Peace Over War, the Future of the Taiwan Straits

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Peace over War, the Future of the Taiwan Straits

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A Thesis in the Field of International Relations
for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

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Abstract

Between 1954 and 1996, the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of China (Taiwan) were involved in three crises that encompassed military actions. Many scholars have suggested that military conflict or intervention may again take place at the Taiwan Straits. However, each of the past military conflicts was comparably shorter and less intense than its direct predecessor. At the same time, the scope of economic and cultural globalization has vastly expanded.

This thesis addresses the question of whether tighter integration into the global economy and culture makes military conflicts at the Taiwan Straits less likely. The theoretical variables are extracted on the individual level, the domestic level, and the international level. An investigation of the crucial impact that factors such as economic collaboration, domestic interests, and ethnic connections have exerted on military conflicts during the three Taiwan Straits Crises is conducted.

It is demonstrated that the influence of rapidly advancing globalization reduces the likelihood of military conflicts at the Taiwan Straits. The future of Taiwan Straits issue will likely be maintaining the current stalemate with no armed conflicts, no reunification, and no independence.
Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank the Harvard Extension School for giving me a chance to pursue this master degree in the field I was interested in since a very young age. I have learned so much in the ALM program. Harvard taught me how to think academically, critically, and thoroughly. It also helped me grow as a parent. I have learned a more scientific approach to parenting and apply it on a daily basis to educate my children on how to think critically and study productively, which goes far beyond rote memorization.

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Furthermore, I would like to a give big applause to myself for completing this
thesis and the ALM program. Seven years have passed since my enrollment in 2010.
During these seven years, I got married. I was taking an exam in a costume for a theater
performance while the rest of the cast was waiting for me to get on stage right after. I was
pregnant and gave academic presentations with an enormous belly. I was watching online
lectures in the middle of the night while breastfeeding my newborn. I was writing my
thesis on an outdoor playground while pretending to be a monster for my toddler and his
friends’ role-play. It was not easy. During the writing process, I experienced pregnancy,
childbirth, miscarriage, and a move to a completely new country with a toddler and an
infant. The thought of giving up crossed my mind multiple times. I am so glad I didn’t. I
finally made it! Hooray!

Lastly, in this thesis, I wrote a lot of about democracy and my motherland, the
People’s Republic of China. I sincerely hope that my motherland will have a fit
democratic system soon. Indeed, I hope that, in the near future, I can vote as a citizen in
my motherland and that my vote counts!

Thank you, thank you, thank you!
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Chapter I

Introduction

The relationship between the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC) is unique. First, unlike the relationship between South and North Korea, and unlike the relationship between West and East Germany, the PRC and the ROC are not exactly in an “interstate” relationship because most other countries and international organizations do not recognize Taiwan as an official nation. Second, the relationship between the PRC and the ROC is also different from other cases of federation, such as the situation between the United States and Puerto Rico or between Finland and Aland Island. The conflict does not stem from two ethnic groups fighting over one sovereign state, but is rather caused by the legacy of the Chinese Civil War and the Cold War: One government is capitalist while the other one is socialist. The different administrative and political ideologies of the governments involved make the Taiwan Straits situation extremely hard to solve. Additionally, the United States’ Dual Track policy deeply influenced the situation at the Taiwan Straits. The US implements its dual Track policy by developing Sino-American Relations while maintaining the security of the ROC by providing weapons and military consultation.

With its over 1.3 billion people and the world’s second highest GDP, the PRC is currently the most populous and economically powerful communist country. Although its economic form is, in some respects, pursuing a transformation into a free market economy, its national political system still remains communist.
The ROC is the first capitalist regime in China. Unlike other controversial autonomous regions in China, such as Tibet and Hong Kong, the ROC is a de facto nation with full sovereignty that was recognized by the United Nations until 1971.¹ Therefore, the relationship between the PRC and the ROC is especially strained and an outbreak of war at the Taiwan Straits would deeply impact the status quo in East Asia. Geographically, it would affect many neighboring countries such as Japan and South Korea. Furthermore, the Taiwan Straits is one of the key locations for the United States’ military deployment in the Pacific and the US supplies arms to Taiwan pursuant to the Taiwan Relation Act. The US also has economic ties with both the PRC and the ROC. The peace in the Taiwan Straits is an important factor in a delicate international power equilibrium.

Since the background of the two sides is intertwined, there are multiple possible outcomes in the medium future. One of the most essential questions is whether another military conflict will erupt in the Taiwan Straits. Between 1927 and 1950, the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Kuomintang (KMT), the two parties that later established the PRC and the ROC respectively, fought two civil wars. Some scholars consider these two conflicts as one civil war that was interrupted by the Japanese invasion during the Second World War. Between 1954 and 1996, the PRC and the ROC had three crises that involved military actions.

Many scholars have suggested that military conflict or intervention may again take place at the Taiwan Straits. In 2016, Jin Canrong, a professor at Renmin University

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in Beijing, has presented his opinion in the auditorium of his university. He elaborated that the situation in the Taiwan Straits will have four stages: observe, pressure, confront, and conflict. He postulates that the PRC will observe the ROC’s new administration for a while and then exert increasing economic and political pressure on it. If the ROC subsequently still did not re-agree on the 1992 Consensus, the PRC would then confront the ROC with military threats. Eventually, if the situation remained unchanged until after the ROC’s 2020 presidential election, the PRC would wage war in 2021.\(^2\) Zhao Suisheng, a professor at the University of Denver and the editor of the Journal of Contemporary China also predicts that, if current Taiwanese leadership continues its course, China would wage war on Taiwan in 2021.\(^3\) The research of scholars who predict military scenarios has focused on the balance of military strength, political tolerance, and ideological differences.

However, examining the past military conflicts at the Taiwan Straits, each of these conflicts was comparably shorter and less intense than its direct predecessor. At the same time, the scope of economic and cultural globalization has vastly expanded. Are these two changes potentially related? As aforementioned, the PRC and the ROC used to experience a series of military conflicts. Under the influence of rapidly advancing globalization, these countries’ economic collaboration, domestic interests, and ethnic connections should be reconsidered as essential factors that will deeply influence these countries’ interactions.

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Nowadays, the PRC and ROC have strong economic and cultural ties, are undergoing a process of socialist and economic reforms, and are being closely watched by the international community. Under these circumstances, any military action will necessarily harm the PRC and ROC’s economic and cultural development, and severely damage their international reputation. Moreover, any military conflict may delay or harm their economic and cultural development. Hence, the current situation ought not to escalate into military action but rather deescalate to an even more stable and peaceful state. I hypothesize that, in light of rapidly advancing globalization, due to shifted domestic interests, especially strong economic ties, in addition to Taiwan’s democratic progress, and changes in the Sino-American relations, military conflict is not likely to erupt between the PRC and the ROC.

The change of leaders’ behaviors, the structure of domestic political parties, and the stance of international allies support the hypothesis. This thesis will address the question of whether tighter integration into the global economy and culture makes military conflicts at the Taiwan Straits less likely. The crucial impact that the above factors have exerted on military conflicts during the three Taiwan Straits Crises will be examined. The main argument is based on the study of these crises.

To test the hypothesis, this thesis begins by reviewing theoretical literature about the distinguishing factors that determine war and peace, such as a balance of power and ethnicity. The theoretical variables will be extracted on the individual level, the domestic level, and the international level. On the individual level, the beliefs and attitudes of leaders and the influence of their decision-making strategies will be assessed during the crises. On the domestic level, not only political factors of the dominant parties, but also
economic, social, cultural, and perceptual factors will be analyzed. On the international level, influences from other countries will be considered. The influences will not be limited to military aspects, but include states’ reputation and economic conditions. Even though both parties had constant military growth, the economic and cultural cooperation led to nearly twenty years of peace.
Chapter II

Background

This thesis uses Kenneth Neal Waltz’s framework. First, In *Man, the State and War*, Waltz classified the causes of war in the first image (individual), the second image (state), and the third image (international community). Waltz’s framework is widely used in the field of international relations.⁴

Then, the theory of the Balance of Power will be reviewed. The theory of Balance of Power is used to support the possibility of wars in the Taiwan Straits. Charles Kegley summarizes the concept of the Balance of Power in his *World Politics: Trends and Transformation*. The theory of the Balance of Power states that “peace and stability are most likely to be maintained when military power is distributed to prevent a single superpower hegemon or bloc from controlling the world.”⁵ Hence, when military power is distributed to reach a balance, no single state is strong enough to dominate all others. The theory predicts that if one state gains additional power, it will take advantage of its military strength and attack neighbors that are weaker.

Ernst Haas summarized the concept of the Balance of Power in *World Politics* in 1953.⁶ Some politicians and political scientists believe that, instead of a distribution of

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power, the Balance of Power rather refers to an “equilibrium”: “an exact equilibrium of power between two or more contending parties.” Some observers believe that the Balance of Power implies a need for hegemony and some analysts believe that peace and stability are identical with a Balance of Power. Contrarily, sometimes in literature the Balance of Power is used to imply instability and war.

The Balance of Power theory is supported by classical realists and neorealists. For realists, some states prefer war to peace. Others, even those who prefer peace to war, choose war unintentionally while enhancing their own security through armaments, alliances, and deterring threats. Robert Jervis calls this phenomenon a “security dilemma”.\(^7\) One state’s actions to increase its security may lead to a decrease in the security of all states, including its own.

For neorealists, according to Waltz’s *Theory of International Politics*, “balance-of-power politics prevail wherever two, and only two requirements are met: that the order be anarchic and that it be populated by units wishing to survive”.\(^8\) There are two ways to achieve the Balance of Power, namely internal balancing and external balancing. Internal balancing means that a state can use internal efforts such as increasing economic capability, developing political strategies, and enhancing military strength. External balancing refers to a state’s external measures to improve their security.

Additionally, this thesis uses the concept of globalization in order to explain the changing political atmosphere at the Taiwan Straits. Although, on first glance, the term “globalization” seems to have been coined in modern days, some scholars trace its origins


in 15th century or even as far back as the third millennium BC. “Globalization” is derived from the verb globalize that describes the emergence of an international network of economic systems.

Based on Martin Albrow and Elizabeth King, globalization is the process of international integration arising from the interchange of worldview, products, ideas, and other aspects of culture. Anthony Giddens defined Globalization as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.” Paul James described in an article in the journal Globalizations that “Globalization is the extension of social relations across world-space, defining that world-space in terms of the historically variable ways that it has been practiced and socially understood through changing world-time.” Due to the long history of globalization, he also categorized globalization into four different forms. The oldest dominant form is the movement of people. The second form is made from different institutions, organizations, and polities. The third form is the movement of commodities and other objects of exchange. The last and most current dominant form is the transmission of ideas, images, knowledge, and

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In modern society, the economic and financial applications of globalization are its most influential and studied form. Hence, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) identified four basic aspects of globalization: trade and transactions, capital and investment movements, migration and movement of people, and the dissemination of knowledge in 2000. With the continuous development of globalization, research in this field is increasingly advanced. Manfred Steger identified five empirical dimensions of globalization: economic, political cultural, ecological, and ideological. Thomas Friedman thinks that “globalized trade, outsourcing, supply-chaining, and political forces had permanently changed the world.”

The boom of globalization began in the 19th century as the connectedness of the economies and cultures worldwide increased. A century later, the invention and broad adoption of the Internet and smart phone brought the world further together in an unprecedented manner. In general, scholars understand and categorize globalization in three major facets: economic globalization, cultural globalization, and political globalization.

There are numerous theories about how globalization affects conflicts. Some scholars believe it promotes peace. For example, Katherine Barbieri and Rafael Reuveny

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14 James, “Arguing Globalizations: Propositions towards an Investigation of Global Formation.”


summarized that globalization promotes economic development by expanding free markets, reducing income inequality, reducing state control over the economy, increasing communication and information flows, increasing the size of security forces, and generating economic benefits.\textsuperscript{20}

As globalization is a complex, multi-faceted concept with a multitude of potential implications, theoretical arguments previously made are not sufficient to predict the influence of globalization on the Taiwan Straits issue. Hence, a more detailed empirical analysis will be conducted.

Finally, this thesis uses the theory of ethnicity and identities to predict possible outcomes of the Taiwan Straits issue. Many scholars define ethnicity by Bruce Gilley’s concept. Ethnicity is “that part of a person’s identity which is drawn from one or more ‘markers’ like race, religion, shared history, region, social symbols or language.”\textsuperscript{21} Anthony Smith defines an ethnos in \textit{Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History}, as having a proper name, common myths of ancestry, shared memories, shared culture, and a connection to a homeland.\textsuperscript{22} Milton Esman explains the ethnic sentiment as “an expression of who I am, how I identify myself, to what group of people I belong. As a member of that group this becomes to me a collective identity.”\textsuperscript{23} An ethnic sentiment can lead to ethnic solidarity. Although ethnicity is related to nation and nationalism, it is

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\textsuperscript{21} Bruce Gilley, “Against the Concept of Ethnic Conflict,” \textit{Third World Quarterly} 25, no. 6 (2004): 1158.


\end{flushleft}
different from them. Differences mainly manifest themselves in the goals of ethnic
groups as compared to nationalist groups. A nation has geographical boundaries and
political boundaries. Ashutosh Varshney elaborates that “Ethnic groups […] can live
without a state of their own, making do with some cultural rights (e.g., use of mother
tongue in schools) or affirmative action, but a nation means bringing ethnicity and
statehood together.” In addition, some nationalist conflicts, such as the ideological ones
at the Taiwan Straits, are different from ethnic conflicts because ethnicity is an ascriptive
identity.

There are many theories to explain ethnicity. Scholars have developed a few main
theories in the field of international relations: primordialism, constructivism, and
instrumentalism. For primordialists, ethnic identity and national identity are derived from
human nature and they are unchangeable. Through shared cultural and historical memory,
group consciousness is reinforced. Hence, the ethnic identity is more important than other
identities such as ideology and class.

Social constructivists claim that identities are “molded, refabricated, and
mobilized in accord with reigning cultural scripts and centers of power.” They see
ethnicity as “a social phenomenon” and as the result from behaviors and speech that “can
and do change over time.”

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24 Ashurosh Varshney, “Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Rationality,” Perspectives on Politics 1,

25 David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict : Fear,


27 Lake and Rothchild, The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict : Fear, Diffusion, and
Escalation.
For instrumentalists, ethnicity and nationalism can be used to achieve an instrumentalist purpose. Anthony Marx points out that individuals, especially among the elites, can use ethnicity for political benefit.\textsuperscript{29}

Demographics of the Republic of China

Based on one of the ROC’s official reports, the population of the Republic of China is about 23.4 million.\textsuperscript{30} According to official census data, there were 3.12 million people on the island of Taiwan in 1905. In 1945, the population increased to 6.09 million. Until 2013, the number multiplied nearly four-fold to 23.4 million. The ROC has an aging population. The proportion of citizens who are 65 or older has increased steadily to 11.53\% in 2013.

The original inhabitants of the ROC were aborigines who share mitochondrial DNA with the islanders of Southeast Asia and Oceania but now over 95\% of the ROC’s population is Han Chinese. The ancestors of the Han ethnic group in the ROC migrated from the southeastern provinces of China in the 17\textsuperscript{th} century. In these early times, most of the migrants were Holo from the Fujian province and Hakka from the Guangdong province. The second migration wave of Han people happened in 1949 when the ROC’s government retreated to the Island of Taiwan and around 1.2 million people left the Mainland to relocate to Taiwan. The majority of them were soldiers, civil servants, and


teachers. The ROC is home to a number of other ethnic groups. Indigenous people, some of whom belong to groups who have lived in Taiwan for millennia, make up 2.28% of Taiwan’s total population. Sixteen of these groups are officially recognized: Amis, Atayal, Bunun, Kavalan, Paiwan, Puyuma, Rukai, Saisiyat, Sakizaya, Seediq, Thao, Truku, Tsou, Yami, Hlaalu, and Kanakanavu.

Language

The ROC’s official national language is Mandarin Chinese but many Taiwanese also speak Hakka and Hokkien. Very few people speak aboriginal languages. In terms of written language, the ROC officially uses traditional Chinese characters.

Religion

About 93% of the ROC’s religious population believes in a mixture of Buddhism and Taoism, and 4.5% of it believes in Christianity.

Politics

The ROC is home to two political coalitions: Pan-Blue parties and Pan-Green parties. Pan-Blue parties, which include the Kuomintang, the New Party, and the People First Party, affirm that there is only one China and that it is either the PRC or the ROC. Pan-Green parties, such as the Democratic Progressive Party, and the New Power Party, maintain that the PRC and the ROC are both independent nations.

As described above, the ROC has an aging population. However, based on the numbers provided by the Department of Household Registration in 2015, there are 7.15
million voters who are between 20 and 39 years old, which amounts to 39% of the 18 million voters in total.\textsuperscript{31} The ROC’s younger generation used to be less interested in Taiwanese politics as for instance demonstrated by the presidential election in 2008. Based on the data gathered by Taiwan Academia Sinica, only 18.2% of young people between the age 20 and 23 voted.\textsuperscript{32} For the age group of 24 to 29 olds, the voter turnout was 48.4%. Compared to the total turnout of 76.33%, these two numbers appear quite low.

However, in 2014, due to the initiative of a few student-driven political movements such as the Sunflower Student Movement, the participation and enthusiasm of young voters increased dramatically to an extent that they were able to change an election’s result, a phenomenon which is also known as the “nine-in-one elections”. According to a voting behavior survey conducted by Taiwan Thinktank, the voter turnout for the age group of 20 to 29 and 30 to 39 year olds was in fact 74% and 78.2% respectively, an increase of more than 15% compared to previous elections.\textsuperscript{33} These local elections resulted in a substantial defeat for the ruling party KMT. Previously, the KMT governed 14 out of 22 municipalities and counties. However, in the 2014 elections it only reached a majority in six municipalities while the DDP achieved big gains. The “nine-in-one elections” changed the ROC’s political landscape significantly. During these elections, the youngest eligible voters were born around 1994 and when they first started their primary education in 2000, the DDP became the ruling party. Compared with the

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KMT, the DDP is more favorable regarding Taiwanese independence. Hence, between 2000 and 2008, this young generation was strongly politically influenced and wanted to be more eagerly involved in the ROC’s democratic process.

Demographics of the People’s Republic of China

The population of the People’s Republic of China is over 1.38 billion, making it the largest in the world. The PRC officially recognizes 56 ethnic groups of which Han is the largest. Based on the 2010 census, 91.51% of the population of the Mainland is Han Chinese and 8.49% belong to minorities. Although the population’s enormous size, the young age group is comparatively small due to the implementation of the one-child policy, a method to control excessive population growth. The policy permitted couples of the Han majority to only have one child. In 2015, the one-child policy was abandoned, permitting Han Chinese couples to have two children. However, ethnic minorities are excluded from the one-child policy and thus their growth rates remained higher than the Han people’s growth rate during the past decades.

Language

The official spoken language of the PRC is Mandarin Chinese. Other widely spoken languages include Cantonese, Shanghainese, and Hokkien. The official written language is simplified Chinese except for Hong Kong and Macau where it is traditional Chinese.

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Religion

China has long history of being a cradle of religious and philosophical traditions, such as Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. The philosophical frameworks of these religions have had a significant historical role in the shaping of Chinese culture.

Since the PRC was governed by the CPC in 1949, it is theoretically atheistic. Especially under Mao Zedong’s administration, religious activities were fiercely oppressed. Yet, in the 1970s, religious freedoms improved vastly. Currently, the CPC formally recognizes five religions: Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism. The largest groups of people who practice religion in the PRC follow a mix of Taoism and Buddhism. There is no clear boundary between these mixed religions and many scholars and officials likewise claim that those practices are not religions but rather constitute cultural practices or thought systems.

Politics

The PRC has only one ruling party, the Communist Party of China. Based on the Constitution of the PRC, the electoral system is pyramidal. People directly elect their local People’s Congresses and higher levels of People’s Congresses up to the National People’s Congress are indirectly elected by the congress of the level immediately below. The President of China is the head of state. In most cases, the leader of the CPC and the Military Commission also is president. For example, the current president, Xi Jinping, is also the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China and the Chairman of the

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Central Military Commission.

In addition, there is also a State Council. It consists of a Premier who presides over it, four vice premiers, and the heads of ministries and commissions. Lastly, other political parties in the PRC also exist. They have representatives in the National People’s Congress and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference. However, the CPC retains effective control over the administration of the country.

The PRC has 22 provinces and considers Taiwan as its 23rd province. The PRC also has five autonomous regions that are designated for minority groups to habitat: Guangxi (Zhuang Chinese), Inner Mongolia (Mongolian Chinese), Ningxia (Hui Chinese, Islamic), Xinjiang (Uighur Chinese, Islamic), and Tibet (Tibetan Chinese). It has four municipalities, Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, and Chongqing. Lastly, the PRC has two Special Administrative Regions, namely Hong Kong and Macau, that enjoy a certain degree of political autonomy by using a special administrative system called “One Country, Two Systems”.

The History of Cross-Strait Relations

Both the PRC and the ROC have a turbulent history (Figure 1). In ancient times, Taiwan was actually not officially incorporated into China by the Chinese government. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Netherlands and Spain occupied Taiwan.
In 1624, Chenggong Zheng, an official from the Ming Dynasty, defeated the European invaders and took over control of the island after which the first Han Chinese regime was established in Taiwan. However, the Manchu Qing in turn defeated this regime in 1683 and Taiwan became a part of China’s Fujian province. Under the Qing government, both Taiwan and Mainland China belonged to the same country for 212 years during which the Cross-Strait relations were of a simple, domestic nature. When the Treaty of Shimonoseki was signed as the result of the First Sino-Japanese war, Taiwan became a colony of Japan. Cross-Strait relations became international during the Second World War, since Taiwan was part of the Japanese Empire. Japanese rule over Taiwan lasted until 1945.

After Japan was defeated in the Second World War, the ROC took Taiwan back and the KMT started governing the island from 1945 to 1949. In 1949, the Chinese Civil War turned decisively against the KMT and in favor of the CPC. Eventually, the CPC founded the People’s Republic of China in Beijing and forced to ROC to retreat to Taiwan where it declared Taipei as its temporary capital in December 1949.

**Figure 1. History of the PRC and the ROC**

Brief Introduction of the First Taiwan Straits Crisis

The vast majority of scholars generally believe that the First Taiwan Straits Crisis
took place from September 1954 to May 1955, shortly after the Geneva Conference had put an end to the conflict in Indochina. The crisis was mainly a conflict between the newly established PRC and the ROC, also often called “Formosa” during the time of the crisis, a historic name the island got from Portuguese explorers that was later widely used in the West. After the Chinese Civil War, a complicated and costly armed conflict erupted between the CPC and the KMT. The two parties retained strong grudges against each other and desired to unify China under their sole rule. A staunch ally of the ROC, the US was deeply involved and came perilously close to war with the PRC. A crisis broke out on September 3, 1954, when the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) commenced an artillery bombardment of Quemoy (also called Kinmen), an island located only nine kilometers from the Mainland and held by the KMT forces.

At the very beginning of this crisis, President Dwight D. Eisenhower was unwilling to actively respond to this new threat in the Far East since the US had just finished the already unpopular Korean War. During the National Security Council meeting of September 12, 1954, he wrote in his memoirs: “We’re not talking now about a limited, brush-fire war. We’re talking about going to the threshold of World War III. If we attack China, we’re not going to impose limits on our military actions, as in Korea.”\(^\text{37}\) However, critical voices in the US administration also specified that the crisis “marked the beginning of Beijing’s attempt to invade the ROC territories; the offshore islands would be first, Taiwan and Pescadores next.”\(^\text{38}\) Thus, under continuing pressure from the PLA,


the US assembled a huge air-naval force in the Taiwan Straits and signed the Mutual Defense Treaty with the ROC on December 2, 1954. The treaty was ratified by the U.S. Senate on February 9, 1955, and by the ROC on February 15, 1955, and entered into force on March 3, 1955. However, this treaty did not include explicit provisions for the offshore islands but rather only focused on the island of Taiwan and the Pescadores, also called Penghu islands, a group of small islands in close proximity to Taiwan. The treaty stated that “The Government of the Republic of China grants, and the Government of the United States of America accepts, the right to dispose such United States land, air and sea forces in and about Taiwan and the Pescadores as may be required for their defense, as determined by mutual agreement.” The two parties’ development of “their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack” and their declaration that each party “would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes” constituted the heart of the treaty.

In January 1955, the PLA launched an airstrike against the ROC-controlled Dachen Islands. With the help of the US’ Seventh Fleet, Taiwanese civilians and ROC troops retreated from the islands. Additionally, shortly thereafter the PRC captured Yijiangshan Island from the ROC. However, due to the signing of the Mutual Defense Treaty, the PRC ultimately feared the retaliation of the US. Thus, on April 23, 1955, during the first Asian-African Conference, the PRC’s Prime Minister Zhou Enlai publicly demonstrated his willingness to negotiate with the US in order to mitigate the strong tensions that had built up at the Taiwan Straits. Later the PRC ceased taking any further military

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39 Sheng, “Mao and China’s Relations with the Superpowers in the 1950s.”

interventions in the crisis and started ambassadorial talks with the US.\textsuperscript{41}

**Brief Introduction of the Second Taiwan Straits Crisis**

Most scholars believe that the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis took place between August 23 and October 5, 1958, and that it was a direct continuation of the First Taiwan Straits Crisis. During the three years between the First Taiwan Straits Crisis and the Second Taiwan Straits Crisis, the PRC was strengthening its military power at and near the Taiwan Straits, and the US was continually arming and consulting the ROC’s forces.

The crisis started with the 823 Artillery Bombardment at 5:30 AM on August 23, 1958. The PLA launched an intense artillery bombardment against Quemoy by firing thirty thousand rounds of bombs, killing more than six hundred ROC troops and two American advisors in the process. The PLA Navy also joined this crisis the next day by sinking two ROC ships.\textsuperscript{42} The ROC forces in Quemoy returned fire and in the heavy fire exchange, many troops on both sides were killed. The PRC had left 474,910 shells on Quemoy Island while the ROC fired 74,889 rounds of bombs.\textsuperscript{43}

The US Eisenhower Administration responded to the ROC’s request for aid according to its obligations as defined in the Mutual Defense Treaty by reinforcing US naval units and ordering US naval vessels to help the ROC’s government protect Quemoy's supply lines. On October 6, the PRC announced decreasing the level of bombardment.

\textsuperscript{41} Li Ping and Ma Zhisun, *Zhou Enlai Nian Pu [A Chronological Biography of Zhou Enlai]* (Beijing: Central Archive Press, 1997).


Afterwards, both the PRC and the ROC continued to bombard each other with shells containing propaganda leaflets on alternate days of the week. This strange informal arrangement—only firing every other day—continued until the normalization of ties between the US and the PRC in 1979.

**Brief Introduction of the Third Taiwan Straits Crisis**

The Third Taiwan Straits Crisis was triggered when Lee Teng-hui, the president of the ROC, visited Cornell University and gave a speech about the ROC’s democratization. In 1994, President Bill Clinton denied Lee’s request for a visa to enter the US. However, in May 1995, a concurrent resolution was submitted to the State Department to permit Lee to visit the US. It passed the House “396 to 0 with 38 not voting”, and the Senate “97 to 1 with 2 not voting.”\(^\text{44}\) Hence, Lee Teng-hui got the opportunity to visit the US to attend a Cornell alumni reunion. The PRC was shocked and furious about the US’s reversal of course and shortly after, from July 21 to 26, the PRC conducted missile tests on Pengjia Islet, a place North of the ROC. Forces were also mobilized in the Fujian province. From August 15 to 25, 1995, the PRC fired another set of missiles as part of a military exercise and in November, an amphibious assault exercise was conducted. In the meantime, the PRC initiated a propaganda campaign to denounce Lee Teng-hui’s cross-strait policies.

Soon US president Bill Clinton responded to the PRC by staging “the biggest display of US military power in Asia since the Vietnam War, sending ships to the Taiwan

Two aircraft carrier battle groups were also present in the region. By demonstrating military strength, the US sent a clear message to the PRC that US forces would come to the Strait in order to assist the ROC in the hour of need.

One of the main reasons for the PRC to start the Third Taiwan Straits Crisis was to influence the ROC’s first direct presidential election in 1996. The election took place on March 23. From March 8 to March 15, the PRC sent a third set of missiles near the ports of Keelung and Kaohsiung which had a major economic impact. Over 70% of commercial ships in the area were disrupted by the tests and trans-Pacific flights as well as flights to Japan were delayed. Ships traveling between Kaohsiung and Hong Kong were forced to take a detour. On March 8, 1996, the US announced that the Independence carrier battle group had been stationed near the ROC. In response, on the very next day, the PRC announced that live-fire exercises would be conducted near Penghu from March 12 to March 20. On March 11, the US dispatched Carrier Group Seven from the Persian Gulf. Four days later, the PRC announced that a simulated amphibious assault planned for March 18 to 25. However, the PRC’s threats turned out to be largely ineffective. Lee Teng-hui was elected the president of the ROC and this crisis also indirectly promoted US arms sales to the ROC.


47 Xiaobing Li, China at War: An Encyclopedia (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2012).
Cross-Strait Communication

The communication and cooperation between the ROC and the PRC have been developing continuously. In December 1978, Deng Xiaoping came to power in the PRC and initiated economic reforms. Deng also made adjustments to the direction of foreign policy including Cross-Strait relations. Correspondingly, the Three Links policy was proposed by the PRC in January 1979 which meant opening up postal connections, transportation, and trade between the two parties. Achieving the Three Links has not been an easy undertaking as exemplified by the difficulty of establishing direct fights between the PRC and the ROC. The PRC insisted on the One China Policy which meant that any direct flight would be a domestic flight. However, the ROC was worried about this position as it would imply recognizing the ROC as a part of the PRC and thus would compromise the ROC’s sovereignty. During later negotiations, the PRC declared that the One China Policy would no longer be considered a necessary component of the talks about the Three Links and that any direct flights would be “special cross-strait flights” as opposed to “international flights” or “domestic flights”.48 Therefore, the ROC started to gradually loosen restrictions. First, limited postal, transportation, and trade links between three cities in PRC’s Fujian province and ROC’s islands of Kinmen and Matsu were permitted. Trade links were open to the businessmen who were registered in Kinmen and Matsu and PRC-based Taiwanese businessmen. Initially, travelers from the Mainland were required to travel in groups. However, the restrictions were lifted gradually. In 2008, under the administration of Ma Ying-jeou, a multitude of direct flights between the PRC and the ROC were established. These flights operate every day and make 890 round-trips

per week, connecting 61 cities in the PRC with eight airports in the ROC.\(^{49}\) Furthermore, the citizens of both parties cannot use their passport to travel to the other side of the Strait since neither the ROC nor the PRC considers the journey as international travel. ROC residents are required to hold a Mainland Travel Permit for Taiwanese Residents when they want to enter the Mainland. Similarly, PRC residents are required to hold an Exit and Entry Permit for the Taiwan Area of the Republic of China to enter the ROC.

Based on data provided by the Tourism Bureau of the ROC, after the full liberalization of transportation between the PRC and the ROC, more and more tourists visit the ROC every year of which the majority comes from the PRC. The growth of visitors from the PRC has been virtually linear. In 2015, there were more than four million tourists from the PRC. The second largest source of tourists is Japan. With only barely more than 1.5 million visitors, visitors from the PRC outnumber Japanese tourists by nearly three to one (Figure 2).

According to the Tourism Bureau’s statistical data, tourism-related revenues have, unsurprisingly, also increased and foreign exchange revenues increase steadily every year (Figure 3). In 2008, foreign revenue was only 45% of the total tourism revenue. However, after the direct flights between the two parties were established in 2015, the percentage climbed to 56%. Therefore, the cooperation between the parties definitely brought economic advantages to the ROC.

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Economic Cooperation

Economic cooperation is a hugely important factor in the Taiwan Straits issue. In order to further enhance their economic ties, in 1991, the PRC founded the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits in Beijing while the ROC founded the Straits Exchange Foundation in Taipei. In recent years, Cross-Strait investments have greatly increased and in the majority of cases, Taiwan-based firms moved to the PRC or collaborated as joint ventures. Nowadays, Taiwanese investors in the PRC constitute a significant economic force. Economic cooperation has brought numerous advantages to both the ROC and the PRC. In 2011, the ROC exported $124.05 billion to the PRC and

Figure 3: Increase of Revenues in Tourism\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{51} Tourism Bureau, “Guan Guang Tong Ji Biao [The Statistic Data of the Tourism].”
imported $45.28 billion, resulting in a trade surplus of $78.77 billion. In 2014, trade values between the two parties reached US$198.31 billion and Taiwan exported goods and services in the value of US$152 billion to the Mainland.

Other Cooperation

In addition to cooperation in trade, other types of collaboration were also enhanced. For example, media communications between the parties are much more substantial than before. Especially during Ma Ying-jeou’s administration, the major media stations from both sides were permitted to have media outlets in each other’s capital. The information flow in the Taiwan Straits helps the people in both the PRC and the ROC to have a better understanding of what happens on the other side of the Strait.

In addition, the music and television communications are boosted. Because of the absence of a language barrier, entertainment works created by one party can be easily understood by the other party. Popular culture idols of the ROC, such as A-mei, Jay Chou, and Mayday, gained a substantial following in the PRC. On the other hand, singers from the PRC, such as Faye Wong and Ying Na, became very well known in the ROC. TV shows broadcast by the ROC and the PRC can be seen on TV stations from the other side of the Strait. “Kongsi Coming”, a popular ROC talk show, is a good example of this phenomenon. Although it was broadcast in the ROC, the show is extremely successful and popular and reaches a global Chinese-speaking audience via the Internet. This way,

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52 Yue Chen and Huifeng Dong, “Tai Qu Nian Mao Yi Shun Cha Li Nian Di San, Dui Da Lv Xiang Gang Shun Cha 787 Yi Mei Jin [Taiwan’s Trade Surplus Last Year Is the Third in Recent Years; Its Trade Surplus with the Mainland and Hong Kong Is 78.7 Billion US Dollars],” People’s Daily, 2012.

the Chinese people have learned customs, basic knowledge, and even political attitudes of ROC.

Recent Developments

On the side of the ROC, as the Pan-Green parties favor Taiwanization and Taiwanese independence over Chinese reunification, once the DPP, the most important party in the Pan-Green Coalition, came to power in 2016, the ROC’s independence movement advanced drastically. Another good example is the Sunflower Student Movement. Between March 18 and April 10, 2014, a group of students and civic groups organized in a protest movement against the passing of the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement. The protesters occupied the Legislative Yuan of the ROC because they believed that the trade agreement would hurt the ROC’s economy and make the ROC politically vulnerable while facing pressure from the PRC. This successful protest movement demonstrates that some citizens of the ROC are worried that the ROC will lose economic independence, which will, in turn, gradually erode its political independence.

On the side of the PRC, the CPC as the sole ruling party definitely favors Pan-Blue parties, such as the KMT, PFP, or PNP, governing Taiwan. Although these parties are not willing to yield to the PRC either, they at least are willing to agree on the 1992 Consensus and believe that there is only one China. While those Pan-Blue parties were in charge, the decisions that have been made by the two opponents in the Taiwan Straits were more tolerable for each side. Nevertheless, regardless of what party is currently governing Taiwan, the PRC’s line is relatively consistent.
For years the PRC’s attitude towards Taiwan has created the intense political atmosphere in the Taiwan Straits. For example, during Chen Shui-bian’s administration, the PRC issued two warnings in 2000. First, in February the Chinese government warned:

[If a grave turn of events occurs leading to the separation of Taiwan from China in any way, or if Taiwan is invaded and occupied by foreign countries, or if the Taiwanese authorities refuse the peaceful settlement of cross-Strait reunification through negotiations, then the Chinese government will only be forced to adopt all drastic measures possible, including the use of force, to safeguard China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and fulfill the great cause of reunification. The Chinese government and people absolutely have the determination and ability to safeguard China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and will never tolerate, condone or remain indifferent to the realization of any scheme to divide China.]

Moreover, on March 15th that year the Chinese Prime Minister made a statement during a press conference that any kind of Taiwanese independence is prohibited and China will not give up the right to use force against Taiwan. The speculation over war did not fade away over time. Four years later, the Taiwan Affairs Office of the Chinese State Council issued a statement:

To the Chinese people, nothing is more important and more sacred than safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their country. We will do our utmost with the maximum sincerity to strive for the prospect of peaceful reunification of the motherland. However, if Taiwan’s leaders should move recklessly to provoke major incidents of ‘Taiwan independence’, the Chinese people will crush their schemes firmly and thoroughly at any cost.

The tensions diminished during Ma’s administration. However, in 2016, when the DPP gained control, many scholars observed that the Cross-strait relations took a turn for the worse. Yet, in light of the economic connections of the PRC and the ROC, the

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56 Taiwan Affairs Office, Statement on Current Cross-Straits Relations (Beijing: Taiwan Affairs Office of People’s Republic of China, 2004).
DDP’s attitude has also softened. The CPC has threatened to use force to deal with the Taiwan Straits issue in 2000.\textsuperscript{57} Nevertheless, it resorted to more peaceful ways to solve the issue.

\textsuperscript{57} Taiwan Affairs Office and the Information Office Of the State Council, “The One-China Principle and The Taiwan Issue.”
Chapter III
Research Methods and Limitations

In designing the analysis of the Taiwan Straits issue, a few questions have to be asked. First, is the world indeed more connected?

Common sense suggests that the answer must be yes. Improvements in transportation, telecommunication, and infrastructure have magnified global interconnectedness. Tourism, immigration, international education, and transnational marriage connect people across the globe. The advance of electronic communication, especially the spread of Internet, links people across geographical boundaries. Increased cross-border movement of goods, services, and capital demonstrates an increasing economic interdependence among countries. People all around the world started sharing ideas, religions, languages, and values. Emerging supranational institutions and non-governmental organizations represent political globalization. During the World Wars and the beginning of the Cold War the advance of connectedness of the world’s cultures and economies significantly slowed down. However, it resumed very fast. Yet, after the Revolutions of 1989, global interconnectedness expanded at a large scale. The advance of globalization magnifies the effects of critical factors, such as economic cooperation and culture cohesion, in the context of interstate relations.

Second, is the world more peaceful than before?


Steven Pinker, a psychologist from Harvard University, argued that the world is experiencing a period of unprecedented peacefulness. He claims that during World War II 300 out of every 100,000 people lost their lives every year. During the Korean War, the number fell to 20 per 100,000. Then, the number fell further and remained at less than 10 per 100,000 in the 1980s and 1990s. Now, in the 21st century, only one out of 100,000 people die because of war per year.60

The decline of battle-related deaths over time is readily apparent (Figure 4). There are three peaks: The Korean War (1950-1953), the Vietnam War (1955-1975), and the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988). The magnitude of every subsequent peak decreased substantially.

Finally, Katherine Barbieri and Rafael Reuveny’s established the potential link between the advance of globalization and decreasing scales of military conflict. Their empirical analysis demonstrates that, generally speaking, globalization reduces the likelihood of war. How does this finding translate to the Cross-Straits relations? The PRC and the ROC share the same ethnic roots and have strong economic and cultural ties. The ROC is undergoing a process of democratization and the international community is closely watching both the PRC and the ROC.

This thesis will bridge the gap in existing research and explore the past military conflicts between the PRC and the ROC. Each case will be analyzed on the individual level, the domestic level, and the international level. Evidence that could potentially trigger a military conflict will be collected and used to test the hypothesis.

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61 Pinker, “Has the Decline of Violence Reversed Since the Better Angels of Our Nature Was Written.”

The analysis on the individual level explores theories on human cognition, psychology, and motivation of political leaders. The domestic-level analysis concentrates mainly on regime type, elite organizations, political parties, armed forces, and social movements. On the international level, the analysis explores the theories on how international actors, mainly the United States, can impact conflicts by trying to serve their national self-interests.

There were five major military conflicts between the PRC and the ROC as measured by death toll and length (Table 1). Based on the lengths of the conflicts, with the exception of the Third Crisis, which was mainly a military exercise, the severity level is decreasing. Casualties, although exact statistics from a neutral party are impossible to find, are consistently decreasing as well.
Table 1. Major Military Conflicts at the Taiwan Straits\(^{63-65}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Civil War</th>
<th>Second Civil War</th>
<th>First Crisis</th>
<th>Second Crisis</th>
<th>Third Crisis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CPC Leaders</strong></td>
<td>Mao Zedong, Zhu De, Bo Gu, and others</td>
<td>Mao Zedong</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jiang Zemin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>KMT Leaders</strong></td>
<td>Chiang Kai-shek</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lee Teng-hui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
<td>CPC and KMT made temporary peace to cooperate against the Japanese invasion</td>
<td>CPC took over the Mainland and forced KMT to retreat to Taiwan.</td>
<td>CPC withdrew and took the Yijiangshan Islands; KMT signed the Mutual Defense Treaty with the US</td>
<td>Ceasefire</td>
<td>Ceasefire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Casualties</strong></td>
<td>At least 10,900,000(^66)</td>
<td>3783(^{67}) CPC: 3000 KMT: 720 Local: 63</td>
<td>899(^{68}) CPC: 460 KMT: 439</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The two civil wars were deeply intertwined with the Second World War. The first Taiwan Straits Crisis changed the ownership of the Dachen Islands and the Yijiangshan Islands and led to the creation of the Mutual Defense Treaty, which played a very important role in Sino-US relations. The Second Taiwan Straits Crisis had no significant geopolitical impact but still caused hundreds of casualties. The Third Taiwan Straits Crisis was characterized by several military exercises. The CPC basically acted by itself and did not exchange fire with the KMT.

Individual Level

On the individual level, human cognition has an essential impact on domestic policy making, foreign policy making, and world politics. The majority of the influence on a state’s decision making is actually controlled by the leaders or the elites of the state. Michael Brown describes in *The Causes of Internal Conflict* that the decision leading to war or peace rests with domestic elites.69 However, the influence of leaders varies with interest groups, political parties, and political institutions. For example, in a dictatorial state, the leader may have a more powerful form of authority than the elected leaders in a democracy. Also, the evaluation of a leader’s decision making is related to his or her individual style and the effect that it has on his or her society.

To study leadership, some scholars use the rational actor approach that concentrates on cost-benefit considerations of self-interested leaders. In this thesis, a cognitive approach will be used instead. The behaviors and the decision-making strategies of the leaders from both the PRC and the ROC during the military conflicts will

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be analyzed. The main focus will be on their beliefs, images, and attitudes. This thesis will analyze the main leaders of the PRC and the ROC between 1927 and 1996, namely Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Chiang Kai-shek, Chiang Ching-kuo, and Lee Teng-hui to demonstrate how their decision-making styles influence the situation in the Taiwan Straits.

The political leaders of the PRC and the ROC remained the same during the first two crises, namely Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek. Because of the political and military influence they gained during the Second World War and the Civil War, their positions and decision-making had a monopolistic character. Under Mao’s Communist society and Chiang’s “democratic” society—that actually initially was under the “White Terror”, a nearly forty year long period of martial law in Taiwan–Mao’s and Chiang’s decisions largely determined the decisions of their states. Additionally, both Mao and Chiang were the subjects of personality cults in the PRC and the ROC.70

From 1958 until 1995, PRC and ROC enjoyed a 37-year long period of peace. Especially after 1978, the domestic political and economic environment was stable in both the PRC and the ROC as they commenced an exploratory period. The leaders during this critical period were Deng Xiaoping in the PRC and Chiang Ching-kuo, the son of Chiang Kai-shek, in the ROC, both of which enjoyed an extremely good reputation in their respective states. Although nominally Deng had never officially served as the head of the government, he was widely recognized as the de-facto leader of the PRC. His leadership position was established in the 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on December 25th 1978 and it was even

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70 Tianshi Yang, Zhao Xun Zhen Shi De Jiang Jie Shi: Jiang Jie Shi Ri Ji Jie Du [Find the Real Chiang: The Interpretation of Chiang Kai-Shek’s Diaries] (Taiyuan: Shanxi People’s Press, 2008).
confirmed in Constitution of the Communist Party of China. Deng’s priority at that time was solving the PRC’s domestic problems, opening the Chinese market, and developing the PRC’s economy. He set up the foundation of the current PRC’s economic model. Chiang Ching-kuo had made huge democratic progress in the ROC. He initiated political reforms by allowing the existence of new political parties. Neither of them believed in military power as much as their predecessors. Moreover, they used to be classmates when both of them studied Communism at Moscow Sun Yat-sen University. Their personal relationship undoubtedly contributed to the decrease of hostilities between the PRC and the ROC. However, although many historical scholars believed that this period was the best time to solve the Taiwan Straits Issue and Deng had sent some signals to demonstrate his willingness to negotiate, Chiang Ching-kuo’s attitude against communism was comparable to that of his father. He claimed that he could not trust the Communists. Although he did not make any military movements, he pursued the Three Noes Policy instead: no contact, no compromise, and no negotiation.

The de facto peace between the PRC and the ROC lasted until Jiang Zemin and Lee Teng-hui became the political leaders of the PRC and the ROC. Jiang has created his own theory, Jiang Zemin Three Represents, as a guiding socio-political theory along with Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory. Many critics

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consider Jiang’s Three Represents as his cult of personality.74 Jiang was not hesitant to implement relatively aggressive measures towards political targets such as, for instance, Falun Gong protesters.75 Like most other political leaders of the PRC, he considered maintaining the One China Policy as one of the most important domestic issues. Lee Teng-hui differed from the other two presidents in Taiwan in that he was born and raised in the ROC. Unlike Chiang and his son, Lee had no strong connections to the Chinese Mainland. He preferred Taiwanization (Taiwanese Localization Movement) to the One China Policy. Taiwanization is a term to emphasize the importance of a Taiwanese society, economy, and nationality as opposed to viewing Taiwan as solely an appendage of the PRC. Lee believed that all of China should be divided into seven states: Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang, Mongolia, South China, North China, and Northeastern China.76 This deeply offended Jiang’s beliefs and could potentially have been one of the triggers of the Third Taiwan Straits Crisis after all those peaceful years. Neither Jiang nor Lee had strong ties to the military before assuming office. Jiang had been an engineer by training and Lee had been an agricultural researcher.

Domestic Level

On the domestic level, a state’s domestic actors include formal institutions, political parties, interest groups, economic sectors and factors, social movements, and political culture. Powers are often not equally distributed among the actors, or even


among the different societal layers, with most actors having levels of economic power, military/violent power, or political power that vary significantly.\textsuperscript{77} In addition, the actors normally organize themselves collectively to boost and unite their powers and ensure that their interests are met, especially in democracies. Thus, domestically, political parties play a crucial role. This thesis will use Michael Brown’s four categories that relate to the measurement of domestic actors’ roles. The four categories are “structural factors, political factors, economic/social factors, and cultural/perceptual factors.”\textsuperscript{78} The last category, perceptual factors, describes “group histories and group perceptions of themselves and others.”\textsuperscript{79} In the PRC and the ROC, the main domestic actors are political parties. During the entirety of the Taiwan Straits Crises, the aforementioned, constantly changing factors of these parties played important roles. Therefore, for the analysis of the referenced case studies, the Communist Party of the PRC and the Kuomintang of the ROC will be the research objects on the domestic level. In addition, the emergence of the Democratic Progressive Party will be discussed, especially during the third crisis.

The fundamental differences between the parties’ ideologies have caused the described conflicts to manifest themselves in different dominant political parties and different regime types: the KMT supports capitalist democracy while the CPC supports Leninist socialism. During all three of the Taiwan Straits Crises, the same two parties, the CPC and the KMT, administrated both the PRC and the ROC. However, the strategies pursued by the parties to resolve the Taiwan Straits issue varied over different periods. In the PRC, under Mao’s reign, the CPC propagandized the liberation of Taiwan by military


\textsuperscript{78} Brown, “The Causes of Internal Conflict: An Overview.”

\textsuperscript{79} Brown, “The Causes of Internal Conflict: An Overview.”
force. After Deng took over, the CPC still insisted on the idea of One China but postponed to deal with the Taiwan Straits Issue until the next generation. Since then, this strategy has not changed.

In the ROC, on the other hand, the strategy changed more frequently. Under Chiang Kai-shek’s reign, the ROC prepared to counterattack PRC and take back the Mainland from the CPC. When Chiang Ching-kuo took power, he championed the idea of using the “Three Principles of the People”–nationalism, democracy, and the people’s livelihood–to rule instead of relying on military means.80 After Lee became president, he was initially seeking unification via the “Three Principles”. In 1991, during Lee’s administration, the Guidelines for National Unification were published.81 They endorsed the One China Principle and stated, “Both the Mainland and Taiwan are parts of Chinese territory. Helping to bring about national unification should be the common responsibility of all Chinese people.” However, two events happened that might have potentially changed Lee’s political views concerning Cross-Straits relations. In 1997, the United Kingdom transferred the sovereignty over Hong Kong back to the PRC and on January 1st, 1998, South Africa officially ended the diplomatic ties with ROC. These two events emphasized that the PRC gained a diplomatic advantage and might have prompted Lee to pursue a new diplomatic approach. On July 9, 1999, during an interview with Deutsche Welle, Lee’s administration commenced to refer to the Cross-Straits relations as a special


State-to-State relationship. Lee further highlighted Taiwan’s Independence in his book “With the People Always in My Heart”. During his term, Lee’s political team vigorously promoted the first direct elections of the ROC’s president which finally took place in 2000 when the DDP collected enough votes to become the ruling party. It was the first time a party other than the KMT has became the ROC’s ruling party.

The above remarkable transformation of the parties’ policies towards the Taiwan Straits Issue was probably caused by a change of economic factors and sectors, social movements, and political culture. Take the shift of the CPC’s strategy, for example. During Mao’s tenure, the PRC had experienced a series of severe domestic crises, including the Great Leap Forward, the Great Chinese Famine, and the Great Cultural Revolution. The progress of national development had been seriously delayed. Those grave failures encouraged the CPC to shift its focus from political movement, such as class conflict, to recovering industry, economy, and diplomacy. The ROC, on the other hand, although claiming to be a democratic state, was still a hegemonic regime under martial law. At the end of Chiang Ching-kuo’s tenure, plenty of protests flared up in favor of real democracy. Finally, multiple political parties were permitted. The interests of the KMT no longer represented the interests of all of the ROC, and the administration had to consider other groups’ interests, such as Taiwanization.

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83 Lee Teng-hui, Taiwan De Zhu Zhang [With the People Always in My Heart] (Taipei: Yuan-Liou Publishing, 1999).

International Level

The international system lacks a central authority. It is especially complex since it can provide opportunities for states to access resources, gain legitimacy, and find coalition partners. States have to help themselves and seek the maximum exploitation of benefits to ensure their security and survival. Changes in power in the international system lead to new opportunities to gain power. During an inner-state or interstate conflict, involvements and interventions of other states normally have many foreign policy objectives. In addition, many instances of international involvement require coercive intervention, such as the threat of or the actual use of military force. Third-party mediations like negotiation and diplomacy may also be used. However, the cost of an unsuccessful mediation is the destruction of the state’s reputation or the economic conditions if the parties are trading partners. Usually, international actors intervene to determine outcomes that include the regime type, the economic system, and the autonomy or independence of an ethnic group.

The changing political environment of the international community had a significant impact on the Taiwan Straits issue. Take the 37-year long period of peace as an example. During these years, the diplomatic standing of the PRC was gradually strengthened. Since 1950, more and more countries have recognized the PRC’s diplomatic status. Finally in 1971, the United Nations officially recognized the PRC as the only legitimate representative of China. The Long Peace coincided with the

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improvement of the PRC’s international reputation. In addition, due to the substantial ideological differences between the PRC and the ROC, the Taiwan Straits is very sensitive and susceptible to the vast global changes, such as the periods of recovery after the Second World War, the Cold War, the Revolutions of 1989, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Since the ROC is capitalist while the PRC is socialist, both of them supported different superpowers during the Cold War. As these superpowers, namely the US and the USSR, dominated world affairs, the hostility in the Taiwan Straits was exaggerated during that period. The gradual decline of socialist powers in Europe made the PRC the strongest remaining socialist country. This gave the PRC more bargaining power in the international community and made it the more powerful party at the Taiwan Straits.

The dual track of the US foreign policy towards Sino-American relations is important to the decision-making strategies of the PRC and the ROC. Also, the United Nations changed the only lawful representative of China from the ROC to the PRC in 1971. This motion altered the international influence of both parties. In addition, the influences of Russia (and its predecessor, the USSR), Japan, and Korea will be considered in this thesis.

It is important to highlight involvement of the US in the Taiwan Straits issue. To maximize its benefits, expand its power, and ensure its security, the US has been walking a fine line between improving its ties with the PRC while keeping its warm relations with the ROC. At the end of the Second Civil War and the beginning of the Cold War, the ROC desperately needed US assistance for military and economic recovery. In the meantime, although the US tried to avoid a war in the Far East, Eisenhower’s
administration feared the effect of the Domino Theory in Asia and was determined to stop the spread of Communism.\textsuperscript{87} Due to the incapability of ROC’s military forces, US decision makers seemed to eventually change their minds to support the ROC during military conflicts with the PRC. This stance led to the signing of a Mutual Defense Treaty between the US and the ROC.\textsuperscript{88} The signing of this treaty marked the end of the First Crisis. This treaty determined that if one country came under attack, the other country would come to its aid and provide military support. That implies that the US had the obligation to assist the ROC with military force. Hence, the PRC had to consider any military action against the ROC with uttermost caution. Interestingly, this treaty only covered Taiwan and the Pescadores, and unilateral military actions were not supported. Therefore, the treaty also indirectly prevented the ROC from starting military actions against the PRC.\textsuperscript{89}

Besides conventional military interventions, the US, especially under the Eisenhower administration, used nuclear deterrence. H.W. Brands points out that there are unclassified documents that confirm that the use of nuclear weapons against the PRC was genuinely considered during the first two crises, as it was one of Eisenhower’s favored default options.\textsuperscript{90} Brands also claims that General John Hull first brought up the


\textsuperscript{90} Congress of the United States, “H.Con.Res.53 - Expressing the Sense of the Congress Regarding a Private Visit by President Lee Teng-Hui of the Republic of China on Taiwan to the United States.”
potential use of atomic weapons on September 11, 1954.\textsuperscript{91} However, the majority of Eisenhower’s advisors and Eisenhower himself ultimately rejected the use of nuclear weapons to avoid initiating a war.

In addition, the US also attempted to use non-violent measures, such as diplomatic negotiation. On April 23, 1955, during the first Asian-African Conference, the Prime Minister of the PRC, Zhou Enlai, publicly demonstrated his willingness to negotiate with the US in order to release the strong tensions that had built up at the Taiwan Straits. The two states joined the negotiation table for the first time in many years. However, based on the reports from the PRC, in the beginning of 1958, the US attempted to stop the ambassadorial level meetings due to a lack of progress. This action offended Mao.\textsuperscript{92} Although the US received a warning, the US indeed selected its Ambassador to Poland as its new representative for the continuation of the ambassadorial level negotiations. In order exert pressure on the US during the ambassadorial level meetings, the PRC had announced it would attack Quemoy and initiated the Second Taiwan Straits Crisis.

Moreover, the US indirectly triggered the Third Taiwan Straits Crisis. Bill Clinton supported the PRC as the only representation of One China and refused to grant a visa to the new president of the ROC, Lee Teng-hui. However, the Democrats lost control of Congress in 1994 and Congress supported Lee to visit Cornell University.\textsuperscript{93} This was a


\textsuperscript{93} Congress of the United States, “H.Con.Res.53 - Expressing the Sense of the Congress Regarding a Private Visit by President Lee Teng-Hui of the Republic of China on Taiwan to the United States.”
contributing factor to the start of the third crisis that the PRC initiated only two months later.94

The influence of the Soviet Union (USSR) also played a big role in the Taiwan Straits issue during the Cold War. Before the beginning of the Second Taiwan Straits Crisis, the relationship between the PRC and the USSR became increasingly delicate. On the one hand, the PRC relied on the help of the USSR for developing its industrial infrastructure and military forces, in particular its nuclear arsenal. Yet on the other hand, the PRC also feared the increasing control that the USSR exerted over the PRC’s industry and military. Mao once accused the USSR of “not trusting the Chinese but only trusting the Russians” and believed that the USSR wanted to “control China”95 by controlling its industrial and military assets. Moreover, since Khrushchev’s secret speech about De-Stalinization in 1956, substantial disagreement against Khrushchev’s ideology about socialism was building up in the PRC. Khrushchev’s revisionist Communism, which exhibited a softer approach to foreign policy, did not fit the Chinese communist ideology. Based on William Taubman’s book, Khrushchev: The Man and His Era, Mao was unhappy about Khrushchev’s intentions to reach a détente with the US. Mao provoked the Second Taiwan Straits Crisis to use it as a tool to highlight the importance of the PRC among the socialist nations and to compromise the capitalist camp. He called the Taiwanese “batons that keep Eisenhower and Khrushchev dancing, scurrying this way


and that way. Don't you see how wonderful they are?" Therefore, as the Sino-Soviet split ensued. However, the split worsened the Sino-Soviet border conflict. In March 1969, a battle over Zhenbao Island broke out and around 200 people died during this conflict. This was the peak of Sino-Soviet confrontation and it forced the PRC to start thinking about improving its relations with the other main power of the bipolar international system, the United States.

Limitations

The Taiwan Straits Issue is one of the biggest unsolved questions in Sino-American relations. This dispute has lasted for almost 65 years and even now it is one of the first questions foreign and domestic commentators seek to answer when a change of administration occurs in the PRC, the ROC, or the US. Due its paramount importance, a large number of scholars from the PRC, the ROC, and the US have discussed different aspects of the Taiwan Straits Issue. However, because these two crises happened during the Cold War, research efforts about them are hampered by a lack of communication, international supervision, and coordination. Additionally, numerous reports that contain little useful information but a large amount of propaganda about the Communist Party were published in the PRC. These challenges led to confusion and obvious inconsistencies in research and records from the different countries involved. Academic analyses based on sources from only one country are likely to be biased or incomplete. Hence, comparing records and analyses originating from different countries will provide

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more consistent and logical insights into what really happened during the Taiwan Straits crises.

Additionally, the sources are in different languages: English, Simplified Chinese, and Traditional Chinese. Some of the local sources are not digitized. Some supporting material is written in other languages, such as German. Obtaining authentic translations from different languages into English poses a big challenge.
In the above case studies, globalization was discussed from the perspectives of economic cooperation and cultural communication. Its impact was analyzed on the individual level, domestic level, and international level. Military conflicts were measured by numbers of casualties. The results show that the influence of globalization reduces the likelihood of military conflicts in the Taiwan Straits.

On the individual level, in both the ROC and the PRC, the personal worship of leadership figures is gradually decreasing. In the ROC, from the initial sole rule of leader Chiang Kai-Shek and his son the system progressively transformed into a democratic rotation system. People in the ROC can now vote directly for their presidential representatives. In the PRC, although the sole ruling party is still the CPC and no change is to be expected for many years to come, leaders in China are no longer being worshiped as before. For instance, Chinese leaders do not any longer have their own educational books and TV shows. Neither can their personal political theories be found in standard textbooks in schools, at least not in an obvious manner. The people in the PRC started to judge their leadership by their own standards. One of the potential reasons of this phenomenon is that, due to the increased connectedness brought about by the advance of globalization, people in one country can very easily gain access to sources of information that are hosted by people in other countries. They obtain the latest news from the Internet...
and may travel to or even spend an extended stay in another country, even that of a political adversary, to experience or immerse themselves in a different culture. Thus, nowadays the general public, including followers and the electorate, is more independent and critical. Members of the populace do not blindly follow their leaders to a degree comparable to how it used to be. They have the means and information to form their own option about their leaders’ decisions, including irrational ones such as waging war.

On the domestic level, in general, both the PRC and the ROC enjoy increased economic prosperity. In fact, the PRC was extremely poor and reached its economically lowest point during the Three Years of Great Chinese Famine before 1962. There were at least 45 million premature deaths due to starvation and related factors. However, due to the Chinese Economic Reform and the resulting continuously growing economic recovery after 1978, the PRC’s GDP reached 3552.18 billion US dollars in 2007 and 11007.72 in 2015. Based a statistical analysis conducted by James Fearon, a country’s higher per capita income is associated with a lower risk of war. This conclusion holds true in the Taiwan Straits. A possible explanation is that the economic development strengthens the government by providing more revenues such as tax revenues. Vice versa, having a military conflict would interrupt economic development and thereby actually weaken the government. Secondly, as stated above, under the influence of globalization, both the PRC and the ROC successively opened their economies to the free

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market. In this situation, the government has less control over domestic economic performance because of limited control over the influence of external forces. These external forces include, but are not limited to, traders, currency traders, investors, and multinational corporations.¹⁰² In light of the increase of cross-strait economic cooperation, business entities of the ROC are of high importance to the PRC, but the PRC’s government has less control over their influence on the PRC’s economy. Likewise, the same logic applies to the ROC’s economy and the PRC’s business entities. Lastly, military conflicts would potentially cause substantial loss of generated economic benefits, especially of the benefits brought about by cross-strait trade and foreign investment. Hence, promoting trade and investment is an effective path to peace.¹⁰³

On the international level, due to the emergence of more influential international organizations such as the World Trade Organization and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and increasing international trade combined with foreign direct investment, the international community is reluctant to see another military conflict at the Taiwan Straits. These days, countries are more economically interdependent: for instance, a military conflict may destroy the global supply chain by sabotaging the production of goods in one country, which subsequently destroys commercial handling and distribution in another country. Thereby, military conflict in one country has, in a highly connected world, more downstream ramifications such as an increase of unemployment rate and a decrease in tax revenue in other countries. The advance of globalization magnified the interdependence among countries. With increasing international communication and


information flow, international organizations and governments can more easily expand and control their activities further oversea. Also, with enhanced communication channels, people from one country can actually witness what is happening in other countries and are in a better position to predict the global influence of the observed events. This enhanced awareness will bring pressure to local governments to search for more peaceful solutions.

The result of the analysis of the three crises has important policy implications. Indeed, under Ma Ying-jeou and Hu Jintao’s administration, Cross Strait relations remained peaceful and stable. However, the situation became more complicated in 2016. But even under a more volatile political environment, the situation at the Taiwan Straits still remains relatively calm. During the Taiwanese presidential election in 2016, Tsai Ing-wen was elected president of the ROC. Tsai was born in 1956 and therefore has no shared memories of China. She is also the first president of Hakka, a subgroup of the Han Chinese people. Her cultural heritage makes her more tied to the ROC than its other presidents and less ethnically connected with the PRC. She was a staunch supporter of Taiwanese Independence but her opinions underwent a change and became more nuanced in 2016. Tsai, a member of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) ran for the 2012 presidential election but failed. At that time, she already made clear that she disagreed with the 1992 Consensus which states that there is one undivided sovereignty of China. Representatives of the PRC and the ROC both insist that they are the sole legitimate

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representatives of Chinese sovereignty.\textsuperscript{105} Yet, during the presidential elections of 2016, Tsai became more moderate and exposed tendencies to maintain the current status of the Taiwan Straits. It appears that she intends to continue focusing on maintaining economic connections with the PRC. On February 5\textsuperscript{th} 2017, Tsai expressed that a new gentler policy will be announced in the second half of 2017 that is geared towards the Taiwan Business Association to ensure that they maintain the economic cooperation with their business partners in the PRC.\textsuperscript{106}

On the other side of the strait, Xi Jinping is the General Secretary of the CPC, the President of the PRC, and the Chairman of the Central Military Commission since March 2013. An article in \textit{The Economist} pointed out that unlike his predecessors, Xi’s administration has made strong efforts to reduce the remaining political influence of previous leaders.\textsuperscript{107} For instance, retired Jiang Zemin overshadowed Hu Jintao whereas Deng Xiaoping, the PRC’s actual number one, had overshadowed Jiang. Therefore, Xi’s administration has more leeway to make cautious changes. Since Xi came to power, he attempted to enforce discipline in the CPC and centralized authority of the party. In the process, he launched a campaign against corruption, attempted to reform the military, and rapidly increased online censorship. He has explained his attitude towards the Cross-


Straits relations during the CPC’s National People’s Congress Delegation Meeting. Under his administration, the Cross-Straits policy will remain largely the same and will not be revised in face of a changing political situation in the ROC.

Therefore, it is necessary to observe the changes of the political leaders’ perspectives after they gained power and the political environment they are facing. Currently, Tsai appears to have recognized the importance of economic developments. Necessarily, in the face of increased economic dependence, it is not a good time to start an armed conflict with the PRC. Xi, in the meantime, is busying reforming the army and fighting against domestic corruption. It is likely that changing the current situation at the Taiwan Straits is neither among Tsai’s nor Xi’s main priorities.

On the domestic level, the blooming economic and trade cooperation have brought huge benefits to both the ROC and the PRC. For example in 2011, the ROC exported goods worth 124.05 billion US dollars to the PRC, which amounts to 40% of the ROC’s annual exports. The ROC imported goods worth 45.28 billion US dollars from the PRC which results in a surplus of 78.77 billion US dollars making the PRC the ROC’s largest trading partner. On the other hand, some of the ROC’s enterprises have entered the PRC’s market, providing technologies and job opportunities, and even enhancing the development of some new industries in the PRC. The semiconductor industry, for instance, is one of the most important industries in the ROC. Starting in 2000, the ROC assisted the PRC in developing this technology and associated human resources and

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109 Chen and Dong, “Tai Qu Nian Mao Yi Shun Cha Li Nian Di San, Dui Da Lv Xiang Gang Shun Cha 787 Yi Mei Jin [Taiwan’s Trade Surplus Last Year Is the Third in Recent Years; Its Trade Surplus with the Mainland and Hong Kong Is 78.7 Billion US Dollars.”
financial support. Many related companies even shifted their focus to the PRC. This support boosted the development of the semiconductor industry in the PRC. Therefore, the increasingly close cross-straits economic cooperation brings huge benefits to the PRC and the ROC. It makes the countries stronger, more stable, and richer. As discussed before, this interdependence and the associated benefits deter political confrontation.

On the international level, in 2015, the PRC’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that the PRC has already established different forms of partnerships with 75 countries and five regional organizations. The ROC has diplomatic relations with twenty United Nations member states and unofficial relations with 57 member states by having representative offices and consulates. It also participates in many international organizations under the name of “Chinese Taipei.” A worldwide audience, including the citizens of the PRC and the ROC, would be instantly informed via social media if any seemingly irrational activities were to happen at the Taiwan Straits. The open communication channels make it much harder to use propaganda to influence public opinion and cover up inconvenient truths. Hence, maintaining a peaceful state is a more probable alternative.

Then what possible future scenarios of the Taiwan Straits remain?

If the ROC announces independence, the PRC would probably initiate a war to recover the ROC. Independence of the ROC is very improbable because the PRC’s bottom line is “One China.” The simultaneous existence of the PRC and the ROC as

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independent sovereignties is not acceptable for the PRC. In fact, the PRC has frequently publicly stated that if the ROC were to announce its independence, the PRC would have to seriously contemplate recovering the ROC by force. Leaving aside whether PRC would really attack the ROC, based on what has been discussed above, the ROC is also in no position to afford a war right now. Therefore the PRC’s threat is sufficient to avert a declaration of independence.

A possible outcome of the Taiwan Straits issue is reunification by non-forceful means. Using “One Country, Two Systems” appears to be a promising choice at first glance. “One Country, Two Systems” was the official policy strategy Deng Xiaoping tailored for Hong Kong and Macau. It permitted maintaining a socialist system while Hong Kong and Macau could keep their capitalism for a peaceful reunification. This theory was also designed to be used in the Taiwan Straits Issue. Yet, after twenty years of implementation in Hong Kong, the results are not overly convincing. In Hong Kong for instance, the frictions between Hongkongers and Chinese Mainlanders recently became more and more severe. Some of the many problems include, for instance, an overflow of tourists, pregnant Mainlanders giving birth in Hong Kong to obtain associated benefits, and unemployment caused by low labor costs on the Mainland. Resources in Hong Kong are limited and without proper handling of the issues by the government of Hong Kong, negative sentiments against Mainlanders are accumulating. Often these negative sentiments overshadow the benefits (especially the economic benefits) of unification, which obviously does not help in convincing the Taiwanese of this approach. Therefore, the chances that the ROC will follow the example of Hong Kong and Macau and
implement the “One Country, Two Systems” policy is extremely questionable under the current circumstances.

The last remaining viable option is maintaining the current situation, namely maintaining the stalemate with no armed conflicts, no reunification, and no independence. As a matter of fact, one of the reasons of the current stalemate is the Balance of Power in the Taiwan Straits. In consideration of the aforementioned economic factors and ethical, which render all other solutions virtually infeasible, the stalemate will likely remain in force over an extended period of time in the future.


Chen, Yue, and Huifeng Dong. “Tai Qu Nian Mao Yi Shun Cha Li Nian Di San, Dui Da Lv Xiang Gang Shun Cha 787 Yi Mei Jin [Taiwan’s Trade Surplus Last Year Is the Third in Recent Years; Its Trade Surplus with the Mainland and Hong Kong Is 78.7 Billion US Dollars].” People’s Daily, 2012.


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