

## Workshop: Sunflowers and Umbrellas

### Speakers:

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**Time and Venue:** 7 May 2015, 13:50, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, *Rimljanka* (Rimska cesta 11)

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### **Hong Kong under the Yellow Shades: The implication of Umbrella Revolution to Taiwan**

The 75-day long Umbrella Revolution in Hong Kong which has come to the end on 15th December 2014 has drawn significant attention from not only the local people but all over the world. Initiated by students, joined and supported by massive crowds, this social movement not only was a response to show dissatisfaction to the proposed reform of Hong Kong electoral system announced on 31st August, 2014, but also has posed question on the principle of One Country Two System and the path of democratization in Hong Kong.

While Hong Kong had been officially handed over back to China from Britain in 1997, Taiwan, which is now an independent country, is always China's unification target. It is argued that Hong Kong acts as a prototype of Taiwan i.e. adopting One Country Two Systems which allows high autonomy in Hong Kong after 1997 is part of the strategy of China for Taiwan's unification. Yet, the general dissatisfaction of the general public as well as the escalating social movements against the government in recent years in Hong Kong might in contrast bring an opposite and negative impact to the island. This seminar which looks into the triggering events of the Umbrella Revolution as well as some underlying problems in Hong Kong in the past 15 years aims to discuss and provide some insights on how the situation in Hong Kong impacts Taiwan.

## Endless Pursuit: Mass Movements in Taiwan, 1979-2014

Since the beginning of Taiwan's democratization, the focus of political developments has been largely on the linkage between mass movements and democratic transition. As Taiwanese politics was transformed in the late 1980's from an authoritarian regime dominated by one party to an emerging democracy, the proliferation of various mass movements not only change the political situation and policy direction but also shape the particular democratic model. Within this context, multiple issues raised and reinforced by these movements have become prominent electoral issues in electoral campaigns, which are entirely consistent with the real world situations. Each segment of the trajectories of mass movements can be seen as the underlying forces that operate through places and times, affect the formation and quality of democracy in Taiwan. Significantly, the six-municipal elections held in November of 2014 has shown a profound political transition in Taiwan, that is, the focus of contention shifted from national identity to social cleavage and distribution issues, which was the central demand of sunflower student movement.

This seminar explores the linkage between mass movements and electoral campaigns in Taiwan and tries to grasp the dynamics of democratization in Taiwan: the endless pursuit of autonomy, democracy and dignity based on the accumulation of social forces and collective cognition, while the relation between the rulers and the masses has deteriorated sharply. The question of whether this tendency will continue can only be answered if we grasp the driving force behind mass movements, and capture the recursive and complex interweaving of national identity, cross-strait relationships, as well as class cleavage and distribution issues in democratic Taiwan.



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