terms of electoral reform but more broadly with regards to the prospects of Hong Kong's self-determination vis-à-vis mainland China.

This paper is largely built upon field research in Hong Kong in 2015, including in-depth interviews with activists, journalists, politicians, members of think tanks and social scientists as well as the analysis of media reports and the limited amount of scientific analysis of the umbrella movement that has been published so far. In order to assess how the results of the umbrella movement will play out in the above mentioned four fields of self-determination, I first characterize the umbrella movement, its structure and goals in paragraph 2. While it is widely believed that the umbrella movement has been an outright failure, I argue in paragraph 3 that the results are mixed if we assess the achievements in all four dimensions of self-determination. Valuating the results and predicting the foreseeable future, I argue that the

⁴ The most prominent feature of the "national education" plan was to prescribe students to show emotions and cry when the Chinese flag is raised. Furthermore, an appraisal of the communist and nationalist ideology was part of the plan.

movement was partly successful in terms of electoral democracy and social issues. It failed with regards to institutional self-determination while questions of identity remain completely open to this day. Paragraph 4 summarizes the main finding of this paper.

Spontaneous and peaceful for self-determination: the umbrella movement

There is not much that the umbrella activists and the HKSAR government agree upon. But the fact that the selection method of Hong Kong's Chief Executive is in need of reform is not only the goal of thousands of pro-democracy activists but is also in accordance with § 45 of the city's mini-constitution, the Basic Law, which defines universal suffrage as the ultimate goal:

The ultimate aim is the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures (HKSAR Government 1997:§ 45).

Ever since the PRC's Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (SCNPC) decided in 2007 *'that the election of the fifth Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the year 2017 may be implemented by the method of universal suffrage'* (HKSAR Government 2013:44) pro-democratic activists hoped that a reform of Hong Kong's polity would be made in the not-too-distant future. Indeed, Hong Kong's current Chief Executive CY Leung started a reform process in October 2013 announcing that the reform process would contain two rounds of public consultations. However, only two months later, the government published a 'Consultation Paper' which was intended to provide a basis for public consultation but indicated that the scope of reforms would be limited (HKSAR Government 2013). In order to assess the reform proposal I shortly summarize the method of selecting the Chief Executive prior to the reform:

The last selection of Hong Kong's Chief Executive took place in 2012 and was carried out by an 'Election Committee' which consists of 1,200 members. These members are not voted upon by all 3.5 million registered voters of Hong Kong – which domiciles 7 million inhabitants – but by only about 250,000 voters who are members of four 'functional constituencies' known as political, commercial, professions and a fourth one containing labor, social services, arts and religion. Each of these four functional constituencies is represented by 300 members in the Election Committee (Chen 2012). It is beyond the scope of this paper to go into the details. But three important consequences of this procedure that characterize the Election Committee need to be mentioned:

Firstly, only 7% of Hong Kong's registered voters possess voting rights for the Election Committee, leaving 93% of them without representation in this institution. Hence, the selection of the Chief Executive can be hardly called democratic.

Secondly, even these 7% of the citizens are not equally represented in the Election Committee: While all four functional constituencies possess 300 representatives within the Election Committee, providing all four of them with 25% of the vote in the Committee, the numbers of voters in the four constituencies vary greatly: The 300 representatives of the political sector are elected by only 700 voters constituting less than 0,3% of all citizens possessing the right to vote for the Election Committee. In contrast to this, 204,399 from the professions sector constituting almost 82% of voters electing the Election Committee equally select only 300 representatives for the Election Committee. The commercials sector has 26,828 and the labor/social services and religions sector 17,572 registered voters respectively, each selecting another 300 representatives though representing only 10.75% and 7% of the total number of citizens possessing the right to select the Election Committee members.

Thirdly, these selection mechanisms are to the systematic advantage of pro-Beijing officials (mainly in the political sector) and businesses with close ties to the mainland which largely depend on the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the central government in Beijing. In other words, the described selection mechanism allows Beijing to control the Election Committee and the Hong Kong's Chief Executive elections.

The electoral reform process started in the latter half of 2013 and was set-up to fundamentally change the process of selecting Hong Kong's Chief Executive and introduce general elections carried out by universal suffrage. However, the HKSAR government made it clear that a Nomination Committee would decide who could run as candidate in the general elections. Though not officially stated, it was widely believed that the existing Election Committee should function in the future as Nomination Committee. This belief rests upon the 31 August decision of the SCNPC that reads as follows:

The provisions for the number of members, composition and formation method of the nominating committee shall be made in accordance with the number of members, composition and formation method of the Election Committee (Xinhua 2014).

In other words, the Election Committee would choose candidates that are allowed to run in the general elections. This would grant decisive competences to the Beijing-controlled body.

Advocates of democracy in Hong Kong call this a 'fake democracy' since they predict that the Nomination Committee would not allow any opposition candidate to run in the general elections for fear that the next Chief Executive would not be affiliated with the CCP and the Beijing central government. Instead of granting these far-reaching competences to the Nomination Committee, pro-democratic activists who supported the umbrella movement in autumn 2014 favor civil nomination. The process of civil nomination requires every candidate to collect a given number of signatures from registered Hong Kong voters to run for the post as Chief Executive. Hence, civil nomination would not grant Beijing control over who is running for Hong Kong's Chief Executive; consequently the CCP and its allies in the HKSAR reject the proposal. They argue that civil nomination does not conform to the Basic Law which explicitly states the nomination has to be done 'by a broadly representative nominating

committee' (HKSAR Government 1997:§ 45). Civil nomination was never seriously considered by the HKSAR government and was not mentioned in the final report released after the first round of public consultations in 29 July 2014 (HKSAR Government 2014; Steger et al. 2014). Attempts of moderate pro-democratic actors to propose compromise solutions have failed.

Even more importantly than the HKSAR government's report, the SCNPC published a decision on 31 August 2014, which made clear that the central government was not willing to accept as Chief Executive anybody who does not *love the country [China] and Hong Kong* and that the Chief Executive remains accountable to the CCP-led central government (Xinhua 2014; Luk 2014; Buckley/Forsythe 2014). This was in line with previous statements by Beijing leaders stating that the Chief Executive cannot oppose the central government (Cheung/Chong 2013).

More fundamentally, the government in Beijing interprets the 'one country, two systems' principle very differently from the pro-democratic actors in Hong Kong. Ever since its handover from British colonial rule under the sovereignty of the PRC in 1997, Hong Kong has been governed under the principle of 'one country, two systems' which stipulates that Hong Kong remains under the authority and sovereignty of the PRC but preserves a high degree of autonomy (HKSAR Government 1984). Only issues related to foreign affairs and security are subject to the jurisdiction of the central government in China. However, the Basic Law does not specify what 'foreign affairs' and 'security' entail and especially the fact that what China considers to be a matter of 'national security' has changed over the years.⁵ To clarify its interpretation of 'one country, two systems' the PRC government published a White Paper in June 2014 which made it clear once more that it is China and not the local political actors who will determine the Special Administrative Region's future (People's Republic of China 2014).

Hence, from the outset the struggle for democratizing Hong Kong's polity in general and the nomination procedure of the Chief Executive elections in particular directly address the question of how autonomous Hong Kong should be. In essence, they touch upon the very question of Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong and the degree of the city's self-determination.

Correspondingly, the agenda of the umbrella movement itself has to be seen in the broader context of Hong Kong's self-determination as well. The umbrella movement's aim for self-determination was not limited to electoral democracy. Instead, four dimensions of self-determination that the movement was aiming at are clearly identifiable. These four dimensions are electoral democracy, social welfare, identity and institutions (independence).

All of these four dimensions carry their own core questions: How democratic should Hong Kong be in order to guarantee enough self-determination of its citizens? What is the best way

⁵ Author's interview with a senior lecturer at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong 2015-06-26.

to social security and a free and self-determined life of Hong Kong's poor people? What describes Hong Kong's identity best (Hong Kong Chinese, autonomous Hong Kong identity, or anti-Chinese Hong Kong identity)? Which political institutions serve Hong Kong's interests best?

The answers to these questions within the movement are very different. They all revolve around the question what exactly 'one country, two systems' means in these four fields, or whether Hong Kong should strive for complete independence. This does not mean that all demonstrators agree on these issues. Instead, the diversity of the movement resulted in different demands in all four dimensions which all call for more self-determination though to different degrees. I differentiate between moderates and radicals (as do many of the demonstrators as well). However, while the desired degree of Hong Kong's autonomy vis-à-vis mainland China remained contested with the umbrella movement, the hope for a more self-determined city united the protesters:

With regards to electoral democracy (referring within the umbrella movement only to the selection method of the Chief Executive), the debate within the movement focused on the question of the candidates' nomination. Moderates aimed at changes in the composition of the Nomination Committee, for example by broadening the scope of committee members to include directly elected representatives from District Councils and/or the Legislative Council into it. Others opt for a greater say of different political parties and/or organizations which requires pro-democratic and pro-Beijing forces to find compromise candidates (Occupy Central with Love and Peace 2014b). This would turn Hong Kong into some sort of a concordance democracy. Radicals instead insist on civil nomination without Chinese interference. Apart from these different approaches, all pro-democratic forces in Hong Kong are united in their call for a nomination procedure which ensures that the candidates running for the post as Chief Executive cannot be hand-picked by China. All agree that civil nomination would be the best way of nomination but are divided on whether to compromise or not since it is highly unlikely that Beijing will accept this demand. In other words, while radicals call for complete non-interference of the PRC into the nomination process, moderates seek ways to limit China's influence and protect as much local autonomy as possible. Both, moderates and radicals, aim to preserve or even increase Hong Kong's degree of self-determination.

In terms of economic and social welfare issues, the umbrella movement has demanded to fight poverty⁶ and housing shortages,⁷ as well as to address concerns of the young middle classes which are also heavily affected by the difficult social situation in Hong Kong.⁸ Moderates within the movement aim at fighting these issues by all means – if needed, in

⁶ According to the HKSAR's own figures, 20% of the city's population is poor (Ngo 2013).

⁷ Rental fees are among the highest in the world and tens of thousands of people live in cages that often do not provide enough space for a grown person to sleep outstretched.

⁸ 23% of Hong Kong's youth supports their elderly parents with up to 20% of their income; another 17% spend between 20-60% of their income for their parents (Hong Kong Transition Project 2013:34).

cooperation with China. This includes that they accept increased economic cooperation and the influx of Chinese tourists if it serves the Hong Kong economy, helps to reduce poverty and supports the middle class. At the same time they believe that the PRC has negatively impacted the current situation in Hong Kong. Others, on the other hand, emphasize the self-expression of Hong Kong's poor people as a part of grassroots democratic self-determination of the Hong Kong people. Consequently, Chinese interferences are perceived with more skepticism and local solutions that place the needs of the poor people first are preferred. Finally, radicals even call for economic independence from China because they believe that the close ties with the mainland undermine the social welfare institutions of Hong Kong. Apart from these differences, all protest camps agree that China and mainlanders are causing social challenges for Hong Kong. Consequently, all hope for more economic and social self-determination while the degrees to which activists are willing to cooperate with the PRC vary: Moderates hope for true cooperation while radicals call for economic independence from the mainland.

As for identity, moderates perceive themselves as 'Hong Kong-Chinese', an identity that merges Chinese cultural traditions with the international and multicultural legacy of Hong Kong, which is still somehow shaped by British colonial rule. The claim to be 'Hong Kong-Chinese' represents something unique and distinguishable from the mainland Chinese identity without neglecting Chinese influences. Others view themselves solely as 'Hong Kongers' with a strong sense of localism. Mainland Chinese influences, though not completely rejected, are perceived with some skepticism either because China is only a minor source of the Hong Kong identity or because the PRC is seen as not preserving the 'true' Chinese traditional culture anymore (e.g. because they have simplified the Chinese characters and don't write the 'language of Confucius' anymore). Anti-national education protests as well as the struggle to prevent Putonghua from replacing Cantonese as the medium of instruction in the city's primary schools most prominently tie in with the question of Hong Kong's unique identity. Finally, radicals clearly reject any Chinese influences on the local Hong Kong identity. This does not mean that they deny Chinese impacts on Hong Kong's past. However, their local Hong Kong identity is constructed in contrast to the mainland Chinese one and is sometimes even infiltrated by anti-Chinese racist opinions.

Politically, all this bears the question of adequate institutions. Moderates defend the status quo of 'one country, two systems' highlighting the 'two systems' part of the principle. China's increased emphasis of the 'one country' norm, e.g. within the White Paper issued in June 2014, worries them. For this group, Hong Kong is and should remain part of China. In their eyes, Hong Kong's example could trigger political reform in the PRC as a whole. This is where others disagree, aiming at a higher degree of autonomy like in a federalist state searching for local institutional solutions without setting any prototype for other localities. While the PRC may prefer this perspective over the first one, it is more radical insofar as it does not relate the city of Hong Kong to the Chinese motherland. More autonomy compared to the existing 'one country, two systems' principle is demanded, which would make Hong Kong highly autonomous from the central government. Radicals, finally, go a step further calling for complete independence of Hong Kong as a city state with its own full sovereignty.

Apart from these differences, the umbrella movement agrees on the call for more political autonomy.

All in all, the question of electoral democratic reform of the Chief Executive selection did not only touch upon the broader issue of Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong and the interpretation of the ‘one country, two systems’ principle from Beijing’s perspective. Instead, the umbrella movement’s call for electoral democracy has to be seen as part of a broader and more general desire for an increased self-determination of Hong Kong.

In other words, democracy fits the umbrella movement’s agenda for self-determination because, in its literal sense, democracy is about the rule of the people themselves.⁹ In almost the same manner, this is the essence of collective self-determination. Both concepts share the idea that power is executed by the subjects of rule, effectively overcoming the division of the rulers and the ruled. However, there is one market difference in the evolution of the terms ‘democracy’ and ‘self-determination’: While the former refers to a specific form of rule domestically, self-determination as a *political* concept¹⁰ rose in prominence as a by-product of nationalism highlighting the collective self-determination of people externally. Literally, democracy and collective self-determination are closely interlinked but each carries a different political-historical connotation.

Hence, while the ultimate aim of the umbrella movement was broader than electoral democracy, the above summarized reform process of the Chief Executive’s selection method that – in the eyes of pro-democracy actors – offers only ‘fake democracy’ and reinforces Beijing’s control over the city, constituted the occasion of forming a protest movement: Already in January 2013, an associate professor at the Department of Law at the Hong Kong University, Benny Tai Yiu-ting, published an article entitled ‘Civil Disobedience’s Deadliest Weapon’ in the Hong Kong Economic Journal calling for an occupation of Hong Kong’s Central district in order to shut down the city (Chan 2013; Tai 2013). The article went viral in Hong Kong and with the help of a minister of Chai Wan Baptist Church, Reverend Chu Yiu-ming, who is also the chairman of the Hong Kong Democracy Development Network, and Chan Kin-man, an associate professor of sociology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Tai announced the foundation of the *Occupy Central with Love and Peace* (OCLP) movement (March 2013). Up until autumn 2014, these three people, often referred to as the ‘Occupy Trio’, successfully built up OCLP, organizing several events, gatherings and meetings, discussing the democratization of Hong Kong’s polity and preparing the occupation of the city’s business district, Central, on China’s national day, 1 October 2014. At the core of these preparations were three ‘deliberation days’ when every citizen of Hong Kong was invited to propose and discuss different ways of democratizing the Chief Executive selection. The result

⁹ I am aware of the fact of democratic theory’s plurality of the terms definition. However, this paper does not follow a specific understanding of democracy but aims at presenting what the umbrella protesters thought of when they referred to it. Hence, this paper understands democracy in its broadest, literal sense as any form of rule that is carried out by the people (*demos*).

¹⁰ The *political* concept of self-determination has to be distinguished from its philosophical usage which neither limits self-determination to the nation nor to collectives (see e.g. the work of Immanuel Kant).

of the third deliberation day were three different proposals (Ip 2014; PopVote 2014) which were sent to an unofficial referendum that took place 20-29 June 2014 with 800,000 out of the 3.5 million registered voters casting their ballot (Occupy Central with Love and Peace 2014c; BBC 2014a). The final result showed support for a three-chain proposal, offering candidates three ways to be nominated for the elections, which should be held by universal suffrage: Firstly, nomination by the Nomination Committee after the democratization of its composition; secondly, party nomination allowing the political parties in Hong Kong's Legislative Council to nominate; thirdly, civil nomination which provides the citizens a direct opportunity to nominate their candidate(s) (Hong Kong University 2014).

Although the referendum showed a high turnout, the government did not fulfill the demand of OCLP to implement its result. Therefore, the Occupy movement decided to hit the streets on 1 October 2014 as planned and occupy the streets. The leadership of OCLP hoped that 10,000 people would join to completely occupy Central district peacefully as an act of civil disobedience and expected to get arrested after only a few days if not hours. Although Hong Kong was occupied for several months by up to 500,000 occupiers (estimations vary), the protests turned out to be very different than what OCLP had expected. At least four significant differences can be identified:

Firstly, the occupation started already a few days prior to 1 October 2014 and was initiated not by OCLP but two student organizations, *Scholarism* and the *Hong Kong Federation of Students* (HKFS) (see introduction; Vice News/Yeung 2014).

Secondly, the local public's outcry over police violence turned the whole movement from an organized one led by the 'Occupy Trio' into a spontaneous protest which was largely shaped by Hong Kong's youth. Social media reports about police violence massively helped to spontaneously mobilize the city's young people who had never taken part in the deliberation days or participated in one of OCLP's trainings in civil disobedience (Occupy Central with Love and Peace 2014a).¹¹

Thirdly, the protest tactics varied not fundamentally but markedly: While both the students and OCLP lobbied for and carried out peaceful protests, the students rejected OCLP's appeal to wait until getting arrested by the police. The continued call for their original strategy made many students reject the leadership of OCLP. A moderate student activist who had been sympathetic to OCLP initially told me for example:

*At first, when Benny Tai proposed Occupy Central, I was supportive and I really think that civil disobedience can make a difference. But when you are in the movement, you don't think the same way because the use of violence is all out of charge. When I was pepper sprayed, I couldn't control my consciousness, I was full of hatred, full of aggressive minds. No way. I think 90% of students think the same way as I do.*¹²

¹¹ Author's interview with a senior member of Occupy Central, Hong Kong, 2015-07-18.

¹² Author's interview with a moderate student activist, Hong Kong 2015-06-27.

Fourth and finally, the ‘umbrella movement’ never occupied Central as it was planned by OCLP but three other districts of Hong Kong (Buckley et al. 2014): Admiralty, Mong Kok and Causeway Bay. Admiralty, bordering the business district of Central, consists of public administration buildings, consulates, luxury shops and restaurants as well as financial businesses. Protesters in Admiralty gathered in front of government buildings and the Legislative Council and blocked main roads for the traffic on Hong Kong Island connecting Wan Chai and Causeway Bay in the east with Central and Sheung Wan in the west. Protests at Admiralty gained the most attention from international media and counted the most occupants. They were the most organized and well-structured protests coordinated by the Hong Kong Federation of Students, Scholarism as well as to a lesser extent OCLP and other civil society organizations.

In contrast to Admiralty, Mong Kok is a working class district on the Kowloon Peninsula with many low-priced shops and traditional cookshops. People living here are much poorer and the neighborhood is dirtier. Protests attracted occupants with more radical perspectives than those of Admiralty, which included the call for grassroots democracy within the protest movement itself. Mong Kok developed into the most unique protest area and protest leaders never gained control over Mong Kok which was mainly grassroots driven.¹³ In Mong Kok, the movement occupied two major roads of the Kowloon Peninsula including Nathan Road which caused enormous obstacles to the traffic in Kowloon.

The protest site in Causeway Bay is geographically not too far away from Admiralty. On the one hand, Causeway Bay is a business district with many high-price shopping opportunities and full of shopping malls. One would not assume to find much support for the protesters here. In contrast, there is some tradition of political protest in Causeway Bay and every day people distribute political leaflets in the streets. The protesters at Causeway Bay were less outspoken than their counterparts in Mong Kok and Admiralty and gained the least attention. Instead, my interviewees characterized it as a place of classes, seminars and discussions.¹⁴

The plurality as well as the differences of these three protest sites and the divergent views of radicals and moderates shortly mentioned above with regards to the four fields of self-determination all point to an important characteristic of the movement: its diversity. While most of the protesters came out ‘individually’ in reaction to the media and social media coverage of the occupation and police violence holding a great variety of opinions, the diversity of the movement was also represented by the supportive organizations including moderates and radicals, civil society organizations and political parties, well-established organizations and loosely structured networks. As a result of this diversity, neither individuals nor one or more organizations were able to *control* the movement. Instead, with the support of

¹³ Author’s interview with a moderate student activist, Hong Kong 2015-06-27 and a young Mong Kok activist, Hong Kong, 2015-07-15.

¹⁴ Author’s interviews with a young lecturer at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong 2015-06-26 and a human rights activist, Hong Kong, 2015-07-20.

new technology and social media, civil society organizations tried (in some parts very successfully) to *coordinate* a very fragmented protest movement.

Overall the protests of the umbrella movement remained peaceful and very well ordered. Violent clashes with the police erupted only sporadically (Lau 2014) (though human rights organizations reported human rights violations by Hong Kong's police; ai [Amnesty International] 2015; Whiteman 2014) and on a minor scale mainly in Mong Kok, with counter-demonstrators supporting the HKSAR and central Chinese governments. It has been reported that some of these counter-demonstrators have been paid by the PRC (Liu 2014) but this should not mislead one to overlook that Hong Kong remained a divided city with only a little over half of it being in support of the umbrella movement (Ortmann 2014; Lee/Siu 2014; Chan 2014; Ma 2014).

The young protesters demanded talks on political reform with the HKSAR government and negotiations were scheduled several times but only one official meeting broadcasted live in local TV took place (Chow/Steger 2014; Hunt 2014).

Over time, it became clear that the HKSAR and central Chinese governments' tactic was to sit out the occupation and try to avoid both political reform as well as violent crackdown of the movement. Indeed, tensions over goals and tactics arose among the activists and the fact that nothing changed exhausted many young occupiers. Moreover, the support of the general public in Hong Kong decreased due to the fact that the occupation caused some – albeit limited – inconveniences to everyday life. This led the 'Occupy Trio' which had joined the movement in the first days to decide to withdraw their support on 3 December surrendering to the police; but they were set free without being charged (Barber 2014).

On 25 November 2014, the police cleared the Mong Kok protest area with some but not excessive resistance by the demonstrators. Admiralty and Causeway Bay were cleared 11 December and 15 December 2014 respectively without violence, ending 2.5 months of the umbrella movement occupying important parts of Hong Kong.¹⁵

The occupiers left the scene frustrated: For most protesters, the umbrella movement has failed. In their eyes, the demonstrators left the streets without concessions from the government and the general public's sympathy for the movement faded because the protests lasted too long.¹⁶ Moreover, many activists believe that the protests demonstrated the marginality of their bargaining leverage because the final decisions are not made in Hong Kong but in Beijing. In the following section, I argue that this assessment overlooks the

¹⁵ For a more detailed description of the occupation on a daily basis see the blogs of the South China morning Post or the Young Reporter, a students' magazine of the Hong Kong Baptist University's Department of Journalism (The Young Reporter 2015).

¹⁶ Author's interviews two senior Occupy Central members, Hong Kong, 2015-07-18, with a moderate student activist, Hong Kong, 2015-06-23 and two young Mong Kok activists, Hong Kong, 2015-07-19.

complexity of the demands and prospects for Hong Kong. In fact, the umbrella movement has not been a clear success; but it has achieved more than most activists have realized.

Success or failure: Towards a more self-determined Hong Kong?

The rather pessimistic and frustrated perception of most umbrella movement protesters draws on the fact that the government refused to make any concessions (Lau 2015). However, I argue that the results of the umbrella movement are much more mixed and ambivalent as to call them a clear failure. This holds true in two regards: Firstly, one needs to consider the development in all four dimensions of self-determination that the protesters aimed at. Secondly, even in the field of electoral reform, where the demonstrators believe they failed, the outcome of the umbrella movement is better than one might believe in the first place:

A democratic future for Hong Kong?

Neither upon the end of the umbrella movement in December 2014 nor until the final voting of the Legislative Council on the reform bill on 18 June 2015 was a compromise reached (Lam 2015a). For coming into effect, the bill would have needed a two-thirds majority in the Legislative Council. However, since pan-democratic legislators possess a blocking minority the reform package failed as expected prior to the voting (Buckley/Wong 2015). The final result even turned into a disaster for the pro-Beijing parties because out of confusion many of the pro-Beijing lawmakers left the plenary prior to the voting hoping that the quorum needed for a legally valid decision would be missed and the ballot repeated (The Standard 2015). However, due to a lack of coordination, the quorum was met and the reform bill did not only miss a two thirds majority as expected but also misses a bare majority with 8 in favor of Beijing's reform proposal and 28 against it (Forsythe/Wong 2015; Kwow 2015; Yau 2015). The umbrella movement's core request, namely to prevent the bill and with it 'fake democracy', was achieved months after the occupiers had left the streets.

While most protesters did not celebrate this as their victory, some recognize that at least the unity of the pan-democratic members of parliament can be perceived as a result of the umbrella movement because many feared losing their voters' support if they 'betrayed' the umbrella movement.

There are three reasons why many demonstrators do not see the result in the Legislative Council as their success: Firstly, the voting took place months after the end of the umbrella movement. The demonstrators left the streets without an immediate result, which has caused their feeling of failure. Secondly, most protesters do not feel closely associated with the pan-democratic parties. Hence, what parties achieve in 'high politics' is not recognized as a result of the umbrella movement. Thirdly, while the government's bill was prevented, the existing law stays in place: The next Chief Executive will be voted upon by the Election Committee. Hence, while 'fake democracy' was prevented, the protesters did not receive 'true democracy' but the previous non-democratic procedure stays in place.

The crucial question now is whether there will be another reform process in the not too distant future. One scenario is that the Beijing and the HKSAR governments will not offer any other reform package to the pro-democratic camp (Hui 2014). At first glance this might be realistic since both want to prevent real democracy in Hong Kong. Furthermore, this would be consistent with their statements prior to the Legislative Council voting (Cheung et al. 2015a). However, there are four reasons that make me consider this scenario rather unlikely:

Firstly, the Hong Kong people have voiced their protest over and over again (Cheng 2011). The PRC obviously tried to avoid a crackdown of the movement. But it should be fully aware that the next protest is only a matter of time. Hence, Beijing is well-advised if it prepares a new reform proposal to reach compromise with the Hong Kong people, especially its youth.

Secondly, China has repeatedly promised a process of democratization. Even if there will be no reform prior to the elections of Hong Kong's Chief Executive in 2017, by starting the last reform process the Chinese leadership has acknowledged the need of change. Given the obvious dissatisfaction of the Hong Kong citizens with the status quo it is unlikely that the PRC will completely retract from the recognition of the need to political reform. In late July, a leading CCP official on Hong Kong and Macau affairs announced for the first time further political reform though he did not indicate any timetable or what kind of reforms the CCP intended to offer. Furthermore, the Basic Law clearly states that the election of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage is the ultimate goal. Though not setting any timetable, Beijing would harm the future of the city if it broke the Basic Law because trust in Hong Kong's effective rule of law has always remained a locational advantage.

Thirdly, not only pan-democrats but also the pro-Beijing parties are rather fragmented. As a result, CY Leung received only 689 out of the 1,200 votes in the last Chief Executive Election in 2012. According to observers, it is rather unlikely that the pro-Beijing parties will nominate only one candidate for the post as Chief Executive in 2017.¹⁷ In case the pan-democrats send more than 200 delegates to the Election Committee, their votes might be important to anyone running for the post as Chief Executive. Pan-democratic parties may make use of this leverage and force any candidate to restart the reform process in return for the votes of pan-democrats in the Election Committee.¹⁸

Fourthly, there is still enough room for compromise. A number of partly rather complex compromise proposals have been tabled prior to and after the umbrella movement. Although they have not been successful in the past, their existence has clearly mapped out space for compromise. Additionally, there will be new suggestions in the future. One possible compromise may be found in a concordance democratic approach which sets up a framework that requires both pro-Beijing and pan-democratic parties to agree upon a list of candidates

¹⁷ Author's interview with a pan-democratic member of the Election Committee and member of a leading pan-democratic think tank, Hong Kong, 2015-06-26.

¹⁸ Author's interview with a pan-democratic member of the Election Committee and member of a leading pan-democratic think tank, Hong Kong, 2015-06-26.

running for the post as Chief Executive in general elections held by universal suffrage (Ng et al. 2015). The democratization and enlargement of the Nomination Committee would be another option to solve the crisis of reform. All in all, concordance democratic reform solutions are apparently not completely impossible.

Hence, by contributing to the rejection of Beijing's reform proposal and highlighting the Hong Kong people's demand for democratization, the umbrella movement might have indeed achieved a partial success in the medium-term with regards to electoral democratic reform.

However, the umbrella movement's call for civil nomination is very unlikely to be met. Hence, moderates have much more to expect from the coming reforms. It is very likely that the radicals will remain unsatisfied. Furthermore, if moderates compromise with Beijing on electoral reform, the political forces supporting the umbrella movement might split seriously, weakening the pro-democratic camp in the long-run.

Social justice for Hong Kong?

Since the umbrella movement has not formulated any explicit goal with regards to social issues and welfare policies, it is difficult to exactly find out whether and what the movement might have achieved or will achieve in the near future. However, there is good reason to believe that the umbrella movement has caused a heightened awareness of the city's political elite for the concerns and challenges of the young, the poor and the middle classes fearing socioeconomic decline:

The students have spoken about the concerns of many people who used to have no voice in Hong Kong politics, especially with regards to social issues. All of a sudden, these issues were debated much more in the city's public and that has not changed ever since.

The perception of Hong Kong's challenges has changed with many but not all politicians. This holds true for both the pro-Beijing and pan-democratic lawmakers.

After the electoral reform had failed, the Chief Executive announced that this was regrettable but now the government has to and will focus on social and economic issues. One might argue that this is populist and that he tried to weaken the opposition with this announcement. However, nobody can deny that the city faces many social and economic challenges which a government has to address. The opposition agrees to this as well and admits that it has a certain responsibility given its blocking minority too. After the voting in the Legislative Council, I talked to an opposition leader and she told me: 'If the Chief Executive will claim successes on economic and social issues for the government, we will agree. Most important is that we start to seriously address these problems.' I think we will see cooperation between the government and the opposition on these issues and I am very optimistic that this will lead to positive results for Hong Kong.¹⁹

¹⁹ Author's interview with a leading European diplomat, Hong Kong 2015-07-17; translation: T.R.

Hence, the umbrella movement most likely had a significant impact on future social policies in Hong Kong. A success of the movement is very likely in terms of the political elite fighting poverty. Furthermore, Beijing has shown flexibility both in China and in Hong Kong when it comes to economic reforms in the past: When Hong Kong suffered from the Asian financial crisis and the outbreak of SARS, a demonstration of 500,000 people shocked Beijing in 2003.²⁰ It reacted by increasing economic ties with the mainland that favored mainly the city's economy. However, while Beijing's last attempt was successful economically, many supporters of the umbrella movement reject an increasing economic dependence on the PRC. Hence, if China's economic engagement becomes too obvious, the central government may risk further anti-Chinese protests.

In essence, while it is rather likely that social concerns will be addressed in the coming years, Hong Kong's economic and social dependence on China will rise. While the first is a success of the umbrella movement, the latter contradicts what many demonstrators are hoping for.

Hong Kong's identity – Chinese or not?

Throughout the umbrella protests, Hong Kong has remained a divided city. Little more than half of the population supported the protests, the other half condemned it. This holds true for the identity issue as well: The protesters' sense of localism has been strengthened but there is no reason to believe that supporters of the pro-Beijing camp have changed their affiliation. All in all, the umbrella movement has both boosted the young people's sense of localism and, at the same time, polarized the city as a whole.²¹

Since mostly young people support the umbrella movement and hold a 'local' identity, the CCP's goal to establish a patriotic Chinese identity seems even more unlikely to be achieved than ever before. The 'mainlandization' of the city will go on because economic ties with the PRC increase and more and more people from the mainland move to Hong Kong. However, this 'mainlandization' seems to cause a polarization of the city and since Hong Kong will remain unique for quite some time to come, the full cultural and ideational integration of the city into the PRC is not foreseeable (yet). This situation leaves the people of Hong Kong in a dilemma: While many citizens in Hong Kong realize that the city's economic future largely depends on China, culturally they perceive themselves to be superior and more civilized compared to the mainland, hoping to separate themselves from the PRC.

More conflicts including protests are very likely to emerge in the near future. The question whether Mandarin should replace Cantonese as the medium of instruction in primary schools will become the next battlefield between young protesters with Scholarism at its core and the

²⁰ In 2003, 500,000 people hit the streets demonstrating against a draft bill implementing the Basic Law's article 23 on subversion. However, it is widely believed that the high turnout was also the result of Hong Kong's difficult economic situation after SARS and the Asian Financial crisis (Poon 2008:introduction; Ngok 2009; Yeung 2008).

²¹ Author's interview with a leading European diplomat, Hong Kong 2015-07-17; translation: T.R.

HKSAR and central governments. Beyond the language issue many incidents are now framed in terms of the divide between the mainland and Hong Kong (e.g. the appointment of new professors in Hong Kong's universities).²²

The umbrella movement is over but part of its legacy is the polarization of the city and an increased awareness of localism that will lead to more protests in the coming years. How the city develops in terms of its collective identity and cultural distinctiveness remains completely open. The umbrella movement has demonstrated the frictions but has neither pointed out any solutions nor how Beijing will handle the issue in the future.

Hong Kong – politically autonomous?

Institutionally, the umbrella movement has not achieved anything and it is very unlikely to succeed in the foreseeable future: The central government in Beijing fears that providing Hong Kong with more autonomous rights could encourage other unsatisfied people in other regions of the People's Republic to intensify their efforts. Hence, China is not only concerned about the city but of setting an example for conflicts with minorities in Tibet and Xinjiang or even local protests in other provinces, most importantly the demonstrations in the southern province of Guangdong (Keck 2014; Jacobs 2014a).

Consequently, the central leadership in Beijing is concerned about the situation in Hong Kong and its possible impacts on the rest of the country. Not only is succession of the city unthinkable but also more autonomous rights would contradict the governance style of the CCP: Back in 2003 when 500,000 people hit the streets, China reacted with a double strategy: Firstly, it provided economic assistance to Hong Kong in order to help it overcome its economic difficulties for example by easing the influx of mainland tourists which have visited Hong Kong ever since in order to shop (Citrinot 2014) or concluding the free trade agreement CEPA which is widely perceived as mostly serving the economic interests of Hong Kong instead of the mainland (Antkiewicz/Whalley 2011). This has driven Hong Kong closer to the mainland and demonstrates the great economic potential of cooperation for Hong Kong (Jacques 2014), but many young Hong Kong umbrella movement activists reject it.

Secondly, China tightened its control over the city basically reinterpreting the 'one country, two systems' principle.²³ It would be a major surprise if the PRC would react with a loosening of control over Hong Kong after the umbrella movement. To the contrary: A loss of political autonomy will most likely be the result of the umbrella movement because Beijing's concerns have grown.

All in all, with regards to the political autonomy of the city, the umbrella movement has been an outright failure. As long as the CCP stays in power and the PRC is not in serious trouble, the independence of Hong Kong is beyond reach. Moreover, the anti-Chinese protests in the city have made more autonomy under the 'one country, two systems' principle less likely.

²² Author's interview with a leading European diplomat, Hong Kong 2015-07-17; translation: T.R.

²³ Author's interview with a senior lecturer at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong 2015-06-26.

In sum, the umbrella movement has not been a complete failure measured by the results and developments that are, most likely, about to emerge in the near future: Compromise on electoral reform is possible and may satisfy the moderates of the umbrella movement. A heightened awareness of social issues will most likely lead the HKSAR and central governments to address the issue. However, this may result in an increased economic dependence on the mainland, which is rejected by many protesters. In terms of the city's identity, the umbrella movement has neither failed nor succeeded but it has polarized Hong Kong. More protests – most likely on the issue of Putonghua as the medium of instruction in primary schools – will emerge in the city. Only in terms of political autonomy, the umbrella movement has resulted in a complete failure since it has made an increase of Hong Kong's autonomy less likely.

The future of the protest movement

The umbrella movement has been the most important pro-democracy demonstration on Chinese soil ever since the crackdown of Tiananmen in June 1989. In all these years, no major protests against the central government and a demand for changing the political system have been seen in the mainland. The CCP's violent crackdown of the student protests in 1989 are only one reason for the absence of protests in the mainland: Scientific analysis has demonstrated that the people in the PRC are rather satisfied with their government (Gilley 2006). Will China succeed in appeasing the city of Hong Kong like it did in the last 25 years with the whole country?

Probably not. Hong Kong's political and societal systems are more open and China will not be able to carry out repressive means as it did in the mainland. But more importantly, the city of Hong Kong is in relative decline. In contrast to the PRC, which has witnessed not only a rise of its international importance but also an unprecedented increase of prosperity and the people's welfare, Hong Kong will most likely not experience such a 'golden era' in the next decade.

Hong Kong remains culturally, economically, politically and socially very different from the rest of the PRC. There is, however, good reason to doubt whether the leaders in Beijing are fully aware of this since many of the decision-makers have never been to Hong Kong or at least don't know the city very well.²⁴ The local HKSAR government, in turn, largely depends on the decisions made in Beijing. Hence, it is questionable whether the CCP's decisions on Hong Kong meet the conditions on the ground as adequately as they have in the mainland throughout the last two and a half decades.

Hong Kong's challenges have not been met. While frustration is visible throughout the umbrella protesters now, more demonstrators are very likely to emerge in the future. This might not be a matter of months but a few years. The umbrella protesters are young and they

²⁴ Author's interviews with a leading European diplomat, Hong Kong 2015-07-17, and an expert on civil society and protests, Hong Kong, 2015-06-24.

will hit the streets again. One moderate student activist who claims to be very frustrated with the movement's failure told me for example:

*I would definitely join a new protest movement. Expressing my attitude and doing something impossible to make it happen is important. Moreover, I think that the Hong Kong people don't really deserve democracy yet. I think if you want democracy you really have to deserve it by means of ideological struggles and revolution.*²⁵

Apart from the perception of failure, many in the city believe that the umbrella movement has been a 'formative' event for the city's youth (Dapiran 2014). Furthermore, the young protesters have experienced their potential of mobilization and that they are not alone in their dissatisfaction with the situation of Hong Kong. Apart from these encouraging facts, the umbrella movement faces four interrelated major challenges relevant for future protests:

Firstly, the movement has laid open a generational gap. While the majority of Hong Kong's older generation did not support the movement, most young people did (BBC 2014b). This resulted in major distrust between the generations, often dividing families.²⁶

Secondly, the movement is highly diverse and contains many different factions and organizations which neither agree on protest tactics nor goals. Furthermore, the pan-democratic parties and well-established pro-democratic civil society organizations have existed for many years, know each other personally very well but have been disunited for the last decade. In the upcoming District Council elections, radicals and moderates will compete again in many districts of Hong Kong, effectively splitting the pro-democratic votes and providing pro-government candidates better chances to win.²⁷ The lack of unity is further fueled by the generational divide within the movement because many young protesters reject the well-established pro-democratic organizations including pan-democratic parties:²⁸

I don't want to follow the games of adults, [...] handing out business cards that you'll just put in the rubbish bin, chit-chat. Political reform is not going to come from going to meetings... We had to do radical action because our leaders did nothing" (Joshua Wong quoted in: Rauhala 2014).

Thirdly, the umbrella movement lacked a clear structure and leadership. Pan-democratic lawmakers as well as the 'Occupy trio' including Benny Tai had only very little influence on students and are not perceived as representing the movement. More important were the student leaders themselves, most prominently Joshua Wong and Alex Chow. However, both

²⁵ Author's interview with a moderate student activist, Hong Kong, 2015-06-27.

²⁶ Author's interviews with a young Mong Kok activist, Hong Kong, 2015-07-15, a moderate HKU student activist, Hong Kong, 2015-07-23, and a radical secondary school student, Hong Kong, 2015-07-19.

²⁷ Author's interview with a member of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, Hong Kong, 2015-07-18.

²⁸ Author's interview with a young lecturer at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 2015-06-26.

are not unchallenged leaders either: Joshua Wong's organization Scholarism faces the accusation of not being democratic internally.²⁹ The Hong Kong Federation of Students, headed during the umbrella movement by Alex Chow, is about to fall apart (Cheung et al. 2015b). The lack of widely accepted leadership has been a problem during the movement and it will continue to be in the future. In the long-run, some of the umbrella movement's leaders will most likely become politicians themselves. It has to be seen whether they will succeed in uniting the supporters of democracy and their generation.

Consequently, the re-unification of the pro-democratic organizations and parties as well as the bridging of generational conflicts within the movement would be central to a successful future of pan-democrats both within the parliament and on the streets of Hong Kong. In order to achieve this goal, pan-democratic parties and well-established civil society organizations need to open up, democratize themselves and integrate the young generation into their ranks and provide the youth with possibilities to influence and shape their courses of action.

Fourthly, Hong Kong's economic dependence on China is rising. In this situation, the economic elite of the city is most likely to continue its support for the pro-Beijing forces which seriously limits any prospects for major reform in Hong Kong (Karásková/Rezková 2014).

From the perspective of Beijing, the short-term handling of the protests was rather successful: The HKSAR and central governments avoided a violent crackdown similar to 1989 but waited without offering compromise until the protesters got frustrated and tired of staying on the streets. However, the challenges have not been solved and Beijing is well-advised to offer compromises especially with regard to electoral reform and the nomination of the city's Chief Executive. This would address parts of the protests' root causes and satisfy moderates at least partly.

Apart from these Hong Kong-related considerations, the future of the city largely depends on domestic developments in the whole of China: The PRC is most likely to face economic problems in the coming years, questioning the output legitimacy of CCP-rule. There are clear signs that the administration of Xi Jinping will make use of nationalism to replace output legitimacy to an increasing extent compared to previous decades (Lam 2015b). Nationalist rhetoric and emphasis of the 'one China principle' could include a tougher stance towards all regions which seem to challenge CCP rule or even the unity of the country including Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong. Consequently, Hong Kong's future may be influenced by developments in these other regions as well. Furthermore, Xi Jinping's leadership style, portraying himself as a strong and uncompromising leader (Lam 2015b) as well as the skeptical societal perception of Hong Kong in the mainland may worsen the city's hopes for a more self-determined future:

²⁹ Author's interviews with a young lecturer at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 2015-06-26, and a moderate student activist, Hong Kong 2015-06-27.

What is honestly worrisome is the lack of trust on the people's level. We know from international relations that the governments of China and the United States don't trust each other a lot. But at the lower level, the Chinese and the American people treat each other very friendly. We may see a lot of arguments among ordinary citizens as well, especially online. But if Chinese travel to the United States they are warmly welcomed and Americans going to China will receive the great Chinese hospitality. This is completely different with the mainland and Hong Kong. Even the ordinary people distrust each other.³⁰

Conclusion

The pictures of the umbrella movement have been seen around the world: The largest pro-democracy movement on Chinese soil ever since the Tiananmen Incident in 1989 has attracted a lot of attention. However, the movement's goals have been often narrowed down to its demand for electoral reform of the Chief Executive in general and the nomination of candidates in particular. This perception is not wrong but it neglects that it is embedded in a much broader agenda that aims at Hong Kong's self-determination in four dimensions: electoral democracy, social issues, identity and institutions. Although the umbrella movement contained a great diversity of actors with very different demands, the call for self-determination of Hong Kong unites the movement; however, self-determination is claimed to different degrees. Consequently, the assessment of the movement's achievements as well as a prediction of future politics and protests in Hong Kong has to take into account these four dimensions:

The electoral reform bill proposed by the government has been rejected in the Legislative Council. A new round of reform is likely to be seen in the coming years at least in part due to the young people's demand voiced on Hong Kong's streets. True democracy has not been achieved (yet) but moderates should be hopeful to see their demands being seriously considered in the foreseeable future. Radicals, though, have little chance that their hopes will become reality.

As of social justice addressing poverty, housing and the fears of well-educated middle classes, a rising awareness in Hong Kong's political elite is visible within both the pro-Beijing and pan-democratic camps. It is not unlikely that social issues will be tackled in the coming decade even though this may go along with an increased economic dependence on China, which many protesters reject.

The struggle for Hong Kong's distinct identity has just begun. The umbrella movement has polarized the city and strengthened the localist identity of the city's youth. Consequently, protests touching upon identity issues such as the intention of the government to change the medium of instruction in primary schools from Cantonese to Putonghua are very likely to be

³⁰ Interview with a mainland-born senior lecturer of Political Science based in Hong Kong for many years, Hong Kong, 2015-06-23.

met with resistance. Beijing's hopes for a unitary national identity will not be achieved any time soon.

Finally, the umbrella movement failed with regards to claims for institutional self-determination. Not only is the independence of the city unthinkable as long as the PRC is not in serious troubles, the central government is most likely to tighten control over the city further undermining the 'one country, two systems' principle in order to avoid another round of mass protests in the city. The fact that the HKSAR government was not able to prevent the umbrella movement has further damaged the existing distrust of the central government in Beijing in the abilities of its allies in Hong Kong. The umbrella activists' hope for more autonomy is not likely to become reality.

After the end of the occupation, the umbrella movement has fallen apart and the diversity of the pro-democratic camp has become visible again. The future of the pro-democratic movement largely depends on the question whether it will succeed to unite again, bridging not only the divide between radicals and moderates but also between the generations and social classes. Well-established organizations should open up to the youth or at least closely cooperate with the young people.

The umbrella movement ended and many activists are frustrated. Protests are not likely to emerge in the next couple of months. But the fight for the city's future is not over. The hope to make the impossible become reality is still alive. The next round of demonstrations for Hong Kong's self-determination is only a matter of time.

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