



To what Extent did Colonial Legacy in Shaping the Path of Democratization in Taiwan and Hong Kong?

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Abstract. In the 1980s and 1990s, both Taiwan and Hong Kong were undergoing various degrees of democratic reform at this time. This is a similarity between Taiwan and Hong Kong as regions that are part of the same Greater China region and have a history of colonization. I cannot help but think about the impact of the colonial legacy on the path to democratization in Taiwan and Hong Kong. What are the differences in the processes and outcomes of democratic development in Taiwan and Hong Kong due to the differences in colonial sovereignty? To what extent did external forces have an impact on their internal democratic development after the end of colonial rule? With these questions in mind, I intend to begin with a historical perspective, presenting a brief history of the colonization of Taiwan as well as Hong Kong in my essay. Then I will proceed to study the political institutions of the two places before the democratization process and analyze the inevitability and correlation between them and the conduct of democratic reforms. The focus of the study will then turn to democratization itself, as mentioned above, focusing on the process and its results. Finally, based on the above research, a comparative approach will be used to draw similarities and differences between the paths of democratization in Taiwan and Hong Kong, and to explore the role of colonial legacies on democratic development in the context of other factors. The purpose of this study is to examine the possibility of colonial legacies and external forces spawning democratization in particular regions within the Greater China region, and to provide a predictive analysis of the future state of democracy in the region in a realistic sense.

Keywords: democratisation; heritage studies; path of democratisation in Taiwan; democratisation in Hong Kong

1 Introduction

In Mahony's theory, the continuity of the system takes centre stage. The elites who create the system endeavour to consolidate the current pattern of distribution of benefits so that the system evolves in the direction of self-reinforcement. Therefore, in order to explore the origins of economic development, it is necessary to explore the incentive environment faced by elites during the period of system creation ^[1].

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Mahony argues that different colonial elites had different preferences for the geography of the colony: liberal elites established open economic institutions in regions with small indigenous populations, while rent-seeking mercantilist elites favoured complex indigenous societies. As a result, the more advanced civilisations of the pre-Hispanic colonial period fell as a result of mercantilist regimes, while the backward regions came to enjoy sustained development^{[2] [3]}.

Records of foreign power in Taiwan date back as far as the Dutch establishing trading posts in the 16th century, but the real sense of colonial rule came in 1895 when Taiwan was ceded to Japanese rule for fifty years after the Sino-Japanese War with the Treaty of Shimonoseki. It was not until 1945 that Taiwan was restored after Japan was forced to give up Taiwan as a result of its defeat in World War II. This was followed by a struggle for political power between the Communist Party and the Kuomintang in mainland China until 1949, when the Kuomintang retreated from Taiwan and began a different pattern of rule from that of mainland China. In the case of Hong Kong, formal colonial rule began in 1842 when China was defeated in the First Opium War and signed the Treaty of Nanjing^[4], followed by the Treaty of Peking and the subsequent extension of Hong Kong's boundaries, which brought Hong Kong, Kowloon, and the New Territories under British colonial rule in three separate treaties. Although briefly occupied by Japan during World War II, the British Hong Kong government continued to rule Hong Kong for over a century^[5]. It was not until 1984 when the Sino-British Joint Declaration was signed after several rounds of negotiations that Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997, and that year Hong Kong officially ended its more than 100 years of colonial rule^{[6] [7]}.

2 Political Developments in Taiwan and Hong Kong

Colonial rule undoubtedly had an impact on the political development of Taiwan and Hong Kong. The patterns retained by the suzerain state in politics would be presented in the political systems and institutions of its colonies. A very typical example is that Hong Kong as a former British colony still follows the common law system that originated in medieval England, not the civil law system that is now practiced in the mainland by the People's Republic of China, which has sovereignty over it, where law not only regulates and constrains people's behavior but also serves as an important expression of politics. It is easy to see from Hong Kong's adoption of the legal system that its political system has a strong colonial dimension. Therefore, the adoption of the common law system in Hong Kong society is a result of British colonial rule. In the case of Taiwan, the introduction of the Western system by the Japanese colonial government was also a reflection of the colonization by Japan. The impact of the colonial government on Taiwan and Hong Kong in terms of politics is similar, and the colonial legacy of both laid the foundation for their future democratization^{[8] [9]}.

A colony is, in short, a territory of a suzerain state outside of its own territory and can be seen as a subordinate to it, since the ultimate goal of colonial development is to serve the suzerain state and to develop in the interests of the suzerain state^[10]. Thus, Taiwan and Hong Kong have been in a state of "domination" for a long time, and this

is evident in their political systems. First, in the case of Taiwan, after Japan gained control of Taiwan, it established a system of local governance in which the leaders of Taiwan were appointed by the colonial authorities, which meant that the leaders were elected by the colonial authorities rather than democratically. Regional leaders would then naturally be accountable to the colonial authorities and not to the people of Taiwan. At the same time, the Japanese colonial government also explicitly prohibited the formation of political parties and participation in elections in Taiwan in order to limit Taiwanese participation in politics. Under such circumstances, it can be concluded that there was no democracy in Taiwan under the Japanese government's colonial rule, and the political system was full of authoritarian overtones. The situation of democratic development in Hong Kong was similar until 1980, when the so-called Governor of Hong Kong derived his power from the Queen and was therefore accountable to the United Kingdom and not to the residents of Hong Kong, which naturally made it difficult for the latter to have democratic rights. At the same time, apart from the Governor, all the major officials in Hong Kong were appointed, and there was no legislative or representative body, and there was a consultative politics of appointment and absorption, and decisions did not reflect public opinion.

We can see that both Taiwan and Hong Kong faced relatively similar dilemmas in their political systems before the road to democratization, with Hong Kong's budding democratization occurring in the early 1980s and Taiwan's in the late 1980s. However, it is worth noting why Hong Kong was earlier than Taiwan under similar conditions. This is a comparative study of the paths of democratization explored in Taiwan and Hong Kong, with the aim of analyzing the reasons for the differences between them. Throughout China's modern history, the biggest difference between Taiwan and Hong Kong is that the former was ruled by the defeated Kuomintang after the Japanese rule, while the latter was ruled by the British Hong Kong government for more than 100 years from the time it became a colony in 1842 until the transfer of power to China in 1997. The end of colonial rule did not mean the development of democratic politics; on the contrary, Taiwan under KMT rule imposed martial law for 38 years from 1949 to restrict civil liberties with authoritarianism and begin internal surveillance, especially under the authoritarian rule of the Chiang family led by Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo. This was one of the reasons for the slow development of Taiwan's democratization path. While Taiwan remained under martial law, democracy was quietly sprouting in Hong Kong in the south, and the determination to hand over sovereignty to China in 1997 undoubtedly accelerated the process of democratization in Hong Kong, and after 1980 Britain began to carry out the so-called 'political reform' in Hong Kong, preparing to start a representative system in Hong Kong, although this was to nurture a local pro-British political entity to perpetuate the British influence in Hong Kong. Despite the impure motives of British democratic reforms in Hong Kong, this undoubtedly contributed to the democratization process in Hong Kong to a certain extent. At the same time due to the lack of political freedom in Hong Kong under British colonial rule, there were already student groups protesting for greater democracy and freedom in Hong Kong as early as the 1960s and 1970s, and although this was part of a series of reactionary movements since World War II and was primarily a struggle for decolonization, it can be certain that this protest planted the seeds for the budding

democracy that emerged in the 1980s as mentioned earlier and contributed to the awakening of Hong Kong people's identity and democratic consciousness. These are the reasons for the difference in the timing of democratic reforms between Taiwan and Hong Kong, and it can be argued that the difference is due to the difference in historical and contemporary social opportunities.

3 Taiwan's Democratisation Process.

While the process of democratization in Hong Kong has already been mentioned in the comparison above, I will now analyze the democratization of Taiwan that began in the late 1980s and early 1990s. During this time, other parts of Asia, including Hong Kong, were gradually undergoing democratic transformation in the 1980s, and Taiwan was under pressure from the international community to adopt a more democratic system. At the same time, more than thirty years of authoritarian and dictatorial rule had caused strong dissatisfaction within the island, leading to numerous criticisms and protests from the public, a good example of which was the emergence of the Tong Wai movement in 1986. The lifting of martial law in 1987 helped Taiwan take the first step toward democratization, giving Taiwanese citizens more opportunities to participate in political activities and express themselves freely. The formation of the Democratic Progressive Party at this time created good conditions. The development of democratic politics in Taiwan was undoubtedly facilitated by the contact with martial law, and the first-ever national assembly election in Taiwan, contested by two parties, was held in 1991, which is regarded as an important symbol of Taiwan's transformation into a democratic society.

The second difference in the democratization transition process between Taiwan and Hong Kong is thus manifested, namely, why the two, which have also undergone the democratization process, have developed different models of democracy. Taiwan has developed a model of democracy while Hong Kong has developed a model of limited democracy, which makes me wonder what factors have led to such obvious differences between the two, with external forces as a very important factor in shaping the democratic political systems in Taiwan and Hong Kong.

We can say that the democratic reforms carried out in Taiwan with the help of the United States were thorough and comprehensive. Hong Kong, thousands of miles away, was a different story, as the 1980 political reform under the British Hong Kong government was a minor tinkering with the original political system, not a fundamental one, as the British did not want Hong Kong to have democracy in essence, and the reform was done as a last resort to perpetuate British power in Hong Kong as it was about to be handed over to China. In this respect, Hong Kong's democracy has been deficient from the very beginning, and after the official transfer of sovereignty in 1997, Hong Kong under Chinese sovereignty adopted the "one country, two systems" system, and although Hong Kong still has the privilege of a high degree of autonomy compared to the rest of mainland China, the election of Hong Kong's legislature has long been a matter of the central government's mandate. Although Hong Kong still enjoys a high degree of autonomy compared to the rest of mainland China, the election of the Hong

Kong legislature has long been regulated by the Basic Law at the behest of the central government, and the political system is under its control. One notable difference is that the election of the Chief Executive is not directly elected by the people but appointed by the central government. Conclusion

By exploring the paths to democratization in Taiwan and Hong Kong at the end of the last century, it is easy to see that while the colonial legacy had a profound impact on the political institutions of both places, it also gave birth to the sprouting of democracy to some extent. At the same time, external forces themselves and their motivations shaped the direction of democratic reform. A comparison of the similarities and differences between the different paths to democracy that Taiwan and Hong Kong have taken in similar contexts can help explore the different factors that gave rise to and influenced democratization in addition to enhancing the study of regional political development within the Greater China region on all fronts, which can be used to analyze and speculate on the future direction of democracy within the Greater China region.

4 Culture for development

Among the trends of the times, the first to bear the brunt was the national language movement. For Taiwan in the early days of the Restoration, it had the special significance of restoring the legal status of the national language in the local context, and therefore not only was it implemented more forcefully, but also achieved more remarkable results in popularising the language in society than the national language campaigns in other parts of the country at that time, especially in the southern regions such as Fujian and Guangdong. Obviously, it was not only a necessary precondition for strengthening communication between Taiwan and the mainland and truly integrating them, but also a solemn manifestation of national sovereignty and national self-respect.

In promoting 'assimilation' in the social and cultural fields, the Japanese colonial authorities in the early period also adopted corresponding means. Religious practices in Taiwan were originally similar to those in the Fujian and Guangdong regions on the mainland, with traditional Chinese folk religions combining Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, as well as ancestor worship and the belief in some local miscellaneous deities. Since Confucianism has always been regarded as the most important symbol of Chinese culture, although Japanese culture has also been profoundly influenced by Confucianism, 'suppressing Confucianism' is still regarded as a basic cultural policy.

In order to better grasp the rhythm of this 'gradual assimilation' and to stabilise the colonial rule in Taiwan, the Japanese authorities also set up the 'Provisional Taiwan Old Customs Investigation Society' in 1901, with Shinpei Goto as its president, to organise a detailed investigation and verification of the various systems and customs in Taiwan before the Sino-Japanese War. In 1909, it also set up the Fan Section under it to investigate Taiwan's Gaoshan ethnic group. These measures deepened the understanding of the Japanese colonial authorities of the local society and people's conditions, and achieved certain results in the formulation of policies and legal systems related to religious customs, stabilisation of the order of colonial rule in Taiwan, and promotion of 'gradual assimilation'.

It should be noted that the ‘gradual assimilation’ advocated by the Japanese colonial authorities, while appearing to be an attempt to gradually bring the Taiwanese onto the same footing as Japanese nationals, was in fact more focused on its strategic function of pacifying people's hearts and maintaining the order of colonial rule at the present time. This can be clearly seen in the behaviour of its administration.

5 Conclusion

As a relatively recent wave of colonisation in human history, Western colonialism, with its superior institutions and technologies, reached a breadth and depth of domination that was unparalleled by previous colonisers, and even after its climax, has had a profound impact on the great waves of history in the twentieth century. To this day, the construction of nations in the Third World, the economic development of low- and middle-income countries, the immigration of immigrants from developed countries, the racist undercurrents in political and intellectual circles, and the multiculturalist debates are all imbued with the complex legacy of the Western colonial enterprise. The exploration of the colonial legacy will remain ‘contemporary’ for a long time, until the Third World unearths the positive legacy of colonialism, overcomes its negative effects, builds its own good institutions, and achieves catching up with the development of the advanced countries.

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