

Young Generation's Political Attitudes and Participation in Taiwan<sup>1</sup>  
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Paper present at the 2018 年度の日本選挙学会総会  
Tokyo, Japan

12-13 May 2018

First draft, please do not cite or quote

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<sup>1</sup> Funding for this study was provided by the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST 106-2410-H-031-038-).

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# **Young Generation's Political Attitudes and Participation in Taiwan**

## **Introduction**

Last year (2017) marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of Martial Law in Taiwan. For the past three decades, democracy in Taiwan has experienced three power turnovers. Recently, there have been several social and political issues which have attracted much attention from Taiwanese society and one of which is the issue of “youth participation”. The studies of youth participation were also taken initiative by several cross-national projects in the academic communities (Sherrod et al., 2010 ; Yuniss and Levine, 2009). By focusing on young people's political, social, or communal participation, those research recognise the importance to democracies of youth participation and highlight possible ways to promote youth civic engagement.

Several local cities and counties in Taiwan had set up institutes such as Youth Affairs Bureau, the Commission on Youth since 2015. The vision of those official organisations is to know the constraints and challenges facing by young people, to enable young people to participate public affairs, and to include young people's voices in pubic decision-making process. The action highlights the importance of youth participation issues in current political agenda in Taiwan.

However, there has a decline in political participation in many democracies among young people for the past three decades. Scholars pointed out that the absence of young people in voting is one of the reasons that led to a declining turnout in many democracies (Henry 2010). In Taiwan, studies of voting behavior show that young people are less likely to go to vote as well (Tsui and Wu, 2011). Young people are the future for a country. Thus, in the studies of political participation, many researchers shows their concern for young people's low level of participation. However, some studies argue that young people tend to use other modes of participation to engage themselves in public affairs instead of merely casting vote (Norris, 2005). Is the low level of participation of young people is due to indifference to politics, or is it because political elites do not respond well to the issues that young people are concerned with? Do young people's political attitudes undergo changes for the past few decades? Are they tend to turn away from politics or are they being left behind? How is the situation of young people in Taiwan? This is the main research question that this paper aims to explore.

## **Literature Review**

### **Who are the young people?**

There is no unified definition of youth among current research on young people. The United Nations refers to young people as aged between 15 and 24 years old. There are studies of young people's participation in Europe focusing on the age between 18 and 35 years old (García-Albacete, 2014: 80). In Taiwan, according to the Youth Development Agency, which is an organisation under the Ministry of Education, young people could be the age between 15 and 45 years old or age between 18 and 35 years old. In terms of political recruitment in Taiwan, political parties hold summer camps regularly for training and recruiting young people to join the parties. The age limitation for the application is between 18 and 35 years old. By and large, there is no consensus on the definition of "youth" in various studies, but the 35-year-old in most studies defines the upper limit of youth. Therefore, young people refers in this paper will be the people whose age under 35 years old.

### **Young people's attitude and participation in Taiwan**

Most studies of young people's political attitudes and participation in Taiwan published before 2014. However, the Sunflower Student Movement in March 2014 brought significant change for the young people in Taiwan. This student movement inspired young people to get involved in public affairs after the movement. Some young people even run for the 2014 local elections and got elected as county council members or the head of village. The legacy of this student movement not only encourage more and more young people to stand for the elections, to work with political parties, but also aroused young people's civic consciousness. It can be expected that young people's political attitudes has greatly changed in recent year. Focusing on the difference among the youth and non-youth enable us to accumulate knowledge of youth engagement in politics. Political attitudes such as political values, political trust, or political efficacy play important roles in influencing young people's political behavior (Chen and Huang, 2007; Cammaerts et al., 2016:23-24). As mentioned before, this paper argues that young people in Taiwan are not political alienation instead their low turnout in politics are due to critical about politics. In the following sections, this paper will exam the above argument by studying several political attitudes.

Participation is an important mechanism to promote psychological empowerment. By taking part in the process enable a person to influence public policies. A sense of political efficacy is one of the sources of the psychological empowerment. Studies

show that a person is more likely to participate in political activities with a higher degree of political efficacy (Chen and Huang, 2007; Dalton, 2008: 59).

Democratic life should go beyond voting and campaign activities. A person's political beliefs in democracy and political values are important political attitudes and deserve to study. Cammaerts et al. (2014 : 57-58) indicated that young people conceive themselves a distance from conventional political participations. In order to have a more comprehensive understanding of young people's engagement with politics, it is advisable to extend the research focus to the exploration of the values of democracy withhold by young people. Yu and Hsiao (2007) pointed out that an increasing pattern of democratic values among Taiwanese people during the period between 2002 and 2005. People who were born after 1992 hold higher democratic values than people who were born before 1992. Yu and Hsiao (2007) comes to an conclusion that the political attitudes that new generation hold will benefit Taiwan's democracy.

Young people's images of politics largely come from their impressions of politicians and political parties. The perception of party that voters hold will affect their political attitudes and behaviors as well (Baumer and Gold, 1995; Lin, 2006). The sources of party image partly come from the performances of the politicians/ political parties. It in turn affect young people's attitudes toward democracy (Henn et al., 2005). Young and Cross (2007) found young people displayed low motivation to join political party. If political parties are unable to attract young people to engage with, the policies that a political party demand might lack of representativeness on youth interests. A further study in young people's attitudes toward political parties thus provide a clue to explore whether young people is either critical or cynical from politics.

In terms of political participation, as mentioned before that young people are less likely to show up in conventional activities such as voting or campaign activities. By contrast, they are prone to participate unconventional activities such as demonstration, protest, or petition (Chen and Chen, 2014). More and more young people also to volunteer being social services. Studies (Thesis-Morse and Hibbing, 2005: 238) show said that the volunteer experiences nurture interpersonal trust and encourage civic participation. Hence, study of youth participation should go beyond the scope only on conventional political participation. Paying attentions further to civic engagement will offer a comprehensive knowledge on youth participation.

## **Research Method**

A sense of political efficacy, attitudes towards political parties and democratic values are confirmed to be associated with the level of political participation (Dalton, 2008: chap 4; Chen and Huang, 2007). Several studies have explored young people's sense of political efficacy, democratic values, and political participation. Most of these studies were up until 2010. With the focus on the political attitudes and participation of young people, this paper used a longitudinal research design and survey data to portray an overall picture of young people's political attitudes and participation for the past two decades.

The survey data analysing in this paper comes from two projects: Taiwan's Election and Democratization Study (TEDS) and Taiwan Social Change Survey (TSCS). All survey data were conducted via face-to-face interview. The TEDS data conducted after the presidential election or legislative election. The TSCS survey conducted every five years. In the following section, the paper will first examine young people's attitudes such as democratic values, political efficacy, attitudes towards political parties, and different modes of political participation. It will first showcase young people's political attitudes, analyse the differences between young people and older people. Later on, this paper will study the relationship between attitudes and political behaviour.

The measurement of a sense of political efficacy, political values and attitudes toward political party and democracy did not keep the same wordings or questions across each face-to-face survey data. It limits the following analysis only present the results with the same measurement.

## **Empirical Analysis**

This section will divide into two parts. The first section will describe the continuity and change of important political attitudes among young people and older people. It then continues to study the relationship between political attitudes and participation in a longitudinal design.

### **Political attitudes among young people and older people**

A sense of political efficacy refers to a person's feelings that he/she can play a role in the political world. An individual with higher sense of political efficacy is more likely to engage in political activities (Chen and Huang, 2007; Dalton, 2008: 59). The concept of political efficacy contains two dimensions: internal political efficacy and external political efficacy. The former means that an individual's feelings of ability to

influence politics. The latter means that an individual's perceptions of the degree of responsiveness from the government. Table 1a presents the results of external political efficacy during the period between 1990 and 2010. The results show that the two age cohorts display significant difference before 2000. After the first power turnover, young people and older people display similar sense of political efficacy. The data imply an increasing trend of young people's external political efficacy. Compared with young people in the 1990s, those who were aged less than 35 years old in 2005 and 2010 acknowledged the government's responsiveness.

Due to the lack of systematic and continuous measurement in internal political efficacy, here we presented the data from the TEDS project in Table 1b and Table 1c. The TEDS projects use two questions to tap an individual's internal political efficacy. Based on the results in Table 1b and Table 1c, young people display a higher level of internal political efficacy than before. This is especially the case after the 2014 Sunflower Student Movement. This implies that young people believe their ability to influence politics.

Table 1a Significance of Test on external political efficacy, 1990-2010

Year	Type	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Sig. of Test
1990	Young people	2.70	0.52	985	F=1.635
	Older people	2.65	0.54	885	p<0.05
1995	Young people	2.17	0.5	534	F=8.493
	Older people	2.26	0.54	917	p<0.01
2000	Young people	2.10	0.47	584	F=11.455
	Older people	2.21	0.51	959	p<0.001
2005	Young people	3.28	1.18	643	F=1.938
	Older people	3.39	1.23	1254	p>0.05
2010	Young people	3.55	1.29	585	F=0.204
	Older people	3.64	1.26	1180	p>0.05

Source: TSCS

Table 1b Crosstabulation for age and internal political efficacy: Sometimes politics seems so complicated that a person like me cannot really understand what is going on

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N	Sig. of Test
TEDS2004P	Young people	14.9%	63.2%	20.3%	1.7%	646	$\chi^2=6.791$

	Older people	17.9%	64.8%	16.1%	1.2%	1053	df=3 p>0.05
TEDS2008P	Young people	13.6%	66.6%	18.2%	1.6%	632	$\chi^2=3.382$
	Older people	15.6%	62.3%	20.5%	1.6%	1149	df=3 p >0.05
TEDS2012	Young people	17.6%	60.5%	19.2%	2.7%	484	$\chi^2=13.598$ df=3
	Older people	12.3%	60.5%	25.4%	1.9%	1214	p <0.01
TEDS2016	Young people	8.7%	60.2%	24.7%	6.4%	485	$\chi^2=36.098$ df=3
	Older people	13.8%	61.0%	23.8%	1.4%	1126	p <0.001

Table 1C Crosstabulation for age and internal political efficacy: People like me don't have any say about what the government does

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N	Sig. of Test
TEDS2004	Young people	5.4%	24.3%	60.6%	9.7%	629	$\chi^2=15.965$ df=3
	Older people	8.0%	31.2%	53.4%	7.4%	988	P<0.01
TEDS2008	Young people	6.5%	30.9%	54.6%	8.0%	628	$\chi^2=3.940$ , df=3
	Older people	7.2%	35.1%	50.6%	7.1%	1098	P>0.05
TEDS2012	Young people	5.0%	25.1%	60.9%	9.1%	483	$\chi^2=2.559$ , df=3
	Older people	4.7%	28.1%	59.8%	7.4%	1198	P>0.05
TEDS2016	Young people	3.2%	24.5%	58.4%	14.0%	473	$\chi^2=26.581$ , df=3
	Older people	4.7%	29.6%	59.4%	6.4%	1095	P<0.001

Table 2 presents the results of how two age-cohorts' feelings toward political parties in Taiwan. It is clear that there is significant difference between young and older people towards to the KMT. Young people tend to rate the KMT with lower feeling thermometer. No matter young people or older people, most of time, display similar feelings toward the DPP. The New Power Party (NPP) was established in 2015 and mainly comprised people who were leaders from the Sunflower Student Movement in 2014. They received strong support from young people and won 5 seats in the 2016 Legislative election. Therefore, it is not surprise that the data in Table 2 show that young people like the NPP more than the older people. In all, young people retain

colder feelings toward the KMT and the NPP (the average scores were lower 5), while they have warmer feelings toward the DPP in 2016.

Table 2 Like/Dislike political party (0-10 scale)

			N	Mean	Sig. of Test
TEDS2004P	KMT	Young people	644	4.57	p<0.05
		Older people	1026	5.09	
	DPP	Young people	644	5.08	p>0.05
		Older people	1030	5.18	
TEDS2008P	KMT	Young people	639	5.21	p>0.05
		Older people	1122	5.01	
	DPP	Young people	638	4.48	p>0.05
		Older people	1108	4.61	
TEDS2012	KMT	Young people	481	5.15	p<0.05
		Older people	1222	5.64	
	DPP	Young people	480	4.99	p>0.05
		Older people	1205	5.06	
TEDS2016	KMT	Young people	469	3.76	p<0.05
		Older people	1084	4.31	
	DPP	Young people	469	5.47	p>0.05
		Older people	1086	5.40	
	NPP	Young people	414	4.85	p<0.05
		Older people	874	3.99	

Based on the results in the Table 3, it is clear that young people hold higher democratic values than the older cohorts for the past three decades. The difference reach statistically significance in each year. The results also are in line with Yu and Hsiao's study in 2007.

Table 3 Democratic values

Year	Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. of Test
1985	Young people	1961	2.62	1.11	$p < 0.001$
	Older people	2290	2.26	1.18	
1990	Young people	1243	2.25	0.70	$p < 0.001$
	Older people	1285	1.92	0.79	
1995	Young people	707	2.37	0.56	$p < 0.001$
	Older people	1381	2.09	0.67	
2000	Young people	675	2.43	0.51	$p < 0.001$
	Older people	1285	2.04	0.78	
2005	Young people	673	2.49	0.50	$p < 0.001$



	Older people	1425	2.19	0.70	
2010	Young people	554	2.61	0.40	$p < 0.001$
	Older people	1031	2.51	0.45	
2015	Young people	527	2.63	0.49	$p < 0.001$
	Older people	1462	2.24	0.69	

Source: TSCS

In terms of the attitudes toward democracy, Table 4 displays the results of the choice of regime types. With no doubt, most of the respondents think “democracy is the best regime type”. However, it is clear that an increasing percentage of young people consider “authoritarian regime is the best form” during the period between 2000 and 2015.

By taking the TEDS data and the TSCS data together in Table 5a and Table 5b, the results show that young people’s satisfaction with how democracy works also gradually in decline. It might be that young people are not satisfied with the democracy performance so that authoritarian regime is an alternative. Yet, this phenomena requires more data to examine.

Table 4 Attitudes toward the regime type

Year	Type	Authoritarian is the best	The same	Democracy is the best	Nonresponse	N	Sig. of Test
2000	Young people	19.90%	17.80%	60.90%	1.50%	675	$\chi^2=28.566$ df=3 $p<0.001$
	Older people	13.60%	24.70%	58.00%	3.70%	1285	
2010	Young people	31.00%	24.50%	44.10%	0.50%	597	$\chi^2=54.574$ df=3 $p<0.001$
	Older people	17.40%	24.10%	55.70%	2.70%	1256	
2015	Young people	36.20%	22.60%	39.30%	1.90%	527	$\chi^2=62.038$ df=3 $p<0.001$
	Older people	20.40%	23.70%	50.00%	5.90%	1462	

Source: TSCS

Table 5a Satisfaction with how democracy works

		Very satisfied	satisfied	dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	N
TEDS2004P	Young people	5.40%	52.70%	36.90%	5.00%	626
	Older people	6.70%	46.00%	39.30%	7.90%	984

TEDS2008P	Young people	6.10%	52.60%	36.80%	4.50%	622
	Older people	5.00%	46.50%	40.90%	7.70%	1111
TEDS2012P	Young people	5.30%	70.20%	22.20%	2.30%	487
	Older people	5.90%	63.60%	26.10%	4.40%	1247
TEDS2016P	Young people	3.30%	59.00%	34.90%	2.70%	478
	Older people	4.30%	58.30%	32.50%	4.90%	1139

Source: TEDS

Table 5b Satisfaction with how democracy works (0-10 scale)

Year	Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. of Test
2000	Young people	667	5.66	2.13	p>0.05
	Older people	1181	5.80	2.00	
2005	Young people	670	5.53	1.87	p>0.05
	Older people	1348	5.35	2.13	
2010	Young people	595	5.82	1.95	p<0.001
	Older people	1210	5.56	2.15	
2015	Young people	521	5.32	2.30	p>0.05
	Older people	1354	5.27	2.23	

Source: TSCS

The concept of political participation can be divided into conventional one and unconventional participation. Vote and electoral activities have been regarded as conventional participation. Table 6 presents turnout among the two age cohorts in the presidential election. The results show that young people have lower turnout than the older people. Furthermore, the percentage of young people who reported went to cast the vote has decreased from 87.5% in 2004 to 73.6% in 2016.

Table 6b presents the results in participating electoral activities by taking data from the TSCS project. The total number of questions asked in each year is different, therefore, it is not reasonable to compare the values in Table 6 across each year. However, the results provide us with an idea that whether a significant difference among the young and older people's electoral participation. After the first power turnover in 2000, there is a significant difference between the two age cohorts in electoral participation. Young people display a lower degree of electoral engagement in 2005 and in 2010.

Table 6a Turnout in the Presidential Election

Year	Type	Yes	No	N	Sig. of Test
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TEDS2004P	Young people	87.5%	12.5%	614	$\chi^2=16.591$ df=1 P<0.001
	Older people	93.2%	6.8%	1201	
TEDS2008P	Young people	84.6%	15.4%	579	$\chi^2=11.371$ df=1 P<0.01
	Older people	90.0%	10.0%	1322	
TEDS2012	Young people	78.0%	22.0%	492	$\chi^2=90.637$ df=1 P<0.001
	Older people	93.5%	6.5%	1331	
TEDS2016	Young people	73.6%	26.4%	489	$\chi^2=66.922$ df=1 P<0.001
	Older people	89.4%	10.6%	1196	

Source: TEDS

Table 6b Electoral participation Between Young People and Older people

Year	Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. of Test
1985	Young people	1979	4.07	1.68	p<0.001
	Older people	2317	3.58	1.83	
1990	Young people	1244	3.08	1.30	p>0.05
	Older people	1287	3.13	1.46	
1995	Young people	707	3.33	2.01	p>0.05
	Older people	1383	3.19	2.05	
2005	Young people	673	0.24	0.71	p<0.001
	Older people	1425	0.44	0.93	
2010	Young people	597	0.20	0.61	p<0.001
	Older people	1256	0.42	0.92	

Source: TSCS

Taken the results from Table 6a and Table 6b together, Taiwan also witness young people having lower engagement in conventional participation. The TSCS project has tapped a question of unconventional participation since 1990. Table 7 display the results. There are about 3 percent of young people reported that have taken actions such as protest, demonstration or sit-in during the period 1990 and 2010. It is a pity that the TSCS project did not include the same question in its 2015 survey. It might have some changes occurred of the young people after the 2014 Sunflower Student Movement. Chen's study of Taiwanese university students in 2015 provided us with some clues of young people's attitudes toward unconventional participation. Chen (2015) found that 83.8% of university students agree the statement that "in order to express their appeals,

the public can engage in social movements”. This study further asked the university students’ willingness to participate in social movements in the future. There are about 50% of university students reveal the possibility to join the social movements in the future.

What is the most efficient way to express opinions to or demands from the government? In Chen’s study (2015), the results show that 16.0% of the university students answered “join protest activities” is the most effective way to express opinions/ demands. There are 26% of the university students indicated that through the medium of mass media is the most effective way. There are 13.3% percent of the university students answered the most effective way to express opinion was to organize or engage in an organized group. Although more than one third of the university students answered that “vote and support a good candidate” is the most effective way to express opinions/ demands, there are one third of the students agree with taking unconventional actions too.

Table 7 Youth people’s participation in protest, demonstration, sit-in

Year	Many Times	Have done this	Never	Nonresponse	N
1990	0.2%	2.6%	97.3%	0.0%	1244
1995	0.3%	4.2%	95.3%	0.1%	707
2000	0.3%	3.1%	96.6%	0.0%	675
2005	0.1%	3.3%	96.9%	0.0%	673
2010	0.3%	2.8%	96.8%	0.0%	597

Source: TSCS

As mentioned before that young people are less likely to participate in conventional political activities. Table 8a and Table 8b display the political participation models in 2010 and 2016. The results again confirmed the phenomena by holding other variables constant. Compared with older people, young people are significantly less likely to participate in electoral activities.

Table 8a Model of Political Participation in 2010

	Electoral participation	Political participation
Male (female=0)	0.132** (3.00)	0.122*** (3.87)
Young people (older people=0)	-0.273*** (-5.27)	-0.0283 (-0.76)

High school (elementary school=0)	0.0412(0.46)	-0.0394(-0.62)
Senior high school	0.204 <sup>**</sup> (2.81)	0.0455(0.87)
College	0.120(1.43)	0.201 <sup>***</sup> (3.36)
University and above	0.0524(0.66)	0.261 <sup>***</sup>
External Political Efficacy	0.008(0.46)	0.034 <sup>**</sup> (2.76)
Political values	-0.019(-0.42)	0.073 <sup>*</sup> (2.27)
Constant	0.326 <sup>*</sup> (2.25)	-0.193(-1.85)
<i>N</i>	1552	1552
<i>Adj R-squared</i>	0.0297	0.0502

Source: TSCS

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table 8b Model of Political Participation in 2016

	Electoral participation	Vote
Constant	-0.28(0.32)	0.30(0.18)
Political Efficacy	0.48 <sup>***</sup> (0.10)	-0.03(0.04)
Like KMT (0-10)	-0.03(0.02)	0.12 <sup>*</sup> (0.05)
Like DPP (0-10)	0.05(0.03)	0.10(0.06)
Like PFP (0-10)	-0.02(0.03)	-0.02(0.06)
Like TSU (0-10)	0.01(0.03)	-0.02(0.05)
Like NPP (0-10)	0.08 <sup>**</sup> (0.03)	-1.36 <sup>***</sup> (0.20)
Young People (older people=0)	-0.36 <sup>**</sup> (0.11)	-0.16(0.18)
Male (female=0)	0.05(0.09)	0.07(0.46)
High school (elementary school=0)	0.02(0.22)	-0.27(0.39)
Senior high school	0.23(0.19)	-0.53(0.42)
College	0.21(0.21)	0.45(0.42)
University and above	0.52 <sup>**</sup> (0.20)	0.81(0.59)
<i>N</i>	1150	1129
<i>Adj R-squared</i>	0.075	
Cox & Snell $R^2$		0.063
Nagelkerke $R^2$		0.110

Source: TEDS2016

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

In sum, we found that young people in Taiwan hold a higher democratic value, they don't like the KMT, their external political efficacy and internal political efficacy are increasing. They have more faith in their ability to influence politics and beliefs in the government capacity in responsiveness. However, young people's turnout in the election are decreasing and there are more young people consider the authoritarian regime is the best form. Taken all these findings together, it seems to indicate a mixed picture of young people's political attitudes and behavior. On the one hand, it seems to confirm the argument that young people are turning away from politics since they were less likely to participation in electoral activities. On the other hand, we found that young people reveal their confidence in influence politics nowadays.

A further point with youth attitudes toward politics is to examine their political interest. Here, this paper tried to combine several sources of research to argue that young people do not turn away from politics from the perspective of political interest and civic consciousness.

Having interest in politics and discussing politics with others indicate an individual's concern of public affairs. With a higher level of political interest might also facilitate an individual to discuss politics with others more often. In fact, these two political attitudes affect each other. In the following section, we further examine data from the TEDS project by looking at the measurement of political discussion and political interest.

As mentioned above, discussing politics with others could be seen as an indicator of political interest. Table 9 presents the data taken from the TEDS survey and shows that older people used to discuss politics with others more than young people, but there is no statistically significant difference in 2016. According to the TEDS survey data in 2008, there are around 21% of the young people reveal their interest in politics, while there are 30% of the older people did so. In 2016, the gap of political interest between the young people and older people decreased. There are 43.5% of young people said they are interested in politics, while 42.5% of the older people said so. The results imply that an increasing political interest among young people.

It was confirmed that a sense of civic consciousness is related to political participation. A person with a higher civic consciousness is more likely to express their opinions more (Lin, 2016b). In her study of youth participation, Lin (2016a) found that young people display a higher sense of civic consciousness than older people. She also found that young people reveal a critical attitude toward parties'

performance. Compared with older people, a higher percentage of young people were not satisfied with how the political parties deal with the important issues in Taiwanese society. All in all, the evidence seems to indicate that young people in Taiwan seems to be critical instead of apolitical in politics.

Table 9 Political discussion with others

		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	N	Sig. of Test
TEDS2004P	Young people	17.2	43.7	31.6	7.6	662	$\chi^2=80.148$ df=3 P<0.000
	Older people	33.2	26.3	30.4	10.0	1155	
TEDS2008P	Young people	17.8	52.0	27.2	2.9	579	$\chi^2=79.973$ df=3 P<0.000
	Older people	33.0	34.4	25.8	6.8	1255	
TEDS2012P	Young people	22.0	46.2	26.8	3.7	493	$\chi^2=38.465$ df=3 P<0.000
	Older people	34.9	31.8	28.0	5.3	1331	
TEDS2016P	Young people	21.9	39.9	32.7	5.5	489	$\chi^2=6.770$ df=3 P>0.05
	Older people	27.4	32.7	32.7	5.1	1199	

Source: TEDS

As stated, a student movement erupted in March 2014, which was the Sunflower Student Movement, invited a nation-wide attention and encouraged more young people to get involved in public affairs and even run for the elections in 2014. According to Ho's study (2015: 2), many participants of the Sunflower Student Movement actually came from coalitions of students who were protested in Wild Strawberry Student Movement in 2008. Some students who join the Wild Strawberry Student movement went back to university and set up advocacy societies on campus. They then formed a nation-wide student movement network. The network has been the support of the following student-led social advocacy movements. In the meantime, members of advocacy societies play important roles in the student-led social movement in 2014.

By looking at the university's advocacy societies in Taiwan provide us with part of evidence in how youth engaged in public affairs. According to Lin's study (2015-2017), there are 95 advocacy societies in 47 universities in Taiwan in 2016. Among the 95 advocacy societies, some advocates more on animal rights, some focus more

on gender issues, and there are 54 societies level on public affairs and social issues. According to Lin's statistics, a majority of the advocacy societies were established after 2008. In the same study, Lin found that members of advocacy societies don't use traditional channels to give voice out. Instead, protests, petitions, and social media are the modes that they use to show their concerns on politics (Lin, 2015). The study showed an increasing indication of young people's engagement with public affairs. Young people tend to pay more attentions to public affairs and politics through unconventional channels for the past ten years.

### **Conclusion and Discussion**

Patties and his colleagues (2004: Chap 3) found that young people show a low level of political participation, political knowledge, political trust, political interests, and political discussion in the UK. In Taiwan, we found a mixed picture of young people's attitudes toward politics. Compared with older people, young people tend to participate less in electoral activities and dislike the political parties. However, they hold a higher democratic value, an increasing level of sense of political efficacy, and are interested in politics. Roughly speaking, there are more evidence to show that young people in Taiwan become critical instead of apolitical in politics.

For example, the 2014 Sunflower movement aroused a new wave of civic consciousness among young people. On one hand, the society are more welcome for young people to stand for the election since 2014 city/county council members election. Thus, we can find more and more young people were nominated by political parties to run the elections. On the other hand, a lot of advocacy societies in Taiwanese' universities were formed after the Wild Strawberry Student Movement in 2008. They pay closer attentions on the issues such as land justice, environment protection, labor rights, gender issues, and globalization (Lin, 2015). This shows young people are not apolitical but paying attentions to "new issues". Ronald Inglehart's (1997) value change theory may account for the phenomena and deserve more systematic studies. Accompanying with a growing civic consciousness, increasing level of education, and political interests, young people are more sophisticated than before and become critical young citizens.



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