

Factional Conflict and Militant Nationalism in Democratizing States:
A Reassessment of Mansfield and Snyder's "Democratization and the Danger of War."

by

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ABSTRACT

Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder argue that democratizing states typically go through a “rocky transition period, where democratic control over foreign policy is partial, where mass politics mixes in a volatile way with authoritarian elite politics, and where democratization suffers reversals.” In this phase, states become “more aggressive and war-prone, not less, and they do fight wars with democratic states.”¹ Their theory is, however, based on a deterministic conception of democratization which emphasizes material “preconditions” rather than political actions; contains flawed assumptions about the role of nationalism in the state formation process; and is not generalizable in the manner which they claim. An approach to democratization which examines the political dynamics among the individuals and groups involved reveals a number of insights not contained in Mansfield and Snyder’s analysis which challenge their conclusions about nationalism and war. Taking these political dynamics into account the democratic transition on Taiwan reveals how, even in a tense and highly militarized security environment, rather than forcing politicians to play the “nationalist card” in order to illicit popular support, democratization actually weakened the power and influence of extreme nationalist factions on both the Chinese nationalist (reunification) and Taiwanese nationalist (independence) sides of the political spectrum. This phenomenon eventually caused a broad consensus to emerge on issues of independence and national identity, to which all major parties now adhere. Contrary to Mansfield and Snyder’s theory, the process of democratization on Taiwan directly corresponded with an increase in both the authority and the legitimacy of the central government as well as an increase in the predictability of relations with the Chinese mainland. A similar pattern can likely be detected in other states, a situation which strongly calls into question the applicability of Mansfield and Snyder’s theory to contemporary democratic transitions.

¹ Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder. 1995. “Democratization and the Danger of War.” *International Security* 20, 1: 5.

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INTRODUCTION

The debate as to whether a democratizing state is more likely to be involved in war than a state which experiences no regime change has, in recent times, become closely associated with Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder's 1995 article "Democratization and the Danger of War."¹ Mansfield and Snyder challenge the Clinton-era U.S. foreign policy which argued that the promotion of democracy throughout the world is an effective means of promoting regional stability ones own security.² Instead Mansfield and Snyder argue that, although a world made up of a greater number of stable and mature democracies would likely have fewer incidences of war, in order to become democratic a state must typically go through a "rocky transition period, where democratic control over foreign policy is partial, where mass politics mixes in a volatile way with authoritarian elite politics, and where democratization suffers reversals."³ Because of this, they argue, in the transitional phase, "countries become more aggressive and war-prone, not less, and they do fight wars with democratic states."⁴

¹ Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder. 1995. "Democratization and the Danger of War." *International Security* 20, 1: 3-49. See also Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder. 1995. "Democratization And War," *Foreign Affairs* 74: 79-97.

² The sources Mansfield and Snyder cite which present this position are "Transcript of Clinton's Address," *New York Times*, January 26, 1994, p. A17; Anthony Lake, "The Reach of Democracy: Tying Power to Diplomacy," *New York Times*, September 23, 1994, p. A35.

³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴ *Ibid.*

The notion that regime change is linked to political instability has been pervasive in the literature. Mansfield and Snyder's argument is essentially building on a theme which goes back at least as far as de Tocqueville⁵ but which was popularized in the comparative politics literature more than 30 years ago by Samuel Huntington.⁶ Huntington argued that there exists a very dangerous possibility of disorder as a society enters a transitional phase on route to modernity. Mansfield and Snyder simply put forward a more specific form of the argument - namely that a state undergoing a transition to democracy greatly increases its chances of becoming involved in war. Their claim rests on the assumption that a move toward a democratic political system will result in a situation in which no leader or faction holds a preponderance of power and where different factions compete in an uncertain political environment, each group being forced to play the "nationalist card" in order to position itself as the best defender of the "national interest" and therefore gain enough popular support to control the institutions of the state. The assumption that this pattern will necessarily be played out over a variety of historical, regional, and social settings, and that the possibility of war will increase as a result, does not follow in any obvious way nor is it borne out by the empirical evidence. Several contemporary case studies show that states which move toward a democratic system of government are in fact much *less* likely, *ceteris paribus*, to become involved in war. Mansfield and Snyder have taken certain elements which

⁵ See Havard Hegre, Tanja Ellingsen, Scott Gates and Nils Petter Gleditsch. 2001. "Toward a Democratic Civil Peace? Democracy, political change and civil war, 1816-1992." *American Political Science Review* 95 (1): 34.

they have found to be common to a select group of democratic transitions (weak government legitimacy, increasing nationalist sentiment), and generalized this pattern to all cases in order to develop a new theory which argues that the danger of war is increased in all democratic transitions.

The case of the democratic transition in the Republic of China on Taiwan provides valuable insight into many of the ideas discussed by Mansfield and Snyder while at the same time challenging many of their central assumptions as well as their conclusions. The Taiwanese example makes a strong argument that nothing inherent in the process of democratization or any of its side effects (i.e. factional competition), necessarily leads to an increase in the kind of militant nationalist sentiment which Mansfield and Snyder see as the root cause of an increased danger of war. In fact, the Taiwanese example shows that requiring politicians to seek a mandate from voters can potentially force political parties to come down from nationalist positions and converge on a moderate middle ground which is acceptable to a broad majority of voters. These voters, contrary to Mansfield and Snyder, are not easily manipulated and do not simply seek to vote for candidates who are most adept at playing the “nationalist card.”

⁶ Samuel P. Huntington. 1968. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University

CHAPTER 1

MANSFIELD AND SNYDER AND THEIR CRITICS

In their article Mansfield and Snyder make a series of claims based on their analysis of Small and Singer's *Correlates of War* (COW) data covering interstate and civil conflicts between 1816 and 1980,⁷ Ted Robert Gurr's *Polity II* data on regime type,⁸ and Bruce Russett's regime classification system.⁹ Mansfield and Snyder arrive at a three part classification system where states are labeled as either "democracy", "autocracy" or "anocracy" (a regime type defined as a political system "in which democratic and autocratic features are mixed, or in which very little power is concentrated in the hands of public authorities."¹⁰). A state is considered a state to be "democratizing" if it moves from autocracy to either anocracy or democracy, or from anocracy to democracy.¹¹ Mansfield and Snyder also explore four case studies in order to develop a theoretical explanation of their findings. The cases are all pre-WWII "Great Powers" which became involved in war during their transition to democracy, cases

Press.

⁷ Melvin Small and J. David Singer. 1982. *Resort To Arms: International and Civil Wars, 1816-1980*. (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications)

⁸ Ted Robert Gurr. 1990. *Polity II: Political Change, 1800-1986*. Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research No. 9263.

⁹ Bruce Russett. 1993. *Grasping the Democratic Peace*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 77.

¹⁰ Mansfield and Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War", 9.

¹¹ Ibid.

which Mansfield and Snyder believe reveal a pattern of behaviour among democratizing states which is generalizable to other states across wide variations in time and space.¹²

Mansfield and Snyder's principle claim is that democratizing states are more likely to fight wars than mature democracies or even stable autocracies.¹³ Specifically, they argue that: (1.) states which make the largest jump toward democratization (i.e. from autocracy to democracy) are "about twice as likely to fight wars in the decade after democratization as are states that remain autocracies;"¹⁴ (2.) that reversing the process does not eliminate the risk, as states which experience reversals of democratization are still more likely to fight wars than those whose regime remained unchanged;¹⁵ (3.) that virtually every Great Power became involved in a war during the period when it entered into democratic politics;¹⁶ and (4.) that the root of this phenomenon lies in the nature of the domestic political competition that occurs after the breakup of an autocratic regime.¹⁷

Their analysis of the data leads them to conclude that states which are undergoing democratization are on average "about one-third more likely to go to war than states experiencing no regime change."¹⁸ They found this to be particularly true when looking at a ten year time-span from the initial point of democratization rather than a five year time-span. They also found that the greater the shift in regime type the

¹² Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder. 1997. "A Reply to Thompson and Tucker." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41 (3): 457-461.

¹³ Ibid., 6.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 7.

greater the danger of war. A change from autocracy to democracy “increased the probability of any type of war by approximately 30 to 105 percent, and of interstate war by approximately 50 to 135 percent, compared to a state that remained autocratic.”¹⁹ The smallest increases in the probability of war among democratizing states were for those states which made the transition from autocracy to anocracy.²⁰ Conversely, “autocratization” was also observed to be dangerous. States moving from democracy to anocracy or autocracy, or from anocracy to autocracy, were found to be more likely to go to war than states experiencing no regime change, although not as likely as those experiencing a move toward democracy.²¹

1.1 A Theory of Democratization and War

In order to explain these findings, and to identify what they believe to be the causal lines behind their analysis of the data, Mansfield and Snyder cite four case studies from the 19th and early 20th centuries where democratizing Great Powers became involved in war. They argue that Britain’s partial democracy between the First Reform Bill of 1832 and the full-fledged democracy of the Gladstone era (from 1868 on) was the key factor which led it into the Crimean War in 1853; that France’s series of wars in the 1850s under Napoleon III were directly linked to its drift toward parliamentary rule during the same period; that the rising levels of nationalist sentiment in Wilhelmine Germany leading up to the First World War were linked to

¹⁸ Ibid., 14.

¹⁹ Ibid., 17.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 18.

democratization, and that Japan's "Taisho democracy" of the 1920s led to the adoption of an imperial ideology and, ultimately, war.²² As they write, "In each case, the combination of incipient democratization and the material resources of a great power produced nationalism, truculence abroad, and major war."²³

The principle force which links democratization to war, they argue, is the rise of extreme forms of nationalism. Extreme nationalism is the result of a competition among elites, both old and new, for popular support and legitimacy in a new and uncertain political environment. In the absence of other forms of legitimacy (i.e. performance based), elites quickly become forced to utilize all the resources available to them in order to shore up their weak regimes or make a bid for power. This includes playing the "nationalist card," a tactic whereby leaders each attempt to present themselves as the most capable defenders of the national interest, leading to a vicious circle of ever more extreme forms of nationalism as factions compete for public support. Nationalist legitimacy strategies may include the use of propaganda which emphasizes the regional primacy, uniqueness, superiority or the (possibly wounded) prestige of the nation.

Nationalism is related to war in several different ways. Firstly, nationalist strategies are inherently risky. As Mansfield and Snyder write, "like the sorcerer's apprentice, these elites typically find that their mass allies, once mobilized, are difficult to control."²⁴ Nationalist strategies may also force the new regime into provoking or challenging neighboring states over a variety of issues, including historical legacies or the

²² Ibid., 6-7.

demarcation of boundaries, which would otherwise not be sufficient reasons for war. When nationalist sentiment has been enflamed among the population it may become difficult if not impossible for the democratizing state to back down or even to make small concessions in order to avert war. Diversionary conflicts may also become possible as the new regime seeks to focus popular attention on something other than its own (likely extensive) domestic difficulties.

This argument is not a reversal of the traditional Kantian democratic peace position which argues that the public is generally opposed to frivolous political wars. Mansfield and Snyder argue that the public in these cases will generally *will* be against war, it is simply that elites are able to “exploit their power in the imperfect institutions of partial democracies to create *faits accomplis*, control political agendas, and shape the content of information media in ways that promote belligerent pressure-group lobbies or upwellings of militancy in the populace as a whole.”²⁵ The accompanying danger for democratizing states is that once this connection based on extreme nationalism has been made between the elites and the population at large, the elites may simply dispense with any remaining pretense of electoral democracy and concentrate solely on nationalist and populist rhetoric as the basis of their legitimacy. Mansfield and Snyder argue that it is this stage, where democracy collapses, that the danger of war is

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 7.

²⁵ Ibid., 7.

particularly acute - as demonstrated by the aftermath of democratic collapse in Weimar Germany and Taisho Japan.²⁶

The likelihood of war in a democratizing state increases or decreases depending on several factors: how entrenched the interests of the elite groups are, how effectively propaganda can be utilized to increase nationalist sentiment, what incentives and risks there are for weak leaders to resort to prestige strategies in foreign affairs, and how effectively nationalist formulas will enable the regime to cloak itself in an aura of populist legitimacy.²⁷ The volatility of this transitional stage is characterized by the inability of the new regime to adequately deal with the demands put on it. Mansfield and Snyder accept Huntington's argument that, "the typical problem of political development is the gap between high levels of political participation and weak integrative institutions to reconcile the multiplicity of contending claims."²⁸ Many democratizing states lack the essential elements of a stable democracy - strong political parties, independent courts, a free press, and untainted electoral procedures - making the government only "haphazardly accountable to the electorate."²⁹ They argue that without such institutions, "there is no reason to expect that mass politics will produce the same impact on foreign policy as it does in mature democracies."³⁰

It is also the case that not everyone benefits, or at least not everyone perceives the benefits, from democratization. Political, economic and military elites may see a

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 20.

²⁸ Ibid., 22.

²⁹ Ibid., 23.

more open and accountable version of democracy as a threat to their privileged positions and, as Mansfield and Snyder argue, “even the elites who are doing well in the transition have a stake in making sure the transition is a controlled, partial one, where profiteering is not fettered by democratic scrutiny or rule of law.”³¹ The combination of these factors, social and political uncertainty, institutional weakness, and threatened interests, tends to lead the democratization process to a political impasse as it becomes difficult (if not impossible) to form a stable political coalition able to remain in power. It is this impasse which Mansfield and Snyder believe breeds the kind of short-term thinking and reckless policymaking that lead to war.³² The conditions leading to this impasse can be summarized as four factors:

1. **Widening the Political Spectrum** - democratization creates a “wider spectrum of politically significant groups with diverse, incompatible interests.”³³
2. **Inflexible Interests and Short Time Horizons** - “Groups threatened by social change and democratization, including still-powerful elites, are often compelled to take a very inflexible view of their own interests, especially when their assets cannot be readily adapted to changing political and economic conditions.”³⁴
3. **Competitive Mass Mobilization** - “In a period of democratization, threatened elite groups have an overwhelming incentive to mobilize allies among the mass of people, but only on their own terms, using whatever special resources they still retain.”³⁵
4. **The Weakening of Central Authority** - “Autocratic power is in decline vis-a-vis both the elite interest groups and mass groups, but democratic institutions lack the strength to integrate these contending interests and views. Parties are weak and lack mass loyalty. Elections are rigged or intermittent. Institutions of public political

³⁰ Ibid., 22.

³¹ Ibid., 25.

³² Ibid., 26.

³³ Ibid., 26.

³⁴ Ibid., 27-28.

³⁵ Ibid., 28.

participation are distrusted, because they are subject to manipulation by elites and to arbitrary constraints imposed by the state, which fears the outcome of unfettered competition.”³⁶

Some examples of the special resources elites use to manipulate voters include: strategic “expertise,” propaganda skills and assets, ability to distribute patronage, wealth, organizational skills and networks, ability to use control of political institutions to shape the political agenda and structure the terms of political bargains.³⁷ Ideology is another important tool which elites may use to mobilized mass allies. As Mansfield and Snyder write, “New participants in the political process may be uncertain of where their political interests lie, because they lack established habits and good information, and are thus fertile ground for ideological appeals. Ideology can yield particularly big payoffs, moreover, when there is no efficient free marketplace of ideas to counter false claims with reliable facts.”³⁸ Although traditional political ideologies such as capitalism and socialism may be employed, they tend to be used in a nationalist sense (Socialist Motherland, etc.) as nationalism is the dominant characteristic of any kind of ideological appeal for mass allies. As Mansfield and Snyder write, “A nearly universal element on these ideological appeals is nationalism, which has the advantage of positing a community of interest that unites elites and masses, this distracting attention from class cleavages.”³⁹

³⁶ Ibid., 30.

³⁷ Ibid., 28.

³⁸ Ibid., 29.

³⁹ Ibid., 29.

According to Mansfield and Snyder, political leaders tend to rely on a few tried and true means for dealing with these four problems in an effort to remain in control of the democratizing state. The most common being:

1. **Logrolling** - something which tends to take place among elite groups only, since the power of the mass groups is not yet institutionalized since, "...logrolling works by giving each groups what it wants most, so that even if only some of the groups in the coalition favored policies leading to war and expansion, that would be enough to make their adoption likely."⁴⁰
2. **Squaring the Circle, Integrating Opposites** - "Since democratizing states typically compromise such a broad spectrum of social interests, would-be ruling coalitions must often be cobbled together from diverse or even contradictory bases of support. For this reason, one of the characteristic problems of the leadership of transitional, democratizing states is explaining away the self-contradictory aspects of a coalition or policy that must integrate antithetical elements."⁴¹
3. **Prestige Strategies** - "One of the simplest but most risky strategies for a hard-pressed regime in a democratizing country is to shore up its prestige at home by seeking victories abroad."⁴²

In the contemporary era a prestige strategy may not mean military victories so much as seeking military concessions from other states. This strategy is, however, fraught with difficulties. As Mansfield and Snyder write, "Prestige strategies make the country hypersensitive to slights to its reputation. As the Kaiser found out in the First and Second Moroccan Crises, stiff foreign resistance can produce not cheap victories but embarrassing defeats, which further complicate domestic governance."⁴³ Other examples include the prestige strategy employed by Argentina toward the Falkland Islands, a strategy which ultimately led to the collapse of the Argentine military regime.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 31-32.

⁴¹ Ibid., 32.

⁴² Ibid., 33.

Mansfield and Snyder conclude by arguing that, because democratization involves such serious dangers, the international community needs to adopt a strategy, "...not so much for promoting or reversing democratization as for managing the process in ways that minimize its risks and facilitate smooth transitions."⁴⁴ To this end they suggest a number of policies based on their analysis, including providing "golden parachutes" for members of the old regime, giving the old regime a stake in the privatization process, keeping the old elites happy but also keeping them weak, ensuring that pacts do not serve to prop up the remnants of the old regime, and not allowing the ideas or propaganda of the old regime to go unchallenged.⁴⁵ As they write, "Mythmaking should be held up to the utmost scrutiny by aggressive journalists who maintain their credibility by scrupulously distinguishing fact from opinion and tirelessly verifying their sources. Promoting this kind of journalistic infrastructure is probably the most highly leveraged investment that the West can make in a peaceful transition."⁴⁶ They also argue that the success of the new democratic regime, and hence the character of the regime, depends greatly on the incentives created by the international community. Citing the examples of Germany and Japan they argue that, "when the international supports for free trade and democracy were yanked out in the late 1920s, their liberal coalitions collapsed."⁴⁷

⁴³ Ibid., 33-34.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 36.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 36-37.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 37.

1.2 Criticisms in the Literature

Research Design

Much criticism of the Mansfield and Snyder piece has focused on the design of their statistical model rather than their theoretical argument. Eric Weede takes issue with the fact that, although the case studies used by Mansfield and Snyder deal with interstate war, their statistical data includes two categories of war: "interstate wars" and "all wars" - the second category referring to "extrasystemic" (civil) and colonial wars. As Weede writes, "Mansfield and Snyder's relationship between regime change and war looks *much weaker* for *interstate* war than for *all* wars."⁴⁸ Mansfield and Snyder are able to report three out of four statistically significant relationships for interstate wars only at the weaker .10 threshold for significance, whereas a similar number of significant relationships can be had at the .5 level when data for all wars are used, leading Weede to conclude that, "for interstate wars at least, empirical support for the Mansfield and Snyder proposition is at best borderline."⁴⁹

Weede also points out that no information is provided as to why there is a differing degree of war-proneness found for democratization versus autocratization. He asks whether this says anything that might challenge the simpler hypothesis that all types of regime change lead to an increase the danger of war. As he states,

⁴⁷ Ibid., 38.

⁴⁸ Reinhard Wolf, Erich Weede, Andrew J. Enterline, Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder. 1996. "Correspondence: Democratization and the Danger of War." *International Security* 20 (4): 181.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

“Theoretically and politically, it makes some difference whether any regime change or rather the process of democratization is the culprit in increasing war-proneness.”⁵⁰

Enterline also believes Mansfield and Snyder’s research design to be flawed, accounting for what he sees as inconsistent results.⁵¹ He redesigns the project using the same Polity II and COW data (although making some important changes, such as excluding data for intra-state wars⁵² and choosing to identify the independent variable (regime change) in a more “efficient” way⁵³). Using this redesigned approach, Enterline reaches a conclusion which is the direct opposite of the one reached by Mansfield and Snyder, stating that, “democratization has a statistically significant, negative impact on the likelihood of a state being on the initiating side of a dispute.”⁵⁴

Thompson and Tucker⁵⁵ also take issue with Mansfield and Snyder over the latter’s choice of Maoz and Russett’s index⁵⁶ for identifying regime type. They point to serious anomalies in the scoring for countries which arises in utilizing the Maoz and Russett index and propose a propose their own “modified continuous index” as an alternative.⁵⁷ Further, Thompson and Tucker believe the entire research design to be rife with problems. While the issue of classifying regimes is contentious, the issue of

⁵⁰ Ibid., 182.

⁵¹ Andrew J. Enterline. 1996. “Driving While Democratizing (DWD).” *International Security* 20 (4): 183-196.

⁵² Ibid., 186. see footnote 4.

⁵³ see Ibid., 187-91.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 196.

⁵⁵ William R. Thompson and Richard M. Tucker. 1997a. “A Tale of Two Democratic Peace Critiques.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41 (3): 428-454.

⁵⁶ Zeev Maoz and Bruce Russett. 1993. “Normative and Structural Causes of Democratic Peace, 1946-86.” *American Political Science Review* 87: 624-38. See also Russett. 1993. *Grasping the Democratic Peace*, 77.

whether or not regimes are actually even in transition is even more complicated. As they argue, although the data may appear to reveal a pattern which would allow us to infer that there is a positive correlation between regime change and war, “... it is not really clear whether we are capturing autocratizing [democratizing] states at war or semistable autocracies [democracies] at war.”⁵⁸ They conclude that their re-analysis of Mansfield and Snyder’s results indicates that, “neither democratization nor autocratization increases the probability of war involvement within a 1-, 5-, or 10-year window. We conclude that regime change and war involvement are independent of one another.”⁵⁹

Regime Type

Wolf argues that because their statistical research only uses data from the period before 1980 it excludes much of the so-called “Third Wave” of democratization, including the democratization of military regimes in Latin America and the communist regimes of Eastern Europe, a factor which may have important effects on results.⁶⁰

Wolf argues that this focus on earlier transitions weakens the argument for two reasons: Firstly, the pattern they describe does not seem to apply to events in Eastern Europe in the 1990s, where none of the nine Central and Eastern European states which became “free” between 1988 and 1993 were involved in interstate conflict but eight of the thirteen states which remained non-democratic did become involved in war.⁶¹ Secondly,

⁵⁷ William R. Thompson and Richard M. Tucker. 1997b. “Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildered.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41 (3): 467.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 473.

⁵⁹ Thompson and Tucker, “A Tale of Two Democratic Peace Critiques,” 450.

⁶⁰ Wolf, Weede, Enterline, Mansfield and Snyder. “Correspondence,” 177.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Mansfield and Snyder's approach does not account for different social starting points in analyzing the phenomenon, i.e. the transition of a communist state may have a very different domestic dynamics than the transition of a largely pre-industrial state such as those which Mansfield and Snyder discuss.⁶² As Wolf notes, "Compared to, say, a Latin American landholder whose wealth and prestige are threatened by the reformist policies of a new liberal government, high-ranking party officials in Eastern Europe were in a much poorer position to impede the new developments."⁶³

These varying degrees of power and entrenched interest are likely to have substantial impact on the volatility of the transition process, casting doubt on the generalizability of a theoretical explanation based solely on pre-WWII case studies. Mansfield and Snyder mention Serbia and Croatia, as well as Armenia and Azerbaijan, as states which "have found themselves at war while experimenting with varying degrees of partial electoral democracy."⁶⁴ However, these select cases do not explain why a large number of former communist states in the region, all of whom were experimenting with "varying degrees of partial electoral democracy," did not find themselves at war during this period.

Thompson and Tucker are also critical of Mansfield and Snyder's apparent willingness to accept any type of regime change as compatible with their theory. As they write, "Their theory is about the dangers of democratization, but autocratization is found to be dangerous as well. This raises the question of whether it is regime change

⁶² Ibid., 178-79.

overall, certain types of regime change, or simply regime instability that alters the probability of war involvement.”⁶⁵ It may be the case that these are questions which cannot be answered statistically. Even so, Thompson and Tucker argue that the research design laid out by Mansfield and Snyder is unable to shed light on these questions since, “A significant outcome indicated only that their three “variables” (democratization, autocratization, and no change) together are related to war. However, it does not suggest which of the three groups are more or less war prone. Thus, none of their analysis serves as a direct test of whether democratization (or for that matter, autocratization) makes war more likely.”⁶⁶

Thompson and Tucker are also critical of what they see as a strong major power bias in Mansfield and Snyder’s theoretical analysis, particularly since their statistical findings are primarily based on data from non-major power states. The four case studies they use (Great Britain, France, Germany and Japan) were all imperialistic great powers during their initial period of democratization, is it reasonable to expect that the same domestic dynamics exist will exist in the democratizing states of the late 20th Century? Thompson and Tucker argue that, “To expect observations about a small elite group of states to encompass all states would be fallacious.”⁶⁷ Mansfield and Snyder, however, don’t agree that this is what they are doing, arguing that,

⁶³ Ibid., 179.

⁶⁴ Mansfield and Snyder, “Democratization and the Danger of War,” 6.

⁶⁵ Thompson and Tucker, “A Tale of Two Democratic Peace Critiques,” 441.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 442-43.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 442.

Although differences may, of course, exist between major powers and other states in the process through which democratization increases the likelihood of war, we and other scholars have conducted research indicating that *dynamics similar to those we identified in the major powers are at work in many small democratizing states*.⁶⁸ [emphasis added]

This seems like a stretch designed to salvage their argument, particularly since their theoretical model, as Wolf noted, doesn't allow for different regime types as starting points. Will the dynamics of democratization be similar in the case of a former communist client state, an underdeveloped feudal-style former colony, and a 19th Century European great power? Mansfield and Snyder seem to think so, citing Snyder and Ballentine's work⁶⁹ on Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and several other cases as proof that dynamics similar to their four case studies exist in a variety of transitional situations.⁷⁰

Geo-politics and "Neighbourhoods"

Thompson and Tucker also raise the possibility that Mansfield and Snyder may not have the causal arrow pointing in the right direction, i.e., they don't consider that changes in foreign policy may be related to changes in the foreign political environment rather than to changes in the domestic arena. This argument is closely related to some of Thompson's earlier work on democracy and peace.⁷¹ As they point out,

...it is just as easy to link their subsequent foreign policy adventures to a combination of continuities in French, German, and Japanese foreign policy and changes in the regional balances of power as it is to bestow blame solely on domestic institutional instability. At the very least, it is difficult to exclude the

⁶⁸ Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder. 1997. "A Reply to Thompson and Tucker." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41 (3): 458.

⁶⁹ Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine. 1996. "Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas." *International Security* 21: 5-40.

⁷⁰ Mansfield and Snyder. "A Reply to Thompson and Tucker," 458.

⁷¹ William R. Thompson. 1996. "Democracy and Peace: Putting the cart before the horse?" *International Organization* 50 (1): 141-174.

external factors facilitating war proneness while stressing only the internal factors. Domestic actors interact with changing environments; they do not simply project their preferred strategies on a featureless external environment. The causal arrows are more likely to be reciprocal than unidirectional - from either the inside out or outside in.⁷²

Thompson's earlier work argued that "scholars have given too much credit to regime attributes when other important factors deserve acknowledgement," arguing that "geopolitics must be given its due."⁷³ The link between regime type and foreign policy behaviour is, he argues, actually the function of a third variable - regional military expansion (arms build-up, war preparation, etc.) In regions where states are involved in aggressively making and preparing for war, the political composition of the region will most likely be autocratic, as elites attempt to mobilize national resources toward survival and/or expansion.⁷⁴ It is only once these militaristic strategies fade and war becomes more or less absent from the region that conditions will allow for the emergence of more liberal political regimes - democracy follows peace and not the other way around. He also argues that increases in war in a regional system tend to stimulate power concentration (i.e. autocratization) in the region's political units. Conversely, decreases in the level of war are more likely to be followed by the liberalization of these political systems.⁷⁵

Thompson is especially interesting for our purposes as he discusses the case of "Taisho Japan" in these terms, arguing that, although there were profound changes in

⁷² Thompson and Tucker, "A Tale of Two Democratic Peace Critiques," 442.

⁷³ Thompson, "Democracy and Peace," 142.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 143.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 148.

Japan's foreign policy behaviour during the 1920s and 30s, "...the formal regime never really changed. Japan's constitution in 1941 was the same Meiji one of had since 1889."⁷⁶ He argues that, "the Taisho Japanese case illustrates how dependent domestic liberalizing movements are on facilitative geopolitical environments. Once the environment changed, the Taisho experimentation was impelled toward much more brutal domestic political strategies as well as toward more aggressive external maneuvers."⁷⁷ As the Japanese case shows, domestic political change can be compelled by external factors in a wide variety of ways. There does not have to be an actual outbreak of war in the region. Even the impending threat of war can cause an increase in the autocratization of the regions politics. As he writes, "Whether relatively authoritarian or democratic at the outset, political systems are quite likely to become more authoritarian as they become engaged in crises of national security."⁷⁸ This climate of fear and autocratization affects the international behaviour of states in that they must "choose to pursue foreign policies of expansion or find themselves forced to defend themselves constantly against the threats of proximate states."⁷⁹

Like Thompson, Gleditsch and Hegre argue that the war participation of a given country is very much dependant on external factors - specifically the political mix of the surrounding countries, a factor often referred to as "neighborhoods" in the literature. They argue that, "For a nondemocracy, increasing the number of democracies increases

⁷⁶ Ibid., 165.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 144.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 144.

war participation. For a democracy, the effect is the opposite.”⁸⁰ They also argue that “The studies done to date are underspecified and fail to distinguish two different effects of democratization: the effect of the process of change for the country itself and the effect of a changing political environment.”⁸¹ This has important implications for Mansfield and Snyder’s argument as their approach focuses solely on this first effect and ignores the later aspect of the larger political environment. Even assuming that democratization is in fact responsible for the war involvement of their British, French, German and Japanese case studies, without taking into account the differences in political composition of neighborhoods it seems difficult to generalize about the behaviour of democratizing states.

Democratic Reversals

Ward and Gleditsch present a new research design which seeks to gain more information about the question of democratization and war by focusing on the direction, intensity and nature of the regime change and how these factors relate to the probability of interstate war involvement. They found that,

On the one hand, as countries become more democratic, other things being equal, they become more peaceful. On the other hand, if they experience setbacks as well as progress on the “road to democracy,” then they are more likely to be involved in warfare along the way. At issue, apparently is not the rapidity of change toward democracy but the linearity of the process. Smooth monotonic transitions are associated with the least risk and greatest benefit. Reversals, even

⁸⁰ Nils Petter Gleditsch and Havard Hegre. 1997. “Peace and Democracy - Three levels of analysis.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41 (2): 303.

⁸¹ Ibid., 303-304.

in the short term, have the greatest risk. Prior analyses that did not focus on the process of transition could not discover these nuances.⁸²

This argument is markedly different from previous studies as it does not so much come down in favor or against the dangerous democratization hypothesis but instead argues that there is “a heightened propensity for war involvement in certain patterns of democratization and a diminished likelihood in others.”⁸³ Their analysis still tends to be opposed to Mansfield and Snyder, however, since they argue that, “...there is little statistical evidence to suggest that the movement toward more democratic practices renders the state more dangerous to international peace unless the transition is rocky and involves reversals along the way.”⁸⁴ The only general principle that can be taken from their study is that “democratic reversals increase the likelihood of warfare.”⁸⁵ They also found that larger changes toward democracy are associated with smaller probabilities of war involvement, a result that is also inconsistent with Mansfield and Snyder.⁸⁶

This study is particularly interesting in that it focuses on the linearity of the process rather than the actual level of democracy or autocracy. They argue that, “changes toward autocracy and reversals of democratization are accompanied by increased risks of war involvement” and that, “These risks are proportionally greater than the decline or benefits of further democratization. Thus, there is strong evidence

⁸² Michael D. Ward and Kristain S. Gleditsch. 1998. “Democratizing for Peace.” *American Political Science Review* 92 (1): 59.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 60.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

that democratization has a monadic effect: It reduces the probability that a country will be involved in a war.”⁸⁷ They also found that, “reversals are riskier than progress”⁸⁸ and that, “moving toward stronger executive constraints results in a visible reduction in the risk of war.”⁸⁹

Ward and Gleditsch believe that their results show, although Mansfield and Snyder may not have the story completely right, they also have “not completely missed the boat.”⁹⁰ Rocky changes toward democracy (or any rocky regime changes) appear to be linked to a greater likelihood of war involvement, but changes toward increased levels of democracy, particularly forms of democracy which involve increase levels of executive constraints, appear to reduce the likelihood of war involvement overall.⁹¹ They believe that these results shed light on, “precisely what aspect of democratization may reduce the probability of war: shared power between the executive and legislature, each largely staffed by officials pressured by public opinion. To the extent that changes toward democracy bring with them constraints on the executive branch of government, the attendant reduction in the risk of war appears quite robust.”⁹²

⁸⁶ Ibid., 57.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 58.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 59.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

CHAPTER 2

DEMOCRATIC DYNAMICS

To date, the literature on the dangers of democratization has been dominated by efforts to redesign a more suitable research program based on the same kind of COW and Polity II/III data originally used by Mansfield and Snyder. Various studies have used slightly different case selection, variable definition, statistical methods, and in some cases have arrived at different conclusions. Unfortunately, as researchers have sought to improve upon Mansfield and Snyder's original model they have also inched toward an almost unmanageable level of complexity in their statistical designs.

Researchers of democratization and the danger of war are now not only attempting to correlate the basic variables (regime change and war involvement), but also to include such diverse factors as the extent of democratization, speed of transition, reversals, specific aspects of democracy (i.e. executive constraints), "neighborhoods," region, number of states in a region, number of contiguous states, great power involvement in the region, war/peace context in which democratization occurs, war/peace history of the region, prevailing norms of governance in the era/in the region, etc. At yet at the same time the literature has almost universally failed to critically examine many of the fundamental assumptions about democratization built into Mansfield and Snyder's argument.

Given the difficulty we have seen in turning even a simple idea like regime type into quantifiable data, and given the increasingly rare phenomenon of interstate war, it is almost certain that any statistical results will be inconclusive and therefore easily challenged by other studies using different data, methods, or in which variables are defined in a different way. Seeking to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon by introducing a greater number of independent variables will lead only to greater confusion unless there is a better understanding of the actual dynamics at work in the democratization process itself. If Mansfield and Snyder's theory is to be regarded as generalizable and relevant then a case study analysis of a contemporary democratic transition is necessary in order to determine whether or not the dynamics they found present in their 19th and early 20th Century case studies remain applicable.

2.1 Modernization and Democratization

Much of the problem with Mansfield and Snyder's theoretical argument lies in that it appears to be rooted in a particular conception of social and political change, sometimes referred to as "modernization theory." Past studies of democratization have focused a great deal of attention on the presence or absence of certain "preconditions" (economic development, rising living standards, education, industrialization, urbanization, etc.) as being crucial to the success of a democratic movement or even to its inception.⁹³ As in modernization theory, Mansfield and Snyder seem to conceive of

⁹³ While this structural/deterministic approach to democratization goes back as far as Marx, Durkheim and Weber, one of the best known examples of the argument can be found in: Seymour Martin Lipset. 1959. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy,"

a democratic transition as a process whereby a complex array of social forces have been radically changing a society for an extended period of time before the dam finally breaks and political leaders are suddenly forced to deal with these new realities. An equally unprepared population is left to fumble its way through the confusion and uncertainty, at which point politicians and other elites seize the opportunity to manipulate nationalist sentiment in order to retain power, thereby leading to a greatly increased chance of war.

A closer examination of the notion of democratic preconditions reveals the extremely limited usefulness of this concept in understanding democratization. For example, in *The Third Wave* Huntington lists a number of independent variables (such as those mentioned above) which have been advanced to explain democratization.⁹⁴ He writes that, while all seeming to be plausible, each is likely to be relevant only in a few cases and none can be considered deterministic. He states that,

In the half century after 1940, democratization occurred in India and Costa Rica, Venezuela and Turkey, Brazil and Botswana, Greece and Japan. The search for a common, universally present independent variable that might play a significant role in explaining political development in such different countries is almost certain to be unsuccessful if it is not tautological.⁹⁵

For Huntington, "Economic development makes democracy possible, political leadership makes it real."⁹⁶ It is this kind of realization which has caused the study of

American Political Science Review 53 (March): 69-105. See also Seymour Martin Lipsett. 1960. *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*. (New York: Doubleday), Ch.2.

⁹⁴ Samuel P. Huntington. 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press), 37-38.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 316.

democratization to largely shift away from an analysis of material preconditions and toward an analysis of the political actions of those involved.

2.2 Nationalism and Democracy

Along with an ill-conceived notion of democratization, Mansfield and Snyder also appear to have placed nationalism in an improbably location on the path to state development. As Ghia Nodia writes, there is a tendency in Western social science toward economic determinism,

When it is presumed that social developments cannot be explained in a really “scientific” way unless they can be traced to economic conditions, it is only a small step to the modern instrumentalist doctrine according to which nations and nationalism emerge as a result of 1) industrialization and 2) mass manipulation undertaken by elites pursuing their own (ultimately economic) interests.⁹⁷

This is essentially what Mansfield and Snyder are arguing: modernization produces the conditions necessary for a modern state; elite manipulation produce the nationalism necessary to initially hold the nation-state together; but in order to sustain their own rule or even state survival itself, elites must produce more and more virulent forms of nationalism, ultimately leading to war. Democratization is incidental to the entire process.

This pattern of events may take place in the context of what Mansfield and Snyder call “democratization” in early 20th Century Germany, but democracy can hardly be seen as the driving factor behind any state action in this situation, whether it be the decision to wage war or otherwise.

There are at least two issues to be addressed: Firstly, nationalism is not the product of regime transition, and second, nationalism does not necessarily take a militaristic form. Nationalism exists in all states, even where there is no democracy, no stunted democratic transition, or even any attempt at democratic government. To say that democracy creates nationalism is to put the cart several miles before the horse for, unless the entire world population simultaneously moved toward democracy as a single polity, it is only through nationalism that democracy can actually emerge, for democracy has always emerged in the context of the nation-state, for which nationalism is a necessary feature. As Nodia writes, "Whether we like it or not, nationalism is the historical force that has provided the political units for democratic government."⁹⁸

Secondly, it is also untrue despite the negative connotations given to nationalism in the 20th Century, that nationalism necessarily takes an aggressive and militaristic form. As Fukuyama writes,

The terrible experiences of the 1930s and World War II seem to have implanted in us a tendency to think that nationalism must inevitably degenerate into fascism, but that is simply not the case. Nationalism can coexist quite well with liberalism as long as the former becomes tolerant. That is to say, national identity has to be pushed off into the realm of private life and culture, rather than being politicized and made the basis of legal rights.⁹⁹

Mansfield and Snyder could conceivably argue that democratization is merely one factor which allows issues of nationalism and national identity to leave the private realm and

⁹⁷ Ghia Nodia. 1994. "Nationalism and Democracy" in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds. *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict and Democracy*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 4.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 7.

enter into the political discourse of the state, enflaming nationalist and militaristic passions but, as the case of the Republic of China on Taiwan shows, this theory is no more generalizable than the larger issue of democratization and war.

2.3 Political Dynamics of Democratization

There are several recent works which seek to provide a theoretical explanation of democratization based on an analysis of the political actors involved.¹⁰⁰ One of the most complete examinations of the subject is contained in *The Dynamics of Democratization* by Graeme Gill.¹⁰¹ Gill outlines a number of factors which he sees as being essential to a modern democratic transitions: liberalization, regime disunity, pacts with the opposition, and the emergence of a civil society movement.¹⁰² Other factors include such things as international influences and the role of exceptional individuals.¹⁰³ Shelley Rigger uses a similar 'pacted democratization' approach in her study of democratization in the Republic of China on Taiwan.¹⁰⁴ While taking into account its unique historical circumstances, the pre-existing credible chance of war with Mainland China and the unique scenario of competing nationalisms and conceptions of national identity makes the study of democratization in the ROC regime an interesting case

⁹⁹ Francis Fukuyama. 1994. "Comments on Nationalism and Democracy" in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds. *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict and Democracy*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 26.

¹⁰⁰ The ground breaking study in this area is: Guillermo O'Donnell, Phillippe C. Schmitter and Laurence Whitehead, eds. 1986. *Transitions From Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press).

¹⁰¹ Graeme Gill. 2000. *The Dynamics of Democratization: elites, civil society and the transition process*. (London: Macmillan).

¹⁰² Ibid., 46-62.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 62-67.

¹⁰⁴ Shelley Rigger. 1999. *Politics in Taiwan: voting for democracy*. (New York: Routledge).

study with which to examine some of the more difficult questions of nationalism and war and their relationship to democracy and democratization.

Liberalization is the gradual reduction of state control over certain aspects of life in an authoritarian state - a move which increases the opportunity for autonomous political action on the part of the population. Regimes may begin the process of liberalization for a number of reasons, primarily the existence of internal or external pressures, but the response tends to uniformly be the proliferation of autonomous organizations in society, or what are commonly known as "civil society" groups. Civil society, "exists when there is a sphere of activity outside direct state control, in which the citizenry may organize to pursue their own interests and concerns in their own way (within limits)."¹⁰⁵ The initial stages of liberalization tend to take the form of such things as the legalization of political parties and labour unions, permission for strikes or rallies to take place and the lifting of press censorship - all things which involve an expansion of political participation and therefore the boundaries of civil society.¹⁰⁶ What is clear from all this however is that, although "liberalization does not necessarily lead to democratization, democratization cannot occur without liberalization, except where it comes from a rapid and probably violent rupture of the political process."¹⁰⁷ In cases where the regime's reaction to mounting pressure is to continue clamping down on dissent with its coercive powers indefinitely, regime change is likely to only take place

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 59.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 60.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 49.

through military means, thereby greatly reducing if not eliminating any chance of a new democratic regime taking shape.

Regime disunity is another critical element of a successful democratic transition. A regime which is unified and faces little opposition or crisis is unlikely to embark on a program of liberalization. A regime which is divided between moderate and hardline elements, and is facing an organized opposition and a serious legitimacy crisis, is much more likely to respond to the situation by attempting to appease opposition forces through a gradual (and initially minimal) program of liberalization, particularly if the moderates are currently in control of the regime.

This is closely tied to the idea of pacts and negotiation. If there does not exist at least some minimal willingness to negotiate on the part of all parties involved, a democratic transition is very unlikely. Gill characterizes this as a four actor pact - where the regime is divided into hardliners and softliners (I will use the term reformers) and the opposition into moderates and radicals. The pact is,

...an agreement between the softliners and the moderates whereby they try to work out some of the details of the transition, but each must be careful not to antagonize and provoke the other part of their sides; softliners must not compromise so much that they upset the hardliners and push them into acting while the moderates must ensure that they do not give away so much that the radicals seek to upset the process.¹⁰⁸

The transition process then is essentially a balancing act where moderate elements on both sides of the equation must work together to avoid having the entire process breakdown or be taken over by their respective hardline counterparts.

While it is critical that the moderates be in control of the regime during the emergence of this initial negotiating period, the existence of a moderate element among opposition forces is equally important, preferably the dominant faction which holds the support of a majority of all those opposed to the regime, someone with whom the government can negotiate. For this reason the most important civil society group is a moderate opposition party, or groups which support such a party, willing to engage the regime in a negotiated democratic solution to the legitimacy crisis which it faces. In the absence of sufficient political space for such moderate parties to take shape (created through liberalization), opposition groups will be forced to resort to violent means to advance their cause and, lacking any suitable party to negotiate with, the government will be forced to respond at the same level.

Another aspect of a democratic transition is the role played by specific individuals in the process. This approach is rather straightforward, essentially being summed up by the statement “had it been someone else, things might have been different.” This kind of thinking is commonly employed in analyzing Spain’s unexpected but rapid and successful transition from military dictatorship to parliamentary democracy in the 1970s. The role of King Juan Carlos as well as several reformers within the Franco regime are seen as being key to understanding the process, a process which structural analysts were unable to account for, as they were “inadequately prepared for the intervening role of political actors... ..to perceive the

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 53.

extent to which innovative political action can contribute to democratic evolution.”¹⁰⁹

This idea can also be seen as part of a generational shift in which members of a new younger generation, free of the bitterness endemic to their predecessors (in this case the legacy of the Spanish Civil War) in both government and opposition alike, are able to present themselves as forward looking and move past the stumbling blocks which hampered previous attempts at reconciliation. The clear implication here is that, depending on the character of the key figures, democratization could conceivably be successful even where other factors would suggest otherwise. Ironically though, the very idea of contingencies such as the role of individuals lends credibility to the idea of a regularized pattern of democratization - as contingencies can only have meaning when seen in opposition to some other established motif.¹¹⁰

The framework put forward by Gill outlines the possibility of a democratic transition which is very different from the one outlined by Mansfield and Snyder. But, an analysis of the democratic transition on Taiwan shows that, while Gill's approach at first appears to be, like Mansfield and Snyder, an overgeneralization from a few select cases, in this situation the theory rings true, shedding light on why the extremely volatile nature of Taiwan's international situation did not mean that democratization would result in the kind of outcome Mansfield and Snyder refer to.

¹⁰⁹ Guiseppe Di Palma. 1990. *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions*. (Berkeley: University of California Press), 8.

¹¹⁰ Micheal Bratton and Nicolas Van De Walle 1997. *Democratic Experiments in Africa*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 26.

CHAPTER 3

THE DEMOCRATIC DYNAMIC ON TAIWAN

The origins of the contemporary political situation on Taiwan are rooted in the island's Japanese colonial history and the Chinese civil war. After suffering a disastrous military defeat, the Qing Dynasty ceded the island to Japan as part of the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895. As Japan's first colony, Taiwan provided Tokyo with the opportunity to, "prove that the Japanese could out colonized those who might dream of colonizing Japan."¹¹¹ Many Taiwanese actually saw the colonial era as an improvement over the inept and often corrupt Qing rule. Japanese planners were able to rapidly modernize Taiwanese infrastructure and cities, eventually bringing the island's economy up to near Japanese standards.¹¹² Taiwan quickly began to outpace mainland China in nearly every measure of development, creating an economic and cultural gap that would only widen as the mainland was continually engulfed by civil war and foreign conquest during the first half of the 20th Century.

Chiang Kai-shek's Republic of China (ROC) issued a formal claim to Taiwan in 1942, a claim which was recognized by the 1943 Cairo Declaration, and with the Japanese surrender to Allied forces in October of 1945 Taiwan was returned to

¹¹¹ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 34.

¹¹² Bernice Lee. 1999. "The Security Implications of the New Taiwan." *Adelphi Paper* 331, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 15.

mainland Chinese control.¹¹³ By 1949 Chiang's Nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) forces were facing imminent defeat at the hands of Mao Zedong's Communists, prompting Chiang and over 2 million of his KMT supporters to retreat to their new "provisional" capital at Taipei. Mao proclaimed the People's Republic of China (PRC) on October 1, 1949 and the de facto "two Chinas" system has been in place ever since.

Upon their arrival in Taiwan the weary and demoralized Nationalist forces began preparing for what most believed would be the inevitable advance of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) across the Taiwan Strait.¹¹⁴ By 1949 the U.S. had withdrawn its support from Chiang, disgusted by the corruption and incompetence they believed had "cost" them China.¹¹⁵ On 27 June 1950, three days after the North Korean invasion of South Korea, U.S. President Truman reversed his policy, stating that, "The occupation of Taiwan by Communist forces would be a direct threat to the security of the Pacific area and to the U.S. forces performing their lawful and necessary functions in the area."¹¹⁶ Accordingly, he ordered the U.S. Seventh Fleet into the Taiwan Strait to prevent attacks by either side. The Chinese Civil War may have moved into a stalemate but, as Meconis and Wallace write, "the stalemate was often a bloody one" and that "many contemporary western analysts underreport the frequency and ferocity of the

¹¹³ Ibid., 16.

¹¹⁴ Steve Tsang, 1997. "Transforming a Party State into a Democracy." In Steve Tsang and Hung-mao Tien, eds. *Democratization in Taiwan: Implications for China*. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press), 2.

¹¹⁵ Lee, "The Security Implications of the New Taiwan," 16.

¹¹⁶ Quoted in David G. Muller Jr. 1983. *China as a Maritime Power*. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press), 17.

naval and air engagements in and over the Taiwan Strait” during this period.¹¹⁷ Chiang himself reportedly admitted that the U.S. “neutralization” of the Taiwan Straits was the key to the survival of the ROC regime during these early years on Taiwan.¹¹⁸

The Taiwanese/Mainlander Split

Since its arrival on Taiwan, the KMT was first and last a mainlander party and an instrument of mainlander control over the native Taiwanese population. All high level government positions were filled by mainlanders. Taiwanese candidates were permitted to compete in local elections only as individuals since the “Temporary Provisions” (a series of constitutional amendments adopted in 1948) outlawed all opposition parties. No serious attempt was made to broaden the KMT’s membership to include native Taiwanese in the party. A majority of seats in the National Assembly and the Legislative Yuan were filled by mainlanders who had been elected to represent mainland districts before 1949 but were then allowed to hold the seats indefinitely once it became clear that regaining control of the mainland was not imminent. This discriminatory arrangement was premised on the idea that Taiwan was merely a province of China and that the ROC was the legitimate government of all China, albeit a government in exile.

The regime justified its authoritarian stance by arguing that these were unfortunate but necessary measures given the state of “National Mobilization Against Communist Rebellion” and that eventually the situation would return to a more normal

¹¹⁷ Charles A. Meconis and Michael D. Wallace. 2000. *East Asian Naval Weapons Acquisitions in the*

state of affairs. Understandably many Taiwanese were unconvinced, seeing the KMT as (what even President Lee Teng-hui would later refer to as) “an alien regime,”¹¹⁹ a regime which was not acting in the interests of Taiwan but instead was using Taiwan to serve its own interests. A Rigger writes, “Under Japanese colonialism, few Taiwanese thought of themselves as different from other Han Chinese. But once the ROC government was established on the island, differences between the two groups appeared...”¹²⁰

Relations between the native Taiwanese and their new mainland masters quickly became strained. Many Taiwanese had fond memories of the Japanese colonial era and, like the Qing administrators before them, saw their new mainland rulers as incompetent, corrupt and brutal.¹²¹ Even before Chiang’s forces retreated to the island, his post-1945 administrators on Taiwan had come into conflict with local interests by pursuing a policy of exploiting the former colony to help the war effort on the mainland. The Nationalists saw Taiwan’s industrial and agricultural wealth as a bonanza for the ROC and they fully expected the Taiwanese to volunteer their economy in the service of the war against communism. In the post-1945 period Taiwan began shipping raw materials and foodstuffs to the mainland, seizing property and even ordered factories dismantled and shipped across the Strait. As Rigger writes, “To the Nationalists, Taiwan was a

1990s: Causes, Consequences, and Responses. (Westport, CT.: Praeger), 111.

¹¹⁸ Tsang, “Transformation of a Party State into a Democracy,” 9.

¹¹⁹ Ian Buruma. 1996. “Taiwan’s New Nationalists,” *Foreign Affairs* (74: 4, July/August 1996), 89.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Andre Laliberte. 1997. *Taiwan: Between Two Nationalisms.* (Vancouver: UBC Institute of International Relations), 11.

sideshow. Their top priority was preventing more territory in mainland China from falling to the Communist Party's Red Army."¹²²

Unemployment and inflation reached previously unknown levels and economic difficulties were further exacerbated by the "epidemic of corruption" which was sapping the KMT's strength on the mainland.¹²³ The Taiwanese, accustomed to the strict but honest and efficient colonial administration, were appalled by the new regime.¹²⁴ Tensions boiled over on 28 February 1947 - the so-called "2-28 Incident" - when Nationalist troops crushed anti-KMT demonstrations and embarked on a "White Terror" campaign against students, intellectuals, political activists and anyone else deemed a threat. Between 5,000 and 10,000 people are thought to have been killed, with massacres being particularly brutal in the southern city of Kaohsiung. The 2-28 Incident resulted in decades of mistrust between the two groups and convinced many Taiwanese that the KMT was "a conquering power, not a liberator."¹²⁵ The influx of such a huge number of mainlanders two years later did nothing to help the situation, while the constant threat of a Communist invasion made the KMT regime ultra-sensitive to any real or perceived threat to its security.

ROC Ideology

The Republic of China was established on 1 January 1912 according to the principles articulated by its founder Dr. Sun Yat-sen. These principles, outlined in

¹²² Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 56.

¹²³ Ibid., 57.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 179.

Sun's *Three Principles of the People* (*Sanmin Zhuyi*), became the ideological basis of not only the ROC constitution but also the KMT. The principles: nationalism (*minzu*), popular sovereignty or democracy (*minzhu*) and economic justice (*minsheng*), were fashioned into a Western style constitution that contained guarantees of popular participation and civil liberties. Sun believed that democracy, the rule of law, separation of powers and other such Western influenced institutional arrangements were the appropriate model for China's long-term development.¹²⁶ However, he also, believed that this goal could only be reached through incremental steps. China would initially need a military government to establish order and provide security from foreign powers. Once this was achieved the nation would enter a period of "political tutelage" in which a powerful executive would rule through the Kuomintang. Once citizens were ready to take responsibility for their own governance, the period of constitutional governance would be fully implemented.¹²⁷

Unfortunately for the KMT, the period of political tutelage had already been declared over before 1949, therefore restrictions on the full implementation of the constitution would require a different justification. This was to be found in the situation on the mainland. As Chou and Nathan write, "Upon establishing its rule on Taiwan the party justified its restriction of political and other rights ... not as necessities of the revolutionary state but as temporary measures arising from the condition of civil war

¹²⁶ Ibid., 16.

¹²⁷ Ibid..

between the KMT and CCP regimes.”¹²⁸ Despite the fact that all KMT leaders were socialized to believe that their mission was to “realize Sun’s doctrine in the ROC,”¹²⁹ they largely set that goal aside in favour of maintaining the political, economic and military stability necessary in preparation for unifying China under ROC rule. This formula of stability and economic development for the purpose of eventual mainland recovery would serve as the basis of KMT legitimacy well into the 1960s.

Institutions of the ROC Government

Sun Yat-sen’s constitutional design for the ROC involves six main elements: a president and five branches (called Yuan): Executive, Legislative, Control, Examination and Judicial. In theory the ROC is a decentralized state in which multiple political parties compete for office in free elections and where democratically elected executives and legislators sit at every level of government.¹³⁰ The system, however, never lived up to this ideal. Until 1991, the KMT insisted that the “ongoing” civil war made full implementation of the constitution impossible. In addition to the “Temporary Provisions”, martial law was continuously in effect from 1949 until 1987, greatly aiding the regime in its struggle to control an often unruly and unsupportive population. In practice, the ROC has been dominated by its presidents, especially Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo, but also by Lee Teng-hui.

¹²⁸ Yangsun Chou and Andrew Nathan. 1987. “Democratizing Transition in Taiwan,” *Asian Survey*, 27:3, 278.

¹²⁹ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 9.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 63.

The National Assembly is a large body responsible for amending the constitution and, before 1996, electing the president. From 1949 until its renovation in 1991 it acted mainly as a rubber stamp for decisions of the ruling Kuomintang. The Executive Yuan encompasses the cabinet and central government ministries. Its members are appointed by the president and approved by the members of the Legislative Yuan. Before Chen's election in 2000 nearly all of them were Kuomintang members. The Legislative Yuan is an elected body (since 1992) responsible for holding public officials to account, approving appointments, and debating legislation initiated by the Executive Yuan. Legislative Yuan members began to initiate bills for the first time in 1987. The Judicial Yuan oversees the court system, while the Control Yuan monitors the actions of civil servants. The Examination Yuan administers the civil service examinations used to select personnel for state agencies.¹³¹

Although the constitution gives broad powers to the members of the Legislative Yuan, until recently they had little control over policy. The presence of "senior legislators" elected on the mainland before 1949 was the primary way in which the KMT was able to dominate the institutions of government. True power rested with the KMT Central Standing Committee, without whose approval legislation could not proceed.¹³² The Central Standing Committee, however, is probably too large for effective decision-making, and throughout most of its history has been dominated by the KMT party chair (who has generally been the ROC President).

¹³¹ Ibid., 61.

Additionally, the military could be seen as a virtual sixth branch of the government in the pre-1990s ROC. Once established in Taiwan, the KMT instituted a political officer system in the military making it, like the People's Liberation Army in the PRC, a party institution rather than a national one.¹³³ The KMT also followed a policy of co-opting military leaders by rotating them in a number of key posts including the Central Committee and the Central Standing Committee on an *ex officio* basis.¹³⁴ In return, the military's loyalty toward the KMT was strongly reinforced even among its largely Taiwanese enlisted personnel, becoming its most reliable base of support and often voting as a bloc for KMT candidates.¹³⁵

International Support for the ROC

The primary ally of the KMT regime on Taiwan through the 1950s and 60s was the anti-Communist bent of American Cold War foreign policy. While ambivalent in the immediate post-War period, the United States quickly sought to incorporate Taiwan into its defensive perimeter designed to contain communist expansion in Asia. U.S. policy included arms shipments, economic aid, and the opening of U.S. markets to goods from Taiwan. This support proved invaluable to the ROC regime as, on 3 September 1954, PRC forces initiated the first "Taiwan Straits Crisis" by shelling the Nationalist-held island of Quemoy. As in 1950, the U.S. again ordered the Seventh Fleet

¹³² Ibid., 63.

¹³³ Tsang, "Transforming a Party State into a Democracy," 3.

¹³⁴ Hung-mao Tien. 1997. "Taiwan's Transformation" in Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, Yun-han Chu, and Hung-mao Tien, eds. *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies: Regional Challenges*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 139.

to move into the Taiwan Strait to discourage any invasion plans the PRC may have had.

The long-term result of the crisis was the *Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of China*, signed on 2 December 1954 in Washington, in which both the U.S. and the ROC pledged to, “maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack and communist subversive activities directed from without against their territorial integrity and political stability.”¹³⁶

A second Taiwan Straits crisis began in July of 1958 when the PRC announced that it would begin a campaign to “liberate” Taiwan and by August it had resumed shelling the Nationalist held islands near the mainland once again. Once again the U.S. responded by threatening force, including the use of nuclear weapons if China did not stop the bombardment. Chinese fears and the lack overt Soviet backing caused the PRC to enter into a series of meetings with the U.S. in Warsaw in September and October of 1958, eventually resulting in a cease-fire agreement.¹³⁷

The ROC Legitimacy Formula

Since the ROC constitution defines the nation as all of China, the legitimacy of the KMT regime depended upon its maintaining the notion that the separation of Taiwan and the mainland was temporary. Long after it had retreated to Taiwan it still maintained that its central mission was to regain control of all the territory claimed by

¹³⁵ Hung-mao Tien and Tun-jen Cheng. 1997. “Crafting Democratic Institutions.” In Steve Tsang and Hung-mao Tien, eds. *Democratization in Taiwan: Implications for China*. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press), 31.

¹³⁶ J.A.S. Grenville. 1975. *The Major International Treaties: 1914-1973. A History and Guide with Texts*. (New York: Stein and Day), 340.

¹³⁷ John F. Copper. 1997. “The Origins of Conflict Across the Taiwan Strait: The Problem of Differences in Perception,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 6: 15 (July), 6.

the Qing dynasty in the late 19th Century, including Tibet and Outer Mongolia, as well as Taiwan. The achievement of this goal would required sacrifices on the part of all “patriotic Chinese,” including the imposition of “Temporary Measures.” In the 1950s and 1960s when the threat of war with the mainland was strongest, few on Taiwan questioned the plausibility of the ROC’s reunification plans and those who did risked harsh punishments including long prison sentences.¹³⁸ But as the chances of recovering the mainland became increasingly remote, the KMT began to struggle for a way out of this predicament.¹³⁹

Fortunately for the KMT the decision to focus on the economic development of Taiwan rather than the full implementation of the constitution was beginning to bear fruit. By the late 1960s Taiwan found itself in the midst of an economic miracle brought on by the combination of cheaply manufactured products for export combined with relatively open access to the U.S. market. The ROC’s gross national product (GNP) per person increased from a mere US\$167 in 1953 to US\$3,784 by 1996, eventually rising to US\$10,566 by 1993.¹⁴⁰ This economic success was, however, tempered by a deteriorating diplomatic situation on the international stage.

A Weakening International Position

In the early 1970s, U.S. President Richard Nixon and his National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger initiated a new policy whereby they sought to improve the U.S. position politically and militarily vis-a-vis the Soviet Union by making overtures

¹³⁸ Ibid., 17.

toward the PRC. By this time the PRC and the Soviet Union had developed a deep animosity toward each other and the U.S. sought to exploit this rift. Kissinger held secret talks with Communist officials in Beijing in 1971 wherein he arranged for Nixon to make an official visit to China in 1972. Taiwan suffered another blow when, on 25 October 1971, the UN voted to give the ROC's seat to the PRC by a margin of 73-35 with 17 abstentions, signaling the beginning of the ROC's long journey into political marginalization in the undefined regions of international law.

Nixon's 1972 visit to Beijing further compromised the ROC's position. The *Shanghai Communiqué*, issued before the visit, represented a radical shift in Sino-American relations. China reaffirmed its longstanding position that the PRC is the sole legal government of China, that Taiwan is a province of China, and that the "liberation of Taiwan is an internal affair in which no other country has a right to interfere."¹⁴¹ The United States on the other hand made major concessions in acknowledging that

...all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States Government does not challenge that position. It reaffirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves.¹⁴²

The U.S. also affirmed their, "...ultimate objective of the withdrawal of all U.S. forces and military installations from Taiwan." And that in the meantime it would work, to

¹³⁹ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 60.

¹⁴⁰ Tsang, "Transforming a Party State into a Democracy," 10.

¹⁴¹ 1972 *Shanghai Communiqué* cited in John F Copper. 1992. *China Diplomacy: The Washington-Taipei-Beijing Triangle*. (Boulder: Westview Press), 153.

¹⁴² Ibid.

“...progressively reduce its forces and military installations on Taiwan as the tension on the area diminishes.”¹⁴³

Taiwan’s security arrangement with the United States reached an even more ambiguous stage in 1979 when the Carter administration decided to formally recognize the PRC. A second U.S.-China joint communiqué issued on 1 January 1979 did however note that within this context the U.S. would, “maintain cultural, commercial, and other unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan.”¹⁴⁴ The *Mutual Defense Treaty* with Taiwan (no longer recognized as a sovereign state by the U.S.) was abrogated and official diplomatic links with the ROC were severed, leaving Taiwan in a precarious and undefined defensive relationship with the United States. Beijing proposed talks with Taiwan, based on Deng Xiaoping’s “One China, two systems” principle originally envisions for Hong Kong, in order to end the military confrontation and work toward reunification.

Understandably uneasy about their future the ROC sought and received assurances from Washington. Each created a de facto embassy’s in the form of the ROC’s *Coordination Council for North American Affairs* and Washington’s *American Institute in Taiwan*, to compensate for the lack of “formal” diplomatic relations. The United States also sought to fully clarify its new relationship with Taiwan through the *Taiwan Relations Act* (TRA), signed by President Carter on 10 April 1979. The act in effect reaffirmed what had been Washington’s policy all along, treating Taiwan as a

¹⁴³ Ibid.

separate entity apart from the PRC. The Act governs all political, economic and military relations between the U.S. and Taiwan and permits the U.S. to sell arms, lend money, and grant diplomatic immunity to Taiwanese officials. It gives the *American Institute in Taiwan* the power to conduct normal consular functions and treats Taiwan as a separate entity apart from the mainland in matters of immigration and nuclear energy.¹⁴⁵ While the TRA does not explicitly declare a U.S. commitment to defend Taiwan from attack it does state that it is the policy of the United States to “provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character” and, more ominously, that “any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including boycotts or embargoes...” is “...a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States.”¹⁴⁶

This drastically weakened position of the ROC forced the KMT leadership to rethink the basis of its claim to govern. Instead of focusing on mainland recovery, they shifted their rhetoric in the direction of “reunification” under Sun Yat-sen’s three principles, meaning a reunified capitalist, democratic China. This remains the stated goal of the ROC, although as Rigger notes, “the likelihood of such a convergence strikes most Taiwanese as exceedingly remote, and many are convinced that even if the PRC and Taiwan were to converge, Taiwan would stand to lose a great deal more than it would gain by wedding itself to such a vast political, economic and demographic

¹⁴⁴ 1979 U.S.-China Joint Communiqué cited in John F Copper. 1992. *China Diplomacy: The Washington-Taipei-Beijing Triangle*. (Boulder: Westview Press), 157.

¹⁴⁵ 1979 Taiwan Relations Act cited in John F Copper. 1992. *China Diplomacy: The Washington-Taipei-Beijing Triangle*. (Boulder: Westview Press), 159.

entity.”¹⁴⁷ This change in rhetoric failed to strike many Taiwanese as legitimate grounds to further delay the full implementation of the ROC constitution.¹⁴⁸ The issue of mainland recovery and the civil war could no longer justify absolute KMT rule. The party could conceivably have resorted to repression but this was quickly fading as a viable option. As Rigger writes, “The ruling party, for its part, was forced to choose between ceding more power to the society (i.e., democratizing) or seizing back its dominant position by force. And the KMT had learned in 1947 that force would not work.”¹⁴⁹ By the 1960s it was becoming increasingly difficult for the KMT to hold together both party and state, and to convey a convincing argument that it was the legitimate government of that state.

3.1 Elections as a Catalyst for Democratization

One of the legacies the ROC administration in Taiwan inherited from the Japanese was the tradition of popular participation in the form of limited elections. These elections took the unusual form of “single nontransferable voting in multi-member districts.” While the KMT could have discontinued the tradition upon its arrival in 1945, it would have seemed excessive and run counter to ROC ideological prescriptions. It was also acutely aware that elections could be used as a tool which could allow their regime to become institutionalized in a “foreign” land. Maintaining the “Free China” label also required at least token gestures of democracy. Additionally,

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 18.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 182.

elections were an effective way of keeping liberal critics at bay, as well as drawing dissident groups into the system without handing power over to them.¹⁵⁰

In 1946 the ROC introduced grassroots elections in the form of open contests for township representative positions. In 1950, elections expanded to include contests for township head, municipal executive, and council members in Taiwan's counties and cities. In 1951, Taiwanese elected the first Taiwan Provincial Assembly, a "provincial" government which happened to be coterminous with the extent of the "National" government's effective jurisdiction. Starting in 1969, a few supplementary seats in the Legislative Yuan and the National Assembly were opened up to elections.

It is common to see elections in authoritarian states as little more than a rubber stamp. But as Rigger notes, "a major function of elections was to facilitate mobilization; that is, participation that was controlled and channeled by the ruling party."¹⁵¹ For this reason she characterizes the pre-liberalization system in Taiwan as "mobilization authoritarianism", a system in which popular participation was encouraged but where a firewall existed between popular opinion and government policy. But despite these limitations, elections in these situations have sometimes been known to "set down roots that grow in unexpected directions."¹⁵² Or as Wu argues, "Sun's revolution and the democratic ideas advocated by him formed a legacy that people could utilize to

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 81.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 3.

¹⁵² Ibid..

challenge the authoritarian rule of the KMT government and which contributed to the rise of the democracy movements of the 1980s.”¹⁵³

Chiang Ching-kuo and “Taiwanization”

By the late 1960s ROC leaders began to have some sense that the regime was in trouble. International opinion was shifting toward the PRC, senior legislators were dying off and the Taiwanese business community had become a powerful force in its own right. The regime also began to find it more difficult to suppress dissent. The most serious threat was now coming not from protests or publications but from the exiled dissidents who had fled Taiwan during the “White Terror” years. These dissidents formed the Taiwan Independence Movement (TIM), a group which was willing to use violence to achieve its political objectives. In 1970, TIM supporters attempted to assassinate deputy premier Chiang Ching-kuo in New York. TIM also conducted a series of bombings in Taiwan in the 1970s, in one instance seriously injuring the ROC vice president.¹⁵⁴ The KMT’s response was a combination of repression and reform, shutting down publications and jailing dissidents, but also attempting to co-opt more popular Taiwanese leaders into the party and increase the number of supplementary seats available in elections.

The appointment of Chiang Ching-kuo as premier in 1972, and later president in 1975 after the death of his father, led to a critical change in KMT direction. Although the party continued to advocate its goals of mainland recovery and unification, it began

¹⁵³ Jaushieh Joseph Wu. 1995. *Taiwan’s Democratization: Forces Behind the New Momentum*. (Hong

placing greater emphasis on policies aimed at improving the status and security of Taiwan. Originally a staunch KMT hard-liner, beginning in the early 1970s Chiang Ching-kuo and a new generation of leaders began to realize that the mainlanders could not rule Taiwan alone, or at least not forever.¹⁵⁵ The only way to ensure the ROC's survival was to "set down roots in Taiwanese soil."¹⁵⁶

KMT leaders realized that the rapprochement between the U.S. and China could potentially lead to a situation where the ROC was both weakened from within and threatened from without. This heightened sense of insecurity led the KMT to adopt a dual policy of both clamping down on internal dissent as well as exploring possible alternative arrangements to reliance on the U.S.¹⁵⁷ But, as Cliff writes, "No substitute for the United States existed, and it was unclear for how long domestic opposition could be suppressed."¹⁵⁸ As Laliberte writes, "A greater integration of the Taiwanese population in the political structure up to the highest levels emerged as a necessity for regime survival."¹⁵⁹ To do so, Chiang adopted a policy of "Taiwanization," encouraging the recruitment of native Taiwanese for elected office, taking a more active role in the nominating process, and seeking to stack KMT leadership positions with his own reform minded supporters. Chiang chose native Taiwanese for the positions of provincial governor, deputy premier and also increased their representation on the

Kong: Oxford University Press), 12-13.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 108-109.

¹⁵⁵ Buruma. "Taiwan's New Nationalists", 88.

¹⁵⁶ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 111.

¹⁵⁷ Roger Cliff. 1998. *Taiwan: In the Dragon's Shadow*. In Mutiah Alagappa, ed. *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 293.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 293.

party's Central Standing Committee.¹⁶⁰ Notably, it was Chiang who put Taiwanese born Lee Teng-hui in charge of agriculture in 1972, named him mayor of Taipei in 1978, and eventually vice-president in 1985. Taiwanization of the party and the civil service was designed to widen the base of support for the regime, primarily by co-opting Taiwanese elites, giving them "a vested interest in the preservation of the ruling party's supremacy."¹⁶¹

Although Chao and Myers attribute the democratic transition, "mainly to Chiang Ching-Kuo's decision to liberalize the "inhibited" political center..."¹⁶² their argument remains unconvincing. As Rigger notes, Chao and Meyers also argue that Chiang believed in a "Chinese-style democracy in which only the virtuous elite could represent the people and govern them"¹⁶³ and he was not an advocate of the kind of "messy, unfettered pluralism"¹⁶⁴ that democracy in Taiwan has become. Additionally, by the end of the century politics in Taiwan had become an arena in which, "Non-stop revelations of political corruption had long since put to rest any illusions that a virtuous elite was governing the island." It is therefore reasonable to conclude that, "...even if Chiang Chiang-kuo and the KMT regime were devoted to a particular kind of democratization, they eventually lost control of the process."¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹ Laliberte, "Between Two Nationalisms", 11.

¹⁶⁰ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 111.

¹⁶¹ Laliberte, "Between Two Nationalisms", 11

¹⁶² Linda Chao and Ramon H. Myers. 1998. *The First Chinese Democracy: Political Life in the Republic of China on Taiwan*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 326.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 124.

¹⁶⁴ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 24.

Elections and Democratization

Two Taiwanese political scientists, Hu Fu and Chu Yun-han, have suggested that elections should be seen as the independent variable in the study of Taiwan's democratic transition. As they write, "Elections for national lawmakers not only have increasingly acquired the normal function of popular accountability and system legitimation in a representative democracy, but in the transition they actually functioned as a catalyst of democratization in Taiwan."¹⁶⁶ This can be achieved in several ways. Firstly, elections can be used by the population to send messages to the regime, what Bolivar Lamounier calls "plebiscitary" elections.¹⁶⁷ Even if elections are only used to select a limited number of government officials with a limited range of responsibilities, they can still serve as an avenue for the public to send a message to the regime as gains and losses tend to be measured not in absolute terms but relative to previous performances. Elections act as tools of political socialization, creating expectations of involvement in the political process, building party identification and organization, and by making it extremely risky for the regime to cancel or significantly alter the electoral calendar. Most importantly, as will be explored later, elections also tend to have the effect of strengthening reform factions within an authoritarian regime while weakening hardline elements.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 24.

¹⁶⁶ Fu Hu and Yun-han Chu cited in Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 11.

¹⁶⁷ Bolivar Lamounier, cited in Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 14.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 14-15.

3.2 Liberalization

Institutions of Control in the ROC Regime

Before the process of liberalization was begun in Taiwan in the 1970s, there was very little space in which political activity could take place apart from what was officially sanctioned by the regime. The Temporary Provisions all but eliminated any opposition by restricting public gatherings, the dissemination of information, and all forms of protest activity.¹⁶⁹ Martial law gave the government broad powers of arrest, banned political parties, and the mass media was strictly under the control of the regime. Rigger refers to the ROC system as “mobilizational authoritarianism” because the government did encourage public participation by citizens but sought to control and channel it ways which favored the regime. The KMT’s “corporatist” structure, a system where, “state structuring, state subsidy and state control” describe the nature of most organizations,¹⁷⁰ meant that state-created or state-dominated bodies represented state-designated interests, such as workers, farmers, students, women, etc.¹⁷¹ For example, the government encouraged workers to join labor unions but the unions themselves were established, funded and “guided” by the party.¹⁷²

Perhaps the most important check on dissent was the strict controls imposed on the media. Half of all newspapers on the island were shut down after the February 28

¹⁶⁹ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 71.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 75.

¹⁷¹ Thomas B. Gold. 1997. “Taiwan: Still Defying the Odds”, In Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, Yun-han Chu, and Hung-mao Tien, eds. *Consolidating the Third wave democracies: Regional Challenges*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 170.

¹⁷² Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 8.

incident. In 1951 the regime issued strict regulations on newspapers, forcing them to register with the state, placing limits on their length and limiting the number of licenses to thirty-one.¹⁷³ The KMT owned about one third of the licenses directly and strictly controlled the others. The major news conglomerates, *United Daily Group* and the *China Times Group*, both cooperated extensively with the regime and were rewarded with patronage appointments to government committees. Editors and reporters were also closely monitored sometimes being required to attend KMT “work conferences” at which party cadres instructed them about how their publications could better serve the nation. KMT agents also made it clear how they wanted stories to be reported and discouraged reporters from covering the opposition.¹⁷⁴

While KMT control over newspapers tended to be indirect, control of television and radio was generally direct. Taiwan Television (TTV) is controlled by the Taiwan provincial government; China Television (CTV) is run by the KMT; and Chinese Television Services (CTS) is operated by the Ministries of Defense and Education.¹⁷⁵ A fourth broadcast station, Formosa Television, has links to the DPP but was not allowed on the air until mid-1997. The KMT regime also controlled all radio broadcasting frequencies until 1993, most being owned by either the government, the KMT, or the military.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Ibid., 73.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 73.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 73.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 74.

Government ownership and cooperation by media conglomerates gave the regime effective control over the mass media but regulating the print media required more active enforcement. Martial law powers gave the police the ability to censor and control would-be independent media outlets such as magazines. Journalists were sometimes given lengthy prison sentences for anything regarded as “treasonous,” a charge which usually translated into criticism of the regime.¹⁷⁷ By the 1970s, censors began changing their tactics to concentrate more on revoking licenses, suspending publications, pressuring printers to turn away dissident publications and seizing magazines before they hit the newsstands.¹⁷⁸ Control of the media was also used by the KMT to limit competition in elections as candidates were not allowed to advertise for their campaigns.

Emergence of a Civil Society Movement / Opposition Parties

One of the first signs of liberalization in Taiwan was the KMT party reform of 1972 when the party attempted to recruit more native Taiwanese candidates in order to shed its image as a mainlander party and increase its electoral appeal. President Chiang Chiang-kuo also sought to improve the quality of elected local officials by taking a more active role in cultivating and nominating “good government” candidates to replace local party bosses. This increased emphasis on elections indicates the extent to which the KMT was attempting to use elections as a means of bolstering their legitimacy. The party was, however, still more concerned with winning elections than with responding

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

to citizens or opposition demands, as evidenced by a number of party organizers who were fired over their inability to deliver seats.¹⁷⁹

Some of the first autonomous political activity not immediately suppressed by the regime included things like the consumer, environmental and women's movements which emerged in the early 1980s. By calling attention to issues which affected people's health and well being they quickly grew in size, although making sure not to challenge the regime. Some of these groups eventually formed the organizations which became the foundations of modern civil society in Taiwan.¹⁸⁰ The first attempt at establishing an opposition party came in 1960 when mainlander intellectual Lei Chan tried to establish the Democratic Party and was subsequently sentenced to ten years in prison for his efforts. Despite the harshness of the precedent, throughout the 1970s opposition to the regime slowly began forming into a unified movement. In the 1977 provincial and local elections, opposition leaders were not prohibited when they began forming loosely based "camps" of dissidents, liberal politicians and former KMT members who now opposed the party. These politicians were known as *tang-wai* (outside the party), but unlike the independent "opposition" candidates of the 1950s and 1960s, these politicians represented a new generation of Taiwanese intelligentsia - lawyers, students and university professors.¹⁸¹ To the great embarrassment of the KMT this new "party"

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 25.

¹⁸⁰ Gold, "Taiwan: Still Defying the Odds," 172-73.

¹⁸¹ Lee. "The Security Implications of the New Taiwan," 28.

succeeded in winning 35 percent of the seats in the provincial legislature, becoming an important and growing political force.¹⁸²

The opposition, however, was deeply divided from the start between radicals and moderates. This division only became worse after the "Kaohsiung Incident" where, in December of 1979, the government conducted mass arrests of opposition politicians and pro-independence activists following a riot which erupted during a march by opposition groups protesting what they believed was an election fraud designed to deny a *tang-wai* candidate a municipal executiveship. In a remarkable turn of events, many of the relatives and lawyers of the detained persons were elected in the subsequent round of elections as a statement of sympathy for the defendants and as a protest against the repressive actions of the regime. As Laliberte writes, "Following that incident, the regime came to the conclusion that it was futile to clamp down on the opposition," leading to a new policy of "tacit tolerance."¹⁸³

By 1980, the KMT government was finding it increasingly difficult to suppress dissent and ignore calls for further liberalization. When it did take strong action, as in the Kaohsiung Incident, it incurred a heavy cost as revealed in the 1980 election results. Repression also cost the ROC dearly in increasingly precious international support. Elections drove up the cost of repression further because once an opposition activist had been elected to office, he or she not only enjoyed elevated public stature but also had the benefit of legislative immunity. Suppressing popular opposition politicians

¹⁸² Stephen Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman. 1995. *The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions*.

backed by large followings was no easy matter. As Hu Fu puts it, “it became increasingly costly for the ruling elite to use repressive measures against popularly elected opposition leaders. To do this the KMT regime had to pay a considerable price, at the cost of its own legitimacy.”¹⁸⁴ The existence of an electoral calendar was also a significant factor in limiting the regime’s ability to control the pace of reform. Canceling elections was too risky and likely would have drawn protests even from within the KMT itself.¹⁸⁵

By the mid-1980s the ROC also began to come under direct external pressure to enact reforms. U.S. President Ronald Reagan began personally pressuring the Taiwanese to begin democratic reform and on 1 August 1986, the U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Relations Committee passed a resolution urging the KMT to lift its ban on political parties, warning that if martial law was not lifted Taiwan’s relationship with the U.S. would suffer.¹⁸⁶ The actual effect of this was not so much to cause democratic reforms, but to weaken and split the right wing of the KMT.

Religious groups also played a role in the development of civil society in Taiwan. Organized Buddhism represents great moral, political and financial force in Taiwan.¹⁸⁷ In addition to their traditional charitable and social work, some sects in the 1980s began popularizing a more rigid and centralized form of Buddhism which placed a

(Princeton: Princeton University Press), 293.

¹⁸³ Laliberte, “Between Two Nationalisms”, 10.

¹⁸⁴ Hu Fu. 1993. “The Electoral Mechanism and Political Change in Taiwan,” in Steve Tsang, ed. *In the Shadow of China: Political Developments in Taiwan since 1949*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press), 149

¹⁸⁵ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 26.

¹⁸⁶ Lee, “The Security Implications of the New Taiwan”, 29.

greater emphasis on discipline, charity and contemplation. Chen Li-an's 1995 presidential bid attempted to tap this force, criticizing the "dirtiness" of ROC politics and emphasizing "clean government" proposals.¹⁸⁸ Chen's bid fared badly though, receiving less than 10% of the popular vote. There are also at least 57 Protestant Sects in Taiwan. The Presbyterians, of which Lee Teng-hui is a devout member, is the largest and one of the few to oppose the pre-1987 KMT regime.

In 1986 Chiang announced that vice-president Lee Teng-hui would succeed him. He also announced the creation of a committee to study political reform in which a wide range of issues (including restructuring of the National Assembly, local autonomy, ending martial law, reform of the Party, etc.) would be on the table. On 28 September 1986 about 130 opposition activists and *tang-wai* politicians announced the formation of a new political party to be known as the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The party released a draft of its charter and political platform which included: establishing the ROC as a sovereign, independent state; creating a free and democratic political order; instituting educational, social and cultural reforms; and pursuing peaceful and independent defense and foreign policies.¹⁸⁹

Since the DPP began as a coalition of anti-KMT activists its membership included a diverse range of interests, from urban middle-class professions to traditional local factions. Not surprisingly then, the party was highly fractured from the beginning. The primary division was between the older and more moderate Formosa (*Mei-li-tao*)

¹⁸⁷ Gold, "Taiwan: Still Defying the Odds", 173.

faction, whose roots were primarily in the *tang-wai* opposition movement of the 1970s, and the more radical New Tide (*hsin ch'ao-liu*) faction, largely made up of young intellectuals, radicalized in the wake of the Kaohsiung Incident. While the Formosa faction took a more moderate position on issues of national identity and independence, the goal of the New Tide faction was to hold a plebiscite on the establishment of a "Republic of Taiwan" as soon as the party came to power.¹⁹⁰

Despite the fact that this action was strictly illegal, Chiang decided not to suppress the new party, the rationale being that, "By allowing the opposition to participate in the political process, the KMT diminished the likelihood of a violent conflict at some point in the future."¹⁹¹ Two months later on July 15, 1987 Chiang lifted martial law, ending most restrictions on political organizations (in effect retroactively legalizing the DPP) and passed a National Security Bill designed to institutionalize the supervision, management and depoliticization of the military as well as setting out ground rules for the opposition - again on the condition that the opposition did not advocate communism, Taiwan independence or the overthrow of the constitution.¹⁹² DPP organizers did not officially accept these conditions but abided by them in practice. Significantly, in October of 1987 Chiang also lifted the ban on travel to mainland China.

¹⁸⁸ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 175.

¹⁸⁹ Lee, "The Security Implications of the New Taiwan", 29.

¹⁹⁰ Laliberte, "Between Two Nationalisms", 21.

¹⁹¹ Cliff, "Taiwan: In the Dragon's Shadow", 294.

¹⁹² Timothy Ka-ying Wong. 1997. "The Impact of State Development in Taiwan on Cross-Straits Relations." *Asian Perspective* 21:1 (Spring-Summer), 188.

3.3 Regime Disunity: Factional Politics in the ROC

On January 14, 1988 Chiang Ching-kuo died and Lee Teng-hui was named president, the first native Taiwanese to hold the position. Observers wondered if Lee, who was perceived as politically weak and without a strong power base, would be able to survive without his longtime benefactor.¹⁹³ Lee was initially endorsed by the military and Chief of Staff General Hau Pei-tung, although tensions quickly became apparent.¹⁹⁴ In the campaign leading up to the 1989 elections, the first contested by the DPP, the KMT reiterated its longstanding claims as a provider of stability, economic development and experienced government. The DPP, on the other hand, touched a nerve with the public, arguing that even if it won every supplementary seat available, the KMT would still enjoy a large majority in both the National Assembly and the Legislative Yuan, due to the continued presence of the “senior legislators.”¹⁹⁵ The DPP ridiculed this “ten thousand year legislature” and the “old bandits” who still commanded a majority. The KMT knew it was vulnerable on this issue and even its top leaders could not defend the institution. Unfortunately for reformers like Lee, forcing the seniors out would fracture the party.

Factional Divisions in the KMT

The 1989 elections resulted in the best showing to date for the opposition. The results also succeeded in highlighting the distinction between Lee Teng-hui’s (increasingly Taiwanese) Mainstream faction of the KMT and the (almost exclusively

¹⁹³ Hung-mao Tien, “Taiwan’s Transformation”, 121.

mainlander) conservative “Nonmainstream” faction, unofficially led by Hau. The Mainstream faction knew its most potent weapon in the coming power struggle would be its popular support in elections and that abandoning the “ten thousand year legislature” would ultimately be to its advantage. The issue was how to do so while continuing to maintain a semblance of party unity and a majority in the National Assembly and Legislative Yuan. Conflicts between the Mainstream and Nonmainstream factions came to a head in a struggle over Lee’s nomination for a second term as president and his choice for vice-president.

Lee’s decision, following Chiang Ching-kuo, to establish civilian control over the military had also antagonized General Hau Pei-tung, who viewed military affairs as nearly his private domain.¹⁹⁶ In 1989, Hau was reluctantly persuaded to retire from the military and become Lee’s Minister of defence. Lee sought to break the hold of Hau and his “Hau family army” on the reigns of the military. Hau’s departure enabled Lee to begin exerting civilian control over the armed forces. As commander in chief, Lee held the constitutional authority to appoint and remove major military and security figures. Many of Hau’s protégé’s were replaced with “new” KMT “defectors” and Hau’s long-time rivals. Lee also ordered that the military be trimmed and the focus shifted from the Army over to the Navy and the Air Force. Strategic doctrine was also to be shifted from the ability to retake the mainland to protecting Taiwan, its airspace and its sea lanes, as

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 140-41.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 132.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 140-41.

well as the ability to prevent an amphibious landing on its shores,¹⁹⁷ a change which represented a profound threat to the KMT's traditional claim to legitimacy. By mid-1995, Lee had established civilian control over the armed forces,¹⁹⁸ but he later admitted that "during the power struggle with Hau there has been a real danger of a military coup against him."¹⁹⁹

Conservatives in the KMT also threatened to jeopardize Lee's reelection bid in the National Assembly by introducing the use of the secret ballot in the Central Committee's nomination process.²⁰⁰ Two Nonmainstream politicians, Lin Yang-kang and Chiang Wai-kuo, announced that they would challenge Lee and his running mate of the ROC presidency when it came time for the National Assembly to reelect a president. Lin and Chiang were eventually convinced by party insiders to withdraw their bid but only upon receiving a major concession in having Lee appoint Hau Pei-tsun as Premier.²⁰¹

As he consolidated his leadership over the party, Lee also began to implement his own program of reform. On 25 December 1990, Lee announce that the state of civil war with China (the "Period of Mobilization against Communist Rebellion") would end on 1 May 1991. Lee also proposed a National Affairs Conference (NAC) at which representatives of all political stripes could meet, along with business leaders, scholars

¹⁹⁷ C.L. Chiou. 1999. *Taiwan: a Democratizing Strategic Culture*. In Ken Booth and Russell Trood, eds. *Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific Region*. (London: Macmillan Press), 57.

¹⁹⁸ Hung-mao Tien, "Taiwan's Transformation", 140-41.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Tun-jen Cheng. 1993. "Democracy and Taiwan-Mainland China Ties: A Critique of Three Dominant Views." *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies* 12:1 (Spring), 73.

²⁰¹ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 151.

and others to decide on a plan of action for the next phase in the ROC's democratization, preferably one that would be acceptable to all parties involved.²⁰² The issue of the senior legislators was ultimately addressed by the suggestion that it be put to a Council of Grand Justices. The justices ordered all life-tenure legislators to step down by 31 December 1991. For its part the DPP, not satisfied with the changes, continued to push the KMT to move more quickly and to enact farther ranging objectives including direct popular election of the president. The DPP also began promoting the idea that Taiwan should rejoin the United Nations. These positions enjoyed strong support and the KMT was eventually forced to adopt them in order to remain competitive.²⁰³

The KMT Nonmainstream faction, on the other hand, believed that Lee's concessions to the opposition were an abandonment of the party's traditional commitment to political stability and Chinese nationalism and that he was moving the ROC toward an independent Taiwan. Unhappy with Lee's accelerated pace of reform, a conservative faction calling itself the New KMT Alliance (NKA) demanded that the party align itself more closely with a pro-unification stance and punish the DPP for openly advocating independence. Lee, however, recognizing that most Taiwanese did not approve of strong unificationist language and that they would oppose attempts to

²⁰² Ibid., 153.

²⁰³ Ibid., 153.

crack down on the opposition. Accommodating the NKA's demands "would run the risk of alienating the majority of native Taiwanese voters."²⁰⁴

Lee's faction eventually came to see Hau and his conservative followers as an electoral liability. In May of 1993 Lee sacked Hau as premier. In response, New KMT Alliance and KMT Nonmainstream supporters announced their intention to form the Chinese New Party (NP), with a platform calling for, among other things, greater economic integration with China and fealty to Sun Yat-sen's ideology. Although downplaying their support for unification, New Party members were well known as among the islands strongest supporters of unification.²⁰⁵ Although the loss of the New Party members reduced the KMT's majorities in the National Assembly and the Legislative Yuan, it also cleared the way for the Mainstream faction to begin addressing the final step toward democratization, direct election of the president.²⁰⁶

Another key aspect of President Lee's approach was the entrenchment of members of his "Taiwanese faction" into positions of power within the Party and the government, reflecting a shift in the composition of the Party as a whole. As Laliberte writes, "In 1969, 60.6% of KMT members were mainlanders, by 1992, 69.2% of party members were Taiwanese, including the President, Prime Minister and Chairman of the

²⁰⁴ Tun-jen Cheng and Yung-ming Hsu. 1996. "Issue Structure, the DPP's Factionalism and Party Realignment," in Hung-mao Tien, ed. *Taiwan's Electoral Politics and Democratic Transition: Riding the Third Wave*. (Armonk, M.E.: Sharpe), 152.

²⁰⁵ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 167.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 182.

Legislative Yuan.”²⁰⁷ Institutions in general began reflecting an ethnic breakdown closer to that of the actual population.

3.4 Pacts and Negotiation

Following Gill, we should at this point expect the regime to seek a compromise or pact with the opposition in order to regain control over the democratization process. Indeed this is what occurred in Taiwan. But in order to understand the notion of a pacted transition we must have an understanding of what each side brings to the table and what incentives or disincentives they have compromise with their opponent. For the KMT, a relative lack of upheaval during the key periods of the reform process allowed it to proceed at an orderly pace rather than simply opening the flood gates and hoping for the best. The party therefore saw elections and incremental liberalization as a way to improve its own legitimacy while at the same time retaining control of the process, bringing the opposition into the political process, and reducing the threat of insurgency.

For the opposition, the primary asset they brought to the table was, “popular support, expressed through elections.”²⁰⁸ Elections provided a relatively safe way to spread their message of reform and expand their influence. Even if the elections were primarily symbolic, “If the opposition perceives that it has some chance of gaining a foothold in the power structure through the electoral process, it may well choose to

²⁰⁷ Laliberte, “Between Two Nationalisms”, 11.

²⁰⁸ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 10.

“play the game.”²⁰⁹ As victories are achieved at the polls, the opposition’s commitment to the electoral process (and hence the legitimacy of the regime) increased. Elections were certainly a safer avenue than the use of protests and mass demonstrations, as evidenced by the Kaohsiung Incident. Additionally, the public was unlikely to strongly oppose the suppression of large-scale demonstrations as, “most Taiwanese agreed that these activities threatened public order and stability at a time when Taiwan could ill afford internal weakness.”²¹⁰ As Rigger notes, “For all but the most hard-bitten dissidents, this combination of carrots and sticks inspired moderation.”²¹¹ Elections were also one area where the KMT could not simply shut the opposition down. Although many forms of protest and dissent received little sympathy from the Taiwanese people, “elections were a fundamental, institutionalized component of the ROC political system,”²¹² and therefore provided the best opportunity for expressing displeasure with the regime.

The idea of a “pact” is most explicitly expressed by the fact that, for the KMT, acceptance of the DPP as a legal opposition party was contingent on three conditions: no use of violence, no advocacy of separatism and no support of communism.²¹³ The idea of a pact can also be seen in the formation of the NAC in 1990 to resolve important constitutional disagreements and develop an agenda for future reforms, particularly

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 14.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 113.

²¹¹ Ibid., 181.

²¹² Ibid., 10.

²¹³ Haggard, “The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions”, 295.

issues relating to Taiwan-mainland relations.²¹⁴ The NAC held more than 100 meetings throughout Taiwan in addition to regular sessions in Taipei, resulting in four major points of agreement: 1.) repealing the Temporary Provisions; 2.) reforming the Legislative Yuan by devising a way to force the “senior legislators” to retire; 3.) apportioning some seats in the legislative Yuan along party lines to replace the seats held by representatives of mainland districts; and 4.) to hold a popular election of the president, although it was not decided if this would be a direct or indirect election.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Hung-mao Tien, “Taiwan’s Transformation”, 137.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS: DEMOCRATIZATION, NATIONALISM AND WAR

Having examined the internal and external dynamics of a modern democratic transition we are now in a better position to take a more critical look at Mansfield and Snyder's theoretical argument and the conclusions they put forward about the dynamics at play in a democratizing state. In order to examine the idea of nationalism, central to Mansfield and Snyder's argument, we must have a clearer understanding of what this concept mean in the Taiwanese context.

4.1 Nationalism in the Taiwanese Context

Firstly, nationalism in Taiwan does not take a single form but instead takes a variety of forms, including a variety of overlapping positions. Central to any discussion of nationalism in Taiwan, however, are the issues of independence and identity. It is possible, to think of nationalism in Taiwan as, what Buruma calls, "the clash between Taiwan's new nationalists and China's old Nationalists."²¹⁶ However this implies that the distinction is primarily between the old Chinese Nationalists in the "Nationalist Party" (the KMT) and the new (Taiwanese) nationalists of the DPP, a characterization which, partly due to Lee Teng-hui's transformation of the KMT, no longer applies. Among the reasons why this is no longer the case is the fact that many of the KMT's

²¹⁵ Ibid., 137.

²¹⁶ Buruma, "Taiwan's New Nationalists", 79.

hardline “Chinese Nationalists” split off to form the Chinese New Party in 1993 and, in the wake of the 1996 presidential elections, the most radical wing of the DPP split off to form the Taiwanese Independence Party (TAIP) in 1997,²¹⁷ making it more difficult to characterize the DPP as the party of Taiwanese nationalism (in the sense that Taiwanese nationalism means independence).

Secondly, if we take a Western social science perspective as our starting point in analyzing the political situation in Taiwan we are likely to see it as a “nationalist conflict.” As Rigger writes,

Nationalist thinkers look at national identity from the perspective of ethnicity theory. In essence, they see Taiwan’s national identity debate as a struggle between Chinese nationalism (*zhonghua minzu zhuyi*) and Taiwanese nationalism (*Taiwan minzu zhuyi*) which must be resolved if Taiwan is to achieve stability and coherence as a modern nation-state. Resolving the struggle requires choosing between unification, the position advocated by Chinese nationalists, and independence, the Taiwanese nationalist’s preference.²¹⁸

The essential problem with this approach, is that most Taiwanese are not nationalists, nor do they wish to vote for people who take such positions on issues of identity and independence, nor do they necessarily want the independence issue “resolved.” As Rigger writes,

...when it comes to geographical identity, in which history plays an important role, Taiwanese are twice as likely to link themselves to the mainland as to assert a separate identity. And they are even more likely to view themselves as “Chinese,” an ethnic and cultural category. But when it comes to politics, there is a strong consensus that Taiwan should be autonomous.²¹⁹

²¹⁷ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 169.

²¹⁸ Shelley Rigger. 1999. “Social Science and National Identity: A Critique,” *Pacific Affairs* 72 (Winter 1999-2000), 539-40.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 549.

So, do people on Taiwan see themselves as Chinese or Taiwanese? Confusingly, “we now know that most Taiwanese believe they are both.”²²⁰ Does this constitute an “identity crisis”? Not necessarily. Rigger argues that the unification/independence dichotomy is a false one and that most Taiwanese understand this and that this is reflected in their voting. It may be plausible that the way this issue has been constructed on Taiwan is strongly related to the influence of Western social science on Taiwanese academics and political leaders. Even this, however, has been argued in Western social science terms. For example, Taiwanese social scientist, Chiang I-hua, argues that,

...most Taiwanese support the status quo because most Taiwanese are not nationalists, but liberals. They do not accept the need for correspondence between the nation and the state; on the contrary, they believe that the essence of the state is its ability to protect the rights of its citizens and facilitate democracy.²²¹

It may be the case that, rather than being Western-style liberals, most Taiwanese simply believe that “the boundaries of the state are less important than the nature of the state. Thus, they can imagine Taiwan as part of a democratic China, or as a separate democratic country.”²²² The goal of the average Taiwanese voter then is not an independent Taiwan based on Taiwanese ethnic nationalism, but the perseverance of Taiwanese autonomy. If improved relations with Beijing “will ease cross-strait tensions and strengthen Taiwan’s autonomy, then most Taiwanese will support continued negotiations. If Beijing pushes too hard toward Taiwan’s annexation, a majority of

²²⁰ Ibid., 543.

Taiwanese could come to see independence as their best bet for preserving autonomy.”²²³

Whatever the “true” nature of Taiwanese political culture, one pattern which can clearly be observed is how Taiwan’s electorate has systematically rejected candidates, parties and factions who espouse a nationalistic view (of either type) or a “solution” to the ROC-PRC situation. This electoral reality has resulted in a convergence on issues of identity and independence by the mainstream factions within both the main parties and a steady reduction in support for candidates, factions and parties with nationalistic positions and platforms. As Rigger notes, both the main parties now, “emphasize preserving Taiwan’s de facto autonomy and eschew the declaration of formal (de jure) independence. By taking this position, the parties have finally brought their policies into line with the preference of most voters.”²²⁴ This pattern can be seen in several different elections where issues of independence and identity came to the forefront, particularly the 1991 National Assembly elections, the 1992 Legislative Yuan elections, the 1994 mayoral election in Taipei and the 1996 and 2000 presidential elections.

Nationalism and Democracy in Taiwan

On the eve of the 1991 National Assembly elections, a DPP convention amended the party platform to state that “the formation of an independent sovereign Republic of Taiwan with the establishment of a new constitution must be decided upon

²²¹ Chiang I-hua quoted in Rigger, “Social Science and National Identity: A Critique”, 548.

²²² Rigger, “Social Science and National Identity: A Critique”, 548.

²²³ Ibid., 550-51.

²²⁴ Ibid., 538.

by all Taiwan inhabitants through a plebiscite.”²²⁵ This bold move immediately prompted the infamous response from PRC president Yang Shangkun, warning that “those who play with fire will be burned to ashes.”²²⁶ Undeterred, the DPP went ahead with the change.

The maneuver could however be considered an act of intra-party political strategy, rather than blind folly, on the part of DPP moderates. If the party formally ran a campaign with such an unambiguous position on such a key issue it would, in effect, become a referendum on DPP policy. In this way the issue of independence within the party could be resolved outside the party, ensuring that future debates on the issue would be argued with clear knowledge by all of voters reaction to the policy position. As Rigger writes, “If the voters rejected independence, DPP moderates would be able to put the debate within the party to rest.”²²⁷

In the election, held in December 1991, the KMT won an unqualified victory trouncing the DPP by receiving 67.72 percent of the votes cast and 254 seats. In contrast the DPP received only 22.78 percent of the vote and 66 seats, a weak performance considering it won nearly 30 percent of the popular vote in 1989.²²⁸ As Rigger writes, voters “quickly revealed themselves more frightened than inspired by the DPP’s bold drive for independence.”²²⁹ Within the larger story of the election lies an

²²⁵ Quoted in Hung-mao tien, “Taiwan’s Transformation”, 136.

²²⁶ Quoted in Hung-mao Tien, “Taiwan’s Transformation”, 137.

²²⁷ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 156-57.

²²⁸ Quingguo Jia. 1994. “Toward the Center: Implications of Integration and Democratization for Taiwan’s Mainland Policy.” *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies* 13:1 (Spring), 60.

²²⁹ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 157.

even more nuanced rejection of nationalism on the part of the voters. As Quingguo Jia writes, “Not only did the voters opt for the KMT with unusual enthusiasm despite the fact that it had a pro-unification mainlander as the premier, they also dumped many radical pro-independence DPP candidates. Including Lin Cho-shui who is known as the theoretician of Taiwan independence within the DPP.”²³⁰ Moderates in both parties were bolstered by the results of the 1991 elections. The vote convincingly demonstrated the need for the DPP to, “shed the image of an outsider party obsessed with Taiwan independence.”²³¹ And instead work harder at proposing, “realistic and responsible solutions to problems that mattered to ordinary Taiwanese.”²³² Never again would the DPP embrace independence the way it did in 1991, choosing instead to focus on opposing unification and emphasizing the drive for a UN seat.

The results of the 1991 elections cannot, however, be taken as an indication of strong support for the cause of Chinese unification. As Tun-jen Cheng argues, despite the presence of several prominent conservatives in the KMT campaign, the parties strong showing can primarily be attributed to the popular rejection of the DPP’s radical positions and the fact that the KMT election strategy, “was based on their mobilization of voters in the military residential compounds and their smart campaign for public policy, rather than the cause of national unification, a theme actually downplayed during the campaign.”²³³ This same pattern of rejecting extreme nationalistic views was

²³⁰ Quingguo Jia, “Toward the Center”, 61.

²³¹ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 160.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Tun-jen Cheng, “Democracy and Taiwan-Mainland China Ties”, 80.

repeated in the 1992 Legislative Yuan elections, albeit with the positions reversed. With the radical separatist option having been repudiated in the previous election, the DPP was free to adopt a much more mainstream and electorally appealing platform. The DPP campaigned in terms of “gradual development” on the straits issue and was able to put the KMT on the defensive by putting much more emphasis on practical issues such as corruption in government, growing inequality in Taiwan society, environmental problems, and other issues which had a more direct impact on people’s everyday lives.²³⁴ The election, held in December 1992, saw the fortunes of the two parties reversed. This time around the KMT managed to receive only 53.03 percent of popular votes and 94 out of 161 seats, a 21.71 percent drop in support from the previous year. The DPP, on the other hand, won 31.03 percent of the vote and 51 seats, its best result to that point.²³⁵

The first ever direct presidential election was held on March 23, 1996. The KMT candidate was popular Taiwanese president Lee Teng-hui while the DPP decided to nominate the formerly exiled 1960s independence hero Peng Ming-min. Despite an attempt by the PRC to intimidate voters, the results were a clear and unambiguous show of support for Lee and his policy of “pragmatic diplomacy.” The relatively unknown and untested Peng was dealt a devastating rebuke, receiving only 21.1 percent of the vote to Lee’s landslide 54 percent. The magnitude of the defeat led both to

²³⁴ Quingguo Jia, “Toward the Center”, 61.

²³⁵ Jurgen Domes. 1997. “Electoral and Party Politics in Democratization.” In Steve Tsang and Hung-mao Tien, eds. *Democratization in Taiwan: Implications for China*. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press), 55.

apologies from DPP chairman Shih Ming-te and eventually to the formation of a new independence-minded party under Peng.

As in the legislative elections, the DPP quickly learned its lesson and returned for the next round of elections with a new strategy. As always, the primary disadvantage that the DPP took into the 2000 presidential campaign was the public's perception of it as "a dangerously radical political force,"²³⁶ due to its historical association with Taiwan independence. As Rigger writes, "Given Beijing's repeated promises to use military force to prevent Taiwan's permanent separation from China, Taiwanese voters understandably were reluctant to entrust the DPP with national power."²³⁷ While the DPP appears to have made a significant tactical mistake in recruiting Peng for the 1996 campaign, the party selected a more moderate candidate for the 2000 contest, former Taipei mayor Chen Shui-bien. In his 1994 mayoral campaign Chen had distinguished himself among DPP politicians by dropping the traditional party slogans of political reform, corruption and identity and replaced them with the "fresh themes" of hope, optimism and efficiency.²³⁸ Chen also stood out among DPP candidates in 1996 when, after a group of Taiwan Independence extremists nearly torpedoed his campaign with inflammatory separatist rhetoric, he publicly and

²³⁶ Shelley Rigger. 2000. "Taiwan's Turnaround." *Current History* 99:638 (September), 280.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Shelley Rigger. 1997. "Taiwan Rides the Democratic Dragon." *Washington Quarterly* 23:2 (Spring), 111.

vehemently repudiated their position.²³⁹ This approach proved popular as Chen won the hard-fought race with 44 percent support.

Becoming mayor of Taipei was one thing but becoming the first ever DPP president of the ROC would be a much more difficult task. No matter what position Chen took on any issue, he simply “would not win unless he could convince the voters that he was capable of maintaining peaceful ties with Beijing. Otherwise, even Taiwanese who had chosen DPP candidates for local offices would be unwilling to hand the reins of national power to a DPP candidate.”²⁴⁰ When attacked by both the KMT and CCP agitators on the mainland, Chen stressed the DPP position that, because the ROC is already an independent state, there is no need to declare independence or make any changes to the constitution. He also declared that he would only initiate a referendum on independence if Taiwan came under attack from the PRC. Surprisingly, many of Chen’s proposal’s concerning the mainland appeared more moderate and accommodating than those of KMT candidate Lien Chan, including a proposal to open direct trade and transportation links to the mainland.²⁴¹

Throughout the campaign, Chen made numerous statements aimed at calming fears about cross-strait relations. He summarized these commitments in his inaugural address, enumerating “Five Nos”: no declaration of independence, no change in the Republic of China name, no revision of the constitution to include any, “special state-to-state” theory, no referendum on independence, and no abolition of the National

²³⁹ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 172.

Unification Guidelines. All five commitments hold as long as the People's Republic of China does not use force against Taiwan. After the June 2000 summit meeting between North and South Korea's leaders, Chen went even further, inviting Chinese President Jiang Zemin to join him at a similar event.²⁴² In the end Chen was able to overcome the doubts of many of the soft DPP supporters and on election day received 39 percent of the popular vote. Due to vote splitting between popular former KMT provincial governor James Soong (who was tainted by a corruption scandal that broke during the campaign) and Lee Teng-hui's preferred successor, former vice-president Lien Chan (who was perceived by many as ineffective, too conservative and leading the party in a dangerously pro-unification direction²⁴³). Chen's 39 percent was enough to elect him president of the ROC - the first time the DPP had managed to capture a branch of the government.

DPP-KMT Convergence

The obvious result of the electorates consistent rejection of extreme positions on nationalist issues is that the two parties have increasingly begun to resemble one another in matters of identity, independence and unification. While the mainstream of both parties were closely associated with Chinese nationalism and Taiwanese nationalism respectively only a decade ago, this is clearly no longer the case. As Rigger writes, the parties "have begun to converge on a moderate approach to the national

²⁴⁰ Rigger, "Taiwan's Turnaround", 281.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid., 284.

identity problem. While the parties continue to pay lip service to polarized positions (the KMT still calls for unification, while the DPP advocates independence), their concrete policy recommendations increasingly support the status quo.”²⁴⁴ The establishment of the Taiwan Independence Party, and the corresponding movement of the rest of the party toward a consensus with the KMT at the National Development Conference in December of 1996, was seen as a strong indicator that the mainstream wings of both parties would henceforth attempt to keep the issues of independence out of electoral politics as much as possible.²⁴⁵

As early as 1994, DPP party President Shi Ming-de openly admitted that the KMT’s views on national defense and foreign affairs had been converging with the DPP’s.²⁴⁶ There is even evidence to suggest that, during the democratic transition, the Formosan faction of the DPP entered into a dialogue with Mainstream KMT reformers to build a broad coalition of activists to lead the democratic reform.²⁴⁷ There is also some indication that, in the era of president Chen, many KMT legislators whose policy positions are close to those of former president Lee are unhappy with Lien Chan and are now being courted by the DPP, as evidenced by the widely bi-partisan make-up of Chen’s cabinet and political appointments. Chen’s foreign, cross-strait affairs, and

²⁴³ Shelley Rigger. 2001. “Taiwan’s Perilous Transition.” *Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Notes*, June 6, 2001.

²⁴⁴ Rigger, “Social Science and National Identity: A Critique”, 538.

²⁴⁵ Christopher R. Hughes. 1997. “Democratization and Beijing’s Taiwan Policy.” In Steve Tsang and Hung-mao Tien, eds. *Democratization in Taiwan: Implications for China*. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press), 143.

²⁴⁶ Wong, “The Impact of State Development...”, 185.

²⁴⁷ Hung-mao Tien, “Taiwan’s Transition”, 143.

defence portfolios - as well as the head of the Mainland Affairs Council, are all held by officials with strong KMT ties.²⁴⁸

4.2 Assessing Mansfield and Snyder's Argument

Widening the Political Spectrum

If we analyze the Taiwanese Case in reference to Mansfield and Snyder's theoretical argument we see many similarities but also several fundamental differences. Democratization in Taiwan very clearly did create a "wider spectrum of politically significant groups with diverse, incompatible interests."²⁴⁹ From a regime completely dominated by the KMT, and particularly its ruling elite in the Central Standing Committee, to a free-wheeling democracy with a wide variety of political actors and interests, including several significant political parties and an array of civil society groups, this aspect of democratization cannot be denied in the Taiwanese case. On the issue of these groups having incompatible interests there is also little doubt that this in fact was the case. If one party advocates unification with the mainland and another calls for an immediate plebiscite on independence (the early 1990s scenario), these are apparently incompatible interests.

Inflexible Interests and Short Time Horizons

Mansfield and Snyder see inflexible interests as assets which "cannot be readily adapted to changing political and economic conditions."²⁵⁰ While certain individuals and interests during Taiwan's transition fit this description, they tended to be peripheral to

²⁴⁸ Rigger, "Taiwan's Turnaround", 282.

the changes that took place and had little ability to halt or manage their progress. Part of the problem here is that Mansfield and Snyder take a very limited view of “interests,” i.e. property, influence, access to patronage, etc. All of these are interests which almost exclusively affect elites, a group which by definition is very small. While it is true that democratization has been bad for business as far as old-style political corruption goes (particularly now that President Chen has set up a special prosecutors’ office to investigate the practices of Taiwan’s “black gold” - politics including bid rigging, bribery, kickback schemes, and vote buying²⁵¹) the beneficiaries of corruption seem to have had an extremely limited ability to slow or halt the pace of change. Since corruption tends to nearly always be a hot issue with voters successful politicians, particularly those new to the system, will tend to take increasingly tough stands on this issue as democracy continues to be consolidated.

An interest of the type that Mansfield and Snyder fail to consider, but which had important effects on the progress of democratic reforms in Taiwan, is contacts across the strait and access to the mainland. As contacts across the strait expanded through the 1980s, a large number of Taiwanese developed vested interests in their continued and expanded access to the PRC. These interests are not only business and financial but also concern such things as access to relatives as well as cultural, travel and leisure opportunities becoming increasingly important to Taiwanese, not only in terms of business interests but also family and leisure interests as well. The expansion of

²⁴⁹ Mansfield and Snyder, “Democratization and the Danger of War”, 5.

contacts across the strait means that these interests are now not only “inflexible” on the Taiwanese side but for the PRC as well. As Van Kemenade writes, in the wake of Lee Teng-hui’s comments in the summer of 1999 about “state-to-state” relations between Taiwan and the PRC, Taiwanese businessmen in Fujian province were visited by top provincial officials. To their surprise the officials were not there to issue threats or rebuke Lee’s comments but to provide, “assurances that their interests would not be harmed in any way by a potential fallout from Lee’s statehood claim and asking them not to “flee.” One businessman was quoted as saying that the provincial officials were more nervous than the Taiwanese themselves, not about imminent war but about the Taiwanese abandoning their investment projects.”²⁵² Fundamental interests like peace and stability tend to benefit virtually all parties involved. As Rigger writes, “Preserving peace in the Taiwan Strait is a prerequisite for all of Taiwan’s other goals. Without a peaceful relationship with China, Taiwan’s economy will not grow, its people will not feel secure and its international ties will not expand.”²⁵³ Peace and stability, like access to the mainland, is an example of a vested interest on which voters are very “inflexible” and are not willing to let the extreme views of politicians on either side of the nationalist divide set the agenda.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 27-28.

²⁵¹ Rigger, “Taiwan’s Turnaround”, 283.

²⁵² Willem van Kemenade. 2000. “Taiwan, voting for trouble?” *Washington Quarterly* 23:2 (Spring), 146.

Competitive Mass Mobilization

Competitive mobilization is also problematic when looking at the Taiwanese case. While both the KMT and DPP employed election strategies of mobilizing large numbers of supporters behind their parties this, strictly speaking, is not strictly what Mansfield and Snyder are referring to. Mansfield and Snyder argue that “In a period of democratization, threatened elite groups have an overwhelming incentive to mobilize allies among the mass of people, but only on their own terms, using whatever special resources they still retain.”²⁵⁴ This scenario more closely describes what Rigger calls the KMT regime’s era of “mobilizational authoritarianism.” She characterizes this by stating that, “a major function of elections was to facilitate mobilization; that is, participation that was controlled by the ruling party.”²⁵⁵ The period of “mobilizational authoritarianism” in Taiwan, however, primarily occurred before the democratization process got under way in earnest. The co-opting of Taiwanese political leaders into the KMT may have been on the party’s terms initially, but these same candidates quickly began to transform the party that co-opted them. A Taiwanese politician led the KMT by 1988 and the Taiwanese faction had consolidated its leadership over the party by 1993. Clearly this is not the kind of elite manipulation of mass groups that Mansfield and Snyder refer to. Although the party retained many of its “special resources” (patronage, organizational networks, media control, etc.) well into the 1990s (if not the present), the special resource the KMT hardliners did not have was electoral support in

²⁵³ Rigger, “Taiwan Rides the Democratic Dragon.”, 114.

large numbers, thus quickly allowing their opponents to gain control of the party and begin setting the agenda in a way which was inimical to their interests.

Weakening Central Authority

Mansfield and Snyder describe weakening central authority as a situation where “autocratic power is in decline vis-a-vis both the elite interest groups and mass groups, but democratic institutions lack the strength to integrate these contending interests and views. Parties are weak and lack mass loyalty. Elections are rigged or intermittent.”²⁵⁶

This was clearly not the case in Taiwan. Although autocratic power was in decline, democratic institutions were very successful in bringing a variety of groups and interests into the political process and allowing them to present their views to the public. The two main parties received the overwhelming number of votes in elections where participation rates routinely exceeded 70%.²⁵⁷ Additionally, elections were for the most part free and open and almost never cancelled. All of these factors greatly served to increase the authority of the central government rather than weaken it.

The charge that democratization weakened the authority of the central government to advance a coherent policy toward the mainland is also unproven. As Tun-jen Cheng writes, “To the extent that Taiwan’s policy toward the mainland was anarchical, it was probably due to the political elites’ preoccupation with regime change and power transfer within the KMT. As soon as the new leadership under President

²⁵⁴ Mansfield and Snyder, “Democratization and the Danger of War”, 28.

²⁵⁵ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 3.

²⁵⁶ Mansfield and Snyder, “Democratization and the Danger of War”, 40.

²⁵⁷ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 148-177.

Lee consolidated its power, a three-layer institutional framework dealing with mainland policy was established in late 1990.”²⁵⁸ Lee’s three pronged approach included the creation of the National Unification Council (NUC), the Mainland Affairs Commission (MAC), and the Strait Exchange Foundation (SEF). The NUC is a non-partisan advisory organ attached to the office of the president which provides guidelines, reconciles different views, and regulates the pace of the development of relations with the mainland. The MAC is attached to the cabinet and makes mainland policy according to the guidelines set by the NUC. Policies are executed through the SEF, nominally a private association but which is in fact delegated official authority. As Cheng writes, “overall the institutional capacity in managing the mainland affairs has greatly improved.”²⁵⁹

Squaring the Circle/Integrating Opposites

The issue of weakening central authority is closely related to the ability of a state’s institutions to reconcile competing or contradictory claims in a peaceful way and thus mitigate the open (violent) conflict which would likely otherwise prevail. Although Taiwan’s institutional arrangements thus far have little experience in dealing with a situation of divided government (a DPP president and a KMT legislature), the primary institution for reconciling competing claims, both between parties and within them, is democracy itself (elections). As Cheng writes, democracy, “...provides a legitimate institutional device, probably the only peaceful method, to attempt to deal with the

²⁵⁸ Tun-jen Cheng, “Democracy and Taiwan-Mainland China Ties”, 83.

most sensitive and volatile issue of Taiwan's independence versus its unification with the mainland."²⁶⁰ Democracy in Taiwan has given parties a "...political market to periodically test their 'products',"²⁶¹ and as such, democratic institutions in Taiwan have meant that it is not necessary to integrate opposites in order for a stable government to be created. Because both parties realize that their ability to form a legitimate government is dependent on the support of the voters, they have voluntarily converged on a moderate position, while more nationalist factions have consistently seen their vote shares reduced.

Prestige Strategies

Mansfield and Snyder state that, "One of the simplest but most risky strategies for a hard-pressed regime in a democratizing country is to shore up its prestige at home by seeking victories abroad."²⁶² The possibility of a Chinese invasion or another type of military conflict with China has virtually eliminated any chance of the ROC government adopting a prestige strategy (of the type which Mansfield and Snyder refer to) as a way of dealing with domestic legitimacy issues. Because Taiwan's foreign relations are so dominated by the presence of the PRC any "prestige" strategy would primarily be concerned with the ROC's recognition by other states, international bodies or organizations, possibly against the wishes of the PRC, a strategy which might be popular domestically but could carry considerable risks.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 74.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 85.

²⁶² Mansfield and Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War", 33.

Upon coming to power in 1988, Lee Teng-hui began adopting a new pragmatic diplomacy approach to foreign relations. He sent the governor of the Central Bank to the annual meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Manila in 1988 and again sent a delegation to the meeting in Beijing a year later. The ROC developed diplomatic relations with Grenada, Bahamas, Liberia and Belize in 1989 and Nicaragua and Lesotho in 1990. The ROC applied to become a member of the general Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and in the summer of 1993 appealed for a return to the UN. President Lee also visited many foreign states, including the U.S. in 1995, greatly increasing Taiwan's international profile.²⁶³

The PRC response to Lee's pragmatic diplomacy was an all-out effort to block Taiwan's entry into international organization and undercut Taipei's remaining diplomatic ties. In 1996 China convinced both the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (ARF) and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) to pass membership rules that essentially disqualify Taiwan by requiring sovereignty as a minimum qualification.²⁶⁴ Despite this, Taiwan continues to actively seek membership in a variety of international bodies including the UN. As Rigger writes, "Domestic political considerations make it impossible for the ROC government to abandon pragmatic diplomacy; according to surveys taken in 1997, about 70 percent of

²⁶³ Chyuan-jeng Shiau. 1997. "Civil Society and Democratization." In Steve Tsang and Hung-mao Tien, eds. *Democratization in Taiwan: Implications for China*. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press), 111.

²⁶⁴ Yun-han Chu. 1997. "The Challenges of Democratic Consolidation." In Steve Tsang and Hung-mao Tien, eds. *Democratization in Taiwan: Implications for China*. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press), 155.

Taiwanese want their government to pursue international relations even if doing so damages cross-straits ties.”²⁶⁵ However, this should not be perceived as an issue which could potentially put China and Taiwan on a war footing, as evidenced by China’s move to reassure investors after Lee’s “state-to-state” comments. Actions outside of a declaration of independence are unlikely to have military consequences.

Democratic Reversals

The dominant feature of Taiwan’s democratic transition is probably the smoothness and continual forward progression of the changes being achieved while at same time maintaining relatively low levels of conflict. Unlike other democratizing states such as South Korea, the ROC did not experience military coups, routine cancellation of elections, or presidential assassinations. Democratization in Taiwan followed a steady and gradual progression, culminating in the election of an “opposition” candidate as president in 2000. This lack of reversals may be written off as “lucky,” but if we recall the argument of Gleditsch and Ward from Chapter 1 we can see that the scenarios they describe as having a significant reduction on the risk of war (“shared power between the executive and legislature, each largely staffed by officials pressured by public opinion,” reforms which “bring with them constraints on the executive branch of government,” etc.²⁶⁶), we see a number of parallels to the contemporary Taiwanese situation. These could this be some of the reasons why the democratic transition in Taiwan was so peaceful relative to many other states but these

²⁶⁵ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 191.

factors alone cannot explain why Mansfield and Snyder's argument is not generalizable to the Taiwanese case. Their primary argument, that introducing democratic competition ultimately increases militant forms of nationalism, simply does not exist in this case - and likely does not exist in many others as well.

Increase in Militant Nationalist Sentiment ?

This brings us to the key question of whether or not democratization in Taiwan led to an increase in the kind of militant nationalist sentiment which Mansfield and Snyder believe makes democratizing states more likely to be involved in war. One fact that is clear is that, "Democracy broached the issue of national identity, allowing the DPP to preach Taiwan independence and the non-mainstream to push for unification."²⁶⁷ Without democracy it is very unlikely that these nationalistic positions would have been thrown into the center of public debate in the way that they were. But unlike what Mansfield and Snyder would predict, it is also very unlikely that, were democratic elections not introduced at all levels of the ROC government, these issues would have been dealt with in the decisive way that they were and moved to the periphery of public debate. Without democracy, radical nationalist "solutions" of both types would likely continue to simmer just below the surface, waiting to be exploited by potential demagogues in a moment of crisis - a situation that is markedly more dangerous than the current one which is both pragmatic and predictable.

²⁶⁶ Ward and Gleditsch. "Democratizing for peace," 59.

²⁶⁷ Tun-jen Cheng, "Democracy and Taiwan-Mainland China Ties", 82.

This predictability is derived primarily from the fact that, “it is now impossible for any deal to be struck with the mainland that does not command the popular support in the island.”²⁶⁸ In any current or future negotiations between the two, policy will not be able to simply be set by the leadership of the party in power but will have to take into account the preferences of the electorate, Cheng, following Robert Putnam, argues that, “when negotiating with authoritarian regimes, the delegate from democratic countries can credibly argue, “I would like to, but I cannot.”²⁶⁹ While China is unlikely to accept such constraints in the short term, their long-term effect appears to be unavoidable.

Some of the domestic constraints placed on ROC leaders, such as the support for a continuation of pragmatic diplomacy, may be characterized as “nationalistic” but in no sense is this the nationalistic dynamic outlined by Mansfield and Snyder. Unlike the sorcerer’s apprentice, the mass allies of the KMT and DPP, once mobilized, have not pushed the ROC toward dangerous and provocative foreign policy positions or actions but instead have made it politically impossible for leaders to do anything which is not in line with the views of the majority of voters, views which by-and-large have tended to be quite moderate. While this insistence on democratic accountability may outwardly seem to have a negative effect on straits relations, recent evidence shows that

²⁶⁸ Wong, “The Impact of State Development...”, 185

²⁶⁹ Tun-jen Cheng, “Democracy and Taiwan-Mainland China Ties”, 84.

President Chen has actually "led Taiwan away from the cliff of cross-strait relations."²⁷⁰ As Rigger writes,

Beijing's failure to follow through on its earlier threats has already enhanced Chen's standing with the Taiwanese people. To an electorate fearful of war, China's lukewarm reactions so far are a relief; at the same time, Chen is in line with public opinion when he refuses to accept Beijing's terms for beginning negotiations. In short, Chen already has made more "progress" on cross-strait relations than most voters expected.²⁷¹

Now that Taiwan has firmly institutionalized its method of authorizing cross straits policy, the ball has largely been placed in the PRC's court.

Conclusions About the Taiwan Straits, War, and Nationalism on the Mainland

While we can rest assured that Mansfield and Snyder's argument is not generalizable to a wide variety of states across time and space, we can be particularly confident that it does not apply to the Republic of China on Taiwan - a case in which democratic elections appear to have an effect opposite the one described by Mansfield and Snyder. Having established this, what insights can be drawn from this analysis concerning the future of cross-Strait relations? In 1996 Ian Buruma wrote that, in the wake of the presidential election on Taiwan, "Beijing in losing political face. Taiwan has a democracy while Beijing has nothing but force."²⁷² Five years later this is true to an even greater extent as the ROC presidency has now successfully been transferred from the ruling party to the opposition while China remains trapped in the same political and economic contradictions it has faced since the late 1970s.

²⁷⁰ Rigger, "Taiwan's Perilous Transition."

²⁷¹ Rigger, "Taiwan's Turnaround", 284.

²⁷² Buruma, "Taiwan's New Nationalists", 78.

Rigger has noted that many of the politicians in the new DPP administration, “believe that China’s domestic political conflicts make it impossible for Beijing to respond favorably to Taiwan’s concessions.”²⁷³ Those studying the possibilities of conflict or peaceful resolution of the Taiwan Straits issue should now shift their attention to the domestic politics of the PRC, as it is that state’s internal political struggles which will decide the future of the Taiwan Straits dilemma.

Taking a theoretical approach similar to the one outlined by Gill, we should only expect to see significant movement on the Straits issue for China if moderate reformers are able to wrest power from the current generation of PRC leaders. While elements of regime disunity may be apparent in China, substantial liberalization and the development of a civil society seem unlikely at this point. As Chen writes, although, “The locus for decision-making in the post-Mao era has shifted from the politburo and its standing committee to the party secretariat and the inner circle of the state council, supported by increasingly professionalized technocrats and research institutions,”²⁷⁴ there is still no institutional framework able to successfully “integrate opposites.” As he writes, “while authoritarian regimes can suppress internal dissent, democracy is a device for consensus to emerge from below.”²⁷⁵ This ability for consensus to emerge from below is the primary factor which allowed for a relatively peaceful democratic transition on Taiwan. The lack of such mechanisms in China mean that any future liberalization of the political system could have much less peaceful results.

²⁷³ Rigger, “Taiwan’s Turnaround”, 284.

This inability for consensus to emerge under the current institutional arrangements in the PRC therefore presents a potentially volatile and extremely dangerous situation. This situation would however, contrary to Mansfield and Snyder, would likely be improved rather than worsened by democratic reforms, providing that stable democratic institutions could be established or built out of the preexisting authoritarian institutions as happened on Taiwan. A lack of institutional avenues for citizens to make their preferences known and clear to their government as well as the military elites could have a profound effect on government policy and on divisions within the regime. It appears that at least some substantial differences of opinion exist between the civilian and military leadership at this point, particularly over sensitive nationalist issues like Taiwan. As Van Kemanade writes, "The assumption is that Jiang, after the death of Deng Xiaoping in 1997, had consolidated his authority over the military and has persuaded the generals to refrain from any military intimidation."²⁷⁶ But despite the current show of restraint, circumstantial evidence suggests also shows that although, "For the time being, the civilian leadership has the final say,"²⁷⁷ it is widely believed that "the Chinese military still favors a hardline approach towards Taiwan and considers war inevitable in the mid to long term."²⁷⁸ In the event of a power struggle for leadership in the PRC it is conceivable that a hardline nationalist approach to Taiwan could be a powerful card that more than one faction might seek to play.

²⁷⁴ Tun-jen Cheng, "Democracy and Taiwan-Mainland China Ties", 85.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Van Kemanade, "Taiwan, voting for trouble?", 137

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 135

There is also some evidence that a sorcerer's apprentice may be struggling to become free of it's master in mainland China. Recent evidence shows that decades of nationalist oriented propaganda in China appears to have created a large and enthusiastic audience for militant nationalistic messages. When the state-run *China Business Times News Weekly* bragged on 11 August 2000 in a two-paged spread that, "war could break out any day and that Taiwan's resistance would not last longer than five days"²⁷⁹ sales of the newspaper immediately quadrupled to over 400,000. It appears that, "this kind of drumbeating is genuinely popular in the upsurge of post-Kosovo, anti-western nationalism that prevails in China."²⁸⁰ But in the wake of the April 2001 U.S. "Spy Plane" incident, the nationalist drumbeating may have reached an uncomfortable levels for the CCP elite, as evidenced by their decision to discourage and subdue displays of anti-American nationalism, rather than encouraging them as they did in the wake of the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999.²⁸¹ An open political power struggle or another such political crisis could potentially provide the necessary scenario in which competing factions within the PRC would seek to employ the kind of nationalist strategies that Mansfield and Snyder refer to in their effort to quickly gain the support of mass allies. Although it is unclear whether this situation is at all likely in China at this time, the preceding analysis of the ROC clearly shows its impossibility in democratic Taiwan.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 143.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ "White House Says it Sees Some Hope to End Standoff," *New York Times*, April 6, 2001, p.A1.

Ironically, Mansfield and Snyder's theoretical argument seems much more applicable to the PRC, a state which is not generally perceived as having moved very far in the direction of democratic governance, than a democratizing state such as the ROC. This leads one to suspect that a revised version of their article ought to be given a new title, perhaps, "Weak Legitimacy and the Danger of War," or some similar claim. While a claim such as this is not likely to drum up the same kind of controversy and attention as the original article, it would likely be much more reflective of the actual dynamics at work.

In order to more properly examine the relationships between democratization, nationalism and war in contemporary Asia it is clearly insufficient to study the democratic transition on Taiwan alone. Taiwan has often been referred to a *sui generis* among states and few generalizations can be made from its experience, especially where international issues are concerned. The Republic of Korea (ROK) presents an interesting counterpart to the ROC for studying questions of democratization, nationalism and war. Both states have a longtime hostile rival rooted in the legacy of their respective civil wars, both have a long history of U.S. involvement in their internal and external politics, and both have been involved in long and arduous struggles to achieve a democratic form of government. An analysis of the common features of nationalism and democracy in these two states could go a long way to furthering our understanding of democratization and war in the contemporary Northeast Asian context. Ultimately though, any serious study of such issues must be prepared to

explore these questions in the context of China itself, as it is no understatement to say that the future of the PRC will go a long way to determining the future of Asia itself.

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