

CONFERENCE “CIVIL SOCIETY IN TAIWAN AND HONG KONG: LOOKING BACK AND REACHING OUT” - FINAL REPORT

Due to the generous sponsoring of: *Graduate Campus University of Zürich, NCCR Democracy, Stiftung Mercator Schweiz, UFSP, VAUZ and ZUNIV* (in alphabetical order) the international conference on the topic of “Civil Society in Taiwan and Hong Kong: Looking Back and Reaching Out” took place on June 7-8, 2015.

The invited guest-speakers were all outstanding experts of civil society in Taiwan and Hong Kong; three were experts of civic movements and citizenship’s rights in Hong Kong. To name but a few, Prof. Agnes Ku of Hong Kong University of Science and Technology presented her latest research on the evolution of civic movements in Hong Kong from 2003 until the Umbrella Movement of 2014.

Shelley Rigger, Brown Professor at the Political Science Department at Davidson College and Steve Tsang, the Director of the famous China Policy Institute at the University of Nottingham, focused on party politics and Cross-Strait relations between Mainland China and Taiwan. Michael Hsiao, previous Director of the renowned institution Academia Sinica (Taiwan), presented his overview on his long-time research as expert of social movements and their relations to party politics in Taiwan.

All the presentations led to substantial discussion; the format chosen for each panel, leaving ample time to debate (50 minutes) was extremely successful with several prolonged comparisons between the experts in their respective fields and was one of the most appreciated features of the conference.

The collaboration with the China Policy Institute, Taiwan Roundtable (University of Nottingham) was extremely fruitful and allowed us to attract world renowned experts such as: Professor Ho-Fung Hong of Johns Hopkins University, Department of Sociology, Prof. Ho Ming-sho, Taiwan National University, Department of Sociology and Professor Dafydd Fell, from the Political Science Department at the London School of Oriental and African Studies.

The most important aspect of our conference was that we also wanted to include younger scholars and provide a platform for them to interact with such famous academics. We therefore included several Ph.D. and Postdoc students, from both the University of Zürich and abroad.

Along the same lines was also our idea of holding a panel discussion to interact with the public, which was highly publicized during our semester courses, so that we could gather a wide array of students and external guests.

Finally, we would like to once more thank all the sponsoring institutions for making this successful event possible.

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