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**Solving the "Taiwan issue": Contradicting positions on the
future of Taiwan in 1990-2008**

**Research paper for the course Contemporary Chinese Politics
(taught by Urmas Pappel and Tauno Tõhk)**

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INTRODUCTION

The relations between Taiwan and mainland China were virtually non-existent for decades after the People's Republic of China (PRC) was created in 1949. Although the Kuomintang party was forced to retreat to the island of Taiwan, it never truly accepted the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) on the mainland. Kuomintang agrees with Beijing that there is only "One China", but the difference however is that the Kuomintang's position has always been that the sole legal authority is the Republic of China (ROC or Taiwan), not CCP. This non-negotiable understanding of history is relevant all through the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st and is important to understand since it is a potential trigger that might turn two of the world superpowers (U.S. and China) against each other¹.

Important changes to the relations across the Taiwan Strait developed with the rise of Deng Xiaoping who reformed the PRC greatly and led the socialist state on the path of economic development which has made China a remarkable example in the world due to fast economic growth. The events during the 1980s on both sides of the strait made it possible to start negotiations with the aim of unifying China again. Though PRC's understanding on the acceptable solution has not changed greatly during the years, Taiwan has shifted between many viewpoints due to democratization on its territory. Taiwan now has opposing views with one party aiming for unification and the other is mostly known for its separatist policies.

The first time the power shifted in Taiwan was when the Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) presidential candidate won the 2000 elections. This brought the possibility of true future independence which to the people in Taiwan was more acceptable than unification with PRC under Beijing's terms. The aim of this research paper is to introduce the main developments from the 1990s to 2000s and pinpoint the changes which have led to the current positions between Taiwan and the mainland of China. For that I will divide the paper into two main parts which take a closer look at the developments during respective decades from the viewpoints of both sides. Most of the arguments that explain why relations have developed in certain ways come from different official documents which set the overall tone and try to make the other side acknowledge their existence and accept their power. I will try to find a reason why ROC has not succeeded in making a decision whether to not to unify with the mainland or declare independence. I argue that even though DPP was seen as the party who could bring great change and lead the ROC closer to independence, the opposite has happened (Taiwan is more dependent on PRC). The authorities of Taiwan have chosen to develop the cross-strait relations with the aim of gaining de jure and de facto independence but

¹ Wang, Y. K. (2013) Taiwan Public Opinion on Cross-Strait Security Issues: Implications for US Foreign Policy, *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 7 (2), pp 93

have ended up even more influenced by Beijing. This is similar to a prisoner's dilemma where Taiwanese authorities are unable to fully support neither unification nor independence and are forced to "preserve the Chinese-dominated cross-strait status quo... where the omnipresent China factor is legitimized further."²

OFFICIAL POSITIONS ON THE CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS

The relations between China mainland and Taiwan are affected by three parting views on how the future should look like – the mainland or People's Republic of China (PRC), Kuomintang (KMT) as the founder of the Republic of China and Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) as the most relevant opposition party in Taiwan. The mainland or the PRC central government located in Beijing sees the Taiwanese authorities as acting without legitimate claim for power over Taiwan since the Central Communist Party (CCP) replaced the republic in 1949 and thus ROC's "historical status was brought to an end"³ and Kuomintang as the former authority of ROC "forfeited its right to exercise state sovereignty on behalf of China and, in reality, has always remained only a local authority on Chinese territory"⁴. The second actor is Kuomintang (also known as Chinese Nationalist Party) which largely remained in power until 2000 (and again after 2008) and sees the two equal parts of China (the mainland and Taiwan) united in the future. In their scenario the ROC would be the legitimate authority over the whole of China. The third position is that of the Democratic Progressive Party which succeeded in winning the presidential elections in 2000. The DPP sees Taiwan as an independent country separate from the mainland which means that neither PRC nor ROC (under Kuomintang) should gain the right to govern. The difference between the last two actors, although they are both parties in the Republic of China, is that the first does not accept PRC's authority to govern in neither the mainland nor Taiwan and the other acknowledges that PRC should govern the mainland, but there is another country across the strait and the relations between the two should be based on state-to-state equality much like between all the other countries in the world.

The cross-strait relations before the 1990s were mostly defined by two opposing positions (the PRC and Kuomintang) and their construction of the term "One China". Beijing acknowledged that "there is only one China in the world; Taiwan is an inalienable part of China, and the seat of China's central government is in Beijing"⁵ and although the view of the Kuomintang could be interpreted quite similarly, for them the true legitimate seat of the central government is currently forced to

² Magcamit, M. I (2015) Games, Changes and Fears: Exploring Taiwan's Cross-Strait Dilemma in the Twenty-first Century, *Journal of Asian Security*, Vol. 2 (1), pp 92

³ Chen, D. P. (2014) Constructing Peaceful Development: The Changing Interpretations of "One China" and Beijing's Taiwan Strait Policy, *Asian Security*, Vol. 10 (1), pp 39

⁴ Chen (2014), pp 39

⁵ Chen (2014), pp 23

remain in Taipei, not Beijing. Since 1990s the fixed positions have begun to loosen a little bit and in 1992 the two parties developed a consensus recognizing that there is "One China, respective interpretations". This meant that "both Taiwan and mainland China could verbally disagree over what "One China" means⁶."

For 30 years after the rise of CCP in mainland China, the relationship between Beijing and Taiwan were those of rivalry which left virtually no room to create mutually beneficial ties across the Taiwan Strait⁷. Although, the rise of Deng Xiaoping and his "reform and open door policy" changed the relations across the strait and shifted the attention to economic development and stability, for a while Taiwan still remained certain on their "three no-s" policy (no contact, no negotiation, no compromise)⁸. The 1980s brought forth important changes in Taiwan which have largely paved the way to the situation the two sides are in now. There was a decisive turning point in cross-strait relations (i.e. shift "from confrontation and mutual exclusion to dialogue and exchanges⁹") due to lifting of the ban on opposition parties (1986), ending the martial law (1987) and enabling cross-strait visits for the residents of Taiwan so they could travel to the mainland of China (1987)¹⁰.

1. Developments in the 1990s:

1.1 People's Republic of China

PRC's white paper on The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China issued in 1993 sets forth very firm views on how Taiwan's future should look like. A large part of the document focuses on historic events which speak in favour of uniting the territories with the mainland and also the international developments that should support PRC in its aspirations. It can be read that Taiwan is a very important territory not only for the authorities in Beijing but for the whole nation, "unless and until this state of affairs is brought to an end, the trauma on the Chinese nation will not be healed and the Chinese people's struggle for national reunification and territorial integrity will continue¹¹" since Taiwan has belonged to China all through their history¹² and PRC will never support "Taiwan independence."¹³ The document also introduces the understanding that the Kuomintang's policy and the interference of the U.S. administration are the only reasons why

⁶ Chen (2014), pp 23

⁷ Kang, J. Y. (2003) From "Creeping Independence" to Reluctant Realism? China-Taiwan Relations under the DPP, *International Area Review*, Vol. 6 (2), pp 23

⁸ Kang (2003), pp 23

⁹ Kang (2003), pp 24

¹⁰ Kang (2003), pp 23-24

¹¹ Foreword, *The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China (1993)* PRC Taiwan Affairs Office and Information Office of the State Council, the People's Republic of China (white paper) (<http://www.china.org.cn/english/taiwan/7953.htm>, 21.05.2015)

¹² I. Taiwan -- an Inalienable Part of China, *The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China (1993)*

¹³ IV. Relations Across Taiwan Straits: Evolution and Stumbling Blocks , *The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China (1993)*

Taiwan is still not united with the mainland. These actors have "created the division between the two sides of the Straits" and if the U.S. would operate according to the principles set in the communiqués, "it will not be difficult to settle the Taiwan question¹⁴."

The PRC explains its position in the 1993 white paper through following basic principles that are non-negotiable for years to come:

1. There is only one China, Taiwan is an inalienable part of China, the seat of the central government is in Beijing and this is a universally recognized fact;
2. The territories can coexist by preserving capitalism in Taiwan and socialism on the mainland and this does not lead to "one swallowing up the other";
3. After unification, Taiwan remains an autonomous territory with "its own party, political, military, economic and financial affairs", that may also develop certain agreements with other countries;
4. Reunification should be aspired by peaceful means since "it would be a great tragedy for all if... people were to be drawn into a fratricide." Peaceful reunification is PRC's preferable policy, but this does not rule out military means which are entitled to all sovereign states if there remains a threat to their territorial integrity.¹⁵

According to the 1993 white paper, the PRC is convinced that people on both sides of the strait want reunification and "this is also true with most of the political forces in or out of office in Taiwan"¹⁶. For these and many other reasons PRC claims that its position should be supported by all governments and all people¹⁷, making claims for "dual recognition" and establishing official diplomatic relations with other countries not acceptable¹⁸. On the date of issuing the white paper, 157 countries have diplomatic relations with China and therefore they confirm that Taiwan is a part of China and PRC is its sole legal government¹⁹. The document adds that with the 1971 UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 all the rights to govern were given to PRC and Taiwan's authorities were expelled from the UN with re-entry being out of the question²⁰.

¹⁴ II. Origin of the Taiwan Question, The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China, 1993

¹⁵ III. The Chinese Government's Basic Position Regarding Settlement of the Taiwan Question, The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China (1993)

¹⁶ IV. Relations Across Taiwan Straits: Evolution and Stumbling Blocks , The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China (1993)

¹⁷ V. Several Questions Involving Taiwan in International Relations, The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China (1993)

¹⁸ V. Several Questions Involving Taiwan in International Relations, The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China (1993)

¹⁹ I. Taiwan -- an Inalienable Part of China, The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China (1993)

²⁰ V. Several Questions Involving Taiwan in International Relations, The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China (1993)

1.2 Republic of China (Taiwan) and the Kuomintang Party

Although the Kuomintang (KMT) remained in power all through the 1990s there was a remarkable shift to democratic pluralization and indigenization which forced the president Lee Teng-hui to find a more moderate stance on the future of the cross-strait relationship. President Lee did not support the unification idea of the KMT's mainlander-politicians since it was to his mind largely unrealistic and impossible to achieve, nor did he openly support independence yearned by the DPP²¹. Still it is marked that "the KMT's major political platforms became virtually indistinguishable from those of the independence-minded DPP", which was not left undetected by Beijing calling Lee's approach "creeping independence"²².

These changes in Taiwan led to the possibility of shifting power to DPP in the next decade. In 1999 the opposition party released the Resolution on Taiwan's future which explained the party's vision of the future of Taiwan. The resolution drew attention to the fact that the opposition together with the support from the people of Taiwan had succeeded in bringing the ROC closer to a democracy, although there is still the need for further reforms²³. Prior to the presidential elections in 2000 the opposition party set forth a proclamation including the following seven points:

1. Taiwan is a sovereign and independent country and changes in status quo must be decided by all the residents of Taiwan following a plebiscite;
2. Taiwan is not a part of the PRC because "One China principle" and "One country, two systems" are advocated unilaterally by PRC;
3. Taiwan should expand its role in the international community, seek recognition and pursue entry into the UN and other international organizations;
4. Taiwan should renounce the "One China" position since it leads to confusion and could be used as a pretext for military invasion;
5. Taiwan should incorporate plebiscite into law so there remains a way for the people of Taiwan to express their will when needed;
6. The government and opposition should reach a consensus on foreign policy to face China's aggression;
7. Taiwan and China should both seek dialogue to reach mutual understanding and establish economic cooperation.²⁴

²¹ Kang (2003), pp 25

²² Kang (2003), pp 26

²³ I. Preface, Resolution on Taiwan's Future (1999) DPP Congress
(<http://english.dpp.org.tw/1999-resolution-regarding-taiwans-future>, 21.05.2015)

²⁴ II. Proclamation, Resolution on Taiwan's Future (1999)

The time leading up to the 2000s was therefore promising to those who supported independence from the mainland of China as DPP was likely to win the next presidential elections.

2. Shifting power in Taiwan in the 2000s:

2.1 People's Republic of China

In 2000 the PRC government issued a new white paper to explain the relations between Beijing and Taiwan to make sure there is no misunderstanding that the position of Beijing is still strict and there is no future for Taiwan as an independent state. In "The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue" the PRC set forth three scenarios when Beijing will have to resort to the use of military force: 1) if Taiwan declares independence or tries to separate from the mainland under any name; 2) if Taiwan is invaded or occupied by a foreign country; or 3) if Taiwan's authorities choose not to settle the unification through peaceful means and delay the negotiations²⁵. These three scenarios together with the increased military threat from the mid-1990s were surely to affect the decisions Taiwan will have to make during the next decade. Also, the PRC made clear that 1) the future of Taiwan could never be decided through a referendum since Beijing is the sole legal authority; 2) "sovereignty belongs to the people" refers to all the people in China (mainland and Taiwan both), not to people on a certain territory; 3) the issue of "self-determination" does not exist since Taiwan has never been a separate state²⁶.

In addition, since PRC has already used "One country, two systems" successfully (Macau and Hong Kong), there is no reason to doubt that Taiwan could not preserve their democratic system and capitalist society after it is unified with the mainland²⁷. It can be read from the white paper that Beijing largely puts the blame of the recent events on Taiwan's former president Lee who "betrayed the One-China Principle" and through his separatist policies he "jeopardized peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region"²⁸. PRC on the other hand, has made every effort to solve the Taiwan issue through peaceful means, including allowing Taiwan (under the name Taipei, China or Chinese Taipei) to participate on an ad hoc basis in inter-governmental international organizations that also accept regional membership²⁹.

²⁵ III. The Chinese Government--Staunch Champion for the One-China Principle, The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue (2000) PRC Taiwan Affairs Office and the Information Office of the State Council (white paper) (<http://www.china.org.cn/english/taiwan/7956.htm>, 22.05.2015)

²⁶ IV. Several Questions Involving the One-China Principle in the Cross-Straits Relations, The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue (2000)

²⁷ IV. Several Questions Involving the One-China Principle in the Cross-Straits Relations, The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue (2000)

²⁸ Foreword, The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue, 2000

²⁹ V. Several Questions Involving Adherence to the One-China Principle in the International Community, The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue (2000)

In 2003 PRC issued the next official document called "China's Policy on 'Three Direct Links'" Across the Taiwan Strait which was meant to show that PRC has shifted the attention from the non-negotiable "One China" principle to rational economic co-operation that would benefit both the mainland and the Chinese living in Taiwan. The three direct links (mail, transport and trade) were to be set up via third parties (for example Hong Kong, Macau or Japan) benefitting the compatriots on both sides of the strait through a win-win situation³⁰. Although the document claims that the three direct links is the will of the people and purely an economic matter, it can be understood that PRC blames the Taiwan authorities who are claimed to be resisting developing relations due to political reasons, although they are necessary for both sides and would benefit Taiwan greatly. This is done through discriminatory restrictions and unfair treatment against the mainland which damages the market environment³¹. Furthermore, PRC tries to undermine all claims from Taiwan that the goal of this policy could be to jeopardize Taiwan's military security, dwarf Taiwan politically or threaten their economic security in the future³².

All in all, in the 2000s three main factors arose which PRC needs to take into consideration. These are: 1) China wants to improve their relations with the U.S. and for that it is necessary to develop a softer attitude towards Taiwan to not seem threatening; 2) China needs to focus on solving its own domestic socioeconomic problems and for that it needs to refrain from jeopardising social stability and economic development; 3) PRC has realised that the growing Taiwanese national identity is existent and support for unification in Taiwan is virtually diminished³³. All this does not mean though that China has accepted that Taiwan is not a part of China. In 2005 despite PRC's affirmation to solve the Taiwan crisis peacefully the National People's Congress passed the Anti-Secession Law in 2005 legalizing the use of force to influence Taiwan not to declare independence³⁴. Article 4 marks that "Accomplishing the great task of reunifying the motherland is the sacred duty of all Chinese people, the Taiwan compatriots included³⁵" and if the possibility of peaceful means is completely exhausted, PRC is obligated to resort to using force to protect their sovereign right to territorial integrity³⁶. Taiwan's response (The Official Position of the Republic of China (Taiwan) on the People's Republic of China's Anti-Secession (Anti-Separation) Law) was

³⁰ China's Policy on 'Three Direct Links' Across the Taiwan Straits (2003) PRC Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council (<http://www.china.org.cn/english/taiwan/82711.htm>, 22.05.2015)

³¹ II. Realization of the "Three Direct Links" Accords with the Immediate Interests of Compatriots Across the Straits, and Is the Fundamental Way to Attaining Mutual Benefit and a Win-Win Situation, China's Policy on 'Three Direct Links' Across the Taiwan Straits (2003)

³² IV. Explanations on Some Questions Related to the "Three Direct Links", China's Policy on 'Three Direct Links' Across the Taiwan Straits (2003)

³³ Chen (2014), pp 23

³⁴ Chen (2014), pp 24

³⁵ Article 4, Anti-Secession Law (2005) PRC National People's Congress (<http://www.china.org.cn/english/2005lh/122724.htm>, 20.05.2015)

³⁶ Article 8, Anti-Secession Law (2005)

issued in a hurry on the same year, condemning the PRC's pursuit to legitimize the use of non-peaceful means³⁷. Therefore, the first half of the 2000s brought forth a shift to more pragmatic relations between the two sides, but also an obvious military threat from Beijing.

2.2 Republic of China (Taiwan) and the Democratic Progressive Party

The 1990s ended with President Lee marking that there should be a state-to-state special relationship between Taiwan and the mainland. This was seen by Beijing as proof of his true aspirations for policies that would not result in unification. However, when DPP presidential candidate Chen Shu-bian won the elections in 2000 by getting only 39% of the votes, it was clear that more than 60% of the voters still did not support the DPP and therefore also not Taiwan's possible independence. At the time numerous surveys showed that about 50% of the residents supported status quo while either independence or unification was voted as a preferable result only by 20% of the voters each.³⁸ Therefore, it could be said that the former opposition party DPP "has played little role in the creation of a host of major controversies that overshadow the future of the Taiwan Strait; it simply inherited them."³⁹ Although Chen's party had issued the Resolution on Taiwan's Future just a year before winning the presidential elections it should have been clear that their main aim would be to work towards gaining independence, but in his inaugural speech Chen decided to opt for a more moderate policy on the "One China" issue:

"As long as the CCP regime has no intention to use military force against Taiwan, I pledge that during my term in office, I will not declare independence, I will not change the national title, I will not push forth the inclusion of the so-called "state-to-state" description in the Constitution, and I will not promote a referendum to change the status quo in regards to the question of independence or unification. Furthermore, the abolition of the National Reunification Council or the National Reunification Guidelines will not be an issue."⁴⁰

This approach was quite different from the initial declaration a year before the 2000 presidential elections that promised to aim for independence and an equal status with the government in Beijing with the help of a national referendum. Instead, Chen seemed convinced that Taiwan should opt for "positive openness, effective management, a minimal political debate, and a priority in economic

³⁷ The Official Position of the Republic of China (Taiwan) on the People's Republic of China's Anti-Secession (Anti-Separation) Law (2005) ROC Mainland Affairs Council (<http://www.taiwan.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=13556&ctNode=1938&mp=999>, 20.05.2015)

³⁸ Kang (2003), pp 36

³⁹ Kang (2003), pp 28

⁴⁰ Kang (2003), pp 35

and trade issues⁴¹" which basically meant that sovereignty issue could be set aside for the sake of promoting trade and growth in Taiwan's economy. Taiwan should therefore continue on the path of economic co-operation which started with ROC's export dependency being only 2-3% in the end of 1980s, but raised to over 10% already by 1992 and even more up to 17% by the end of the century⁴². The 2000 presidential election results together with the growing economic dependence showed that the people of Taiwan were not ready to support independence in the form initially advocated by the DPP since this could lead to a military confrontation with the mainland of China and damage Taiwan's economy because PRC was the second largest export market after the United States already from the mid-1990s⁴³.

However, few years after the start of his presidency, Chen begun stressing the importance of independence again. He proclaimed in 2002 that "Taiwan and China are each one country on each side of the strait"⁴⁴ which lead to abolishing the National Unification Council, calling to draft a new Taiwanese Constitution and aiming for the membership in UN⁴⁵. This was a worrying tendency for Beijing and ended with issuing the Anti-Secession Law in 2005. The DPP won the presidential elections again in 2004, but in 2008 the Taiwanese people were already too anxious - they opposed reunification, but they also opposed independence since that would damage the cross-strait relations. In 2008 the people of Taiwan therefore voted for KMT to return to presidency⁴⁶. This in turn led to advocating for reunification again since KMT had despite Lee's efforts in the 1990s never truly backed down from the position of "One China". As the new president Ma (Kuomintang) stressed in 2012:

When we speak of "One China, " naturally it is the Republic of China. According to our Constitution, the sovereign territory of the Republic of China includes Taiwan and the mainland.⁴⁷

By the end of Chen's presidency, more than 40% of Taiwan's exports and 75% of foreign investments (since 2002) went to PRC⁴⁸. This has had an effect also on Taiwanese people's ideas on how the ROC's future should look like. Roughly 80% of people already support the status quo in cross-strait relations and the percent of supporters of unification had reduced to 8% (from 17% in 2002) and independence is seen as the only option for 17% of the survey respondents (up from 10%

⁴¹ Kang (2003), pp 35-36

⁴² Kang (2003), pp 38

⁴³ Kang (2003), pp 37

⁴⁴ Chen (2014), pp 35

⁴⁵ Chen (2014), pp 36

⁴⁶ Chen (2014), pp 25

⁴⁷ Chen (2014), pp 37

⁴⁸ Chen (2014), pp 30

in 2002)⁴⁹. This has forced the KMT and also the mainland of China to aim for more moderate solutions in solving the "Taiwan issue" because PRC has not succeeded in winning the hearts of the Taiwanese. President Ma who won the presidential elections in 2008 continued with the reformed "three no-s" which acknowledged that neither side of the strait can deny each other's existence nor accept the other as an equal state (no unification, no independence, no use of force), taking into account the majority view that neither unification nor independence might not be acceptable for Taiwan⁵⁰. In addition, the public polls show that in 2008 82% of Taiwanese respondents answered that they do not support „One country, two systems" and this has been the dominant view all through the last two decades (during the years 70-87% have opposed the unification when asked)⁵¹.

CONCLUSION

The last decades have seen numerous policy positions on the "issue of Taiwan". Understandings on how the future should look like to the people currently living on the territory have varied from no negotiations and no relations to unification or even independence. On the PRC side there has been mostly a fixed position refusing to back down from the policy of "One China" which means that under no circumstances would Beijing give the Taiwanese authorities a chance to advocate for independence. Across the strait in Taiwan though there have been many opposing views. From 2000-2008 independence could be seen as the dominant discourse since DPP won the elections, but in reality PRC has succeeded in making Taiwan dependent economically. Furthermore, the military threats have largely served their purpose and eliminated the option of declaring independence in the near future. The power in Taiwan has shifted back to Kuomintang which supports unification, but the dominant view is that due to its geo-strategic location, all changes on the island affect also in part the sensitive China-U.S. relations⁵² and therefore should be closely monitored and rather moderate.

Both sides are now facing problems internally and also in trying to preserve their position internationally. The cross-strait relations are still complicated, although both sides mostly agree that economic co-operation is beneficial and will help them in the future. The economic aspirations together with an increased military threat from the mainland have forced the people and authorities in Taiwan to rethink what are they willing to sacrifice for the sake of being de jure independent. In 2000 DPP largely inherited the problems between the relations with PRC which were brought about

⁴⁹ Chen (2014), pp 38

⁵⁰ Hughes, C. R. (2009) New Trends in Taiwan's China Policy, *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol 44 (2), pp 62

⁵¹ Sobel, R.; Haynes, W. A. Zheng, Y. (2010) Taiwan Public Opinion Trends, 1992-2008: Exploring Attitudes on Cross-Strait Issues, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 74 (4), pp 782–813

⁵² Hsieh, P. L. (2009) *The Taiwan Question and the One-China Policy: Legal Challenges with Renewed Momentum*, Die Friedens-Warte: Journal of International Peace and Organization, Berlin University Press, Vol. 84 (3), pp 59

already with Lee's presidency in the 1990s. As it has been explained, "at the risk of oversimplification, Taiwan's positions on the "One China" issue can be said to have evolved from the mainlander-dominated KMT to the Lee Teng-hui's KMT to DPP.⁵³" After 2008 Kuomintang party regained presidency and reintroduced their traditional "One China" position which is clearly not acceptable to PRC and therefore the dilemma continues. Any proposal that could be interpreted as equality between the negotiating sides is unacceptable to PRC, but non-negotiable to Taiwan⁵⁴. Furthermore, the status quo is firmly supported by the people of Taiwan which largely eliminates the possibility for DPP to advocate for independence since they claim the people should support it by plebiscite.

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⁵³ Kang (2003), pp 29

⁵⁴ Kang (2003), pp 32-33

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