

## **Identity and Integration as Conflicting Forces Stimulating the Sunflower Movement and the Kuomintang's Loss in the 2014 Elections<sup>+</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

Over the past twenty years, there have been two important trends in Taiwan's political economy whose contradictory implications provide an important explanation for the dramatic events of 2014. The logic of each pulls Taiwan in different directions. In this paper, we describe one of the two contending trends of integration and identity. We then discuss the institutional inheritance from the authoritarian era which we believe is a factor that makes policymaking in Taiwan quite difficult. We conclude by analysing how these phenomena interacted to produce the dramatic events of 2014.

**Keywords:** *Taiwan politics, political economy, integration, identity, Sunflower Movement, cross-Strait relations*

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## 1. Introduction

Over the past twenty years, there have been two important trends in Taiwan's political economy whose contradictory implications provide an important explanation for the dramatic events of 2014, the Sunflower Movement and the major losses suffered by the Kuomintang 國民黨 (KMT) in the local elections. The first of these is the growing sense of a Taiwanese identity in the country; and the second is the increasing economic integration across the Taiwan Strait in terms of trade, investment, integrated production processes, and tourism. The logic of each pulls Taiwan in different directions. During the presidency of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)'s Chen Shui-bian 陳水扁 (2000-2008), the ruling party pushed for more Taiwanization, while the administration of his successor, the KMT's Ma Ying-jeou 馬英九, pushed for deepening economic linkages with China as the best means for promoting economic growth. The Cross-Strait Agreement on Trade in Services that was negotiated by Taiwan and China in 2013 became highly controversial because it raised fears that it would harm Taiwan economically and undermine the nation's sovereignty. The Sunflower Movement arose in the spring of 2014 when the KMT threatened to ram the Agreement through the Legislative Yuan with little debate; and in November the KMT received a devastating thumping at the hands of the electorate. Our paper will have four parts. The first two will each describe one of the two contending trends of integration and identity. The third will discuss a factor that makes policymaking in Taiwan quite difficult, the institutional inheritance from the authoritarian era. Finally, we will analyse how the phenomena discussed in the first three parts interacted to produce the dramatic events of 2014.

## **2. Growing Integration across the Taiwan Strait**

The past 25 years have been marked by a growing economic integration between Taiwan and China. By the late 1980s, many of Taiwan's basic labor-intensive industries were coming under intense competitive pressures because the nation's rising prosperity and wages were pricing it out of the low-cost labor niche in the global economy. Consequently, their owners started moving their production facilities off shore to take advantage of the lower wages that prevailed in countries at lower levels of development. At first, Southeast Asia was the leading target, but by the mid-1990s the People's Republic of China (PRC) had become the major destination for outward foreign direct investment (FDI) by the Taiwanese business community. Changed conditions in both Taiwan and the PRC combined to funnel much of this investment outflow and the trade that it generated into China. After four decades of almost complete isolation due to the Cold War hostilities between Taipei and Beijing, Taiwan opened the door for cross-Strait interactions when it allowed indirect trade through third countries in 1984 and then considerably enhanced the opportunity for "indirect" trade with and investment in the Chinese mainland over the rest of the decade (Cheng and Chang, 2003; Clark, 2007; Kastner, 2009). For its part, China was just switching its strategy for industrial development as well. In particular, the PRC embarked upon an economic reorientation with a "coastal development strategy" aimed at attracting the light and labor-intensive industries that were being priced out of Hong Kong and Taiwan and at using them to emulate the export-led industrialization of the East Asian capitalist nations, thereby creating a strong complementarity between the Taiwanese and Chinese economies. Geographic proximity and a common culture and language reinforced this complementarity, thereby making China an extremely attractive base for Taiwanese firms (Kastner, 2009; Leng, 1996; Lin, 2001; Naughton, 1993, 1997; Wu, 1995).

Investment in China by Taiwan businesspeople was negligible until the late 1980s but then took off rapidly. Official data almost certainly understate the amount of this investment since many Taiwanese firms sought to evade continuing restrictions. Still, even the cross-Strait investment flows reported to the Taiwan government (e.g., US\$43 billion during the 1990s) are impressive. The nature of Taiwan's foreign investment became more large-scale and sophisticated as well. Taiwan investors moved from joint ventures to solely owned enterprises and began to build and supply their own factories. Growing trade was accompanied (in fact, stimulated) by this fairly massive flow of outward foreign direct investment. This is because Taiwan companies on the mainland imported machinery and more sophisticated components from Taiwan for the production (primarily assembly) of goods being exported to third markets. Thus, this investment produced a huge surge in exports from Taiwan to China which more than tripled from 5% to 17% of Taiwan's total exports between 1989 and 1994, but then stayed at that level for the rest of the decade.

The structure of these ventures was also upgraded from simple assembly to upstream heavy and more capital-intensive or high-tech production. In particular, by the mid- to late 1990s the mix of Taiwan investment in the PRC began to shift from predominantly small business in labor-intensive exports to much larger businesses seeking to penetrate the Chinese market in heavy industry (e.g., Formosa Plastics) and consumer goods (e.g., President Enterprises). By the end of the decade, thus, Taiwanese businesses were making a major contribution to the upgrading of China's economy. For example, at the beginning of the 21st century, it was estimated that nearly 75% of China's information technology exports came from factories owned by Taiwanese (Bolt, 2001; Kastner, 2009; Kuo, 1995; Leng, 1996; Lin, 2001; Naughton, 1997).

The two sides went well beyond simple trade or the exchange of goods and services. Rather, Taiwan's businesses set up integrated production networks across the Strait in which different stages (e.g., design and the manufacture of advanced components in Taiwan and final assembly in China) were conducted in Taiwan and the PRC (Bolt, 2001; Chu, 1999; Naughton, 1997; Wu, 1995), creating what Gary Gereffi (1998) has called "commodity chains". Second, the activities of Taiwanese firms led to a substantial migration of business people to China in the 1990s, resulting in growing Taiwanese communities in many mainland cities with, for example, an estimated a half million Taiwanese citizens living in Shanghai alone. This led some observers even to comment upon the growing "Taiwanization" of parts of China (Bolt, 2001; Clough, 1999; Cooke, 2006). Increasing interactions across the Taiwan Strait, moreover, were not just limited to the economic sphere. A very significant number of Taiwanese also rediscovered their "roots" in Fujian Province. For example, Murray Rubinstein (1995) described the fascinating process of cross-Strait "temple politics" in which temples in Taiwan "adopted" older ones in Fujian.

The past two decades, thus, have witnessed a growing economic integration between Taiwan and China. The political relations between the two sides, however, have been anything but calm and stable. Beginning in the 1990s, there have been a series of contretemps across the Taiwan Strait based on China's claims to sovereignty over Taiwan and Taiwan's strong rejection of these claims. The tension was especially high during the presidency of the Democratic Progressive Party's Chen Shui-bian (2000-2008) who strongly advocated Taiwanese nationalism. Following the election of the KMT's Ma Ying-jeou as president in 2008, tensions eased between Taipei and Beijing; and several major economic deals were signed, most importantly the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement or ECFA (Bush, 2004, 2013; Clark and Tan,

2012; Tucker, 2009; Zhao, 1999). One would have expected, therefore, that the Chen administration would have seen a decline in economic ties between Taiwan and China, while the Ma administration would have produced a substantial revival in cross-Strait economic ties. However, almost the opposite occurred, leading Clark and Tan (2012) to conclude that economic relations between China and Taiwan have been primarily responsive to economic, not political, forces.

Indeed, by the turn of the new century, a new round of increasing economic interactions across the Taiwan Strait commenced, as both trade and investment rose fairly consistently until the disruptions of the Great Recession at the end of the decade. This new spurt of economic interactions between Taiwan and China was driven by several factors sequentially. First, when Taiwan's economy was growing robustly during 1999 and the first half of 2000, the high-tech component of cross-Strait relations especially benefited (e.g., two-thirds of the new investment projects approved during 2000 involved the electronics industry). One major project in this area, a US\$6.4 billion joint venture for Shanghai semi-conductor plants announced in May 2000, was certainly fraught with both symbolic and political significance since it involved the sons of Jiang Zemin 江泽民, then president of the PRC, and Y.C. Wang, head of the huge Formosa Plastics empire in Taiwan, indicating that those with the best reason to know believed that cross-Strait relations would not blow up despite Chen's victory. Second, once the global recession in high-tech production hit Taiwan in the autumn of 2000, many domestically oriented businesses on the island tried to expand to the Mainland to make up for the deteriorating economic situation in Taiwan (Bolt, 2001; Cooke, 2006). Finally, as Taiwan's economy picked up again after the 2001 recession, the initial logic of economic expansion reasserted itself (Fuller and Rubinstein, 2013). For example, two thirds of Taiwan's outward FDI in 2004 went to China

with 45% of it in the electronics industry (Mainland Affairs Council, 2005).

The rapid growth in cross-Strait interactions during Chen Shui-bian's presidency is quite striking in terms of trade and investment data. Taiwan's exports to China jumped from US\$21,000 million to US\$74,000 million in 2007 which increased their share in Taiwan's total exports from 17% to 30%, making the PRC Taiwan's largest trade partner. As noted above, the official data on Taiwan's investment in China almost certainly understate the real figures by a considerable extent. Yet, they should indicate trends; and they jumped almost four-fold between 2000 and 2008 (Mainland Affairs Council, 2011). In contrast, despite the signing of ECFA and other trade and investment agreements during the Ma administration exports have remained at roughly the levels of 2008; and investment, while spiking in 2010-2011, was back at the 2008 amount in 2014 (Mainland Affairs Council, 2015).

Yet, the explosion of economic interactions across the Taiwan Strait brought perils with the profits or "an opportunity full of threats" (Rigger, 2011b: 117). First, the very rapid increase of Taiwanese investment in China (and elsewhere) raised fears that the "hollowing out" of the Republic of China (ROC)'s economy would destroy its past progress and current prosperity, especially during the two recessions at the beginning and end of the first decade the 21st century. Second, the PRC stands out among developing countries that have been the recipients of the off-shore movement of basic industries from the developed world in its ability to upgrade into fairly advanced economic sectors (Naughton, 2007). Consequently, the fact that Taiwanese industry is overwhelmingly moving to China, rather than other countries with low-cost labor, represents a more severe threat to the continued viability of its domestic corporations, as indicated by the rapid movement of increasingly advanced semiconductor production across the Taiwan Strait noted

above. Finally, the growing economic integration between China and Taiwan creates a unique threat and danger to Taipei because of Beijing's claims of sovereignty over Taiwan (Chow, 2008; Clark, 2007; Tucker, 2005, 2009), making it vulnerable to the PRC's using its economic dependence for leverage (Yeh and Chi, 2014) as Nazi Germany did in Eastern Europe during the 1930s (Hirschman, 1980).

### **3. An Increasingly Taiwanese National Identity**

Studies of economic integration have found that it often leads to “spillover” into growing political ties and feelings of commonality between the governments and peoples involved (Deutsch, Edinger, Macridis, and Merritt, 1967; Lindberg and Scheingold, 1971). However, this is certainly not the case for Taiwan and China. Since the mid-1990s, there has been a huge increase in the proportion of Taiwan citizen's who identify themselves as Taiwanese as opposed to Chinese or as both Chinese and Taiwanese (Clark and Tan, 2012; Ho and Liu, 2003; Shen and Wu, 2008). Consequently, identity and integration in Taiwan were moving in opposite directions, implying that a clash between them was highly likely, if not inevitable.

The issue of the national identity of the residents of Taiwan has had a contentious history during the postwar era. The incorporation of Taiwan into the Republic of China at the end of World War II after a half century of Japanese rule was quite inauspicious at first. Despite the fact that the Taiwanese or Islanders, who had come to Taiwan before it became a colony, welcomed Chinese troops as liberators, Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 and his Kuomintang (KMT) or Nationalist party viewed the Taiwanese as collaborators of the hated Japanese. In the economic sphere, the KMT used Taiwan as a source for resources in its battle with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the Chinese Civil War. Thus,



they dismantled factories and grabbed raw materials for shipment to the mainland. In addition, the rampant inflation on the mainland was quickly transmitted to Taiwan. These economic problems were exacerbated by the harsh political repression imposed by the island's military commander Ch'en Yi 陳儀, which sparked a spontaneous uprising on February 28, 1947. A compromise between Ch'en and the Taiwanese leaders seemed to settle the crisis. However, KMT troops from the mainland invaded the island in mid-March, killing over 20,000 Taiwanese with the intelligentsia and leadership class being singled out for slaughter. Although Ch'en was quickly replaced by a more conciliatory leader and later publicly executed, the trauma and hatred remained. When Chiang evacuated to Taiwan in late 1949 after losing the Civil War on the mainland, hence, the top levels of political officials were primarily Mainlanders who came with the KMT and constituted about 15% of the population (Lai, Myers, and Wei, 1991; Phillips, 2003). Later, after the implementation of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement in the 1960s, the KMT regime denigrated and discriminated against local culture and dialects by, for example, treating the Mandarin dialect as the official language of government and education, leading to ongoing resentments among the Islanders (Appleton, 1976; Cheng, 1994; Lee, 2005; Lynch, 2004; Makeham and Hsiau, 2005; Tu, 1998; Wang, 2005).

Throughout the authoritarian era, the national identity issue was kept out of public discourse through strong repression under martial law. Thus, many feared that Taiwan's rapid democratic transition in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Chao and Myers, 1998; Chu, 1992; Copper, 1997; Tien, 1996) would unleash a virulent divide over national identity. Actually, through the 1990s the dynamics of democracy had the opposite effect of moderating ethnic tensions. As it turned out, strong association with extremist positions was a loser at the polls. Consequently, Taiwan's

parties, especially the two major ones, came under significant pressure to take moderate positions on national identity (Hsieh, 2002; Lin, 2001; Rigger, 2001; Wang, 2000), as “electoral” factions were able to somewhat suppress the demands of more “ideological” factions in both major parties (Fell, 2005, 2012).

In contrast, there was a growing polarization of Taiwan’s politics in the early 21st century around the national identity issue, following the dramatic victory of the DPP’s Chen Shui-bian in the 2000 presidential election. Two distinct types of issues were involved in this polarization. The first was an ongoing struggle over the “localization” or *bentuhua* 本土化 of the country’s politics and especially culture which was consistently pushed by the Chen administration (Gold, 1986; Hsiao, 2005; Jacobs, 2005; Lee, 2005; Wachman, 1994). The second involved increasingly tense cross-Strait relations with the PRC (Bush, 2013; Tucker, 2005, 2009). For its part, the KMT returned to a much more “China-centric” stance after Lee Teng-hui 李登輝 left the party following its defeat in the 2000 presidential election (Wu, 2011). Indeed, both parties seemed to have reached the conclusion that appealing to their ideological bases would produce more votes than seeking the support of the moderate middle.

However, the situation appears to be somewhat more ambiguous and problematic in Taiwan. Especially during the Chen Shui-bian era, both the DPP and KMT focused their appeals about national identity upon their base constituencies much of the time. Yet, these initiatives (even those by the supposed Independence zealot Chen) appeared strategic in the sense that appeals to Chinese and Taiwanese nationalism were turned on and off depending upon the political situation (Clark and Tan, 2012; Wu, 2011). This pattern continued after the KMT’s Ma Ying-jeou was elected President in 2008. Initially, there was a fierce partisan struggle over Ma’s *rapprochement* with China, but national identity and

cross-Strait relations played only a minor role in the local elections in 2010. National identity was more pronounced in the 2012 presidential and legislative elections, but the parties were clearly less polarized than earlier in the decade, as, for example, the DPP did not make the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement, which they had heatedly opposed when it was negotiated and approved in 2010, a major issue in their critique of the Ma administration (Copper, 2011; Fell, 2012; Rigger, 2010, 2012; Tien and Tung, 2011).

Wei-chin Lee (2005) contrasts Chen Shui-bian's approach to creating a new national identity for Taiwan with that of his predecessor Lee Teng-hui in the 1990s. Lee sought to create a Taiwanese nationalism and nation that could encompass all residents of the country, representing what has been called "civic nationalism" (Shen and Wu, 2008). This can be seen in his attempt to create the basis for a new national identity during the very high-profile 1998 campaign for Taipei's mayor in which the KMT's Ma Ying-jeou challenged Chen Shui-bian, the popular DPP incumbent with approval ratings of 70%. To help Ma overcome the disadvantage of his ethnic heritage, Lee had him proclaim his loyalty to Taiwan in a manner that redefined the categories of national identity on the island:

Taiwan's President Lee Teng-hui added drama to the Taipei mayoral campaign when he asked the KMT nominee, Ma Ying-jeou, "Where is your home place?" Ma, a Mainlander, replied in broken Minnan dialect, "I'm a New Taiwanese, eating Taiwanese rice and drinking Taiwanese water."

(Rigger, 1999a: 48)

Lee's concept of a "New Taiwanese" identity was open to everyone and implied that old ethnic enmities could be left in the past, creating a new

approach to national identity that appeared to be widely popular across the political spectrum (Brown, 2004; Rigger, 1999a).

In contrast to Lee Teng-hui's broader understanding of a developing Taiwan nation, Lee (2005) believed that Chen Shui-bian was more concerned with appealing to specific groups in what has been called "ethnic nationalism" (Shen and Wu, 2008). In particular, by the middle of the decade, the DPP was primarily appealing to the Minnan ethnic group who had come to Taiwan from Fujian Province and constituted slightly over 70% of the population. In contrast, while the DPP paid lip service to the slogan of the "Four Great Ethnic Groups" (Makeham, 2005), some prominent DPP leaders disparaged not just Mainlanders, a little under 15% of the population, but also two groups of Islanders: Hakka, about the same size as Mainlanders, and aborigines, about 2% of the population (Copper, 2010). Consequently, the Chen approach was much more polarizing than Lee's strategy.

The polarization over national identity and cross-Strait relations in the elite discourse and party competition in Taiwan would strongly suggest that such polarization exists among the general electorate as well for either of two reasons. The elites might have responded to a sharp polarization in public opinion; or the citizenry may have become more polarized once the elite debate brought the issue to the center of Taiwan's politics. If neither of these conditions existed and a majority of Taiwanese were in the "moderate middle," the major parties would have a strong incentive to moderate their policies or risk punishment at the polls.

A variety of public opinion data cast doubt upon the image of a polarized electorate, however, as many of Taiwan's citizens possess a complex identity that includes both Taiwanese and Chinese components and are wary about extreme positions on cross-Strait relations (Brown, 2004; Rigger, 1999a; Wachman, 1994). For the last two decades, public

opinion surveys have asked whether people identify themselves as Chinese, Taiwanese, or a combination of both. In 1992 just over half the population (52%) expressed a dual identity, while Chinese identifiers slightly outnumbered Taiwanese ones (28% to 20%). This changed dramatically in just eight years. In 2000, about half the population (47%) still had dual identification, but Taiwanese identifiers outnumbered Chinese ones 39% to 14%. The Chen Shui-bian years continued this trend as Taiwanese identification grew from 39% to 51% between 2000 and 2008, while Chinese identification collapsed further to just 4%. Finally, Taiwanese identifiers continued to increase to 55% at a slower rate during the first two years of the Ma administration (Election Center, 1992, 2000, 2008, 2010).

These data certainly show that the “China-centered paradigm” was a thing of the past in Taiwan, as by 2008 or even 2000 the number of purely Chinese identifiers in Taiwan had become minuscule. Wang and Chang (2005) show that this trend was even pronounced among Mainlanders. Chinese identifiers among Mainlanders fell by almost a half from 57% to 29% between just 1994 and 2000 and then fell by nearly a half again to 16% by 2004. Even before the sharp polarization of the 2000s, therefore, Chinese identifiers were a decided minority of the small Mainlander minority (13%) of the total population; and the decline in Chinese identification among Mainlanders continued apace during the first Chen administration despite his escalating appeals to Taiwanese nationalism. Chiang Kai-shek’s Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement was surely dead and buried.

Evaluating the degree of polarization versus moderation concerning the “Taiwan-centric paradigm” is a little more problematic and ambiguous, though. Clearly, a strong and steady increase in Taiwanese identification occurred over the last decade of the 20th century and the first one in the 21st. These data, however, support two quite different

interpretations. On the one hand, there clearly was a massive shift toward Taiwanese identification (Ho and Liu, 2003; Shen and Wu, 2008) which is consistent with the argument that Chen Shui-bian was able to create a new nation rooted in Taiwanese history and culture (Lynch, 2004). This was expressed during the 2004 campaign not just by the supporters of Chen and Lee Teng-hui. Rather, it could also be seen in the actions and words of the Kuomintang leadership. For example, during their final massive campaign rallies both Lien Chan 連戰 and James Soong 宋楚瑜, the presidential and vice-presidential candidates, kissed the ground in Taipei and Taichung respectively to demonstrate their devotion and loyalty to Taiwan (Huang, 2004); and Lien Chan, the KMT Chairman, was quoted as saying, “There is one state on each side of the Taiwan Strait”, thereby echoing what was seen as a provocative argument by Chen Shui-bian just two years earlier (Rawnsley, 2004).

On the other hand, the continuing strong minority of citizens who profess a dual identity is inconsistent with the image of the new totally Taiwanese nation that was supposedly created by what Wei-chin Lee (2005) termed Chen’s “Cultural Reconstruction Movement”. This can also be seen in how the public views the best option for Taiwan’s international status: 1) Taiwan Independence, 2) the current *status quo* of an uncertain sovereignty, or 3) Unification with the PRC. Over the last two decades, marked majorities of about 60% have supported the diplomatic *status quo*, ambiguous and even ridiculous as it may be. There was a major change in attitudes about this item over time, though. In particular, between 1994 and 2010 the relative support for Independence and Unification flip-flopped from 14%-25% to 24%-12% (Election Center, 1992, 2000, 2008, 2010). Still, since the Taiwan-centric paradigm advocates Independence, popular opinion does appear to be dominated by the moderate middle.

This strong and continuing support for the *status quo* in Taiwan's international status is especially striking because, as Rigger (2004) has noted, growing frustration across the political spectrum with Taiwan's lack of international status and with its treatment by the PRC is very easy to discern. Rather, the dangers of the two extremes are so pronounced that the not particularly satisfactory current situation is accepted as tolerable. In short, the "moderate middle" in Taiwan almost certainly does not have any hesitation in affirming "Taiwan, Yes!" However, its Taiwan-centric allegiances fall considerably short of what the proponents of Taiwan Independence consider to be necessary for a Taiwan nation. For example, Shelley Rigger's (2011a) interviews of young people found that even the term "Love Taiwan" was viewed with suspicion because it had become so politicized. Thus, Chen's Cultural Reconstruction Movement may have over-reached, just as Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement did.

#### **4. Taiwan's Institutional Imbroglia**

The complex contradictions between integration and identity that were charted in the last two sections are now exacerbated by what Clark and Tan (2012) call the "institutional imbroglia" in Taiwan's political system. It is widely assumed that a nation's political and economic institutions shape public policy to a considerable extent (March and Olsen, 1989; North, 1990; Riker, 1982). John Fuh-sheng Hsieh (2006, 2009) has developed an interesting model of Taiwan's institutional legacy based on the difference between presidential or parliamentary governmental systems and between election systems with single-member districts (SMDs) or proportional representation (PR). From this perspective, Taiwan's current institutional imbroglia results from a combination of a complex and somewhat indeterminate constitutional

system, an election system that contained some perverse incentives, and its long era of authoritarian rule. Indeed, Hsieh (2006: 99) concludes that “actual constitutional practice in Taiwan [is] ... contrary to the constitutional arrangement on paper.”

Originally, the government for the Republic of China on Taiwan was (and still essentially is) structured around the 1947 Constitution. This Constitution created the institutions for a liberal democracy and guaranteed civil rights and liberties, although many of its provisions were nullified by the authoritarian rule of the KMT. Thus, at the national level, there were five basic governmental organizations: the Executive Yuan, the Legislative Yuan, the Judicial Yuan, the Control Yuan, and the Examination Yuan. An indirectly elected president stood above these five branches and served as the top political official in the nation (Ch'ien, 1950; Copper, 1979; Winckler, 1984).

The keystone for government was the president, who until 1995 was indirectly elected for six-year terms. The president possessed important constitutional powers, but there were also significant limitations on them as well. He appointed the premier who headed the Executive Yuan and also had appointment powers for the Judicial and Examination Yuans. Moreover, the president became the focal points for several important decision-making bodies, such as the National Security Council that was founded by Chiang Kai-shek in 1967. The NSC has been generally composed of some of the top officials in the regime and seemingly has served as a “super cabinet” at many times. Constitutionally, however, the president did not really appear to be the chief executive. It was the premier who selected and presided over the cabinet; and, at least on paper, the premier and the cabinet were responsible to the Legislative Yuan. It was somewhat ambiguous, therefore, whether the ROC Constitution created a presidential or cabinet system because the exact division of labor between the president and premier was somewhat



unclear and has depended upon their personal power positions. In reality, except for the brief period after Chiang Kai-shek's death when his vice-president finished out his term, the president has always been preeminent (Barnett, 1963; Ch'ien, 1950; Gurtov, 1968; Hsieh, 2006).

The Legislative Yuan or Taiwan's parliament is a directly elected body. Even during the long authoritarian era, it passed budgets and legislation and exercised oversight over the executive (e.g., the Executive and Legislative Yuans had vetoing and overriding powers fairly similar to those exercised by the president and Congress in the United States). In reality, the Legislative Yuan was fairly weak, and it is probably fair to describe it as a "rubber stamp" on major policies before the 1990s. Still, the Legislative Yuan held the very important formal power of having to approve presidential appointments of premiers (Ch'ien, 1950; Hsieh, 2006). More informally, legislators did exercise considerable initiative in such important areas as amending legislation, constituent service, local development projects, and overseeing the executive in public interpellation sessions (Chou, Clark, and Clark, 1990).

The formal constitutional structure for any country, of course, is subject to significant modification by informal political practices. This occurred to an extreme extent in authoritarian Taiwan. Not only were the Constitution's democratic intent and institutions subverted, but an outline of the nation's governmental bodies completely ignores the central role of the ruling Kuomintang Party. Major decisions about policy and personnel were evidently approved, if not made, by the top party organizations rather than the official government (e.g., the KMT's Central Standing Committee had to approve the premier's cabinet choices); and the Executive Yuan was viewed as much more of a policy implementer than initiator. The party also had fairly extensive ties with society through such organizations as the China Youth Corps and

Farmers' Associations. The strong presidential leadership that has marked Taiwan's politics was based to a goodly extent on control of the ruling party as both Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo 蔣經國 were strong chairmen of the KMT through their presidencies (Bedeski, 1981; Clough, 1978; Copper, 1979; Tai, 1970). This continued in the democratic era, as Lee Teng-hui was chairman of the KMT throughout his presidency (1988-2000) and Chen Shui-bian and Ma Ying-jeou were chairs of their respective parties for part of their terms.

Despite this structure of a party-state and a substantial amount of repression directed against those who challenged the regime, the KMT on Taiwan departed from the totalitarian model in one vital respect. Rather than destroying all pre-existing political and social groups, the regime tried to co-opt and manipulate them whenever possible. This resulted in the Mainlander "national" elite playing "local" Islander factions off against each other and retaining power by acting as the arbitrator among them. This also made elections for local governments and Farmers' Associations "real" and often fiercely competitive, which had somewhat contradictory implications for Taiwan's future political development. On the one hand, a significant basis or starting point was created for democratic expansion; on the other, these local bodies were strongly focused on political patronage which was often tied to corruption (Bosco, 1994; Clark, 1989; Rigger, 1999b; Tien, 1989).

This turns attention to the somewhat rare type of election system which Taiwan imported from its former colonial master Japan. As noted above, the two major types of election systems are single-member districts (SMDs) in which the person who gets the most votes wins and proportional representation (PR) in which a party wins the number of seats in a multi-member district that is proportionate to its share of the vote. Taiwan's traditional system of what is called the single nontransferable vote or SNTV combines elements of both systems. The

candidates for legislative seats run in multi-member districts as in PR. However, each voter can only cast one ballot for a specific candidate (not a party) which cannot be transferred to a second or third alternative if the candidate does not win. The candidates are ranked according to the votes they receive, and the number elected is determined by the size of the district. For example, if a district has eight seats, the eight candidates with the highest number of votes are the winners. Consequently, in large districts fairly small minorities can elect a representative (Hsieh, 2009).

This system appears to have ambiguous implications for the party system. SMDs are usually considered to promote competitive two-party systems because minor party candidates are difficult to elect. This promotes the ability of the citizenry to hold a government accountable but makes the representation of some specific constituencies hard because the major parties must retain a broad appeal. Conversely, a PR system promotes a multi-party system that is good for representation but can undermine accountability. The SNTV system promotes representation by individual legislators but undermines representation by a party because candidates of the same party must compete against each other as well as against the representatives of other parties, which undercuts the cohesion and responsibility of the parties. As John Hsieh (2009: 12) explains nicely:

Since the vote shares of these two parties [the DPP and KMT] are, under normal circumstances, relatively fixed, it can be expected that candidates from the same party will compete against each other for the same pool of voters. In fact, this kind of intraparty competition is more often than not fiercer than competition between the two parties. As voters make their choices, they often first determine which party to vote for, and then pick one out of several candidates from that party. Since the platforms of these candidates are likely to be similar, voters

need to rely upon other cues to make their choices, including personal connections, pork-barrel projects, or even vote buying. Elections may become very personalized. In addition, since each party, in general, wants all its candidates to win, and often needs to show impartiality among its own candidates, these candidates may have to turn to other sources of support to compete against their co-partisans. Factions, big businesses, or even gangsters may be dragged into the process. Corruption may thus sneak in. Moreover, because a candidate may need only a small portion of the vote in the district to get elected, he or she may choose to take extreme positions to attract the support of certain groups of voters. In this way, radicalization may become a constant feature of political life.

There seems to be a parallel between Taiwan's constitutional and electoral systems, therefore. The constitutional system combined elements of both parliamentary and presidential governments in a somewhat incoherent system that was held together by authoritarian one-party rule. The election system was neither SMD nor PR and appeared to undercut the incentives that one or the other might have provided for establishing a particular type of party system. Democratization, as might well have been expected, exacerbated these problems. The incoherence and ambiguities of the constitutional system became increasingly apparent as competing political forces were given free rein to pursue conflicting interests and goals, and the growing importance of elections accentuated the dysfunctions of the SNTV system.

John Fuh-sheng Hsieh (2006) provides a broader and more theoretical critique of Taiwan's political system. He argues that constitutional systems can be ranked along a continuum from the liberal objective of protecting human rights to promoting efficient policy-making, with the checks-and-balances of a presidential system

promoting the former and the unified decision-making of a parliamentary system being conducive to the latter. Election systems, similarly, can promote the populist value of individual representation or efficient policy-making by majority parties with PR systems providing the former and SMD ones the latter. He then uses these distinctions to create a typology of four different kinds of democracies. He classifies Taiwan as a presidential system in practice (though fairly parliamentary in constitutional design) and quite populist, at least under the old SNTV system. This creates a “hyperdemocracy” which, according to Hsieh, is the least desirable type because of its tendency for political stalemate and ideological polarization, exactly the problems facing Taiwan today.

### **5. The Conflict between Identity and Integration Hits Home: The Sunflower Movement and Implosion of the KMT**

The contradictory trends in identity and integration were probably destined to clash sooner or later. Still, their violent collision in 2014 was surprisingly spectacular. The student Sunflower Movement was organized quickly during the evening of March 17th after the KMT announced that it would ram the controversial Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA) through the Legislative Yuan and occupied the Legislative Yuan the next day with the aid of opposition lawmakers. The Sunflowers ultimately succeeded in that the Legislative Yuan did not pass the CSSTA. More broadly, they stimulated and symbolized what appears to be a fundamental change in Taiwan's politics. First, in terms of the partisan balance, the KMT emerged from this crisis widely discredited as it took an unprecedented beating in the 2014 local elections and seemed to be in disarray as the 2016 presidential and parliamentary elections approached. Second, the Sunflower Movement marked a major change in the role of civil society in Taiwan politics, as

students, civic organizations, nonprofit groups or NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), and general citizens successfully demanded that they be allowed to participate in the nation's major decisions.

The storm of 2014 had been building for two years. In January 2012, President Ma Ying-jeou won re-election by a margin of 52% to 46% over the DPP's Tsai Ing-wen 蔡英文. This was considerably less than his margin in 2008, and the KMT's majority in Legislative Yuan saw a similar reduction. Still, Taiwan's citizens had given Ma and the KMT a vote of confidence. It turned out to be an extremely short mandate. Within six months of his election, Ma's approval rating had plummeted to 15%, which broke Chen Shui-bian's record low of 18%, and his popularity never rose very significantly after that. This tumultuous drop reflected the confluence of several factors. First, Ma, as is common among many incumbent chief executives, put off several unpopular decisions until after he was re-elected. These included steep rises in oil and electricity prices in response to the global jump in energy prices, a capital gains tax on stock transactions in response to the country's budget squeeze, and the re-emergence of the ongoing controversy over beef imports from the United States. Second, the secretary general of the Executive Yuan, a Ma protégé, was arrested for bribery, thereby doing substantial damage to Ma's image as a clean politician. In addition, China undercut Ma's claims that he was successfully managing relations with Beijing by issuing a thinly veiled rebuke of a speech he made on cross-Strait relations, and Taiwan's economy slowed markedly from 4.2% growth in 2011 to 1.5% in 2012. Finally, Ma's troubles were compounded by growing strains within the Kuomintang which weakened his ability to pass items in his program through the legislature (Chen, 2013; Hsieh, 2014).

The stage for the Sunflower Movement was set when the Ma administration signed the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement with Beijing on June 21, 2013. This was a key extension of Ma's program to promote development and prosperity in Taiwan by increasing the island's economic integration with China. What the CSSTA sought to do was to extend the liberalization of trade and investment in goods in ECFA and other agreements to the service sector. In all, 80 service segments in China were opened for Taiwanese investment, while 64 segments in Taiwan became available for Chinese investors. This was a major proposal that included financial services, communications, health and social services, business services, transportation, tourism, environmental services, and distribution services. The Agreement immediately became highly controversial. This was far from surprising for two distinct reasons. Since 2000, cross-Strait relations had probably been the most important issue dividing the DPP and KMT; and trade agreements in services are generally harder to be negotiated than those for goods, in part because issues concerning such areas as communications and financial services are often seen as threatening the sovereignty of small nations, which is a highly salient and sensitive issue in Taiwan. A central criticism of the CSSTA was that it had been negotiated in secret. It might be argued that this criticism was somewhat spurious because most international agreements are negotiated out of the public view. However, this does not absolve the party who negotiated the treaty, in this case the Ma administration and the Kuomintang, from responding to questions and criticisms. Rather, the very secrecy of the negotiations makes justifying the agreement all the more vital. In the case of the Service Trade Agreement, there were valid fears that China's great wealth would allow it to "buy up" Taiwanese firms in such sensitive areas as banking and telecommunications, despite predictions of the pact's supporters that Taiwanese firms would benefit greatly from

their enhanced access to the Mainland market. More broadly, this criticism came in a context of growing fears of potential Chinese domination of Taiwan among Taiwanese citizens and a growing realization that economic integration across the Strait was contributing significantly to the growing inequality in Taiwan and that the strong economic links with China were transmitting the slowing economic growth there to Taiwan, which was especially harmful to the future prospects of students (Fan, 2014; Hsieh, 2014, 2015).

The Ma administration seemingly realized the breadth and seriousness of the opposition to the CSSTA; and within a week of concluding the Agreement with China; it agreed to a clause-by-clause review in the Legislative Yuan. Then in late September, the KMT and DPP agreed on 16 public hearings, with each party chairing eight. It was here that the process broke down as both parties displayed rather questionable faith in providing a full and fair hearing of the issues involved in the CSSTA. The KMT quickly ran through their eight hearings, while the DPP delayed holding theirs. Even more ominously, a battle between President Ma and Speaker of the House Wang Jin-pyng 王金平 that exploded earlier in the month was seen by many observers as being tied to the CSSTA. Ma charged that Wang had lobbied on behalf of the convener of the DPP caucus in a judicial case and asked the KMT Discipline Committee to revoke his party membership. Since Wang had been elected to the Legislative Yuan as a party-list candidate, this would have removed him from the legislature. Ma's tactics drew widespread criticism, especially after it was revealed that the charges were based on somewhat questionable wire taps by the Special Investigations Division of the Supreme Prosecutor's Office, and Wang sought judicial intervention. Ultimately, there was some reconciliation between Ma and Wang, and Wang continued as speaker. There had been antagonism between these two politicians dating back to Ma's defeat of



Wang in the election for KMT party chair. Beyond this rivalry, many observers believed that Ma intended to ram the CSSTA through the Legislative Yuan, which Wang's more conciliatory relations with the DPP might have prevented (Hsieh, 2004; Shieh, Mo, and Wang, 2013; Smith and Yu, 2014).

No progress was made for almost six months, as the Ma administration showed no interest in compromise, and the DPP showed no interest in moving forward in the Legislative Yuan's consideration of the SSSTA. Then a volcano erupted in mid-March 2014. On March 17th, a Joint Committee Review Meeting on the CSSTA in the Legislative Yuan ended in chaos. Lawmakers from the DPP and Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) seized the podium and prevented the KMT's Chang Ching-chung 張慶忠 from presiding. Three hours of slogan chanting and confrontation ensued. Finally, Chang declared that the meeting was over and that the review period was complete, clearing the way for a vote on the trade pact and leading the DPP to protest vociferously that this move violated the cross-party consensus on reviewing the CSSTA item-by-item. The next day, protests commenced outside the Legislative Yuan, and in the evening, students accompanied by some DPP legislators entered and occupied the Legislative Yuan, thereby setting off the Sunflower Movement (Fan, 2014; Hsieh, 2015; Smith, 2015; Smith and Yu, 2014; Wang, 2014a).

The Sunflower students presented four demands. First, the CSSTA should be reviewed clause-by-clause and renegotiated; second, a mechanism for monitoring cross-Strait agreements should be put in place; third, the CSSTA should not go into effect until such monitoring procedure was operational; and fourth, a Citizens' Constitutional Assembly should be called. The Ma administration ignored these demands and indicated that the CSSTA should be approved as it is, creating a stalemate. For his part, KMT speaker Wang Jin-pyng allowed

the occupation to continue but did not try to negotiate with them, and massive demonstrations were held around the island. Some students managed to enter the Executive Yuan late on May 23rd, but they were later expelled with a considerable amount of force, deepening the crisis. The occupation of the Legislative Yuan continued for five weeks until Speaker Wang agreed to develop and implement a program for monitoring cross-Strait agreements before acting on the CSSTA. Due to partisan polarization, however, nothing happened (Hsieh, 2015; Liu, 2014; Smith, 2015; Smith and Yu, 2014; Sui, 2015; Wang, 2014a, 2014b; Wei, Wang, and Hsu, 2014).

Overall, the Sunflower Movement appears to be very successful in several areas. It stopped the CSSTA from being rammed through the Legislative Yuan. Public opinion polls in the spring of 2014 showed it to have extremely strong public support. It also represented and stimulated an outburst of fervor by civil society and individual citizens to have a part in decision-making in the fundamental issues facing Taiwan, although how lasting this effect will be is still unclear. In political terms, the Sunflower success made a major contribution, although certainly not the only one, to the fall of the KMT, which was trounced in the 2014 local elections and was trailing badly in the run-up to the presidential and legislative elections in January 2016 (Hsieh, 2015; Loa, 2015b; Smith, 2015; Sui, 2015).

## **6. Implications**

The last section might be taken to indicate that the clash between integration and identity has resulted in the preeminence of the later. The reality seems to be more complex, as indicated by the results of two recent polls. First, the surge in support for the Sunflower Movement and the DPP suggests that a similar surge in support for Taiwan

Independence should have occurred. A *United Daily News* poll in September 2015 presents a different picture, however. Taiwanese perceptions of China are anything but favorable as the Chinese government and Chinese people were rated as “bad” rather than “good” by approximately two-to-one margins of 58% to 28% and 51% to 28% respectively. Still, 55% of Taiwanese prefer the *status quo* versus 28% who want Unification and 13% who want Independence. When those who want the *status quo* in the short term before either Independence or Unification are added, an overwhelming 76% of the population supports the *status quo* (Loa, 2015a). This does not just reflect the fear of China’s rising military strength. Younger Taiwanese in their 20s and 30s are much more likely than their elders to have a wholly Taiwanese identity and to favor Independence. Yet, a third of them want to work in China, implying that the Chinese economy retains a major pull in Taiwan (Sui, 2015). Consequently, the contradictory forces of integration and identity will continue to bedevil Taiwan.

A more positive implication is that Taiwan appears to be moving toward what Shen and Wu term “civic nationalism” in which the source of nationalism is support for the country and nation. This can be seen in the rising importance of civil society as illustrated by the Sunflower Movement and by the changing debate over national identity. In the fall of 2015, for example, President Ma and the DPP presidential candidate Tsai, rather than presenting rival proposals for Unification and Independence, both claimed to be the supporters of the *status quo* in cross-Strait relations. Ma claimed that his policies had successfully preserved the *status quo*, while Tsai contended that she and the DPP were committed to preserving the *status quo* (Sui, 2015).

## Notes

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