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Why did Taiwanese Youth Protest in 2014? Emergence of protests from the Perspective of Mobilization Structures and Shared Grievances

Abstract: The purpose of the paper is to restudy the reasons for youth activism in Taiwan in 2014, which led to the so-called Sunflower Movement. The study is based on desk research and semi-structured interviews and expert interviews conducted by the authors, and in the framework of the Daybreak Project. Additionally the analysis on the social media posts during the movement was conducted. Data were analyzed through the Bert Klandermans' model on reasons for collective mobilization. The supply side of mobilization was divided into the role of mobilizing structures and the appeal. The demand side was analyzed through: sociopolitical characteristics of the participants; social embeddedness; shared grievances and shared emotions; group identification. The paper assumes that participation in the protests was a result of mobilizational structures – student discussion groups and the sense that the authorities were violating procedural justice principles – mainly in connection with the processing of the CSSTA.

Key words: Taiwan, protest, mobilization, Sunflower Movement, grievances

Introduction

In March 2014, protests known as Sunflower Movement erupted in Taiwan, led primarily by students, non-governmental organizations, and supported by academics. This occurred when the ruling party, Kuomintang (KMT), rushed the procedure of the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA), considered controversial by many Taiwanese. Contrary to previous arrangements, attempt to quickly push through the legislative the CSSTA between Republic of China (Taiwan) and People's Republic of China, resulted in the protests of up to 500,000 people and occupation of the Taiwan parliament building by protesters. Feeling the political threat from what they saw as an undemocratic procedure of adopting the Agreement, and fearing the possible consequences of the CSSTA, the students took advantage of the political opportunity presented by the split between President Ying-Jeou Ma and the President of the Legislative Yuan, Jin-Pyng Wang, and used the parliament as the site of their civil disobedience (Ho, 2015).

In 2024, 10 years have passed since the aforementioned events. The Sunflower Movement brought about changes in Taiwan's party system since 2014 and the mentality of the whole generation for the support of the democratic values (Beckershoff, 2017; Clark, Tan, 2016; Hsieh, 2015; Rowan, 2015; Wang, 2020). The Sunflower Movement

also prompted extensive scientific research. Researchers focused their attention on the structure of the civil disobedience. Hsu (2021) describe the Sunflower Movement as a hybrid mode, composed of leading core which was built by previous social movement organizational network, and the autonomous actions which were decentralized. Although possessing internal democracy between members and organizations, the basis of previous collaboration and the sense of activism community helped the organizations to build solidarity despite of differences. Other studies concentrated on the role of the mobilization through Internet and social media. Especially Facebook and Taiwanese online forum PTT played a huge role in disseminating information, public discussion, and identity formation (Chen, 2015; Liu, 2019; Tsatsou, 2019; Weng, 2021). From live broadcasting, crowd fundraising and online to offline techniques, the protestors made innovative usage of the technology (Kung, 2016; Schneider, 2019). An important topic of academic discussion revolved around the “China factor”, both as an aspect of Sino-Taiwanese relations and as motivator to participate in the protests. Within this framework, considerable attention was devoted to shifts in Taiwanese identity, particularly the process of de-sinicization of identity. By emphasizing the Taiwanese identity in contrast to the “colonizing, oppressive Communists whose imperialism continues” China, a sense of shared Taiwanese identity based on citizenship, rather than ethnicity was created (Au, 2017). Therefore, the Taiwanese civil nationalism was largely demonstrated and enhanced by the movement (Pan, 2015; Jones, 2017). The Sunflower Movement was also studied in the context of supporting other global protests and enhancing Taiwan’s international image (Ho, 2021; Tanakasempipat, Chow, 2020; Blanchard, 2021; Baron, 2023).

Despite the extensive research on protests in Taiwan in 2014, the Sunflower Movement remains a compelling case study for researching protest movements. The purpose of the paper is to restudy the reasons for youth activism in Taiwan in 2014, which led to the so-called Sunflower Movement, by applying a sociopsychological perspective. After 2014, numerous personal accounts from participants in the protests were gathered. The study is based on desk research and data collected by the researchers: semi-structured interviews and expert interviews conducted in January–March 2022 by the authors¹ and analysis of interviews collected by Brian Hioe in the framework of the Daybreak Project – composition of 60 interviews with participants of the Sunflower Movement. Additionally the analysis on the social media posts during the movement was conducted (more in Research Methods part), mainly, to complement participants’ personal experiences with the narrative of identity they reveal during protests. The paper aims to explore the mobilization process through analysis of collected data and interviews conducted with protest participants.

Data were analyzed through the lens of Bert Klandermans’ research (Klandermans, 2002) on reasons for collective mobilization. The supply side of mobilization was divided into the role of **mobilizing structures** and the **appeal**. The demand side was analyzed through four categories: **sociopolitical characteristics** of the participants; **social embeddedness**; **shared grievances and shared emotions**; **group identification**.

In the article, we aim to verify the following hypotheses:²

¹ Łukasz Zameński’s research was supported by a MOFA Taiwan Fellowship.

² More on use of hypothesis in qualitative research: Chigbu, 2019.

1. Participation in the protests was a result of mobilizational structures, primarily in the form of the significant role of student discussion groups;
2. A significant element of mobilization for action was the sense that the authorities were violating procedural justice principles in connection with the processing of the CSSTA agreement.

These hypotheses are guided by the explanatory research questions. Additionally, we hope to assess the possibility of using qualitative data to study the reasons for protest outbreaks through both the supply and demand sides of mobilization.

The structure of the paper reflects the categories of above mentioned factors of collective mobilization. At the beginning, the main theoretical approaches to why people protest will be briefly presented, then basic information about the Sunflower Movement will be given.

Theoretical and methodological framework

Reasons for Collective Mobilization

Bert Klandermans (2002) divides the supply and demand side of participation in protests. Supply side refers to the “opportunities staged by organizers to protest”, e.g. structures that mobilize for demonstrations and frames that give reasons for protest. While demand refers to the potential for protests that exist among people – e.g., socialization, shared grievances, and collective identity of frustrated people. The demand is supported by the supply – the possibilities given by others to participate in protest. The demand and supply factors are linked by the mobilization process. Klandermans brings the types of demand and supply transaction to three terms: instrumentality, identity, and ideology.

When it comes to the demand side, ‘instrumentality’ underlines situations when people participate in collective actions to change the social and political situation (Klandermans, 2002). The demand for changes starts with the feeling among people of relative deprivation, injustice, and grievances. This perspective is mostly related to resource mobilization theory, political process theory, relative deprivation theory, and rational choice theory. As relative deprivation theories show, feeling of grievances and relative deprivation was an important starting point for researching reasons why people protest. These classical theories were followed by the next wave of studies of reasons for protest. Scholars in the 70s of the 20th century underlined the role of instrumental character of movement participation, the costs and benefits of participation, which are based on resource mobilization theories and political process theories.

From the point of view of supply, ‘instrumentality’ means that the protest movement needs to demonstrate its structures as effective to convince people that they can achieve their goals. It can be done by i.e., showing past successes of movement, strong leaders, large number of members, and broad network or political assets that stands behind the organization/movement.

‘Identity’ emphasizes that people participate in collective actions as a manifestation of their identity. Involvement is an effect of being a member of a particular group. Social move-

ments and political organizations provide opportunities to achieve goals. People are more likely to participate in collective actions on behalf of a group when they have a strong identification with that group (Klandermans, 2002). Especially when a group is seen as an exclusive one. Inevitably, the theories used here are related to the theory of collective identity and social identity theory. These theories explain participation as an attempt to have a positive social identity of the groups they belong to. Studies show that people who see their group status as illegitimately low and variable can engage in protest to raise group status.

Finally, Klanderman's short brief 'ideology' refers to these perspectives and explanations with regard to people's desire to express their views. People participate to articulate their feelings. Social movements and groups provide 'collective action frames' that explain who is responsible for the injustice situation, how to interpret the situation, and how to change it. Under the 'ideology' perspective, fall theories explaining people's mobilization that emphasize the role of culture and social cognition (Klandermans, 2002).

All these three themes (instrumentality, identity, and ideology) are important in researching the causes of social mobilization and how sympathizers and targeted of the case, become motivated and participants of protests. This paper tries to study these important factors of demand and supply side of mobilization that led to the 2014 protests in Taiwan, that is, the role of shared emotions and group identity, the role of networking and appeal, and the role of organizations.

Research Methods

To verify the reasons for protest mobilization as proposed by Bert Klandermans, we analyzed several dozen interviews with participants of the Sunflower Movement. We have conducted 10 semi-structured interviews and expert interviews in the period of January–March 2022. Experts and participants of the protests were collected using the snowball method. In the study we also analyzed interviews collected by Brian Hioe in the framework of the Daybreak Project – the composition of 60 interviews (mainly conducted in 2017) with participants of the Sunflower Movement (Daybreak Project, 2017).

To complement participants' personal experiences with the narrative of identity they reveal during protests, the analysis on the social media posts during the movement was conducted. We analyzed 110 Facebook posts from the main student dissent clubs – namely Continental Club, College News Club and Dalawasao Club from National Taiwan University, Wildfire Club from National Chengchi University, Cross the Wall Club from National Taipei University, Radical Notes from National Tsing Hua University, and Indie02 Club from National Cheng Kung University. The content was coded according to the mobilization frames, identities and emotions, and all joint statements are also noted.

The Sunflower Movement and its background

The Sunflower Movement refers to the protests, mainly of young people in Taiwan, that took place between March 18 and April 10, 2014. The main and direct cause of the protests was parliamentary process surrounding the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agree-

ment (CSSTA), which was dominated by the KMT party. The CSSTA, signed in 2013 between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China, aimed to liberalize trade in services between the two economies. The agreement planned to liberalize up to 64 sectors of the Taiwanese economy and up to 80 Chinese sectors, including banking, tourism, telecommunications, sports, and culture (Shih, 2013). The attempt to expedite the ratification of the agreement in the Taiwanese parliament, without the previously agreed clause-by-clause review, ignited the protests.

The protest in its peak gathered more than 500,000 participants. The Sunflower Movement marks the first time that the Taiwanese legislature – Legislative Yuan – was occupied by citizens. On March 18, approximately 300 protesters entered the Legislative Yuan building. Thousands of riot police were mobilized throughout Taiwan, but force was not used against protesters. Additionally, the Executive Yuan building was briefly occupied, here resulting in police intervention to remove the occupiers. More than 150 protesters were injured.

After reaching a compromise on April 6 with the occupants of the Legislative Yuan and the Legislative Speaker, the protesters decided to end the protests on April 10. But the background of the protests was not only about the CSST. It referred to the broader issue of Taiwan-China relations, Taiwanese identity, and the socioeconomic problems of young people. The Sunflower Movement involved not only hundreds of thousands of people but also dozens of civil society organizations. Notably, sunflower was the symbol of protests after the floral gift sent to protesters as a symbol of hope.

However, the Sunflower Movement cannot be seen as a one-off event that only regards the process of ratification of CSSTA. Instead, it should be regarded as the pinnacle of contentious politics in Taiwan during the second decade of the 21st century. The period leading up to the Sunflower Movement was marked by escalating social tensions sparked by various events that culminated in social protests. As evidenced by research on social protests, prior engagement in such movements has an impact on participants, increasing the likelihood of their involvement in subsequent protests.

One of the most significant events proceeding the Sunflower Movement was the Wild Strawberry Movement in November 2008. This protest, named in reference to the influential Wild Lily movement of 1990, was sparked by the visit to Taiwan of Yun-lin Chen, the chairman of the PRC Association for Relations across the Taiwan Strait. Sit-in protests were organized in several Taiwanese cities, attracting even more than 10,000 participants. The protesters expressed their attachment to the Taiwanese identity, democracy and progressivism. The Wild Strawberry Movement demonstrated that the younger generation of Taiwanese citizens is not politically inactive, contributed to building youth identity and politically socialized many participants.

The period of presidency of Ying-Jeou Ma in Taiwan was a time of few important social outbreaks. It began with the Wild Strawberry Movement in 2008, followed by the anti-Kuokuang Movement in 2010, which the civil society protest against building the naphtha cracker center; protesters feared that the cracker center will have a negative impact on the natural environment. Furthermore, the anti-media monopoly movement followed in 2012, which protesters opposed buying the media by companies with significant shares of Chinese entities. Number of protest events raised from 2008 to 2012 by

more than 60% (Ho, 2019, p. 63). These protest movements played a formative role on the activists who later led the Sunflower Movement.

Crucial for the 2014 outbreak was the year 2013 when few important events occurred. Only to mention a few of them (Hioe, 2017):

- In early 2013 (March–April), people protested against the demolition of Huaguang Community. The authorities wanted to build a Roppongi-style district. The resettled people did not receive any support, they were not offered alternative apartments, and the demolitions often concerned the flats of the elderly. Some of the protesting people then in front of the Ministry of Justice building were later on activists during the protests in 2014 (interview, e.g., Fei-Fan Lin – one of main activist during Sunflower Movement).
- Another case of protests against evictions and demolitions is the demolition in Dapu, where the authorities planned to expand the area of the science park. The first evictions were ordered already in June 2010. One person – Feng-Min Chu – committed suicide. At the end of June 2013, the demolition works were resumed. 5 July 2013 was the last day for citizens to leave their homes. People protested against demolitions in front of the Executive Yuan and the presidential palace. The second suicide was then committed: Sen-wen Chang was found dead after the destruction of his home. This issue caused a larger stir. More protests were organized. In earlier years, there were also protests related to forced evictions. Participation in the protests related to Dapu Demolition is mentioned as important for creating the identity of the protesters in 2014, i.e. by NTU students and activists – Sheng-han Chang and Mimi Huang (Daybreak Project, 2017).
- An important formative and mobilizing role played in protests after the enigmatic death of Chung-Chiu Hung, a 24-year-old military cadet who died of exhaustion three days before completing his military service. The case received much attention as the investigation showed that the boy was harmed by physical exercises. Despite his complaints, the disciplinary exercises continued. The boy fainted during them and died in the hospital. The case showed not only the weaknesses of the Ministry of Defense, but also the inability of the authorities to properly admit mistakes and investigate the issue. The protests after the boy's death gathered the largest crowds of participants in the period directly preceding the Sunflower Movement. On 20 July 2013, more than 30,000 people protested at the Taiwanese Ministry of Defense and more than 100,000 on 3 August 2013. The protesters raised slogans, i.e., 'We want the truth' and 'The president must take responsibility for human rights in the military'. Protests were coordinated by the 'Citizen 1985 Alliance' which also played a role during the Sunflower Movement. As a result of the protests, two defense ministers resigned. Reforms were carried out in the army. There were even convictions. The family considered several months of imprisonment too light.

All of the events mentioned above built the potential for 2014 protests. Distrust towards the incumbents could have developed mainly on the basis of the feeling that the authorities do not listen to the civil society. At the same time, people involved in the protests gained valuable experience that led to later participation in the 2014 protests. A network of contacts and experiences was created, but also a sense of identity and social frustration.

Supply side

Mobilizing Structures

The importance of mobilization structures for participation in protests can be examined with questions: Who mobilizes Taiwanese youth to take part in protests; What networks, formal and informal groups, were the most important in mobilizing process; What has happened that these networks were adapted and activated as a mobilizing structure; What resources were transferred through these structures? (Stekelenburg, Klandermans, 2014).

Based on the analysis of the interviews, the important role of social networks as mobilizing structures in the Sunflower Movement needs to be emphasized. Social network played a pivotal role in the mobilization in the Sunflower Movement, especially the established activist network in campus-based student dissent clubs. The student dissent clubs emerged in the 1980s democratization movement in Taiwan, which are autonomous small scale activism organizations based in different university campus (Ho, 2023). From the legacy from the previous movement, the student dissent clubs were able to pass down the previous movement culture and sustain the mobilization network. When the Sunflower Movement started, the student clubs were already familiar with various tactics and mobilizations from the previous movements such as Huaguang community and anti-demolition of Dapu.

As formal organizations, the student dissent clubs were not a centralized force attempting to lead the movement, or responding to the call from a specific movement leader. The student clubs were more a hub to mobilize student to “join the protest in parliament”, and provide information and practical support. For example, the student clubs from universities outside of Taipei arranged buses to Taipei (NCHU, NCKU), and those based in Taipei call for their participants to “join the club activity in the parliament/ Executive Yuan”.

Before the occupation of the parliament, there were two main organizations which focused on the CSSTA issue, namely the student organization Black Island Nation Youth Front (BIY), and the Democratic Front Against Cross-Strait Trade in Services Agreement (DF), which is composed mainly by NGOs. During the protest, the protestors mobilized through “strategic response without prior planning”, which is a collaboration between experience activists, assisting NGOs and the self-initiating participants who improvised according to the changing situations (Ho, 2018).

Furthermore, as to the organizational networks, we can see the tight student network in the campuses. The statements are often not made by only one student dissent club, but take in the form of the joint statement. For example, in 19/3, the “Anti-CSSTA, Anti-police violence Statement” is made by NTU Student Association, NTU Graduate Student Association, NTNU Student Association, NTU Labor Union. Furthermore, in 24/3, the “Urgent Mobilization to Student Strikes” are made by 20 student clubs from NTU, ranging from political student dissent clubs, LGBT+ and feminist organizations, labor rights organizations, student association from humanity and social sciences, and other interest-based clubs. These clubs may not all played the leading role of the movement, yet they were all concerned about social issues, and they have connection to one another.

Interviews with protesters indicate that activists, being the core of the mobilization of other people, had often prior experience of participating in social protests. Many protesters took part in previous contentious politics in Taiwan. The important formative role played of course the Wild Strawberry Movement (Daybreak Project's interviews with social activists – Chung-chiang Lai, Shou-da Huang, Sheng-han Chang, Jiho Chang, Yikai Wang) but as a mobilization structure we can see ties which were built among activists during later protests, for example, in 2013. Therefore, they activate their network swiftly after the Sunflower Movement, and also they were familiar with the strategies to recruit more members.

Research shows that prior participation in protests is a significant indicator of participation in other forms of social mobilization. Professor Yun Fan emphasizes that “For many people, this was the first time they had taken to the streets in protest. But at the core, there was a group of very experienced street demonstrators” (Daybreak Project, 2017). Interviews with activists show that personal contacts were built during previous protests. Protester Sheng-han Chang also confirms that people participate in protests because of their friends: “For me, I would begin participating because of people I knew. Wu Pei-yi got me to go there, so I went and I saw many people I normally knew” (Daybreak Project, 2017). According the on-line post-occupation survey 25–30% of protesters participated thanks to the “classmate invitation” and ca. 13–18% of surveyed mobilize due to the “friends invitation” (Yang, 2014).

The Sunflower Movement also reaffirms the role of social media in mobilizing protests. As Panayiota Tsatsou (2018) emphasizes, “movement participants developed bridging/linking social capital via Facebook and that the information-dissemination and information-sharing tools of Facebook were the prevalent drivers of Facebook-enabled social capital”. Off-line actions were coordinated through Facebook. Facebook enabled to spread information but, what is very important, to connect with the broader public (Tsatsou, 2018). As Tsatsou's interviewees underlined: “information on Facebook about the movement's goals and ideas had influenced people, ‘awakening’ non-movement participants (such as young people) and making many of them join the movement” (Tsatsou, 2018).

The participants who came to protest via Internet information rather than personal connection were more likely to stay protesting for a longer time (Chen et al., 2016). Students who used Facebook more often and more of a motivation to socialize, are also more likely to participate in the protest (Chen, 2016). The emerging new media helped mobilization in a decentralized manner and did not result from the decision of the leading core. The mix usage between traditional media and new media helps communication between the protestors and the societies, and allow the presence of diverse voices in the movement (Liu, Su, 2017).

Appeal

An important factor in mobilizing people to collective actions is an appeal. To study the appeal, we should answer the question how the participants were framed and which grievances were raised and emphasized in the appeal, what slogans helped the protesters

to join, what goals were declared, what was articulated in their agenda, and what grasped their attention.

Reasons for participating in the protests vary greatly. It is possible to distinguish various groups of protesters on the basis of their declared main motivation to participate in the Sunflower Movement. As, already mentioned, Chung-chiang Lai notice, “Everyone’s reasons for participating were different. There were those opposed to China. There were those opposed to free trade. Or those in industries who may have been affected by free trade. Another key reason is that many people were dissatisfied with this country” (Daybreak Project, 2017).

The main reasons for participating in the protests that we can distinguish are:

- concerns about the influence of the PRC on Taiwan;
- deterioration of the economic prospects of young people;
- opposition to the free market form of globalization;
- aversion to the administration of President Ma;
- aversion to KMT.

There is one issue raised by virtually all interviewees – opposition to the so-called “black box”. Interviewees understand this as lack of knowledge about the possible consequences of adopting the CSSTA agreement. The protesters’ concerns were caused by the form of accepting and proceeding with the CSSTA agreement. The protesters often referred not to the provisions but to the way it was processed. Different threats were assigned to CSSTA: increased migration, economic exploitation, restriction of freedom of speech, etc. (cf. Yun Fan).

Yun Fan or Shou-da Huang agree that the movement could be against few issues at the same time – the ‘black box’, for CSSTA, for KMT and China. In the Bert Klandermans typology (*violated interests* or *violated principles*), it seems that a large number of the protesters were closer to mobilization around the ‘violated principles’. This is also shown in the call to mobilize from the social media posts. Especially in the early days of the mobilization, the student clubs mostly call for attention to the problem of procedural justice. They called CSSTA ‘controversial’ and the main issue is that it is passed without due procedure. As to the essence of the CSSTA, such as the economic impact, it is not emphasized in the mobilization posts, but rather be discussed in lectures and discussions groups in a more contextualized and detailed way. Given the usual pro-independence and left-leaning stances of most of the student activism clubs, it is possible that the ‘procedural justice’ appeal is more strategically adopted to attract more public support and it is more straightforward to post on the social media.

After the police crackdown on the attempt in the occupation of the Executive Yuan, in which many protesters were beaten, the call to mobilization transform to mainly against police violence and the legitimacy crisis of the government. There were also aversion to President Ma, yet is also not the main mobilization call.

An important role in building the identity of the protesters was the issue of a slightly different reference to the future of Taiwan than that of the generations of their parents. Most of the interviewees emphasized the importance of ‘Taiwan identity’. What united the protesters was the declaration that they had a Taiwanese identity, not a mixed or Chinese identity (cf. interview with Shou-da Huang). The social research conducted in the frameworks of Taiwan’s Election and Democratization Study (TEDS) shows that Tai-

wan's identity is dominant among the younger groups of Taiwan's inhabitants. In recent years, it has been replacing a mixed identity (Sino-Taiwanese). In the social media posts, the student activism organizations also shows the narratives of the Taiwanese identity from mentioning the symbolic connections with the Taiwanese activists in the previous generations. For example, we can see from the Indie02 club's posts, to see the identity as the 'democracy supporters'. They traced back from the democratic movement history "From the Japanese colonial era to the democratization of Taiwan and the implementation of party politics in Taiwan, during the past 100 years, it is these few people who have borne the sacrifices and failures, and who have achieved the democratic system of Taiwan. Now is the critical moment to decide on democracy, there is no turning back, no compromise!", and they quoted a professor from the rally as "We are not a mob, we are just using democracy to fight against the state apparatus."

Considering the different motivations of the participants, and avoiding being stigmatized as irrational China-opposers, the social movement organizations carefully shaped their main framing, focusing on democracy and the careful usage of the 'China Factor'. The NGOs adopted the master frame of 'civil society' with a essence of democracy and the call to concern about the China factor. Establishing on the mutual basis of democracy broadens the possible allies, and the emphasis on China factor includes the Taiwanese independence activists (Hsu et al., 2019). Brindle's (2016) discursive analysis on Taiwanese English newspaper also showed that in the pro-movement newspaper, the protests were described as the pursuit of democracy with inclusivity, descending from the roots from the previous democracy movements.

A characteristic feature of the movement was the diversification of the appeal. Different groups gave different appeal to participation in protests. There were groups that emphasized the role of globalization and those that underline for instance mainly China's threats. However, the heterogenous protest groups are united under the call to transparency and due procedures, though some satisfaction and inner conflicts took place (Ho, 2019), the protesters found a common mobilization base.

Demand side

Sociopolitical characteristic

Research on protests shows that people with certain characteristics, such as younger people, are more likely to participate in them.³ So, the important question about the Sunflower Movement is who participated in the protests?

The characteristics of the protesters indicate that they were dominated by younger people, often with progressive views (e.g., in relation to LGBTQ issues). 74.8% of the participants sampled from the Sunflower Movement were under the age of 30 (two-thirds were between 20 and 29 years old). More than 84% held a university diploma or higher (Ho, 2019). A 2015 opinion poll confirms that younger New Taipei City respond-

³ Although recent studies show more nuanced relations between age and protests participation – e.g. Kwak 2022.

ents were more likely to say they support the Sunflower Movement (TEDS). The gender distribution was also fairly even (Chen, 2014).

Other research on the participants of sit-in outside of the parliament reveals similar data – 56% of the protestors were students, with the 73% of bachelor students as the majority, and among the non-students, 76% possesses university or above education (Chen, 2015). According to Chen and Yen (2017) the participants tend to be more attached to Taiwanese identity and with a more anti-China attitude. Despite of it, protestors still possessed different motivations to come to the protest, including anti-China sentiment, generational and distribution justice, and the defense of Taiwanese democracy (Hawang, 2016). Tsai and Chen (2016) especially stressed on the response to the Chinese unfriendliness as the motivation. The protestors felt that unconsented economic integration with China is threatening the Taiwanese identity (Keading, 2015), which is based on democracy and Taiwanese sovereignty (Kwan, 2016).

In the aforementioned TEDS's opinion polls, the father's ethnic origin is also associated with the support for the movement. When father was a 'Mainlander' the lack of will to support Sunflower Movement is higher. Also, when the respondent 'lean toward KMT' they statistically support the movement less often. It can be noticed that identifying as associated with the 'Pan-Green' camp to a slightly greater extent gave a chance to support the movement. Not surprisingly, research shows that describing yourself as 'Taiwanese' more than 'Chinese' was associated with support for the Sunflower Movement.

The growing Taiwanese identity can be interpreted as one of the cause of youth contentious politics. But, at the same time the mere participation in the movement developed the Taiwanese identity of people involved in protests (Chen, 2018) – such process is underlined in the interviews with movement participants (e.g. Ciwang Teyra, Brian Hioe).

Social Embeddedness

Social embeddedness refers to the question what were the organizations, informal groups, and internet communities that played the role in building the social network of participants, how participants were linked to other actors, and how their actions were part of broader social ties? Unlike 'mobilizing structures', 'social embeddedness' does not pertain to networks that encouraged and facilitated participation directly before and during the events, but rather to the pre-existing embedding of individuals within specific social environments where their political socialization occurred. However, it's noteworthy that 'social embeddedness' and 'mobilizing structures' shares some similarities. To assess that, one should study the membership in organizations, informal relations such as friends and family, and social media activity before protests.

Interviews with participants show that an important formative role was played by student dissent clubs, such as the NTU Dalawasao Club (interview with activists: Pei-yi Wu; Sheng-han Chang), the Taiwan Study Club, the Taiwanese Culture Club (cf. Chung-chiang Lai) or Radical Notes (interview of Brian Hioe with convenor of Black Island Youth Front – Yang Wei). These groups discussed social issues, studied the classics of social literature, and participated in social campaigns. The role of university groups is

also highlighted by Ming Sho-Ho in his book on the Sunflower Movement (Ho, 2019). Ming Sho-Ho also noticed that these groups established nationwide network (Ho, 2019, p. 82).

The leaders of the 2014 protests were experienced activists who participated in, i.e. Wild Lily Movement, Anti-Military Peace March, Wild Strawberry Movement, Anti-Media Monopoly Movement. Participation in protests also builds the mobilization for the 2014 protest.

For many activists, the Wild Strawberry Movement was a breaking point – “For many people, that was the start of their participation in social movements. That was when I entered into this world of social movements. But at the time, I was part of the student government. So you could say that I was at the crossroads of these two areas, student government and social movements” (Daybreak Project, 2017; interview with Shou-da Huang).

The Anti-Media Monopoly Movement also played a very important role. As Brian Hioe points out, “major figures of the Sunflower Movement including Wei-Ting Chen, Fei-Fan Lin, and Kuo-Chang Huang first became known to the Taiwanese public through the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement” (Daybreak Project, 2017).

Shaping the attitudes of civic activity took place along with smaller protests. Pei-yi Wu and Sheng-han Chang recall Losheng Sanatorium Protests. These events familiarized student activists with various protest tactics, and provided opportunities for building organizational network.

Since Taiwan has one of the biggest in Asia Internet coverage and number of social media users, internet communities also played networking role. It is important to emphasize the crucial role of Facebook and the PTT message board which ensured anonymity. PTT board played significant role (Daybreak project interview with PTT moderator Zuyi Lin). This is confirmed not only by the interviews, but also by the already mentioned on-line, post-occupation research – Facebook was listed as a main source of information by 83% of surveyed, on-line news were mentioned by 71.5% of interviewees and PTT by 53.7% (Chen, 2014).

Shared grievances and shared emotions

Many studies on why people protest, concentrate on grievances as reasons of collective mobilization. Klandermans’ conceptual model allow us to ask the questions about the grievances of youth Taiwanese – did they have feeling of injustice, how they feel were treated by the government, why were they angry, what interests or principles were threatened?

The grievances that are visible when interviewing with protesters are not only these connected to the way CSSTA was proceed. Young people felt increasing social inequalities and perceived the government as doing nothing to solve them. KMT is blamed, among some interlocutors, as the reason that Taiwan and themselves are in this, and no other situation. Part of interviewees saw the reason for the increasing inequalities in the process of closer cooperation between Taiwan and the PRC under the administration of President Ma. The influx of tourists from the PRC was given as the reason for the

increase in the prices of goods. Concerns about Chinese influence are pervasive in the interviews. Fang-Yu Chen and Wei-Ting Yen found that the feeling of being proud of Taiwan and anti-China sentiments are correlated with a higher level of support for the Sunflower Movement (Chen, Yen, 2017). The Sunflower Movement was a manifestation of a significant identity transformation of the Taiwanese. It was an expression of a new national identity.

Taiwan in the second decade of the 20th century experienced lower economic growth and higher unemployment than decades before. Objectively the situation was better than in many regions of the world, but the relatively young felt worse conditions. In the same time the post-80 generation ('seventh graders') was better educated than generation of their parents but still have worse perspectives. Fears about the future were associated with the blame for the current situation of 'old rules' – ties to China, authoritarian values. Similar processes of relative deprivation can be observed in the region, e.g. in Hong Kong (Zamecki, 2018).

Another important issue mentioned by the protesters was the demand for greater transparency in public life and bigger democratization of politics. According to the interviewees, the Sunflower Movement was also about bringing significant changes to the quality of democratic procedures in Taiwan. Party system was too rigid for protesters. Interestingly, it's also visible in the changes in the party system after Sunflower Movement. In the on-line, post-occupation survey overall 62% of the respondents believe that the current Taiwan's political system needs to be reviewed urgently (Yang, 2014). Even the Democracy Index shows a slight decline in the quality of democracy after 2008, which started to increase from 2014 after the Sunflower Movement (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2023).

Furthermore, during the protests additional factor was collective anger toward the overuse of the police force. The NTHU event 'Are you okay?' in 26/3 describe the event as worrying and heartbreaking. It was after the crackdown of the Executive Yuan, so the anger to the CSSTA, procedural justice and the police at 24/3 night was accumulated. Facing the stress from the movement, the student clubs did not only expressed anger, but also showed the collective sense of care and responsibility. For example, The Continental Club reposted a popular saying among students at the time "Be strong so you don't lose your tenderness".

Above mentioned grievances were shared by the youth, which is evident in the interviews and social media posts. Most of the interviewees who took part in the Sunflower Movement mention similar sources of their general frustration – economic inequalities, concerns about the future of Taiwan and Chinese influence, rigid party system, corrupted media, authoritarian education and lack of political transparency.

Group identification

An important issue when it comes to the participation in the protest is the feeling of group identity: Did the protesters identify with a particular group; Did the protesters feel like a group; Did they share the feeling of fate? It is not a sense of social identity as mentioned in previous parts of the paper, but of belonging to specific groups of peo-

ple, based on, e.g. generational ties. Group identification should also be seen through the sense of connection to other protesters. Group identification, as mentioned at the beginning of the article, may be a factor influencing motivation to participate in the protests.

The generation of protesters in 2014, that was referred to as ‘seventh graders’, to emphasize the fact of being born between 1981 and 1990, created a generational link. They described themselves as the ‘strawberry tribe’, which was designed to mock the opinion of the elders that they are ‘spoiled generation’.⁴ Interviewees underlined the feeling of community with other protesters. Student shared a sense of connection for supporting the same goals. “We go out protest tomorrow, so we will be able come home in the future”, it is written by the Wildfire club, showing the collective sense of home, which referred to the shared fate of the country. Therefore, even some students could not participate in the protests, they still put on yellow ribbons to support the movement. Indie02 also posted that they are supporting their peers “in Taipei facing the barricade in front of them, are burdened with the whole future and the world”. They had the sense of “sharing the same fate”, or even more, those student who joined the protest are doing more to protect their collective fate.

An important aspect of their collective identity were not only shared grievances but the appeal to raising ‘Taiwanese identification’ (Yun Fan). Among many protesters, the slogans of independence of Taiwan were quite natural. There is visible correlation between supporting Sunflower Movement and Taiwanese identification.

Tanguy Lepesant defines the generational gap in Taiwan through the feeling of youth “that young people are the guardians of Taiwanese democracy in the face of leaders and elders who give in to the siren calls of authoritarianism or are deemed incompetent” (Lepesant, 2022, p. 64). The issue of the importance of the freedoms and democracy for protesters was already emphasized in earlier parts of that paper. Their adherence to certain values was also noticeable in their support to other democratic movements all over the world. Taiwanese NGOs and students swiftly mobilized to assist Hong Kong democratic movement in 2019 (Ho, 2021), Thai student protest in 2020 (Tanakasempipat, Chow, 2020), Myanmar anti-coup in 2021 (Blanchard, 2021), and against Russian invasion to Ukraine in 2022 (Baron, 2023).

Conclusions

Our objective was to analyze the factors contributing to participation in the 2014 Sunflower Movement protests in Taiwan. We aimed to assess the significance of both demand and supply factors following Bert Klandermans’ approach. Our research was based on the analysis of interviews with protest participants and Facebook posts of groups involved in the protests. The figure 1 illustrates the mobilization factors for the protests. Among these, we hypothesized that a pivotal role was attributed to student discussion groups as mobilizing structures and the feeling that the KMT was violating procedural justice principles in connection with the processing of the CSSTA agreement.

⁴ More on generational identity in: T. Lepesant (2022), *Generational Consciousness and Political Mobilisation of Youth in Taiwan*, “China Perspectives”, no. 1.

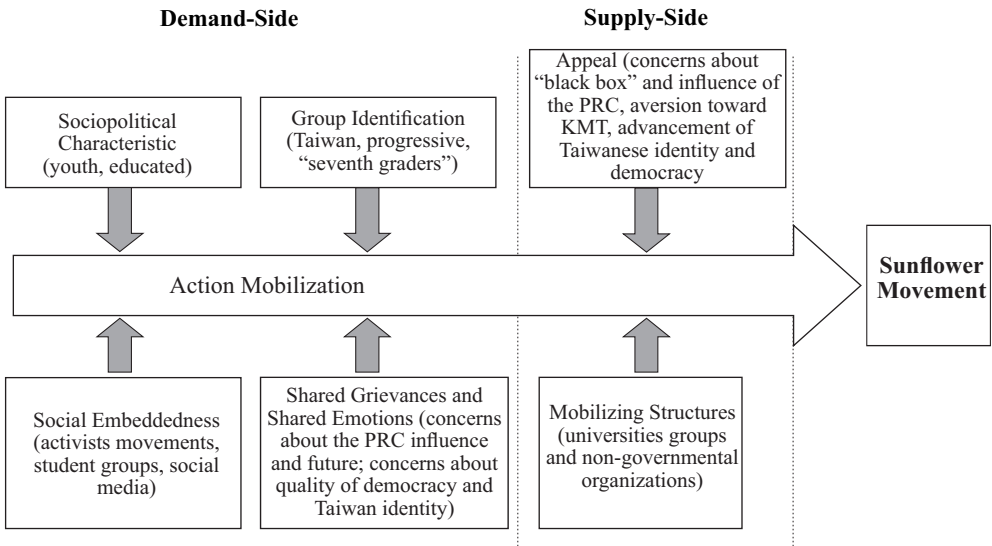


Fig. 1. Factors influencing action mobilization in 2014 in Taiwan according the collected interviews

Source: Authors' own work.

The interviews with the participants of the protests prove the role of certain sociopsychological factors to mobilize the protests. Both, the demand and supply factors played a role. Among the analyzed variables, the most important ones seems to be: experiences of earlier activism in the form of discussion groups and participation in protests. The experience of prior protests helped to create group identity, networks and experience, which resulted in a significant mobilization in 2014. The student clubs and the formative role of university clubs seem to prove a very important role. The Sunflower Movement exemplified the importance of social media in organizing protests, but to a lesser extent in creating the identity of the protesters.

The main concerns of activists, which can be seen as a shared grievances, were related to the violating procedural justice principles when processing the CSSTA. This was confirmed both in interviews and in Facebook posts of students groups. Feeling of Chinese influence on Taiwanese society also seems to play the role but as secondary concern. These fears seem to be an enclosure to the Taiwanese identity that has developed over the years. The overlapping of generational connectivity with a sense of responsibility for the future quality of Taiwan has resulted in massive protests. After the Sunflower Movement, the Taiwanese identity, compared to Chinese identity and dual Taiwanese and Chinese identity had a significant increase (NCCU, 2023). The participants especially experienced a transformation in political identity, becoming more identifying with sole Taiwanese identity and more Taiwanese-independent leaning (Chen, 2018). The Sunflower Movement also lead to deepening public discussion in the society and on campus, leading to civic awareness in daily lives of the citizens (Hawang, 2016; Themelis, Hsu, 2021).

With the societal and personal changes in the political attitudes, the Sunflower Movement did not vanished after the protesters left the parliament. The KMT experienced

electoral defeat (Hsieh, 2015; Rowan, 2015), and the movement participants participated in subsequent elections, which the young challengers received high degree of public support (Clark, Tan, 2016; Wang, 2020). Furthermore, the ascending phase of the social movement mobilizations still persists for years, including the anti-nuclear protests in 2014, and the Anti-Black Box Curriculum Movement, which high school students mobilized nationally to oppose the amendment to the high school history curriculum without due procedures (Rowen, 2015; Ho, 2019; Hsu, 2018). The legacy also lead to enhancing the pre-existing collaboration network of the Taiwanese NGOs (Hsu et al., 2019), establishing new organizations and energizing the civil participation to the politics (Hawang, 2016; Themelis, Hsu, 2021).

Author Contributions

Conceptualization (Konceptualizacja): Łukasz Zameński, Wei-An Chen

Data curation (Zestawienie danych): Łukasz Zameński, Wei-An Chen

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Writing – original draft (Piśmiennictwo – oryginalny projekt): Łukasz Zameński, Wei-An Chen

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**Dlaczego młodzież tajwańska protestowała w 2014 roku?
Powstanie protestów z perspektywy struktur mobilizacyjnych i wspólnych krzywd**

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest ponowne zbadanie przyczyn aktywizmu młodych ludzi na Tajwanie w 2014 roku, który doprowadził do powstania tzw. rewolucji słoneczników. Badanie opiera się na analizie danych zastanych oraz wywiadów przeprowadzonych przez autorów oraz w ramach Projektu „Daybreak Project”. Dodatkowo przeprowadzono analizę wpisów zamieszczanych w mediach społecznościowych podczas trwania protestów. Dane analizowano za pomocą modelu Berta Klandermansa dotyczącego przyczyn kolektywnej mobilizacji. Podażową stronę mobilizacji podzielono na rolę struktur mobilizacyjnych i apel polityczny. Stronę popytową analizowano poprzez: charakterystykę społeczno-polityczną uczestników; zakorzenienie społeczne; poczucie niesprawiedliwości i złości; identyfikację grupową. W artykule przyjęto założenie, że udział w protestach był efektem działania struktur mobilizacyjnych – studenckich kół dyskusyjnych oraz poczucia, że władze naruszają zasady sprawiedliwości procesowej – głównie w związku z procedowaniem umowy CSSTA.

Słowa kluczowe: Tajwan, protest, mobilizacja, Rewolucja Słoneczników, poczucie niesprawiedliwości i złości

