

National Identity and Foreign Policy: Taiwan's

Attitudes toward China*

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Introduction

In the constructivist vein of International Relations theories, national identity, by shaping a state's notion of national interests, has been identified as one of the crucial factors for explaining foreign policy behavior at the level of the state/society. In the course of democratization in the past decade, Taiwan has not only witnessed the gradual transformation of the authoritarian regime into a liberal one, but also endured a crisis of national identity. In the discourse of political nationalism, three perspectives are competing with one another over the proper relations with the People's Republic of China: the quasi-nationalism of the ruling Democratic Progressive Party, the Chinese nationalism espoused by the outgoing Kuomintang, and the Taiwanese nationalism advanced by the Taiwanese Independent Movement. The study will seek to demonstrate how disparate constructions of national identity would steer Taiwan's attitudes toward China, ranging from irredentism (One China), through status quo (Two Chinas), to independence (One Taiwan, One China).

In the literature of national identity formation, three types of explanation have been offered: primordialism, structuralism, and constructivism (Le Vine, 1997; Prinsloo, 1996; Esman, 1994). Primordialism, variously known as essentialism, suggests that national identity is naturally born and essentially made up of an objectively observable core, be it in the form of racial, linguistic, religious, or cultural characteristics. Structuralism, or instrumentalism, would posit that national identity is the result of mobilization by some psychologically deprived elites who have perceived discrepancies in the distribution of political power, economic resources, and/or social status. Constructivism would suggest that national identity is nothing but constructed or imagined.

We have earlier demonstrated that the Taiwanese identity was initially

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constructed upon primordial Han-Chinese racial and cultural bases, and later buttressed by the legitimacy obtained structurally from anti-Manchurian, anti-Japanese, anti-Mainlander, and anti-Chinese nativism (Shih, 1999a). Still, upheld by the doctrines of self-determination and people's sovereignty, a third facet constructed in political discourses has been gradually developed since the end of World War I.

In this study, we would look into three contending approaches to the political facet of Taiwan's national identity reflecting its attitudes towards China: (1) the Chinese irredentist nationalism of the former ruling Kuomintang (KMT, or Chinese Nationalist Party 中國國民黨), (2) the quasi-nationalism of the ruling (formerly opposite) Democratic Progressive Party (DDP 民主進步黨) to take over the regime from the Mainlanders while endeavoring to retain the status quo, and (3) the appeal to nation-building in pursuit of a Republic of Taiwan propelled by the Taiwanese Independent Movement (TIM, 台灣獨立運動). Finally, a political form of Taiwanese nationalism anticipated to be externally exclusive and internally inclusive would be rendered.

Chinese Irredentist Nationalism of the Kuomintang: One China

During the Ching Dynasty, Taiwan only retained slack administrative relations with China. After more than 100 years of effective Japanese colonial (1895-1945) and KMT (1945-2000) rule, Taiwan has hence remained separate from China in the spheres of politics, economy, and culture, which in turns have contributed to the development of a unique identity among the Taiwanese. From the reign of Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石), his son Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國), through the native Lee Teng-hui (李登輝), the ruling KMT has incrementally assured Taiwan's separation with China by territorializing the ROC and by antagonizing the PRC. Paradoxically, it is exactly during the latter period that Taiwanese began to develop a strong sense of loyalty to the land and a sharp animosity against the Chinese.

In the early days, shored up by military measures, the bureaucratic-authoritarian KMT regime was further reinforced by three pillars: warding off military invasion from the PRC, providing material incentives from economic development, and encouraging patriotism to the state as the sole legitimate successor of the millennial lineage of Chinese dynasties. Being provided common political, legal, and administrative systems, the residents were able to undertake intensive social communications and economic exchanges island wide. National flag, anthem, and education were summoned to mould a national, even though a precarious, identity

dissimilar to Chinese one. Penetrating from the fortified power center in Taipei to the peripheries, the KMT has generated a kind of what Anthony D. Smith (1998) terms “later extensive nationalism.”

Initially, the national identity under the ROC was defined exclusively after the wishes of the dominant Mainlanders. As the specter to “recover the Mainland” (反攻大陸) began to fade away, the late Chiang Ching-kuo had no choice but to seek ways for accommodating his own followers among the hostile natives. In his later days, he once expressed that he might have been qualified as a Taiwanese after residing in Taiwan for so long. Before his decease, Chiang personally picked and chose Lee Teng-hui as his successor in order to countervail native antipathy in time.

To avoid breakdown in the global third wave of democratization, the KMT under Lee, becoming a lateral seceding party, embarked on political liberalization and democratization in a piecemeal fashion. By promoting native elites to the ruling echelon, Lee made the KMT naturalized and won it a prefix as the unofficial Taiwan-KMT, meaning Taiwanese Nationalist Party (台灣國民黨).

Compared to the Chinese Ming Dynasty loyalist Koxinga (國姓爺 or 鄭成功) and the Chiang father and son, Lee’s ROC had given up its fictive claim over the territory of the whole China, and abandoned its contest with the PRC as the legitimate China. Ostensibly, the rhetoric had been “One China, two regions, and two equal political entities,” which would actually read “one country, two governments.” Still, Lee (1995) seemed resolute to nurture Taiwan as a cultural Chinese state, and to cultivate the Taiwanese as the better Chinese. In other words, while retaining the mythical Chinese cultural identity, Lee would also like to uphold the concrete Taiwanese political identity. In this regard, Lee is by nature a Han, if not Chinese, loyalist. Since there is no way to reconcile cultural and political facets of national identity, the “official nationalism” of the KMT is mostly a Janus-faced form of born-again “reform nationalism.”

To withstand Chinese nationalism, Lee endeavors to construct a community of fate (生命共同體) for people of Taiwan (or Taiwanese people) by resorting to the principle of people’s sovereignty (主權在民) in a communitarian fashion. In his cardinal contemplation, all policy priorities are given to the whole residents of Taiwan, which implicitly makes him a territorial Taiwanese nationalist since a nation is a community of fate embedded on its sovereign state. Curious enough, even thorough the KMT has in general followed a “Independence Taiwan” (獨台) line in the past

few years, it has, nonetheless, refrained from the articulation of nationalism. At times, nationalism would be selectively portrayed as chauvinistic-expansionist as Nazi German or Fascist Italian one. The only logical explanation is that Lee has an eye to distance himself from the Chinese nationalism ingrained in the hitherto enshrined official ideology of Sun Yat-sen's "Three Principle of People" (三民主義), that is nationalism, democracy, and welfare.

In order to court the native voters to empathize with the stigmatized KMT in elections, Lee openly spelled out "the sorrow of Taiwanese" while interviewed by a Japanese writer (born in Taiwan before the war) in 1995 before the first popular presidential election, which in sequence unintentionally alienates the Mainlanders for his favorable pro-Japanese predispositions. Consequently, Lee had to come up with the concept of "New Taiwanese" (新台灣人) in the Taipei mayoral election in 1998. In accepting the new created inclusive identity, the Mainlanders seemed relieved to have been finally salvaged. While the long waited reconciliatory design is widely welcome, the term is not only vague but ambiguous also. If New Taiwanese is meant to embrace all residents of Taiwan, especially to include the Mainlanders only, it is too all encompassing to offer any discriminative utility in practice. For the natives, as they have been Taiwanese anyway for long, the term futile for them; for the Mainlanders, a new ethnic group name is still called for. On the other hand, if New Taiwanese is reserved for the Mainlanders, the term is no less discredited than the original one.

Even if this ingenious orthodox of ethnic integration may have alleviated ethnic tension at home, the controversial issue of national identity has not been resolved at rest as expected, again, particularly for the Mainlanders. While some Mainlander elites start out to admit themselves as Taiwanese, they still cling to their Chinese identity. In any case, most of them still consider themselves Chinese first and Taiwanese second, or rather rhetorically "Chinese on Taiwan," much the same as the state is "ROC on Taiwan." Understandably, by so dubiously defining, Taiwanese is relegated to a territorial regional identity while Chinese is advanced to a national one.

Given Taiwan's diplomatic isolation resulting from Chinese boycott, the relations with the PRC appeared to be the Achilles' heel of the Lee government, which was increasingly under assault from the DDP, then in opposition, on its somewhat reluctant incompetence. While Lee had intentionally downplayed the issue of sovereignty as the ROC degraded itself to the status of "political entity" in the

quasi-official Guidelines for National Unification (1991) and subsequently agreed to disagree with the PRC on the so-called principle “One China” in 1992, Taiwan was still treated as a local government. No matter whether “One China divided” (一個中國分治) of the PRC, or “One divided China” (一個分治的中國) of the KMT, Taiwan, as long as conceived one part of China, had by and large been rejected a legitimate place in the international society as a state.

In anticipating the coming presidential election in 2000, Lee, to everyone’s surprise, introduced the “Two States Discourse” (兩國論) while interviewed by Voices of Germany in 1999. While reiterating the KMT’s established rejection to the “One Country, Two Systems” formula initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1982, Lee formally made known his interpretation of cross-strait relations as “a state-to-state relationship or at least a special state-to-state relationship.” By officially adjusting to “Two Chinas,” Lee was said to deliberately shift his China policy to separation of Taiwan and China, so that whoever succeeded him in the future would have little space for pro-unification orientation.

In spite of Lee’s maneuver, however, “Two States Discourse” still provides a host of connotations along the spectrum from “Two States in One China” (一中兩國) espoused by the loyalists, literal “Two States in One Chinese Nation” (一個民族、兩個國家, or 一族兩國) by the KMT mainstream, to “Two Chinese States” (兩個華人國家) by the newly elected DPP president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁). Even among the KMT elites, there were contestations over whether to employ the suffix “One Nation,” or “One Chinese Nation” after “Two States,” since nation would carries dissimilar as well as multiple interpretations both in Han-Chinese and in English.

If “One Nation” stands for an amorphously cultural Chinese people (華人), the formula is on even terms with the DPP since Singapore is also broadly “misperceived” in Taiwan as a Chinese state. However, if it is contemplated as a political Chinese nation (中華民族), the denomination strongly implies pro-unification predisposition, which is also understood in Taiwan as the so-called “German model” of unification.

In so far as the German model is customarily comprehended, it is a cultural form of nationalism, which called for eventual unification of all German speakers. In reality, not all German speakers are ready to avail themselves to a Pan-German state, such as those in Austria or Switzerland. Even in the age of economic globalization, it is much

doubtful whether Americans, Canadians, Australians, or New Zealanders, who may possess abundant Anglo-Saxon lineage or Britain culture, would greet any more political association with the Great Britain beyond the Commonwealth.

Although Lee' s claim that only the Taiwanese have the right to decide their future is comparable to that of the TIM, his treatment of the issue of national identity was recognizably inadequate. Fusing the shell of the ROC and the soul of Taiwan, he seemed steadfastly determined to retain the status quo. Never the less, by tacitly proposing an expedient identity of hybridity, the Chinese on Taiwan, he in fact created more controversies than solving ones already existing. After the last presidential election, Lee remarked that the reason why the KMT has lost to the DPP was due to internal cleavages over identity among the party .

Quasi-nationalism of the DPP: The Status Quo

The ruling DDP came to power after unexpectedly winning the presidential election in March this year. Right from its inception in 1986, its party ethos has three components: anti-KMT/anti-Mainlanders, social reforms, and the TIM. Factional politics, the most conspicuous character of the DPP, can be largely understood as division of labor or competition over political space, even though general gaps and networks of personal relations also explain their differences to certain degree.

In the beginning, the DPP was perceived as the Taiwanese Party, read the ethnic, if not nationalist, party for the natives. On the island, actually, it was an association of former political prisoners that openly declared “Taiwan Ought to be Independent” in 1987 before the DPP was forced to pass a resolution that it would support the cause of Taiwan Independence only if under four circumstances. Sensing the prospective pressure from returning TIM exiles, the quarrelsome factions finally managed to mend their internal frictions and embarrassingly embrace nationalist cause by supplementing a so-called “Taiwan Independence Clause” (thereafter TIC) to the party charter in 1991 .

However, the DPP has ever since been ambivalent to the TIC after its setback in the 1992 election of National Assembly. What is more ominous, as Lee rushed to undertake the process of naturalizing his party as well as the regime, native voters began swaying to the KMT that had strategically occupied the middle of the ground. As the clause has ever since been deemed as the poison for elections, more and more DPP elites perceive it as the major barrier to government and demand its revision or removal.

To prepare for the coming presidential election, the DPP held a show debate for the fate of the TIC. Meanwhile, it appears that the party have reached the consensus that Taiwan has unofficially declared its independence at least in the first presidential election in 1996, even though some would argue that Taiwan's independence has been heralded in the 1991 election of the National Assembly, or in the 1992 election of the Legislature since both bodies had been frozen since their elections hold in Mainland China in the 1940s. As former secretary general Chiou Yee-zen boldly boasted: “[Now that] triumphal in independence, undertake state-building next.” In other words, the TIM has been degraded to merely the symbolic gesture of name-change.

To be fair, the DPP has never undisguisedly confronted the TIM, although some would denounce its supporter as fundamentalists without reservation. What worries the DPP elites most is that the TIM has excluded other policy options, such as “Two Chinas,” “Chinese Commonwealth,” or “Two States in One Nation.” In the view of President Chen, the nature of the issue is not a matter of true-or-false or multiple-choice, but rather a fill-in question left for the voters to decide just as they go to the department stores.

Judging from open and private remarks, we would discover that the DPP tends to interpret nationalism negatively as ethno-nationalism as does the KMT, which is different from what students of nationalism would understand. On the other hand, the DPP elites are plainly willing to illuminate Chinese nation as cultural one and disregard its political, historical, or geographic meanings. No wonder Chen agrees that both ROC and the PRC two Chinese states. By so doing, Chen and the DPP are ready to take over the ROC state from Lee.

As we have mentioned earlier, the posture of “Two Chinas,” in whatever forms, would run risk of being misperceived by the international society as romantic Taiwanese irredentism with China. Secondly, it is doubtful whether China would accept a formula in opposition to its staunch “One China” policy. And thirdly, in the home front, the designation of Chinese state neglects the fact that Taiwan is not a homogeneous Han-Chinese society, but rather a multi-cultural, ethnic, and racial one, even though the Aboriginal peoples constitute only 1.7% of the total population (Shih, 2000b).

Once in power, President Chen wasted no time in repeatedly pledging that only

the Taiwanese have the right to choose the option that may change the status quo. As such, he is in essence a Taiwanese nationalist who is afraid of being dubbed so. While concurring with Lee's "Two States" discourse, he has every appearance of compromising on the framework of "One China" imposed by the PRC. Proclaiming his "5 No's" in the inaugurating address in May, Chen pragmatically endeavors to defuse the perceived mounting tension from China during regime change. Since procedural referendum promised by Chen (and the DPP) as the ultimately guaranteed right to self-determination is not equal to substantive policy commitment to the voters, he, as a responsible politician, needs to be more specific on relations with China. Without unconcealed platform as a contract with the voters, he is so far a quasi-nationalist at best.

Taiwanese Independent Movement: One Taiwan, One China

The first appeal for Taiwanese nationalism is in the form of pursuing a sovereign independent Republic of Taiwan free of colonial political, economic, and cultural dominations. The so-called "Taiwanese Independence Consciousness" (台獨思想) was initially inaugurated by overseas Taiwanese students in Japan proper during the Japanese rule. Nurtured by the idea of self-determination and further inspired by the success of Irish and Korean independent movements, the embryo Taiwanese Independence Movement asserted that "Taiwan is Taiwanese' Taiwan," and asked for equal treatment among the Emperor's subjects in the Japan proper and the island as well. Even though the Taiwanese Communists had long invoked the concepts of "Taiwanese nation," "Taiwanese Independence," and "Republic of Taiwan" in 1928, these were at best qualified as nascent nationalism since no sophisticated formulation was seriously attempted.

It was not until the days of white terror under the KMT rule after World War II that some exiles in Japan and the United States embarked on disseminating the consciousness of Taiwanese Independence in the Taiwanese student and immigrant community. Based on the paramount principle of national self-determination, it has been avowed that the sovereignty of Taiwan ought to belong to all the resident of Taiwan, that the future of Taiwan ought to be decided by the Taiwanese, and that Taiwan not only is to be separate from China, but also detached from all powers (NG, 1998).

For these nationalists, the Taiwanese, having been subject to alien rulers for the past 400 years, are equally entitled to the right of possessing a nation-state of their own as other nations are. It is sincerely envisioned that the formation of an

independent Republic of Taiwan would be the *raison d'être* of Taiwanese nationalism. In a minimal sense, Taiwanese nationalism is to disentangle the bondages imposed by the KMT, and to resist possible Chinese forceful incorporation of Taiwan. From a more positive perspective, the supreme goal of Taiwanese nationalism is to construct a modern nation-state, the task of which is further subdivided into social reform, cultural reformation, ethnic integration, democratic consolidation, and economic autonomy.

While the idea of self-determination, propelled by American President Woodrow Wilson, had been finally embodied in the enshrined Fourteen Points, its eventual application was largely confined by the Allied Powers to peaceful settlements of defeated nations in territorial disputes (Heater, 1994). No wonder that the Taiwanese failed to seize the opportunity to exercise their right of self-determination after World War I. After World War II, Taiwan, as former colony of Japan, was entrusted to the KMT regime of the Republic of China (ROC).

Even if Taiwan is no less qualified as a state than most member states in the United Nations since there are the population, the land, and even a government, these necessary conditions are not sufficient enough to make it sovereign one yet. If we decompose sovereignty into effective governance, *de facto* sovereignty, and *de jure* sovereignty, what is precariously lacking is *de jure* sovereignty, which is not to be obtained simply by declaring one independent. Internally, while the subsequent governments of the ROC have effectively maintained practically solid ruling, the process of democratization embarked on in the 1990s has also helped it to win over the legitimacy to a large degree. Still, externally, the state has yet failed to score the recognition of the majority of the states in the international community owing to the avowed menace from the People's Republic of China (PRC), which has until recently claimed that there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China.

Facing enormous international isolation, political forces in all shades differ only slightly in their interpretations of the current international status of Taiwan. For the KMT, the New Party (NP 新黨), and the newly organized People First Party (PFP 親民黨), the ROC has been a sovereign state since its establishment in 1911. On the other extreme of the spectrum, the proponents of the TIM would dispute that neither the ROC, which has ruled the island since 1945, nor Taiwan is a sovereign state in the conventional sense. For the ruling DDP, the majority of the elite opinion would be that Taiwan has declared its independence at early as the first presidential election in 1996. And a few DPP politicians have gone so far as to contend that Taiwan has been

independent since 1949, when the KMT was forced to move the government to Taiwan after being defeated by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the civil war.

The last argument is especially challenging the ethos of the true believers of the TIM. If Taiwan had been independent for the past 50 years, had they not have absurdly undertaken a fictitious goal that have made them exile themselves for decades? Also, for those who had been imprisoned on charge as the followers of the TIM, their sacrifice must have been an oxymoron if the KMT government had been making the common cause with them.

Nonetheless, even if Taiwan has consolidated its newly obtained democracy, it is not yet a sovereign state in every sense of international law. While the government may have internally enhanced its legitimacy through liberal elections over the years, externally, the sovereignty of the state has persistently met the world's blind eyes. To borrow the terms of Hashimi (1997: 2), while Taiwan may possess substantive sovereignty, its procedural sovereignty is shaky, especial in terms of the membership to the UN, which is generally perceived as the birth certificate of the state and the very symbol of dignity of the Taiwanese. Nowadays, while Taiwan may not be a colony as Tibet or Chechnya is, it is at best a quasi-state under the protection of the Taiwan Relations Act (1979) of the US.

What if the ROC were to be widely received by the world, as the mainstream of the DPP alleges that it is only a matter of name-change over night? The TIM would argue that as international recognition can not be naively reduced to unilateral declaration of independence, so can not the construction of a nation-state be comfortably dismissed to merely the assignment of power shift from the Mainlanders to the natives.

It appears that the TIM discourse has gradually been refined from the quest for formal independence to the pursuit of a nation-state. In other words, except for the initial mission of state-making (國家的肇建), the mission has been further decomposed into both goals of nation-building (民族的塑造) and state-building (國家的打造). As members of a community of fate, the nationalists' identity is to the nation they belong to; however, as citizens of a state, the patriots are loyal to the state where they enjoy citizenship. Since nationalism and patriotism are conceptually distinct, even if highly related, the tasks call for discrete, though not detached, treatments.

The construction of nation-state is generally classified into two prototypes: from nation to state, and from state to nation (Kohn, 1944; Alter, 1989, Brown, 199;

Nieguth, 1999; Yack, 1999). To follow the former path, nationalism is the integrating force to mobilize co-nationals in the process of state-making, in the hope that the political boundary would correspond to the national one. To pursue the latter track, the state machinery is enlisted to mold the nation as designed by nationalists. In the earlier phase of the TIM, the passion was centered on the former in the rhetoric of expelling the alien KMT regime and/or the Mainlanders. In the past decade, the zeal has, to a certain degree strategically, been shifted to the latter approach in a more inclusive fashion.

Alternatively, Samuel P. Huntington (1971) collapses the establishment of a nation-state into two models: the post-colonial and the settlers' states. In the former model, the struggle is between the natives and the colonial conquerors; and in the later one, the contention is among the indigenous peoples, the immigrants, and the home country. In the case of Taiwan, on the other hand, it is the combination of the two: while the Han settlers have to seek reconciliation with the aboriginal peoples, they have yet to fence off the menace of possible incorporation by the home country (Ming Dynasty, Ching Dynasty, ROC, and PRC) and to resist a wave of alien regimes (Dutch, Spanish, Manchurian, and Chinese). In so interpreting, if the Han settlers are considered natives of Taiwan, the quintessence of the TIM is to transform a traditional Chinese settler society into a modern multicultural nation-state.

To attain the goal of nation-building, the TIM has yet to face the knotted labyrinth of ethnic diversity since Taiwan is by no means a homogeneous society in terms of ethnicity (Shih, 1995). Owing to racial, linguistic, and political differences, ethnic cleavages in Taiwan have in the past manifested in the form of clan feuds, electoral competitions, or even armed struggle, not only between the Han settlers and the aboriginal peoples but also among the Hans themselves. Currently, the most serious ethnic dispute is prevalently found in the protracted power struggle between the native Taiwanese and the Mainlanders, followers of the KMT expatriate regime. As involuntary later comers of the land, the latter tend to consider themselves as but one branch of the Chinese in diaspora. As a result, the residents of Taiwan have so far failed to reach any consensus on their national identities, varying from Taiwanese only, both Taiwanese and Chinese, not only Taiwanese but Chinese also, and Chinese only (Shih, 2000a, 1999a). The thrust of nation-building is thus to crystallize the loose Taiwanese people into a Taiwanese nation, which measures up to what Smith (1998) terms "vertical intensive nationalism."

In order to achieve the aspiration of state-building, the TIM is further burdened

with the archaic systems transplanted from China after the war. For the strangers to the system, the road from voice, dissent, to loyalty, to borrow the terms from Hirschman (1990), is not tantamount to a wholehearted embrace of the MKT regime, which is at best a Second Republic of China. Nor is it their declared campaign to dismantle the system outright. Still, without superseding them with ones constructed upon the consensus reached after thorough deliberations and bargains, the natives cannot help but engulf themselves in a colonial mentality of dependence. Without any slightly effort at constructing the political, social, economic, and cultural systems, the alternation of regimes is nothing but nominal independence. In a word, mechanic electoralism cannot take the place of the heartfelt popular participation on the way to state-building.

Conclusions: Externally Exclusive and Internally Inclusive Identity

Although the Taiwanese have ceased to be subjugated by alien rulers since Lee had gradually seized power in the 1990s, the resurgence of Taiwanese nationalism is mainly the uneasy manifestation of a genuine anxiety over their future in the face of endless military threat from China, which has actually become their most significant other. As most Taiwanese were not involved with the bloody civil war between the KMT and the CCP, there is not intrinsic animosity for the Taiwanese to hate the Chinese. Regretfully, the Chinese missile crises in 1995-96 virtually bisected any sentimental connection between Taiwan and China, which has become a barbarian bully in the East Asia neighborhood. Undaunted to protect their cherished way of life, the Taiwanese elites are invoking nationalism to counter Chinese expansionism disguised as irredentism

Justified by the doctrine of self-determination, all three forms of Taiwanese political identity would espouse mutually exclusive sovereignty between Taiwan and China. Nonetheless, they differ in terms of how the new Taiwanese identity is to be constructed. As the KMT would retain its primordial approach while experimenting a constructivist revision of territorial identity, the TIM would employing a constructivist perspective of national identity, and the DPP is struggling to adjust its exclusively structural overture to a more inclusively integrating one. While the KMT has so far been deliberate to portray Taiwan as a better Chinese state than the PRC, the TIM would emphasize the tasks of nation-building and state-building at the same time, and the DPP are nationalists embarrassingly shy away from nationalism. Metamorphosing from being Chinese, Chinese on Taiwan, to Taiwanese, the people of Taiwan are grappling hard with their own national identity. While ordinary people would admit that they are roughly Chinese, they are not certain exactly whether the

term “Chinese” means political Chinese citizenship, racial-cultural Han ethnics (or folk), or even ethnic Mainlanders. In order to answer the question of whether the Taiwanese and the Chinese belong to the same nation, the easiest acid test is to ask whether the former like to share the same country with the latter. According to a latest poll, 80% of respondents concur with the statement “our country is Taiwan.” Without going into detailed academic jargons, the answer to the former question is obviously negative.

What is intractable is whether it is possible to retain a Taiwanese political identity and a Chinese cultural identity at the same time, as some Mainlanders would favorably appreciate. Since both “China” (中國) and “Chinese” (中國人 or 華人) connote the political term “state” (國), “cultural China” (文化中國) is in itself an oxymoron, unless a non-political term is substituted to represent 「華人」, say, Han (漢人). On the other hand, is there any way that the Taiwanese may possess both Taiwanese and Chinese citizenships? Unless we are able to solve the problem of dual loyalty, any affirmative is precarious as long as China is vehemently hostile to Taiwan.

To be successful, any nationalist movement ought to be inclusively integrating. Internally, hence, national identity is to be decided by subjective identification with the land rather than any ethnics or cultural characteristics. Without careful management of ethnic relations, domestic conflict is bound to spill over borders and draw external interventions. As a result, we argue that the success of Taiwanese nationalism is not dependent on whether the Mainlanders would finally consider Taiwan as their motherland, but rather on whether the natives are ready to embrace the former as Taiwanese.

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