Andrew Junker and Cheris Chan tackle the recent Hong Kong protests and argue that actors within Hong Kong that are advocating for a separatist identity from China are promoting localist ideas and are veering towards particularism, while those that are seeking to build bridges between China and Hong Kong are veering towards universalism and inclusion. However, one could argue that the demand for an autonomous Hong Kong is not localist, because it is founded on democratic ideals. From this perspective, keeping Hong Kong forcibly tethered to China has the effect of normalizing Chinese authoritarianism. There is a fallacy in seeing imperialistic assemblages as cosmopolitan and nationalist aims as particularistic. This is especially so because cosmopolitanism does not necessarily lead to horizontal equality since cosmopolitan spaces can be organized very hierarchically.

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CIVIL SPHERE IN EAST ASIA SYMPOSIUM: AUTHOR'S REPLY

AGAINST THE IDEA OF "WESTERN MODERNITY": AXIAL FOUNDATIONS AND CONTEMPORARY CIVIL SPHERES IN EAST ASIA

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I am grateful to Ming-Cheng Lo, Sadia Saeed, and Lyn Spillman for their attentive and detailed readings, and most of all for their recognition that *The Civil Sphere in East Asia* (CSEA) represents a decidedly more even-handed approach to theorizing and empirical research about non-Western societies than has often been the case heretofore. The concept of "modernity" has been a massively vexed one in the history of social science. Motivated by presentism and legitimating self-congratulation, the trope has all too frequently functioned as a placeholder for "where we are today," temporally and spatially, in contrast with "those stuck in tradition" long ago or far away (Alexander 2003). Max Weber, the founding figure of comparative and historical sociology, was himself deeply implicated in this misplaced concreteness, despite his acerbation about disenchantment. Though Weber rarely employed the term modern, his explanatory model was fully imbricated in the binary East-West, and his studies of China and India suffered greatly as a result.

CSEA avoids, not only the term, but the very idea of "Western modernity," taking its leave, instead, from research and theorizing about the trans-civilizational Axial Age and from scholarly demonstrations that the intellectual lineaments of Western democracy long preceded the so-called take-off to modernity. In fact, CSEA is not, strictly speaking, a comparative study at all; rather, it is an investigation into the manner in which civil spheres have developed in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan. These developments need not be compared with those in the putatively more fully realized democracies of the West. Why should such a comparison be made? Have Western civil spheres thrived so fully? Have not the nations within which they have been instantiated also maintained damaging patrimonial structures of anti-democratic domination and deeply compromising economic, racial, religious, and gender structures, which have undermined civil incorporation and made the split between "us" and "them" such a continuous feature of democratic life? (cf., Alexander and Tognato 2018).

As S.N. Eisenstadt (1986) and Robert Bellah (2011) developed Axial theory, they effectively turned Weber on his head, arguing that

transcendental, universalistic and critical cultural ideas informed, not just the West, but religious and institutional complexes in all the world's "great civilizations." Axiality provided fertile common ground for the extraordinarily rapid development of global "late comers." If Confucian, Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic regions did not, on their own, achieve Western levels of social development, they were certainly already in possession of the basic cultural and institutional resources to do so – after coming face-to-face with Western advances and depredations. Hence one of the most important implications of CSEA: The efflorescence in East Asia of civil sphere culture and critical communicative and regulative institutions should not be seen as "made in the USA" or Europe.

If democracy constitutes the singular cultural and institutional structure that, historically speaking, is distinctively Western, it is not "modern." As Quentin Skinner (1978) and his colleagues (e.g., Pocock 1975) have demonstrated, after the early Greek and Roman experiments fizzled, republican ideas re-emerged and thrived during the late middle ages. From 1000 A.D. there circulated popular and scholarly tracts protesting kingship, advocating for liberty and constitutionally regulated self-determination, civil sphere ideas that, not only reflected, but also triggered, the formation of democratic, albeit aristocratic city-states, first in Italy and then elsewhere in Europe. Indeed, the Protestant Reformation that Weberians herald as the origins of cultural modernity emerged from the transformation that republican humanism had already effected in papal Christianity.

Civil sphere theory (CST) is the first systematic effort to conceptualize the key sociological elements of this republican tradition as it came to be developed in highly differentiated, complex, mass-mediated, rule-regulated, industrial and post-industrial nation-states. A key premise of CST is that democracy, rather than being synonymous with elections, depends on the existence of a richly developed and relatively autonomous civil sphere. The latter is conceptualized as a social world that aspires to broad solidarity, one in which feelings of individual autonomy and collective obligation intertwine. Civil spheres are constructed culturally, institutionally, and interactionally. Civil discourse defines a binary language about motives, relations, and institutions; the signifiers of its sacred side legitimate incorporation into the civil sphere, those on its profane side mandate civil exclusion and repression. Communicative institutions, such as factual and fictional media, public opinion polls, and civil associations connect this binary meta-language to ongoing events, providing continuous representations of who and what is civil and not; regulative institutions, such as law, voting, and office, connect these interpretations to the administrative and coercive powers of the state.

When we examine East Asian societies, we find that key elements of civil spheres have long been in place. Civility is demanded and broad solidarity encouraged. Office obligations are institutionalized to control personal power. Quasi-legal coding regulates institutional and economic relations. These cultural, institutional, and interactive elements were enriched and often democratized in the course of fateful encounters with Western power and ideas. Western imperialism may have forced East Asian empires to their knees, yet it also brought intellectual and political leaders into contact with the discourse of civil society, with republican tropes like self-determination and constitutionalism. The "new culture movement" in China from the mid-1910s to the 1920s called, not only for "science," but also for "democracy." In Japan, during the same period, the liberal Tasho movement opened up democratic possibilities as well.

Western imperialism faded, and, more recently, postwar and cold war intrusions have begun to be set aside. Building on Axial foundations and the legacies of early 20th century democratic movements, the elements of East Asian civil spheres have re-emerged and gained strength. These are the topics of the rigorous and original empirical studies that compose our book. In Korea, critical, universalizing strains in Confucian-cum-civil culture motivate continual revelations of office corruption (Park 2019, Lee 2019), and have triggered a massive, non-violent

protest movement that compelled an authoritarian president to be impeached (Choi 2019). In Taiwan, public bodies sponsor widespread experiments in participatory budgeting that have expanded solidarity across class, region, gender, and ethnic groups, and empower citizens and democratic deliberation vis-a-vis state and local bureaucracy (Lin 2019). In the three decades of Hong Kong's post-UK alignment with the mainland, continuous waves of protest -- in the name of rule of law, integrity of office obligations, and popular sovereignty – have created a newly democratic collective subject (Ku 2019). In post-war and especially post-1960s Japan, extraordinary efforts were made to ensure that police are responsive to the civil sphere, not only to the state (Shimizu 2019). In China, the "communist civil sphere" (Junker, forthcoming) has been compelled by Hong-Kong intellectuals and trade union leaders to allow worker struggles against exploitation to take hold in Taiwanese and U.S. owned factories (Pun and Ng 2019); meanwhile, China's elite journalism schools assign American academic texts extolling investigations of official wrong-doing (Ya-Wen Lei 2018, Alexander 2016), even as they train future journalists in censorship and submission.

Certainly, there are powerful authoritarian movements in East Asia that push back against emerging civil spheres, fueled by cultural and institutional forces as indigenous as resources that emerged from the Axial Age. Not only party but developmental states have refused to be regulated by civil sphere institutions, whether communicative or regulative. The "hybrid codes" (Lo 2019) of Confucian-cum-civil culture can motivate patronizing demands for deference alongside liberal calls for ethical critique (Spillman 2020). There remains, as well, the enormously unsettling threat generated by inter-national enmities inside the broader East Asian region, military efforts to wrest a measure of revenge to compensate for historical traumas and military build-ups whose justification is the putative defense against such possibilities in turn.

The universalizing ambitions of CST make it an unlikely candidate for Beck's admonishment against methodological nationalism (contra Saeed 2020). Recognizing the particularistic and compromising effects of instantiating civil spheres inside nation states is baked into the DNA of civil sphere theory (Alexander 2006: Chapter 8). Yet, the social dangers of nationalism are real, even if its challenge to CST is not. To make these dangers visible (Wang 2019), along with other anti-civil perseverations of actually existing civil spheres, is as much the ambition of CST as laying out the sociological foundations for democracy and the pathways for civil repair.

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CIVIL SPHERE IN EAST ASIA *SYMPOSIUM: AUTHOR'S REPLY*

THE GEOPOLITICS OF CIVIL SPHERES: HONG KONG AND THE CHINA FACTOR

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Spillman recounts how *The Civil Sphere in East Asia* helped her to make sense of daily headlines on the Hong Kong protests of 2019. She asks, "when do different languages of claims-making about universalizing solidarity stop being civil sphere languages, and start being something else?" Lo asks us to think more about the "China factor" and its role in an "international civil sphere." Saeed forcefully asserts that it is "no longer tenable" to consider that the democratic and civil norms underpinning civil spheres are "Western or American". When I began this project, I would have agreed with her on the necessity of decoupling civil society theories from their Western historical grounding, and to see how far

one can go in that direction. But Hong Kong's protest movement has led me to become starkly aware of the limits of such a proposal. In this discussion, I will use the Hong Kong case to reflect on some of the questions raised by Lo, Spillman and Saeed.

The protest movement that shook Hong Kong throughout the second half of 2019 has been portrayed in the American media as a paradigmatic instance of a dramatized struggle, played out in the streets between citizens and the police, between civil values of democracy and anti-civil, violent authoritarian repression. On the ground, there has been no shortage of verbal and physical incivility