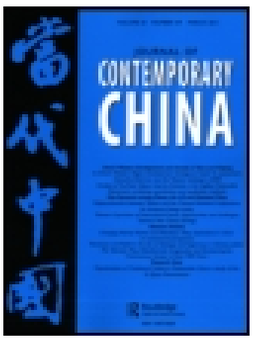

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Changing Attitudes toward China in Taiwan and Hong Kong in the Xi Jinping Era

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ABSTRACT

This study examines public attitudes toward China in Taiwan and Hong Kong. It finds that before 2019, a majority of people in Taiwan and Hong Kong held positive views about the future development of China. However, many of their positive views suddenly changed during the 2019–2020 period. Those two years witnessed several contingent events underlining political tensions across the Taiwan Strait, and between China and Hong Kong. In addition, this study shows that self-interest considerations and ideology-oriented factors have different effects on public attitudes toward China in Taiwan and Hong Kong. In Taiwan, both self-interest and ideology-oriented factors have significant impacts; in Hong Kong, only ideological factors, including local identity, party identification, and belief in democracy, have significant associations with public attitudes toward China.

Introduction

In the summer of 2020, while the world was still gripped by the coronavirus pandemic, a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center reported that unfavorable views of the People's Republic of China (China) among Americans had reached a historic high. Around three-quarters (73 percent) of Americans had an unfavorable view of China—the highest negative reading in the 15 years that such data have been recorded. These negative views did not accumulate gradually, but rather soared dramatically from 47 percent in 2017 to 60 percent in 2018 to 66 percent in 2019, reaching a new high of 73 percent in 2020.[1] Yet, Americans are not alone. On the other side of the Pacific, as this study reports, Taiwan and Hong Kong also saw a sharp surge in negative public attitudes toward China between 2018 and 2020. While they share a common language and cultural heritage with the Chinese mainland, Taiwanese and Hongkongers have never viewed China more negatively than they do today.

How did it come to this? And why now? This study suggests that a key factor lies in the deteriorating political situation of 2019, when the Chinese government intensified its intimidation and repression of Taiwan and Hong Kong, leading to unanticipated and dramatic changes in public attitudes. Specifically, a series of contingent events, including more aggressive policies by the administration of Chinese President Xi Jinping toward Taiwan and Hong Kong, the anti-China extradition bill movement in Hong Kong, the Sino-US trade war, and the coronavirus pandemic, may have been crucial factors that deeply affected people's attitudes toward China in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Scholars of political behavior have argued that proper events and accidents of history

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[1]Laura Silver, Kat Devlin and Christine Huang, 'Americans Fault China for Its Role in the Spread of COVID-19 , *Pew Research Center*, July 31, 2020, accessed August 6, 2020, https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/07/30/americans-fault-china-for-its-role-in-the-spread-of-covid-19/.

are essential raw material for analyzing how and why political views develop and change; unique events may spur opinion change, leading to major political and social transformation.[2] In other words, contingency matters; political outcomes in Taiwan and Hong Kong could have evolved otherwise had Xi Jinping's government handled the two differently.

In addition to macro-level contingent events, research has shown that individual-level attributes —e.g. group membership and identity, interests, habit—have acted as stabilizing forces in shaping and reinforcing people's attitudes. Although the political relations between China and Hong Kong, and China and Taiwan are tense, the economic, trade, and social relations between China and these two regions have continued to be extremely close. In Taiwan, exports account for about 60 percent of GDP and China, being its largest export market, accounted for 40 percent of exports in 2019. China is also Taiwan's largest source of imports, accounting for 21 percent of all imports in 2019.[3] Similarly, China is also Hong Kong's largest export destination and source of imported goods. In 2019, exports from Hong Kong to China accounted for 55 percent of Hong Kong's total export value, and imports from China accounted for 47 percent of Hong Kong's total import value.[4] In 2018, about 404,000 Taiwanese were working in China.[5] In 2017, there were about 530,000 Hongkongers working in China.[6] As a result of these close economic and social interactions, the lives and work of many people in Hong Kong and Taiwan are directly intertwined with mainland China. Since they can be considered beneficiaries of close exchanges with the Chinese mainland, their attitudes toward China may be more positive than others. On the other hand, the job opportunities and salaries of some groups in the labor market are faced with strong competition from the Chinese market. For them, China is a source of pressure. Accordingly, attitudes toward China may be related to the perceived economic interests of individuals.

At the same time, the political relationships between China and Hong Kong, and China and Taiwan affect people's attitudes toward China as well. In Taiwan, the pan-green camp dominated by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) emphasizes Taiwan's sovereignty and independence. Most of the party's supporters identify with the statement that 'Taiwanese are different from Chinese.' However, the pan-blue camp spearheaded by the Kuomintang (KMT, the Chinese Nationalist Party) emphasizes the common interests of cross-strait economic cooperation. They believe that Taiwan should use the 'One China' framework to develop cross-strait relations. Most of their supporters identify themselves as 'both Taiwanese and Chinese.' In Hong Kong, the political parties of the pro-establishment camp support the Central Government in Beijing and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government. They defend their policies and are considered the ruling coalition. Most of their supporters have a strong sense of Chinese national identity. On the contrary, the pan-democratic camp emphasizes 'One Country, Two Systems,' stands for the protection of Hong Kong's freedom and democracy, and advocates for the promotion of universal suffrage. Many of their supporters have a strong Hong Kong identity. Therefore, in Taiwan and Hong Kong, political party identification and national identity also affect people's attitudes toward China.

[2]David R. Mayhew, 'Events as Causes: The Case of American Politics', in *Political Contingency: Studying the Unexpected, the Accidental, and the Unforeseen*, ed. Shapiro Ian and Bedi Sonu (New York: NYU Press, 2007), pp. 99–137; Katherine Levine Einstein and Jennifer Hochschild, 'Studying Contingency Systematically', in *Governing in a Polarized Age: Elections, Parties, and Political Representation in America*, ed. Alan S. Gerber and Eric Schickler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 304–327.

[3]'我國對外貿易發展概況與政策簡報'['A Brief Report on Taiwan's Foreign Trade Development Overview and Policies'], 台灣經濟部國際貿易局 [Bureau of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Taiwan], accessed October 15, 2020, https://www.trade.gov.tw/Pages/Detail.aspx?nodeID=4023&pid=706515&dl_DateRange=all&txt_SD=&txt_ED=&txt_Keyword=&Pageid=0.

[4]'香港與中國內地的貿易' ['Merchandise Trade with the Mainland of China, 2010 to 2019], 香港政府統計處 [Census and Statistics Department, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region], accessed July 12, 2020, https://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp230_tc.jsp?productCode=FA100252.

[5]'107 年國人赴海外工作人數統計結果' ['2018 Statistics on the Number of Taiwanese Working Overseas'], 行政院主計總處 [Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan, R.O.C. (Taiwan)], accessed July 15, 2020, https://www.dgbas.gov.tw/public/Attachment/092991532USM8S5UA.pdf.

[6]'立法會四題: 內地稅法修正對港人的影響' ['The Impact of Amendments to the Mainland Tax Law on Hongkongers'], 新聞公報 [Press Releases, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region], accessed March 22, 2020, https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201810/31/P2018103100519p.htm.

This study uses survey data collected in Taiwan and Hong Kong between 2017 and 2020 to study the factors affecting the attitudes of Taiwanese and Hongkongers toward China. The authors find that personal socioeconomic status, political party and local identity, as well as belief in democracy, are all significantly related to public attitudes toward China. In addition, major political and social events in 2019–20 may also explain why, in 2020, Taiwanese and Hongkongers' attitudes toward China changed drastically compared to previous years. These findings indicate that calculations of economic benefit, ideology, and other factors, as well as contingent events, are the main mechanisms for explaining public attitudes toward China. In the following sections, this article first reviews the political situation between China and Taiwan, and China and Hong Kong in 2019 and 2020, and explains the process of how contingent events exert influence. It reviews the relevant theories on mechanisms of public attitudes, including the influence of contingent events, self-interest, and the impact of ideology-oriented factors. The authors then use social survey data to present the main mechanisms at work in Taiwan and Hong Kong that are related to public attitudes toward China. Lastly, they discuss the theoretical and policy implications of these empirical findings.

China's Political Tensions with Taiwan and Hong Kong

Public attitudes toward China in Taiwan and Hong Kong are mainly related to two types of factors. One is the attitude and behavior of China's administration toward Taiwan or Hong Kong, and the other is conditions and changes within China itself, including the presence of authoritarian politics, a weakening economy, and state repression of civil society. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime has undertaken a more coercive policy toward Taiwan out of frustration that its past efforts to persuade Taiwanese citizens to accept unification on Beijing's terms have not succeeded. Regarding Hong Kong, the CCP has restricted the political freedoms it had previously granted to the city's residents under the formula of 'One Country, Two Systems.' As a result, the people in Taiwan and Hong Kong feel frustrated and upset, resulting in negative public attitudes toward China. In addition, when the Chinese government becomes more authoritarian and repressive toward its citizens, such as cracking down on human rights activists, journalists, and lawyers, and repressing Uyghur minority groups in Xinjiang, these actions also alienate the people of Taiwan and Hong Kong, making them more wary and distrustful of the government in Beijing.

CCP's Attempts to Influence Taiwan's Politics

How China treats Taiwan is mostly related to which party is currently in power in Taiwan. The CCP considers the KMT, which ostensibly supports unification and advocates closer engagement with China, a useful ally. In contrast, the independence-leaning DPP is seen as an enemy that is colluding with anti-China forces from abroad. Therefore, over the past two decades, whenever the DPP has been in power, i.e. during 2000–08 and 2016–20, the CCP's policy on Taiwan has been to 'promote reunification through economic benefits (以經促統).' While providing benefits to Taiwanese businesspeople in China and attracting massive Taiwanese investments, official relations between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait have been locked in a stalemate with limited interaction. At the same time, China has continued to cut away at Taiwan's international space and further blocked its participation in international organizations. As a result, the CCP has been trying to avoid giving merit to Taiwan's ruling DPP, managing to show the Taiwanese people that the DPP cannot score points in the area of cross-strait relations.

In contrast, when the KMT was in power, the CCP had excessive hopes that providing Taiwan with economic benefits would accelerate movement on political issues, but progress was slower and more incremental than Beijing had expected. From 2008 to 2016, during former president Ma Ying-jeou's administration, the two sides held eleven high-level talks and signed 23 agreements. However, in March 2014, in order to prevent the ratification of an agreement on the deepening of economic and trade relations between the two sides of the strait, the young people of Taiwan started what

later became known as the Sunflower Movement, and ultimately succeeded in curbing the trend of cross-strait economic integration.[7] The movement also spurred public opinion in Taiwan to oppose sacrificing Taiwan's political sovereignty in exchange for the economic benefits gained through cross-strait exchanges.[8] The Sunflower Movement boosted the DPP's momentum, and in 2016, the party's candidate, Tsai Ing-wen, won the presidential election.

However, since Tsai came to power in 2016, Beijing authorities have persistently charged her with pursuing *de jure* independence, and therefore cut off high-level contacts with Taiwan. China's increasing pressure on Taiwan's political sovereignty includes restrictions on its international space, encroachment on Taiwanese airspace and territorial waters by Chinese military aircraft and warships, the establishment of diplomatic relations with Taiwan's diplomatic allies, third-country extradition of Taiwanese suspects to China, and restricting Chinese tourists and students from coming to Taiwan. While the CCP's intimidation and international marginalization of Taiwan and its suspension of official cross-strait interactions have strengthened the belief among KMT supporters that the DPP is not good at handling cross-strait relations, they have also made many people in Taiwan furious about the CCP's manipulation of Taiwanese public opinion through the media, particularly by fabricating disinformation and spreading by local surrogates.[9]

On 2 January 2019, in his first major speech about cross-strait relations, Xi Jinping stressed how vital unification with Taiwan is to his vision of Chinese national rejuvenation. Xi threatened military force if Taiwanese leaders grasped for independence, and said that if Taiwan were to agree to unification, its rights would be ensured by the 'One Country, Two Systems' framework that Beijing used in Hong Kong.[10] However, neither the threat nor the promised reward seemed likely to weaken Taiwanese opposition to China's demands. Instead, the Taiwanese believed that Xi Jinping had tried to diminish Taiwan's sovereignty and became even more dismayed with the CCP. A poll released in May 2020 found that 73 percent of respondents disagreed with the statement that 'the Chinese government is a friend of Taiwan,' up from 58 percent of respondents in a similar poll in May 2019.[11]

At the same time, since March 2019, the Anti-Extradition Movement unfolded in Hong Kong with waves of demonstrations and clashes continuing until the pan-democrats' victory in district council elections in November. During this period, Taiwanese people deeply sympathized with Hong Kong demonstrators' demands and imagined what it would be like if the Chinese government's suppression in Hong Kong was happening in Taiwan. A poll conducted in May 2020 reported that a majority of Taiwanese, 67 percent,[12] Taiwanese suspected that Beijing would have no qualms about eliminating freedom by force given the opportunity. People might have believed the CCP's promise of 'One Country, Two System' before, but watching the evidence accumulate in Hong Kong their distrust of the Chinese government only increased.

[7]For more information on Sunflower Movement, see Ming-Sho Ho, *Challenging Beijing's Mandate of Heaven: Taiwan's Sunflower Movement and Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2019).

[8]Chih-Jou Jay Chen, 'Economic Interests or National Sovereignty: Public Opinion on the Cross-Strait Dilemma during the Ma Ying-jiu Era', in *Assessing the Presidency of Ma Ying-jiu in Taiwan: Hopeful Beginning, Hopeless End?*, ed. André Beckershoff and Gunter Schubert (New York: Routledge, 2018), pp. 90–108.

[9]See 'China's Pursuit of a New World Media Order', *Reporters Without Borders*, accessed October 25, 2019, https://rsf.org/en/reports/rsf-report-chinas-pursuit-new-world-media-order; Doublethink Lab, 'Deafening Whispers: China's Information Operation and Taiwan's 2020 Election', accessed November 25, 2020, https://reurl.cc/2gX6Z9; Jieh-min Wu, 'More than Sharp Power: Chinese Influence Operations in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Beyond', in *China's Influence and the Center-periphery Tug of War in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Indo-Pacific*, ed. Brian C. H. Fong, Jieh-min Wu, and Andrew J. Nathan (London and New York: Routledge, 2021), pp. 24–44.

[10]'《告台湾同胞书》发表40周年纪念会在京隆重举行' ['Message to Compatriots in Taiwan'], *新华网* [*Xinhuanet*], January 2, 2019, accessed February 12, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2019-01/02/c_1123937723.htm.

[11]'More Taiwanese against China: Poll', *Taipei Times*, June 4, 2020, accessed June 5, 2020, https://taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2020/06/04/2003737590.

[12]*Ibid.*

Growing Tensions between China and Hong Kong

Taiwan and Hong Kong maintained very close relations even after the handover of the former colony in 1997. From 1997, when the United Kingdom transferred sovereignty over Hong Kong to China, until the late 2010s, Hong Kong was considered a hybrid regime with a partial democracy. Its civil and political rights were protected; elections for half of the Legislative Council were free and fair. Meanwhile, Hong Kong's economic and social integration with China has been comprehensive. During the first decade after the handover, Hong Kong was struck badly by the Asian financial crisis. The stock market and property market were hit hard, and the situation was made worse by the outbreak of the SARS epidemic in 2003. Even so, Hongkongers' views on the implementation of 'One Country, Two Systems' were positive, the proportions of those holding Chinese identity and mixed-identity (i.e. both Chinese and Hong Konger) were gradually rising from 2001 to 2006, and trust in the Beijing central government remained high.[13] Young people showed an even more optimistic attitude.[14]

However, after 2009, especially when the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) and multiple visa policies were extended to Shenzhen permanent residents and more Chinese tourists, the number of leisure visitors to Hong Kong from China accelerated rapidly. They boosted the local economy but also brought about controversies over the scheme's negative social effects, and conflicts between Mainland Chinese visitors and local residents in Hong Kong ensued.[15] As a result, public attitudes toward 'One Country, Two Systems,' the HKSAR government's performance, and trust in the Beijing central authorities all declined as well. Moreover, people's sense of identity as Hong Kongers rose while Chinese identity plummeted.[16]

In 2014, just a few months after the Sunflower Movement in Taiwan, the 'Occupy Central' campaign and the ensuing 'Umbrella Movement' pushed for universal suffrage, while the HKSAR government was trying to use public consultation to realize electoral reform. During this period, not only did people become less satisfied with the performance of the Hong Kong government, but political trust had also gone downhill. In contrast, a sense of Hong Konger identity was on the rise, localism grew and voices for 'Hong Kong independence' began to be heard more widely.[17]

After a lull in movement activity since the Umbrella Movement, millions of Hong Kong citizens took to the streets in the summer of 2019 to protest against a proposed extradition bill that would allow the Hong Kong authorities to extradite Hong Kong citizens to mainland China. Initially only calling for the withdrawal of the impending bill, the mass protests soon evolved into a prolonged and city-wide movement targeting police abuse of power and seeking political reforms. Its mobilization spanned generations, classes and political orientations, and it gained much strong public support for the movement's strength and sustainability. The Hong Kong government's attempt at repressing protesters did not succeed in dispersing the crowds but instead weakened people's trust

[13]'Categorical Ethnic Identity (half-yearly average)', Public Opinion Programme, the University of Hong Kong, accessed October 15, 2020, https://www.hkupop.hku.hk/english/popexpress/ethnic/eidentity/halfyr/eid_half_chart.html; Victor Zheng and Po-San Wan, *Hong Kong New Youth* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2019), pp. 112–115.

[14]Victor Zheng et al., 'Young people's sense of fairness and social action: a survey analysis of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao', *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics* 5(3), (2020), pp. 270–287.

[15]Kevin Tze-Wai Wong, Victor Zheng and Po-San Wan, 'The impact of cross-border integration with Mainland China on Hong Kong's local politics: the individual visit scheme as a double-edged sword for political trust in Hong Kong', *The China Quarterly* 228, (2016), pp. 1081–1104; Huawen Shen et al., 'One Country, Two Strata: implications of social and cultural conflicts of Chinese outbound tourism to Hong Kong', *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management* 6(3), (2017), pp. 166–169; Jackson Yeh Kuo Hao, 'China's Influence on Hong Kong's Economy: Lessons from Mainlander Tourism', in *China's Influence and the Center-periphery Tug of War in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Indo-Pacific*, ed. Brian C. H. Fong, Jieh-min Wu, and Andrew J. Nathan (London and New York: Routledge, 2021), pp. 105–120.

[16]Victor Zheng and Po-San Wan, *Hong Kong New Youth*, pp. 130–154.

[17]Kevin Tze-Wai Wong, Victor Zheng and Po-San Wan, 'What is Localism? A Sense of Belonging Perspective', in *New Social and Political Trends in Hong Kong and Taiwan*, ed. Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao et al. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2020), pp. 3–32.

in public institutions.[18] Furthermore, this movement not only affected Hongkongers' public attitude, but also shaped the Taiwan 2020 presidential and parliamentary elections.

Finally, since the outbreak of COVID-19 spread from Wuhan in January 2020, Taiwan and Hong Kong—being geographically close to China, with frequent social interactions with the mainland—bore the brunt of the first wave of the epidemic. People in Hong Kong and Taiwan believe that the Chinese government suppressed attempts by local doctors to warn the public about the epidemic, which caused the virus to spread to various countries and become a global disaster. In addition, the people of Taiwan have become even more disappointed and dissatisfied with the Chinese government because of Beijing's continued obstruction of Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization.

Perspectives Explaining Changing Public Views

To understand public attitudes in Taiwan and Hong Kong, three perspectives are relevant and should be considered. First, contingency played a vital role. Specifically, the series of actions Xi Jinping and the Chinese government took toward Taiwan and Hong Kong during 2019–20 were the key contingent factors that shaped drastic changes in the attitudes of Hong Kongers and Taiwanese toward China. Scholars have emphasized the role of contingency in understanding the circumstances under which individuals change their minds. By calling something contingent, it is implied that things could have been otherwise, and they would have been otherwise if something had happened differently.[19] Contingent events can change a political context by generating a new sense among the public or policymakers about what is important in public affairs, what problems need to be solved, or simply what should be valued or done. These events may serve as explanatory factors that are proximate, short-term, or contingent.[20]

The second and third perspectives on public attitudes toward China are self-interest calculation and affective identity, the former being more economy-oriented and the latter ideology-oriented. The self-interest perspective assumes that human decision making is rational, that people make reasonable calculations of the costs and benefits of choice alternatives, and decide accordingly. The idea of self-interest also places materialistic motives in a superordinate role. Therefore, political attitudes are guided by material self-interest, rather than through a process of collective socialization in a particular historical context.[21]

Viewed from the self-interest theory of rational choice, the economic interests perceived by Hong Kongers and Taiwanese will govern their attitudes toward China. Those who have a direct economic interest in a stronger and more developed China are more likely to have a positive view of China, have more confidence in China, and encourage their families to study and work in China. The interest and profit gained from closer ties with the PRC may vary among different classes and social groups, and thus lead to different attitudes toward the country. For example, people of high socioeconomic status are potential beneficiaries of a more economically developed China; hence they presumably are more likely to hold positive views about China. On the other hand, low socioeconomic status groups are presumably more likely to hold negative views about China, because their job opportunities and income will suffer as a result of China's more competitive industries and cheaper labor.

[18]Francis Lee, Samson Yuen, Gary Tang, and Edmund Cheng, 'Hong Kong's Summer of Uprising: From Anti-Extradition to Anti-Authoritarian Protests', *China Review* 19, (2019), pp. 1–32; Ma Ngok, 'China's Influence on Hong Kong's Elections: Evidence from Legislative Council Elections', in *China's Influence and the Center-periphery Tug of War in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Indo-Pacific*, ed. Brian C. H. Fong, Jieh-min Wu, and Andrew J. Nathan (London and New York: Routledge, 2021), pp. 91–104.

[19]Ian Shapiro and Sonu Bedi, 'Introduction: Contingency's Challenge to Political Science', in *Political Contingency: Studying the Unexpected, the Accidental, and the Unforeseen*, ed. Ian Shapiro and Sonu Bedi (New York: NYU Press, 2007), pp. 1–18.

[20]David R. Mayhew, 'Events as Causes: The Case of American Politics', pp. 99–137.

[21]David O. Sears and Carolyn L. Funk, 'The role of self-interest in social and political attitudes', *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 24, (1991), pp. 1–91; David Sears, 'The Role of Affect in Symbolic Politics', in *Citizens and Politics: Perspectives from Political Psychology*, ed. James H. Kuklinski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 14–40.

In contrast, the theory of symbolic politics holds that people acquire stable affective responses to particular symbols through a process of long-term socialization. These learned 'symbolic dispositions' include party identification, political ideology, and national identity. Research has shown that symbolic elements are frequently more important than calculated self-interest considerations when people consider whether to support a particular policy. For example, the symbols salient in the public arena may evoke a set of predispositions—nationalism, ethnocentrism, selflessness, or communitarian spirit—and then affect the public agenda and people's attitudes.[22] From this point of view, with regard to their attitudes toward China, those who have a strong local identity and democratic values will have an even more negative view of China when confronted with China's imposition of its national identity and anti-democratic values on Hong Kong and Taiwan.

More importantly, the aforementioned symbolic elements could be largely augmented by the instant and interactive communication made possible by social media. This is particularly salient when a society is becoming politicized because of an imminent territory-wide election or social movement.[23] The eruption of a large-scale social movement in 2019 in Hong Kong and its interconnection with Taiwan and China demonstrated the various symbolic dispositions interacting with and/or being amplified by social media, which ultimately affect public attitudes. Similar to the previous wave of social movements, which started out in Taiwan in May 2014 and later spread to Macao and Hong Kong largely through social media, the 2019 social movement in Hong Kong went the other way around, first erupting in Hong Kong and then being echoed in Taiwan.

Data and Measurements

This study draws on representative random sampling data obtained in a series of territory-wide telephone surveys. They were conducted in the spring of each year, around March through May, between 2017 and 2020 in Taiwan and Hong Kong simultaneously. The surveys in Taiwan were designed and conducted by the Institute of Sociology at Academia Sinica; the surveys in Hong Kong were organized by the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. They were conducted using the landline-only random-digit-dialing (RDD) system or a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system to maximize the sample's representativeness. The target population of these two societies was residents aged eighteen or above. Approximately 1,200 respondents in Taiwan and 1,000 respondents in Hong Kong participated in each year's surveys.

Both in Taiwan and Hong Kong, two questions were used to measure people's attitudes toward China: 1) Do you have confidence in the future development of Mainland China? (請問您對中國大陸未來的發展有沒有信心？) 2) If you had the opportunity, would you be willing to encourage your family to go to Mainland China for development, including investment and work? (請問, 如果有機會, 您願不願意鼓勵您的家人去中國大陸發展, 包括投資和工作？)

To measure public attitudes toward foreign countries, opinion polls mostly use questions that directly ask respondents whether they have favorable or unfavorable views of certain countries.[24] Some researchers ask about respondents' 'feelings' about foreign countries, and some others ask more specific and instrumental-oriented questions, such as the extent to which

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] Stefan Stieglitz and Linh Dang-Xuan, 'Social media and political communication: a social media analytical framework', *Social Network Analysis and Mining* 3, (2013), pp. 1277–1291.

[24] For example, Gallup and Pew Research Center are in this category. See Justin McCarthy, 'Americans' Favorable Views of China Take 12-Point Hit', *Gallop*, March 11, 2019, accessed July 12, 2020, https://news.gallup.com/poll/247559/americans-favorable-views-china-point-hit.aspx; Laura Silver, Kat Devlin and Christine Huang, 'Americans Fault China for Its Role in the Spread of COVID-19 , *Pew Research Center*, July 31, 2020, accessed August 6, 2020, https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/07/30/americans-fault-china-for-its-role-in-the-spread-of-covid-19/.

certain countries provide help to the respondents' country.[25] The questions this study uses—the respondents' confidence in China's development and whether they would encourage their families to pursue careers in China—reflect their perceptions and assessment of China's development.

In order to explain the differences in people's attitudes toward China, the authors assessed the effects of the following individual-level attributes: social positions, socioeconomic status, party identification, national identity, and belief in democracy. Individual social positions included cohort, gender, marital status, and ethnicity. The cohort was recoded by age into three groups: youth (29 years old and below), the middle-aged (30–49 years old), and elders (50 years old and above). Marital status was categorized as 'not married' or 'married.' For data from Taiwan, ethnicity was determined by the father's birthplace and could be Taiwanese Minnan (閩南人), Taiwanese Hakka (客家人), or mainlanders (外省人). There were very few aboriginal respondents, and they did not present themselves as a category. ForHong Kong data, whether the respondents were born in Hong Kong was used as the criterion; it was coded as a dummy variable (0 = not born in Hong Kong, 1 = born in Hong Kong).

Socioeconomic status was indicated by education and income. Education was divided into three categories: junior high and below, high school, vocational college (associate degree) and above. Income in Taiwan referred to personal income, divided into fourteen categories, from no income to over NT$200,000 per month. Income in Hong Kong was based on family income, also divided into fourteen categories, from no income to over HK$50,000 per month.

National identity was measured by self-identification: whether one chose to identify oneself as 'Chinese' or to adopt an alternative identity. In Taiwan, the answers included Taiwanese, Chinese, or 'both Taiwanese and Chinese.' In Hong Kong, respondents were asked whether they identified themselves more as a Hongkonger, Chinese, or 'half-half.' A Taiwan or Hong Kong identity and a Chinese identity are not mutually exclusive. It is common for people in Taiwan and Hong Kong to have both identities.

Party identification in Taiwan was mainly divided into three categories: pan-blue (KMT, People First Party, and New Party), pan-green (DPP, Taiwan Solidarity Union, and Taiwanese Statebuilding Party), and median voters (including those who chose candidates and not parties, those who supported both, and those who did not support any). For data from Hong Kong, party identification was also divided into three groups: pro-establishment camp, pan-democracy camp, and moderate groups.

To assess people's beliefs in democracy, the authors asked respondents which of the following statements they agreed with: 1) 'In any case, democracy is the best political system.' (不管什麼情況下, 民主政治都是最好的政治制度); 2) 'In some cases, dictatorship is better than democracy.' (在有些情況下, 獨裁的政治比民主政治更好)

Changing Views of China's Development

As Table 1 shows, public attitudes toward China's future in Taiwan and Hong Kong began to change significantly in 2019, and a much more drastic drop in confidence toward China occurred in 2020. In the three years from 2017 to 2019, the number of people who had confidence in the future development of China outweighed the number of those who did not. In Taiwan, from 2017 to 2019, those who had confidence in China accounted for 68 percent, 69 percent, and 59 percent of the total, respectively. In Hong Kong, the figures were slightly lower than in Taiwan, accounting for 57 percent, 60 percent, and 54 percent, respectively. As such, it is apparent that before 2019, relatively more Taiwanese had a positive outlook on China's development than Hongkongers.

[25]Kris L. Inman, 'African attitudes toward foreign countries: a hierarchical approach', *Social Science Information* 55(2), (2016), pp. 208–234; Albert R. Tims and M. Mark Miller, 'Determinants of attitudes toward foreign countries', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 10, (1986), pp. 471–484.

However, in both Taiwan and Hong Kong, the percentage of those showing confidence in China started to decline in 2018–19, from 69 percent to 59 percent in Taiwan, and from 60 percent to 54 percent in Hong Kong. More notably, in 2019–20, it dropped even more, from 59 percent to 40 percent in Taiwan, and from 54 percent to 43 percent in Hong Kong. In other words, the year of 2019–20 was something of a watershed in cross-strait relations and China-Hong Kong relations. Before that, more than half of Taiwanese and Hongkongers had confidence in China's future development. After that, an almost opposite picture emerged.

The same trend can be observed with regard to a related issue. As Table 2 shows, when asked if they would encourage their family members to invest or work in China, from 2018 to 2019, both in Taiwan and Hong Kong, the number of those who would do so slightly declined, from 46 percent to 44 percent in Taiwan and from 45 percent to 41 percent in Hong Kong. However, from 2019 to 2020, it dropped sharply from 44 percent to 27 percent in Taiwan, and from 41 percent to 26 percent in Hong Kong. By any standard, the rapid negative change of public views toward China's future in Taiwan and Hong Kong was tremendous.

Ideology-oriented Factors as an Explanation

Ideology-oriented factors were studied as key elements explaining the public attitudes toward China in Taiwan and Hong Kong. For this study, the authors confine the ideology-oriented factors for in-depth analysis to national identity, party identification, and political ideology. In view of the dramatic changes in public attitudes in Taiwan and Hong Kong during 2019–20, the authors first analyzed whether these ideology-oriented variables also changed over the period under examination. Table 3 presents the trend of national and local identities in Taiwan and Hong Kong from 2017 to 2020. In Taiwan, respondents were asked whether they thought they were Taiwanese, Chinese, or 'both Taiwanese and Chinese.' In Hong Kong, respondents were asked whether they identified themselves more as Hongkongers, Chinese, or 'half-half.' The results show that from 2017 to 2020 in Taiwan, Taiwanese identity overshadowed Chinese identity and dual-identity (both Chinese and Taiwanese) by continuing to account for more than 70 percent of the total. Meanwhile, in Hong Kong, more than 50 percent of respondents identified themselves more as Hongkongers than as Chinese or 'half-half'—a token of a neutral stance. However, it is noteworthy that in both Taiwan and Hong Kong, a significant increase in local identity occurred from 2019 to 2020. In Taiwan, the percentage of those who identified themselves as Taiwanese increased from 70 percent in 2019 to 77 percent in 2020, while in Hong Kong, the percentage of those who identified themselves more as Hongkongers

Table 1. Have confidence in the future development of China (%)

		2017	2018	2019	2020
Taiwan	Yes	68	69	59	40
	No	23	20	29	46
	N	1225	1228	1253	1234
Hong Kong	Yes	57	60	54	43
	No	33	32	36	47
	N	1002	1000	1003	1001

Table 2. Willing to encourage family members to go to China for development (%)

		2017	2018	2019	2020
Taiwan	Yes	42	46	44	27
	No	55	51	52	70
	N	1225	1228	1253	1234
Hong Kong	Yes	40	45	41	26
	No	49	46	48	58
	N	1002	1000	1003	1001

Table 3. National identity and local identity in Taiwan and Hong Kong (%)

		2017 %	2018 %	2019 %	2020 %
Taiwan	Taiwanese	73	72	70	77
	Chinese	7	8	6	5
	Both	18	20	22	17
	Others (Neither, don't know, refused, etc.)	1	0	2	2
	N	1225	1228	1253	1234
Hong Kong	More as a Hongkonger	54	52	53	59
	More as a Chinese	29	30	26	18
	Half-half	15	16	18	20
	Others (Neither, don't know, refused, etc.)	3	3	3	2
	N	1002	1000	1003	1001

increased from 53 percent in 2019 to 59 percent in 2020. Both in Taiwan and Hong Kong, local identity reached a record high in the year 2020.

As for party identification, Table 4 shows one intriguing phenomenon: in both Taiwan and Hong Kong, half of the respondents did not attach to any party. The proportions of partisans and non-partisans were about half and half, particularly in the years of 2019 and 2020. Among partisans, the pan-green camp in Taiwan gained further momentum during 2019–20, with the percentage of supporters increasing from 23 percent in 2019 to 34 percent in 2020. Meanwhile, the pan-democratic camp (non-pro-establishment camp) in Hong Kong saw a slight increase in support, growing from 31 percent in 2019 to 34 percent in 2020. Also, in both Taiwan and Hong Kong, while the share of non-partisans remained the same, the amount of increase in support for one camp coincided with the amount of decrease in support for the opposing camp (i.e. the pan-blue camp in Taiwan and the pro-establishment camp in Hong Kong).

Table 4. Party identification in Taiwan and Hong Kong (%)

		2017	2018	2019	2020
Taiwan	Pan-blue	27	25	26	16
	Pan-green	27	24	23	34
	Median voters	46	50	51	49
	Others (Don't know, refused, etc.)	0	2	0	1
	N	1225	1228	1253	1234
Hong Kong	Pro-establishment	21	22	18	14
	Pan-democracy	33	32	31	34
	Median voters	44	45	50	51
	Others (Don't know, refused, etc.)	2	2	1	2
	N	1002	1000	1003	1001

Note:

1. In Taiwan, Pan-blue includes Kuomintang (KMT; 國民黨), People First Party (PFP; 親民黨), and New Party (新黨); Pan-green includes Democratic Progressive Party (DPP;民進黨), New Power Party (NPP;時代力量), Taiwan Statebuilding Party (TSP;台灣基進), and Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU;台灣團結聯盟); Median voters includes voters who responded as 'neither supported,' 'not a party supporter,' and other non-Blue-Green small parties including Taiwan People's Party (台灣民眾黨), Green Party (綠黨), Faith And Hope League (FHL;信心希望聯盟), etc.
2. In Hong Kong, Pro-establishment camp includes Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB;民建聯), Liberal Party (LP;自由黨), New People's Party (NPP;新民黨), Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions (HKFTU;工聯會), Patriots who love Hong Kong (愛國愛港人士), Communist Party of China (CPC;共產黨), and Business and Professionals Alliance for Hong Kong (BPA;經民聯); Pan-democracy camp includes Democratic Party (DP;民主黨), Civic Party (CP;公民黨), League of Social Democrats (LSD;社民連), People Power (PP;人民力量), Labour Party (工黨), Neo Democrats (新民主同盟), Demosistō (香港眾志), Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU;職工盟), Localist Groups (本土派), Hong Kong Independence Camp (港獨派), Hong Kong Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood (ADPL;民協), Neighbourhood and Worker's Service Centre (NWSC;街工), Youngspiration (青年新政), Eddie Chu Hoi-dick (Land Justice League) (朱凱迪□土地正義聯盟), Edward Leung Tin-Kei (Hong Kong Indigenous;梁天琦□本土民主前線), Benny Tai Yiu-ting (戴耀庭), Democratic self-determination Groups (自決派), and Lau Siu-lai (Democracy Groundwork;劉小麗□小麗民主教室); Median voters includes voters who responded as independent voters, moderate groups (中間派), 'all supported,' 'neither supported,' and 'not a party supporter.'

In addition to national identity and party identification, this study also measures people's support for democracy and examines whether it is related to their attitudes toward China. Table 5 shows that the degree of support for democracy in Taiwan and Hong Kong, as demonstrated by an affirmative response to the statement 'In any case, democracy is the best political system,' is higher than support for the assertion that 'In some cases, dictatorship is better than democracy.' From 2017 to 2020, the share of those supporting democracy increased year by year. This growth trend was a little different from the previously mentioned growth trends of party identification and local identity, as they changed drastically in 2019–20. In Taiwan, the share of those supporting democracy increased from 54 percent in 2017 to 69 percent in 2019, and to 70 percent in 2020. In Hong Kong, the proportions changed from 37 percent in 2017 to 40 percent in 2019, and to 48 percent in 2020. At the same time, the number of people in Taiwan and Hong Kong, who believed that in some cases, dictatorship might be preferable to a democratic polity, decreased. From 2017 to 2020, the proportion of people in Taiwan who agreed with this statement shrank from 41 percent to 23 percent, while in Hong Kong, it dropped from 35 percent to 18 percent.

Explaining Changing Views of China's Development

Along with the lines of identity, party identification, and belief in democracy, when adding further variables like age, education, and income to the analysis, the authors can show a clearer picture of factors that are associated with public attitudes.

Table 6 presents the factors that affect Taiwanese people's confidence in China and their willingness to encourage their families to work or invest in China. The independent variables were categorized into three groups: personal and family characteristics (cohort, gender, marital status, and ethnicity), socioeconomic status (education level and income), and ideology-oriented factors (national identity, party identification, and belief in democracy); they were sequentially added to the three models in the regression analyses. For people's confidence in China, the results of Model 1 to 3 show that young people, women, and mainlanders (i.e. post-1945 immigrants from mainland China and their descendants) had more confidence in China's future development. In terms of socioeconomic status, both education and income had significant positive effects on having confidence in China's development. For example, all other things being equal, the odds of having confidence in the future development of China for high-school educated people were about $e^{.380} = 1.46$ times that of lower-educated people (an increase of 46 percent); the odds of having confidence in the future development of China for college-educated people were about $e^{.655} = 1.93$ times that of lower-educated people (an increase of 93 percent). Also, the higher their personal income, the more confident people were in China's development.

Those who identified themselves as Taiwanese, relative to Chinese or 'both Chinese and Taiwanese,' were less likely to have confidence in the future development of China. All other things being equal, the odds for those who held Taiwanese identity to have confidence in China were about $e^{-.857} = 0.42$ times (reduced by 58 percent) than those who identified themselves as Chinese or 'both Chinese and Taiwanese.'

Table 5. Belief in democracy in Taiwan and Hong Kong (%)

Which of the following statements do you agree with?		2017 %	2018 %	2019 %	2020 %
Taiwan	In any case, democracy is the best political system.	54	62	69	70
	In some cases, dictatorship is better than democracy.	41	32	23	23
	N	1225	1228	1253	1234
Hong Kong	In any case, democracy is the best political system.	37	35	40	48
	In some cases, dictatorship is better than democracy.	35	33	27	18
	For me, they are no different.	21	23	23	23
	N	1002	1000	1003	1001

In terms of party identification, in Taiwan, both pan-green supporters and median voters were less likely than pan-blue supporters to have confidence in China. All other things being equal, the odds of pan-green supporters having confidence in China were about $e^{-1.205} = 0.30$ times that of pan-blue supporters (a decrease of 70 percent). Median voters were similarly less inclined to have confidence in China; the odds of median voters having confidence in China were around $e^{-.622} = 0.54$ times that of Pan-blue supporters (a decrease of 46 percent). Furthermore, those who held a belief in democracy were less likely to have confidence in the future development of China than those who did not; the odds of having confidence in the future development of China for those who believed in democracy were about $e^{-.494} = 0.61$ times (reduced by 39 percent) that of those who did not have strong beliefs in democracy. Finally, all other things being equal, people were significantly less confident about China's development in 2020 than in 2017, 2018, and 2019.

Models 4 to 6 in Table 6 present the factors affecting Taiwanese people's willingness to encourage their families to go to China to further their careers. The results were similar to the results in Models 1 to 3 regarding people's confidence in China's development. They show that age cohort, ethnic group, education, income, Taiwanese identity, party identification, and belief in democracy all had sustained and significant effects on this willingness. That is, all other things being equal, those who were over 30 years old, and those who are Minnan Taiwanese (relative to Hakka and mainlanders), were less likely to encourage their family members to go to China to pursue a career. Also, people with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to encourage their family members to invest or work in China. People with a solid Taiwanese identity, Pan-green party identification, and strong belief in democracy were less likely to encourage their families to work or invest in China. Finally, all other things being equal, people were less likely to encourage their families to work or invest in China in 2020 than in the previous years of 2017, 2018, and 2019.

Table 7 presents the factors that are associated with Hongkongers' confidence in the future development of China and their willingness to encourage their families to work or invest in China. Regarding

Table 6. Logistic regressions of Taiwanese who have confidence in China and encourage their families to go to China

	Have confidence in China						Encourage their families to go to China					
	Mode 1		Mode 2		Mode 3		Mode 4		Mode 5		Mode 6	
Cohort (youth: 29 and below)												
Middle-aged: 30–49	−.294	*	−.321	**	−.483	***	−.047		−.090		−.236	*
Elderly: 50 and above	−.657	***	−.331	*	−.533	***	−.603	***	−.202		−.417	**
Female	.250	***	.276	***	.287	***	.061		.097		.126	
Unmarried	−.101		−.130		−.061		.005		−.051		.026	
Ethnicity (Minnan)												
Hakka	.249	*	.227	*	.066		.463	***	.463	***	.323	***
Mainlander	1.050	***	.932	***	.357	*	1.332	***	1.202	***	.737	***
Education level (below junior high school)												
High school			.499	***	.380	***			.595	***	.459	***
Associate college and above			.801	***	.655	***			1.038	***	.863	***
Personal income			.030	*	.038	*			.041	**	.048	***
Taiwanese identity					−.857	***					−.920	***
Party identification (Pan-Blue)												
Pan-Green					−1.205	***					−.810	***
Median voters					−.622	***					−.430	***
Democracy belief					−.494	***					−.563	***
Year (2020)												
2017	1.235	***	1.319	***	1.205	***	.734	***	.818	***	.636	***
2018	1.460	***	1.521	***	1.441	***	1.003	***	1.066	***	.949	***
2019	.893	***	.932	***	.830	***	.877	***	.924	***	.852	***
Constant	−.021		−.859	***	1.166	***	−1.013	***	−2.096	***	−.263	
d.f.	9		12		16		9		12		16	
Chi-square	383.825	***	451.698	***	789.175	***	365.201	***	495.061	***	852.169	***
N	3984		3984		3984		4254		4254		4254	

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

confidence in China's development, Model 2 shows that there was a negative association between the young age of respondents and having confidence in China; Model 3 shows that after adding ideology-oriented variables such as Hongkonger identity, party identification, and belief in democracy, the effects of age cohort became insignificant. This implies that it might be ideological factors for Hongkongers, not necessarily age cohort, that is associated with having confidence in China. Also, socioeconomic factors, including education and income, were not significantly associated with Hongkongers' confidence in China. However, local identity, pan-democratic party identification, and belief in democracy all had significant negative effects on Hongkongers' confidence in the future development of China. All other things being equal, the odds of having confidence in the future development of China for those who identified themselves more as Hongkongers were about $e^{-1.099} = 0.33$ times (reduced by 67 percent) that of those who identified themselves more as Chinese or as 'half-half.'

Those in the pan-democracy camp and median voters were less likely than pro-establishment supporters to have confidence in the future development of China. Also, those with a belief in democracy were less likely to have confidence in the future development of China. All other things being equal, the odds of having confidence in China for pan-democracy camp supporters were about $e^{-1.750} = 0.17$ times that of pro-establishment supporters (a decrease of 83 percent); the odds of having confidence in China for median voters were about $e^{-.466} = 0.63$ times that of pro-establishment supporters (a 37 percent reduction). Similarly, the odds of having confidence in China for those who believe in democracy were about $e^{-.931} = 0.39$ times that of those who have less belief in democracy (a 61 percent decrease). Finally, all other things being equal, Hongkongers, like their Taiwanese counterparts, were less likely to have confidence in China's development in 2020 than in the previous years of 2017, 2018, and 2019.

Models 4 to 6 in Table 7 present the factors associated with Hongkongers' willingness to encourage their families to work or invest in China. The results show that ideology factors, including

Table 7. Logistic regressions of Hongkongers who have confidence in China and encourage their families to go to China

	Have confidence in China						Encourage their families to go to China					
	Mode 1		Mode 2		Mode 3		Mode 4		Mode 5		Mode 6	
Cohort (youth: 29 and below)												
Middle-aged: 30–49	.577	***	.568	***	.276		1.089	***	1.057	***	.891	***
Elderly: 50 and above	.696	***	.613	***	.346		1.302	***	1.241	***	1.095	***
Female	−.075		−.092		−.073		.038		.038		.094	
Unmarried	−.340	**	−.335	**	−.223		−.005		.023		.233	
Born in Hong Kong	−.575	***	−.531	***	−.189		−.182	*	−.179			
Education level (below junior high school)												
High school			−.117		−.037				.157		.359	*
Associate college and above			−.211		.064				−.145		.208	
Household income			−.009		−.005				.011		.015	
Hongkonger identity					−1.099	***					−.635	***
Party identification (pro-establishment camp)												
Pan-democracy camp					−1.750	***					−2.452	***
Median voters					−.466	**					−1.129	***
Democracy belief					−.931	***					−.929	***
Year (2020)												
2017	.649	***	.637	***	.614	***	.649	***	.653	***	.624	***
2018	.806	***	.801	***	.749	***	.881	***	.886	***	.790	***
2019	.561	***	.565	***	.558	***	.685	***	.687	***	.685	***
Constant	−.238		.037		1.782	***	−1.861	***	−1.935	***	−.230	
d.f.	8		11		15		8		11		14	
Chi-square	200.242	***	204.284	***	965.661	***	172.425	***	181.792	***	933.478	***
N	2661		2661		2661		2595		2595		2595	

Note 1: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

Note 2: In Model 6, multicollinearity occurs when there is a high correlation between 'Born in Hong Kong' and 'Hongkonger identity.' Therefore the variable of 'Born in Hong Kong' has been dropped in Model 6.

Hongkonger identity, party identification, and belief in democracy, all had sustained and significant effects on this willingness. In Hong Kong, compared with supporters of pro-establishment forces, pan-democracy camp supporters and median voters were less likely to encourage their families to go to China for professional and personal development. Also, people with a strong belief in democracy were significantly less likely to encourage their families to go to China than those without democratic beliefs. Finally, all other things being equal, Hongkongers, like their Taiwanese counterparts, were less likely to encourage their families to work or invest in China in 2020 than in the previous years of 2017, 2018, and 2019.

Discussion and Conclusion

As the analysis has shown, public attitudes toward China in Taiwan and Hong Kong share some common characteristics: (1) Before 2019, a majority of people in Taiwan and Hong Kong held positive views about the future development of China. However, many of their positive views suddenly changed during the 2019–2020 period; (2) Before 2019, although still less than the majority, many people in Taiwan and Hong Kong had been willing to encourage their family members to work or invest in China. However, the number of people who would do so rapidly declined during the 2019–2020 period; and (3) People with a strong local identity, China-critical party identification (i.e. pan-green parties in Taiwan and pan-democratic parties in Hong Kong), and a firm belief in democracy tended to be less confident in China's future development, and were less likely to encourage family members to go to China for professional or business development. On the other hand, people with a relatively weaker local identity, a strong China-friendly party identification (i.e. pan-blue parties in Taiwan and pro-establishment parties in Hong Kong), who thought that dictatorship could sometimes be tolerated, had more confidence in China and would have been willing to encourage their families to go to China for work or investment.

Why have public attitudes toward China in Taiwan and Hong Kong shifted so dramatically in 2019–20? During 2019–20, the Chinese government's hostile rhetoric and repressive actions directed against the people of Taiwan and Hong Kong might have played a vital role in the breakdown of confidence in the Chinese government. The surveys for this study were conducted in May 2019 and 2020, respectively. During these two years, several contingent events had a lasting impact on both Hong Kong and Taiwan. On 2 January 2019, in his speech on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the 'Message to Compatriots in Taiwan' Xi Jinping proposed the 'One Country, Two Systems, Taiwan Formula' (一國兩制台灣方案), which was met with fierce opposition by both the Taiwanese government and the public. In February 2019, the Hong Kong government proposed an amendment to the 'Fugitive Offenders Ordinance', which galvanized people in Hong Kong and Taiwan. On March 31 of that year, the Hong Kong pan-democratic camp held a protest against the extradition bill with more than 12,000 people attending. On April 28, in another anti-extradition law demonstration, 130,000 people took to the streets. Hence, when this study conducted surveys in Taiwan and Hong Kong in May 2019, the people in Hong Kong and Taiwan had already felt growing pressure from the Chinese government for several months. This is why, compared with the previous years, Taiwan and Hong Kong public opinion vis-à-vis confidence in China's future development had visibly begun to decline in 2019.

Between May 2019 and May 2020, Hong Kong's Anti-Extradition Bill Movement intensified. On 12 June 2019, a throng of 1.03 million people took to the streets to protest the proposed amendment. Although the Hong Kong government subsequently announced on June 15 that the amendment had been suspended, on June 16, around 2 million people participated in another protest march. From July to November 2020, Hong Kong was rocked by several waves of protests. Over the course of the movement, the police used excessive force, leading some of the protesters to turn to more violent means, thereby further intensifying the conflict and shocking the international community. During this period, a majority of the public in both Taiwan and Hong Kong were disappointed and resentful at Beijing's criticism of Hong Kong protesters and the HKSAR government's

harsh measures to suppress them. In the January 2020 presidential elections in Taiwan, President Tsai Ing-wen of the DPP was re-elected by a wide margin. During the campaign, Tsai had strongly criticized China and emphasized Taiwan's sovereignty. These contingent events are the key driving force behind the increase in the negative attitudes among Taiwanese and Hongkongers toward China and the decline in their confidence in China's development in the two years between 2019 and 2020.

Another related factor may be China's slowing economic momentum which reduced the attractiveness of its job market for people in Taiwan and Hong Kong during this period. Over the previous few years, although its economic momentum has been slowing down, China's annual GDP growth remained over 5 percent, which is still impressive when compared to most western economies with modest growth prospects. In the past, Taiwanese and Hongkongers had witnessed the upward trend of China's economic growth and vitality, and had held optimistic expectations for China's future development. However, for some, this optimism might have turned into disillusionment when in early 2019 China reported an annual growth rate of 6.6 percent for 2018, the lowest in 20 years; however, growth in 2019 fell to an even lower 6 percent as reported in early 2020. The release of these disappointing numbers might have affected the confidence of Hong Kong and Taiwanese people in China's future development.

Besides the disappointing economic downturn, the 2019–20 period witnessed several contingent events underlining the political tensions across the Taiwan Strait and between China and Hong Kong. Worse still, beginning in February 2020, the global coronavirus outbreak that first originated in China, caused a global disaster. The authors contend that all these contingency factors combined might have led survey respondents in Taiwan and Hong Kong in May 2020 to voice their lowest level of confidence in China since 2017.

In addition to the influence of these contingency factors on public attitudes, the authors also examined the impact of socioeconomic status, identity, and personal values. In Taiwan, people with higher socioeconomic status tended to have more confidence in China and were more likely to encourage their families to work or invest in China. Considering their economic interests, Taiwanese with higher socioeconomic status may be more likely to have confidence in China's development, probably because they assume that China offers more professional opportunities and relatively higher wages. If a good opportunity presents itself, they are still willing to encourage their family members to go to China for professional development. However, the fact that this consideration of economic interests was not observable in Hongkongers with a high socioeconomic status may be due to their high wages. Since the wage gap between China's metropolitan cities (e.g. Shanghai and Beijing) and Hong Kong is relatively small, the marginal benefits of going to China for professional development are not as large.

Specifically, while Taiwan has developed robust democratic institutions, its economic development has been less than satisfactory, in recent decades. Hong Kong's economy has so far done quite well, but its democratic development has been stagnating. Therefore, one could argue that Taiwanese might still be concerned about economic interests, while Hongkongers are more worried about freedom and democratic progress.

Ideology-oriented factors, including national identity, party identification, and belief in democracy, continue to have significant associations with public attitudes toward China in Taiwan and Hong Kong. These attitude factors make it difficult to clarify the causal relationship between them as they may influence and reinforce each other. In Taiwan, people's identity as Taiwanese and their pan-green party identities appear to have been strengthened by Xi Jinping's proclamation of a Taiwan version of 'One Country, Two Systems,' and the Chinese regime's actions in Hong Kong. At the same time, the people of Taiwan have deepened their commitment to democratic values. Hong Kong's 2019 Anti-Extradition Movement drew participants and sympathizers from all strata of Hong Kong society, thereby boosting Hong Kong's local identity and support for pan-democratic parties, and reinforcing the insistence on democratic values. These identities and values have affected people's confidence in China's development and their reluctance to go to China for development. This may

have happened simultaneously, or it may result from these factors influencing and reinforcing each other. However, the results of this research suggest that the influence of ideology and value beliefs on people's attitudes toward China is clearly stronger than considerations of economic interests.

From 2019 to 2020, polls and research institutions in Taiwan and Hong Kong also found that local identity reached a new high, which is consistent with the findings of this study. In June 2020, a long-term public opinion survey in Taiwan showed that in terms of 'Changes in the Taiwanese/Chinese Identity,' Taiwanese people's sense of 'Taiwanese' identity has continued to rise since 1992, surpassing 'both Taiwanese and Chinese' in 2007. The percentage of respondents identifying solely as 'Taiwanese' continued to rise, reaching 67 percent in June 2020, the highest level in history. While the dual-identity of 'both Taiwanese and Chinese' was at 28 percent, only 2 percent of respondents identified solely as 'Chinese.' Both were record lows.[26] In Hong Kong, the identity of 'Hongkonger' also reached a new high in the three surveys conducted in 2019–20. In June 2020, 75 percent identified themselves as 'Hongkongers' or 'Hongkongers in China,' while 24 percent identified themselves as 'Chinese' or 'Chinese in Hong Kong.'[27]

In addition, Taiwanese and Hongkongers with democratic convictions tended to be less confident in China's future development and less likely to encourage their family members to go to China. As national identity and party identifications also affected people's views on China's future development, it seems political ideology has played a vital role in shaping people's attitudes toward China. As open societies, both Taiwanese and Hongkongers' political views have been forged by an inherent critical argument that in the long run democracy would prevail, while the one-party system in China cannot give people democracy and freedom, and thus cannot be sustained.

A further observation that can be indirectly derived from the above argument is that when compared to less democratic societies, societies that are more democratic and open were less optimistic about China's development. For example, countries that participate in the Belt and Road Initiative (launched by Xi Jinping in 2013) were less democratic countries, while those that showed reservations were more democratic.[28] As such, one can see that democratic conviction significantly affects views on China's future economic development, and this seems to be a global phenomenon.

Beginning in February 2020, the sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has further shaken China and the global economy, as well as the US-China relationship and the world order. Hong Kong's National Security Law was enacted in June 2020, putting the future of democratization in Hong Kong in further jeopardy. Taiwan and Hong Kong may not have a decisive influence on the US-China conflict, but they are heavily influenced by the consequences of the conflict between the two great powers. The big changes in the world in 2020 will have an immediate and profound impact on China's political and economic development, as well as its geopolitical future. The outlook for Taiwan and Hong Kong is also linked to this. As such, although the 2020 surveys showed a decline in confidence in China among both Taiwanese and Hongkongers, it seems unclear whether this is the beginning of something really bad or the end of something bad. Nevertheless, this study shows that public attitudes toward China in Taiwan and Hong Kong have been changing and may vary depending on contingent events, individual interest calculations, and ideology-oriented factors.

Disclosure Statement

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