

# Christianity and Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement

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## 1. Aim

Two decades after the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997, there has been a growing level of mistrust of the government and worry about the interference from the Chinese government. Localism movements advocating for higher autonomy and a 'local Hong Kong identity' have been developing rapidly. Against this background, this paper aims to study how Christianity, which has played an important role in social welfare and political movement in Hong Kong, is related to the recent localism movements, particular in the Umbrella Movement.

## 2. Data & Methods

This paper first provides an overview of the social and political participation of Christianity in Hong Kong and discusses how localism movements have developed in the past decades. It then examines the role of Christianity in the recent localism movements, especially the Umbrella Movement. The paper ends with some discussions about the rise of "localist" churches and the growing internal conflicts of Christian churches after the Umbrella Movement. Data for analysis are collected from national surveys, government statistics, media reports, and interviews.

## 3. Results

The participation of Christians in the Umbrella Movement was spectacular, with church leaders openly expressing their support to the movement and church members building a temporary small church in the occupied area. Many church members were mobilized to the movement through the callings of religious leaders. I also found that the Christian community was, in fact, highly divided in terms of their opinion towards the movement. Many Christian leaders and lay-members were strong opponents of the movement. The movement reflects the increasing internal conflicts in the Christian community in terms of social and political participation.

## 4. Conclusion

While Christianity seem to have a role in the Umbrella Movement, the tension between "pro-establishment" and "pro-local" camp is also rising rapidly within the Christian community in Hong Kong. Many Christian churches, along with Buddhist and Taoist groups, were highly critical of the movement as well.