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Discussion Paper
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When Ma Ying-jeou assumed the presidency of the ROC in 2008 a large part of his administration's policy towards national identity was aimed at undoing the legacy of the Chen Shui-bian administration. In this respect, he worked in tandem with the CCP to implement a strategy based on the following principles, put in place since the meeting between KMT Chairman Lien Chan and CCP Chairman Hu Jintao in 2005.

First, in line with the PRC's Taiwan strategy under Hu Jintao, Taiwanese independence was to be opposed, but unification was not to be discussed. This ambiguity is encapsulated in what the Hu-Lien meeting defined as the "1992 Consensus".

Second, measures had to be taken to shape the process of Taiwan's "nativisation". Whereas the Chen administration had emphasized Taiwan's unique identity, Ma emphasized the contribution to Taiwan's development made by incomers from mainland China over the centuries. By stressing that the population was composed of waves of immigrants and was being shaped by the forces of globalization, the DPP could be portrayed as advocates of a chauvinistic form of ethnic Taiwanese nationalism that would divide society and risk conflict with the PRC. This form of "nativisation" was compatible with that proposed by Hu Jintao, who compared it to the nativisation of provincial identities inside the PRC.

Third, to roll back the consolidation of a separate Taiwanese identity, Ma took active measures to "de-Taiwanize" society. His inaugural address in 2008 thus referred to people on both sides of the Strait as the *Zhonghuaminzu*, a term that implies Chineseness defined by racial and cultural unity. Embassies and overseas representative offices were ordered to stop describing foreigners coming to the island as "Coming to Taiwan" (*fang tai*), and to use the term "Coming to China" (*fang hua*). The opposite side of the Strait was to be called "the Mainland", "Mainland China", or "the Mainland area", rather than "China". The postal service had its name changed back from "Taiwan Post" to "China Post". The Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall also reverted to its original name, after having been rechristened the National Taiwan Democracy Memorial Hall under the Chen administration. Ma also appealed to Confucian values, making Classical Chinese and Confucian morality required material for school courses again. Such measures were given new momentum by the establishment of Taiwan's first Ministry of Culture, under the leadership of Mme Lung Ying-tai, the daughter of a veteran of the ROC army and an outspoken critic of Taiwan's "nativisation" who is well known for her interest in the democratization of the PRC.

Fourth, it was assumed that the development of a separate Taiwanese identity would be eroded by the rapid liberalization and expansion of cross-Strait trade and investment. As the welfare of individuals became tied to the mainland they destiny would be identified with that of China. This was a continuation of the basic belief underpinning Deng Xiaoping's strategy of "peaceful unification" under "one country, two systems". It was fully articulated by Vice President Vincent Siew as the "One China Common Market", leading to some kind of political integration.

There were several reasons for developing such a strategy. First, it promised to improve relations with Beijing and Washington, by presenting Taiwan as a pillar of the international status quo. Second, it promised to revive what many perceived to be Taiwan's flagging economy.

The strategy also appears to have reflected the commitment to Chinese nationalism by some senior figures in the KMT. Ma has often expressed his personal commitment to the version of Chinese nationalism that he had learned from family life and in the KMT. Throughout his political career he has also been known for his commitment to the political transformation of the Chinese mainland and he continued to express his hope that Taiwan's democratization would spread to mainland China throughout his two administrations. His personal identification with China was also expressed through performing symbolic acts, such as leading the memorial ceremony for the Yellow Emperor, the mythical founder of the Chinese nation.

The divergence of policy and public opinion

Opinion polls show that Ma's strategy towards national identity was increasingly out of touch with public opinion. Before he became president, the majority was willing to accept themselves as being "both Taiwanese and Chinese". Shortly after he assumed power, the majority began to identify themselves as "Taiwanese only". By the time he ran for re-election in March 2012, this figure had reached a new high of 54 percent, while those identifying themselves as "both Taiwanese and Chinese" had dropped to 40 percent. Those identifying as just "Chinese" made up a mere 3 per cent.[1] An opinion poll by the DPP-aligned think tank, Taiwan Braintrust, released on July 17 2015, claimed that 76 percent of the population now recognize Taiwan as a "sovereign and independent nation".

This growing dislocation of government policy and public opinion was reflected in the emergence of a new kind of identity politics. This was different from identity politics in the past because it took place in the context of a global

[1] TVBS, 'Xie Changting fang daluyu tong-du, guozurentong min diao' (Public Opinion Poll on Hsieh Chang-ting's Visit to the Mainland and unification/independence, national identity') (16-17 October 2012). Online: http://www1.tvbs.com.tw/FILE_DB/PCH/201210/0p4v11j38l.pdf

radicalization of politics. Whereas the strengthening of Taiwanese identity in the 1990s took place in the context of the global "Third Wave" of democratization, the latest developments have taken place in the context of the occupy movements, fed and organized by new social media, that have come to be symbol of a general disillusionment with established politics since the 2008 global financial crisis.

In Taiwan the occupy movement thus grew out large public demonstrations that began with the angry protest against the visit of the chairman of the PRC's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS), Chen Yunlin, in November 2008. When the police prevented the display of the ROC flag and the playing of Taiwanese songs, around 400 students started an occupy movement in front of the Executive Yuan, calling themselves the "Wild Strawberries". This name was chosen because it had been common in Taiwan to refer to the young generation as "strawberries" on the grounds that they were weak of character and lacked conviction. It thus heralded the appearance of a radicalized new generation, who were to lead a growing number of demonstrations and sit-ins throughout the Ma presidency, focused on a variety of issues but bound together by a common rejection of the idea that Taiwan is a part of China.

Such concerns might have remained the preserve of the intellectual and political elite, if they had not been accompanied by ambitious political and economic overtures from the government and the KMT towards Beijing. Particularly controversial was the attempt to start building the promised Greater Chinese Market through the signing of a cross-Strait Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA). In itself, the liberalization of cross-Strait economic relations was not a radical departure from the policy of the previous two presidents. However, unlike them, Ma showed no signs of balancing growing dependence on the PRC with the building of Taiwanese consciousness and democratic institutions at home.

Instead, he dispatched honorary KMT chairman, Wu Poh-hsiung, to meet Hu Jintao on the eve of the 2012 election and propose a formula for describing the relationship between the two sides of the Strait as "one country, two areas" (*yiguoliangchu*). Opinion polls showed only 33 per cent in favour, while 55 per cent were opposed. Only 20 per cent expressed some degree of satisfaction with the government's handling of cross-Strait relations, while 55 per cent expressed dissatisfaction.[2]Ma had to quickly back-track on the proposal in order to recover in the polls.

[2] I have drawn on a set of polls taken on 26 March by the Hong Kong-owned satellite television station, TVBS (Television Broadcasts Satellite), based on a survey of 1093 respondents with a 3 per cent margin of error. Online: http://www1.tvbs.com.tw/FILE_DB/PCH/201203/0fwcy3m9v1.pdf

Problems with the United Front

Ma's identity politics became even more controversial when suspicions arose over the links between the KMT, the PRC and business magnates with large interests in Taiwan. The immediate catalyst was an attempt by the owner of the *China Times* to acquire ownership of a number of cable television stations in 2008. The individual in question was food products magnate, Tsai Eng-meng, known for his positive views of the PRC political system.[3]If his bid had succeeded, Tsai's *Want Want* media group would have gained control of 10 major cable service providers and a 23.1 percent share of cable TV subscribers.

In the spring of 2012 a coalition of journalists, students and labour organizations led the opposition to this prospect by organizing a boycott, which gained the support of prominent public intellectuals. Most notable was Professor Yu Ying-shi, a world-leading expert on Chinese history and a member of Academic Sinica, who called for the protection Taiwan's values of freedom and democracy from a group of wealthy and powerful politicians and business people who had decided to infiltrate Taiwan at the behest of the CCP (Taipei Times 2012: 3).

The catalyst that finally brought all the forces concerned about the direction of cross-Strait policy onto the streets in huge numbers was Ma's attempt to sign a Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement with the PRC, without due parliamentary scrutiny. Known as the "Sunflower Movement", with many of its leaders having learned their organization skills as Wild Strawberries, the demonstrators managed to occupy the Legislative Yuan and the Executive Yuan, receiving the support of a massive demonstration in the surrounding area.[4] Although the most prominent leaders of this movement were young, it brought together large sections of Taiwan's economy and society who felt threatened by growing dependence on China.

New Developments: The Third Force

The development of this civil society has been described as the appearance of a "Third Force" in Taiwan. This has important implications for identity politics because the fears of activists have been driven in large part by concerns over the ways in which growing economic dependence on the PRC is affecting government policies that affect everyday life. These concerns range from wariness about the impact of PRC influence over the media, to fears over job security and the survival

[3] On Tsai's views of the PRC see Hsu (2014) pp. 142-46.

[4] The movement took on this name after a florist donated a large number of sunflowers to the protestors, who then carried them as a symbol of hope. Naming the movement after a flower also has resonances with the "Wild Lily Movement", which occupied the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Place in central Taipei in 1990 to call for elections for the National Assembly.

of small and medium-sized enterprises under cross-Strait economic liberalization. After the Sunflower movement disbanded, the momentum was thus taken up by a growing coalition of activists concerned with issues ranging from land rights, food safety, LGBT rights through to media control and constitutional reform.

This Third Force has complicated the role of identity issues in party politics. In part this is because its various members have started to establish new political parties, running candidates in elections on a platform of "normalizing Taiwan's status as a nation".[5]This has the potential to radicalize identity politics in the same way that the establishment of the Taiwan Solidarity Union and the People First Party after the election of Chen Shui-bian in 2000 incentivised the two main parties to move towards the extremes in order to hold on to their more radical activists and voters.

The orientation of the rising generation towards identity is clear, with, no less than 83 per cent of those in the 20-29 and 30-39 years of age groups identifying themselves as "Taiwanese"; a proportion that falls to 65 per cent in those aged 65 and above.[6]However, rather than the old binary division of identity politics along lines of pro-independence versus pro-unification, of "Mainlanders" versus "Taiwanese", what is emerging is a generation that demands new thinking about identity.

Challenges for party politics

The members of the new social movements have thus been careful to avoid alignment with any established political party, including the DPP, which would seem to be their natural home. On National Day 2013 organisers of the Sunflower Movement even made it a point to raise the KMT *and* DPP flags at the same height, as a way to symbolize their equal responsibility in failing to meet the demands and expectations of society.

It should be remembered that large-scale demonstrations against the corruption of the political establishment began under the second Chen Shui-bian administration. These were partially hijacked by the pan-Blues in the bid to oust the DPP from the presidency. Moreover, concerns over the possible imposition of a hegemonic version of "Taiwanese" identity continue to exist not only amongst members of the population who arrived in Taiwan after 1945 and their descendants, but also among the aboriginal peoples, the Hakka community and in

[5] See "The New Party's Platform", *Thinking Taiwan*. Online: http://thinking-taiwan.com/the-new-power-partys-platform/ (consulted 8 July 2015).

[6] TVBS, 'Xie Changting fang daluyu tong-du, guozurentong min diao' (Public Opinion Poll on Hsieh Chang-ting's Visit to the Mainland and unification/independence, national identity') (16-17 October 2012). Online: http://www1.tvbs.com.tw/FILE_DB/PCH/201210/0p4v11j38l.pdf

new social groups such as the wives of ROC citizens from the PRC. Moreover, the KMT still gains substantial support from Taiwanese voters and many of the individuals who reap economic benefits from the liberalization of cross-Strait relations cannot be categorized as “Mainlanders”.

Although the emergence of a Third Force presents a challenge for the DPP when it comes to fighting elections, it represents a more fundamental problem for the KMT. This is because the KMT-CCP strategy for keeping the DPP out of power has lost public support in a way that shows how national identity cannot be shaped by top-down attempts at nation-building, combined with the material incentives arising from cross-Strait economic liberalisation.

Such an approach has failed because it does not engage with the much more complex ways in which identity politics has evolved within the broader processes of social change – and especially generation change. Nowhere is this more visible than in the recent dispute over the revision of school textbooks. While this is completely in line with the Ma administration’s identity policy, it has led to yet another student occupy movement and the tragic death of one school student just six months away from the 2016 Presidential election.

The same is true of the formulas devised by previous generations to manage the development of cross-Strait relations. The ambiguity of the “92 Consensus” or “One Country, Two Systems” made sense for diplomats seeking stability in the post-Cold War years. For a generation that has only known a democratic Taiwan, who have witnessed the political crisis in Hong Kong unfolding, and whose image of the PRC is shaped by its new assertiveness in the East and South China Seas such formulas are close to meaningless. This is not only due to a negative perception of the PRC, but also because the established formulas are not relevant for addressing the concerns of everyday life that cause daily insecurity. They even appear to distort the kind of truly democratic politics that might lead to some solutions.

So far the KMT has failed to find a way to respond to such concerns. This can be seen in the way that the party’s presidential candidate, Hung Hsiu-chu, appears to be unable to move away from Ma Ying-jeou’s identity policy. In some respects she has even leaned further towards identification with China, replacing his “one China, each side” interpretation of the 1992 Consensus with her own “one China, same interpretation” formula and condemning the current school curriculum as “pro-independence”.

In the meantime, the announcement that James Soong will run for the Presidency is a reminder that a candidate who had a respected record of addressing everyday concerns in his years as Taiwan Governor might still gain considerable support running on a platform designed to ameliorate the concerns of the PRC.

Conclusion

Trends in public opinion under the two Ma administrations show that the identity policy adopted as a common platform by the KMT and CCP in 2005 has not had the results that were expected. This is due to the fact that national identity can rarely, if ever, be successfully imposed by the state. In a democratic society it is even more the case that identity is shaped by the shifting relationships between individuals and interest groups who are more concerned about everyday issues of welfare and security than about nationalistic ideological missions. When such missions appear to threaten the welfare and security of individuals and interest groups, the development of a counter-identity can be part of the defensive response.

In Taiwan this has happened in the context of the world-wide birth of new social movements, globalization and the coming to political maturity of a generation for whom the seminal event of their lives is the 2008 financial crisis, while even the events of 11 September 2001 can only have left a very vague impression. What gives Taiwan's civil society movements their special quality, however, is the way in which growing dependence on the PRC impregnates new concerns about economic security and public welfare with long-standing questions of cultural identity and political values.

Whichever party wins the presidency in 2016, dealing with this new kind of politics will be a challenge. A KMT victory will see a growing divergence of government policy and public opinion, leading to further radicalization and political action, unless the party fundamentally revises its stance on national identity.

Victory for the DPP will present a different type of challenge. This is because candidate Dr Tsai Ying-wen faces the dilemma of having a sufficiently pro-Taiwan stance on national identity in order to win over the Third Force, while reassuring Washington and Beijing that her leadership will not upset the status quo that has been developed since Taiwan's democratization began in the late 1980s.

It is imperative that third parties, be they the PRC, the USA or the EU, help to make this situation manageable and avoid the further radicalization of Taiwanese politics. This requires a greater understanding of the complexity of the new politics, and especially the fears and aspirations of the new generation. Only then will it be possible to properly understand the constraints within which Taiwan's new president will have to operate.