Prospects for Cross-Strait Political Negotiation: Exploring Win-Sets

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Abstract

This study adopts a pre-negotiation approach based on Robert Putnam's win-set concept to examine domestic constraints on cross-Strait political negotiation. Survey research of elite opinion in both China and Taiwan and of public opinion in Taiwan is used to estimate each side's win-set (that is, the set of political negotiation outcomes that could win majority approval domestically) during Ma Ying-jeou's second presidential term in Taiwan (2012–2016). The possibility for overlap in win-sets that could provide a zone of possible agreement and the potential for coalitions in favour of negotiation are analysed. The study finds no win-set overlap and limited potential for coalitions favouring negotiation outcomes with the least distance from overlap, concluding that domestic conditions for formal political negotiations between Beijing and Taipei are unlikely to be ripe in the near term.

Keywords: cross-Strait; pre-negotiation; two-level game; win-set; opinion survey; zone of possible agreement; political negotiation; Taiwan; China

Is it possible that China and Taiwan will engage in formal political negotiations in the near future? Is the cross-Strait relationship ripe for a political agreement? During the Ma Ying-jeou 馬英九 era in Taiwan (2008–2016), while structural factors as well as policy developments in cross-Strait relations created pressure for political negotiation, domestic trends on both sides impeded commitment to formal political talks. This study uses both the concept of pre-negotiation from the process approach to negotiation theory and the win-set concept from Robert Putnam's two-level game model of international negotiation to examine domestic constraints on cross-Strait political negotiations. It focuses on the overlap in the preferences of domestic constituencies as a key variable in explaining whether or not the two governments decide to enter formal political negotiations. New survey research on elite opinion in both China and Taiwan and on public opinion in Taiwan, designed by the authors, is used to estimate each side's win-set

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(that is, the set of cross-Strait political negotiation outcomes that could win majority approval domestically) during Ma Ying-jeou's second term in Taiwan (2012–2016). The prospects for any overlap in win-sets that could provide a zone of possible agreement and the potential for the formation of coalitions in favour of political negotiation are analysed.

The next section provides a brief overview of the incentives and obstacles to cross-Strait political negotiations during the Ma era and briefly reviews the extant literature. The article then reviews the concepts of pre-negotiation and win-set, and their application to the China–Taiwan case. It continues by detailing the design of the surveys used to estimate the win-sets of the two sides, and explains the relationship between opinion research and win-sets, the choice of survey subjects, and the spectrum of political negotiation outcomes included in the surveys to construct the win-set range. The final section discusses the findings of the survey research. The study suggests no win-set overlap and limited potential for coalitions in favour of negotiation outcomes with the least distance from overlap (an agreement to maintain the status quo before unification or an integration agreement), concluding that domestic conditions for formal political negotiations are unlikely to be ripe in the near term.

Important structural factors suggest that Taipei may eventually agree to enter formal political talks with Beijing. Rationalist models of Taiwan's mainland policy integrating international, cross-Strait and domestic variables suggest that dynamics in the US–China–Taiwan strategic triangle, growing power asymmetry across the Taiwan Strait, and vote-maximizing calculations by domestic political forces could lead Taipei to adopt a "bandwagoning" strategy which would favour political accommodation with Beijing.[1] The growing military imbalance in the Taiwan Strait and questions about the long-term credibility of America's security commitment to Taiwan create pressure on Taipei to accept a peace agreement in order to minimize China's growing military threat. Taiwan's economic dependence on China and Beijing's ability to impede Taiwan's inclusion in regional economic integration allows China to link further economic cooperation with movement towards political engagement. At the same time, US endorsement of cross-Strait political dialogue, in combination with its "one-China" policy, encourages China to cast Taipei's rejection of Beijing's proposal for a peace agreement based on "one China" as undermining regional peace and stability.

Momentum towards political negotiations increased significantly during Ma Ying-jeou's two terms as president in Taiwan. Before Ma's presidency, political dialogue between the two sides had only taken place sporadically in secret, with no concrete results, and Taipei had steadfastly avoided discussion of political issues in the semi-official cross-Strait dialogue begun in the early 1990s.[2] Motivated to resume cross-Strait dialogue in order to secure economic and trade liberalization agreements with China, Ma's administration adopted more

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1 Wu 2000.
2 For the history of cross-Strait political dialogue, see Huang 2003 and Shaw 1999; 2004; 2013a.

conciliatory policies towards Beijing and agreed for the first time that political issues would not be excluded from cross-Strait engagement. Upon Ma taking office in 2008, Taipei immediately accepted Beijing's condition for resuming cross-Strait dialogue, which had been suspended since 1999, on the basis of some expression of "one China" (the ambiguous "92 consensus").[3] Although Ma's cross-Strait policy of "no unification, no independence, no use of force" precluded the possibility of negotiations for unification during his presidency, he pledged in his inaugural address to pursue a cross-Strait peace agreement. As the two sides inked a series of historic economic and trade liberalization agreements, which included the opening of direct transportation links and the ECFA free trade pact, Ma's government agreed that cross-Strait dialogue would follow an "economics first, politics later" (*xianjing houzheng* 先经后政) principle, allowing it to move for the first time beyond functional and economic issues into what both sides call the "deep water zone" (*shenshuiqu* 深水区) of the sovereignty stalemate.

Eager to take advantage of the KMT's landslide election victory and to link new economic agreements with progress towards political negotiation, China outlined a long-term policy of "peaceful development" in late 2008, premised on the conclusion of a peace pact to "end the state of hostility" across the Strait. Shortly thereafter, Beijing began promoting "public discussion" (*minjian tantao* 民间探讨) of cross-Strait political issues by sponsoring unprecedentedly public unofficial political dialogue among think tanks and academics on the two sides, in which various proposals regarding the format for political negotiations and the content of a potential political agreement were discussed. During Ma's second term, his desire to cement a historical legacy through a meeting with PRC president Xi Jinping 习近平 laid the institutional groundwork for political negotiation as cross-Strait dialogue was transferred from semi-official organizations to official government agencies at the Wang–Zhang meetings in 2014 and 2015. Finally, the historic Ma–Xi meeting in November 2015, the first between leaders of the two sides since 1949, created a precedent for cross-Strait leadership meetings, which – if and when they occur – Beijing will expect to pave the way to formal political negotiations. Polls following the meeting showed strong support among the Taiwanese public for future leadership meetings.[4]

In light of the pressure for political dialogue and the inherent risks, more empirical research is needed on the prospects for a formal negotiation of a cross-Strait political agreement. The small body of literature to date has focused on the strategies and policies adopted by the two governments regarding political

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3 Beijing defines the "92 consensus" as the "one-China principle" (both Taiwan and the mainland belong to one China) while the Ma government defined it as "one China, respective interpretations." The Ma government's "one Republic of China, two areas" definition of cross-Strait relations, consistent with the ROC constitution, represented a unification-leaning reorientation of Taipei's mainland policy, breaking with former presidents Lee Teng-hui's "special state-to-state" and Chen Shui-bian's "one country on each side" definitions of the relationship.

4 Taiwan Indicators Survey 2015a.

negotiation,[5] the key role of the United States in cross-Strait political dialogue,[6] and how obstacles to political negotiation might be overcome, including various proposals regarding possible negotiation formats and the content of a political agreement.[7] Although records of official cross-Strait dialogue on political issues are unavailable to researchers, the well-publicized unofficial forums noted above have provided a wealth of insights into the pre-negotiation process. Moreover, Beijing's endorsement of "public discussion" of cross-Strait political issues has allowed experts in the PRC's Taiwan work system greater freedom to address sensitive policy issues, including participation in the elite survey research used in this study.

During the Ma era, despite the structural pressures and policy developments noted above, powerful domestic trends, especially in Taiwan, impeded the path to political negotiations. The relative emphasis in China's Taiwan policy shifted from preventing independence to promoting unification following the KMT's return to power in Taipei. The Xi Jinping-led government's adoption of an openly assertive nationalist foreign policy focused on territorial claims, including the passage of a new national security law requiring Taiwanese to defend China's territorial integrity, fostered public expectations regarding Taiwan policy that made compromise more difficult. In democratic Taiwan, while a majority of the public supported a resumption of cross-Strait dialogue and the series of cross-Strait economic and trade agreements inked by the Ma government, trends towards an exclusively Taiwanese identity and decreased support for eventual unification accelerated.[8] The opposition Pan-Green coalition continued to reject the "92 consensus" as a basis for cross-Strait negotiations and opposed Ma's peace agreement proposal while pushing for legislation to make referenda mandatory for political negotiations.[9] Ma used this lack of domestic consensus as justification to resist pressure from Beijing and from within his KMT party to engage in substantive dialogue on Taiwan's political status. Ma's administration promised that negotiation of a peace pact was conditional on public support and legislative oversight and suggested it would likely require a national referendum. Finally, the 2014 Sunflower movement's demand for stricter oversight of cross-Strait agreements forced Ma's government to freeze all cross-Strait negotiations until a supervisory mechanism could be passed by the legislature.

5 Shaw 1999; 2004; 2013a; 2013b; Huang 2003; He 2010; Chen 2011; Ding 2012.
6 Shaw 2004; Lieberthal 2005; Zhong 2014.
7 International Crisis Group 2004; Saunders, Phillip, and Kastner 2009; He 2010; Shaw 2013b.
8 Opinion survey data on Taiwanese public support for the Ma government's cross-Strait policies and trends in Taiwanese national identity and attitudes towards unification and independence are available from the data archives of the NCCU Election Study Center, http://esc.nccu.edu.tw/course/news.php?class=201.
9 During the Ma presidency, the Pan-Blue coalition was led by the KMT and included the New Party and People's First Party, while the Pan-Green coalition was led by the DPP in partnership with the Taiwan Solidarity Union.

Research Method and Context of Survey Research

Why do groups or states involved in intractable political conflicts like the China–Taiwan sovereignty dispute commit to political negotiation? This is the central question of research on pre-negotiation, a subfield of the process approach to negotiation that has been applied in the international conflict resolution literature to cases of protracted political conflict.[10] While traditional research on negotiation focuses on explaining the outcome of bargaining at the negotiating table, the dependent variable in studies of pre-negotiation is whether the parties commit to sit at the table in the first place. The most commonly cited definition of pre-negotiation is a process which starts when one or more parties consider negotiation as a policy option and communicate this to the other parties, and which ends when either the parties agree to formal negotiations or at least one party abandons negotiation as an option.[11]

The common theme of pre-negotiation research is that in order for parties to commit to negotiation, the pre-negotiation phase must facilitate perceptual change among decision makers regarding the desirability and feasibility of a joint solution.[12] Research has focused on different variables to explain this change, including the role of third parties,[13] leaders' perceptions of the costs of continued conflict and their relative levels of optimism regarding a negotiated solution,[14] the transfer effects from track-two problem-solving dialogues to the policy level,[15] and domestic political factors.[16] The two-level game approach to pre-negotiation used in this paper focuses on the latter variable, examining the preferences of domestic constituencies in China and Taiwan regarding potential cross-Strait political negotiation. Focusing on domestic political factors does not discount the structural pressures for political negotiation noted earlier. However, it does assume the likelihood in the near term that the US and Taiwan will maintain a minimally credible deterrent against PRC military coercion, that Washington will uphold reassurances to Taiwan that it will not pressure Taipei to negotiate, and that China's economic leverage over Taiwan will not alter the long-standing preference of a majority of Taiwanese to maintain the status quo of de facto independence from the mainland.

This study's approach to cross-Strait pre-negotiation centres on the win-set, the central concept in Putnam's two-level game model of international negotiation. Putnam's model views international negotiation as a process of bargaining at two levels, the international level (Level 1) and the domestic level (Level 2). In this two-level bargaining, national leaders pursue international agreements that

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10 Saunders, Harold 1985; Zartman 1989; Stein 1989; Fischer 1989; Cuhadar 2004.
11 Zartman 1989.
12 Theoretical approaches to pre-negotiation include ripeness theory, readiness theory, interactive conflict resolution, and two-level game theory.
13 Saunders, Harold 1985; Stein 1989; Zartman 1989.
14 Zartman 2000; Pruitt 2014.
15 Fischer 1989.
16 Trumbore 1998.

will maximize their ability to satisfy domestic pressure and minimize any negative impact on their domestic standing. A negotiated agreement is possible only if there is overlap in the win set: "the set of all possible Level 1 agreements that would 'win' – that is, gain the necessary majority among the (Level 2) constituents – when simply voted up or down."[17] This overlap creates what Putnam calls a zone of possible agreement. Although Putnam applied his model to cases in which the parties had already committed to formal negotiations, it can also be applied to the pre-negotiation phase because, as he notes, bargaining at the two levels is in reality simultaneous, and the "expectational effect" of failed ratification created by bargaining at the domestic level may prevent the parties from entering into formal negotiations at the international level.[18] From the two-level game perspective, pre-negotiation is a process in which the parties attempt to ascertain and influence each other's win-set and to determine if their win-sets overlap or if overlap could be achieved through domestic and trans-national coalitions.[19]

This study is the first attempt to use survey research to estimate the win-sets in China and Taiwan for a political agreement. Lin Jih-wen's 2000 study applied Putnam's two-level game to cross-Strait political relations at a time when cross-Strait dialogue was suspended and therefore did not strictly follow Putnam's assumption that the parties are already engaged in bargaining of a tentative agreement. Lin's analysis defined the win-set as the set of proposals regarding Taiwan's international political status that could receive majority domestic approval.[20] Our research, which was conducted at a time when multi-track political dialogue produced exchanges of proposals for a cross-Strait political agreement, follows Putnam's definition in that the win-set is the set of cross-Strait political negotiation outcomes that could be approved by a domestic majority. While Lin made rough estimates of the domestic distribution of preferences on the two sides regarding Taiwan's political status,[21] this study attempts to estimate the win-set empirically using survey research on elite opinion in China and Taiwan and public opinion in Taiwan regarding preferred outcomes of potential cross-Strait political negotiations.

Work in the field of peace research has shown that independent opinion surveys have been accurate in gauging ripeness for negotiation in intractable conflicts. For example, opinion polls showed that conditions were not ripe for proposed agreements in the Israeli–Palestinian and Cyprus conflicts, and that greater attention to opinion surveys might have averted commencement of failed negotiations in these cases.[22] Opinion polling is viewed to have played a key role in pre-negotiation problem solving in the Northern Ireland peace process, thus

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17 Putnam 1988, 437.
18 Ibid., 436.
19 Cuhadar 2004, 11–12.
20 Lin, Jih-wen 2000.
21 Ibid., 16–17.
22 Irwin 2004.

encouraging polling research projects to support the pre-negotiation process in other conflicts.[23] Putnam includes public opinion in his list of relevant Level 2 actors in the two-level game.[24] Further research indicates that public opinion acts as a domestic constraint on Level 1 negotiations when the issue under discussion is of intense public interest and the public has the power to ratify potential agreements.[25] In the case of cross-Strait political negotiations, the former condition applies to both China and Taiwan and the second clearly applies to Taiwan. Opinion survey research is especially relevant in democratic Taiwan, where Taipei has identified high public support as a condition for entering into cross-Strait political negotiations and where the referendum law would allow for citizen-initiated plebiscites requiring a high threshold for passage (a yes vote by at least 50 per cent of all eligible voters) to authorize and approve political negotiations.

While there have been public opinion surveys conducted in Taiwan which included questions about cross-Strait political negotiation, the survey research used in this study is the first to be designed for academic research purposes and to survey attitudes among elites in China and Taiwan and among the public in Taiwan. Surveys in Taiwan regarding public attitudes towards political negotiation date back to the early 1990s and have generally shown a paradoxical trend of strong support for political talks with the mainland but opposition to negotiation conditions and proposals put forth by Beijing. Most recent opinion surveys touching on political negotiation have focused on attitudes towards a peace agreement or leadership meetings.[26] This study surveys attitudes regarding a full range of potential political negotiation outcomes, and the survey questions use the Chinese term "political negotiation" (*zhengzhi tanpan* 政治谈判) to make clear that the survey is investigating attitudes towards formal political negotiation rather than informal political dialogue or symbolic leadership meetings.[27]

Two sets of survey research conducted during Ma Ying-jeou's second presidential term (2012–2016) are used to estimate the win-set for both sides and to examine the likelihood of a zone of possible agreement and the formation of coalitions in favour of political negotiation. A survey of elite opinion on cross-Strait political negotiation in China and Taiwan conducted between October 2012 and October 2013 is used to estimate the win-set for China, where the public has no institutionalized approval or ratification power, and the distribution of preferences towards negotiation outcomes among elites in Taiwan's Pan-Blue and

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23 Ibid..
24 Putnam 1988, 432.
25 Trumbore 1998.
26 The earliest cited public opinion survey in Taiwan on political negotiation was conducted in the early 1990s by the Mainland Affairs Council and was not published. See Shaw 1999. For recent examples, see TVBS Poll Center 2010; Taiwan Indicators Survey Research 2013.
27 Since the late 1990s, both sides have often used the terms political consultation (*zhengzhi xieshang*) or political dialogue (*zhengzhi duihua*), which imply less finality and formality than political negotiation (*zhengzhi tanpan*). See Shaw 2004, 313–340.

Pan-Green coalitions. The second survey, a nationwide poll of Taiwan public opinion about cross-Strait political negotiation conducted in September 2015, is used to estimate Taiwan's win-set, as Taiwanese have the referendum power noted above, and the distribution of preferences towards negotiation outcomes among citizens who identify as Pan-Blue, Pan-Green or independent. As described earlier, the win-set is the set of negotiation outcomes that could "win" approval from a majority of domestic constituents. This study designs a range of categories of cross-Strait political negotiation outcomes, and surveys elites from both sides as well as Taiwanese citizens regarding which outcomes they could accept. The outcomes acceptable to 50 per cent or more of PRC elite respondents are estimated to be in China's win-set, and those receiving majority acceptance among the sample of the Taiwanese public are estimated to be in Taiwan's win-set.

The PRC elite win-set is then compared with the Taiwan public win-set to estimate whether a zone of possible agreement exists and, if not, which categories of agreements have more potential for win-set overlap. Those categories of agreements with overlap, or the shortest distance from overlap, are then examined further to assess the potential for coalitions in favour of negotiation leading to those outcomes. Potential for coalitions favouring negotiation is assessed based on two factors: (1) congruence in the distribution of acceptable negotiation outcomes among elites on the two sides and among voting groups in Taiwan, for example, between PRC elites and Taiwan Pan-Blue supporters, or between Taiwan's Pan-Green elites and independents, etc. and (2) preferences among the Taiwanese public (measured in the Taiwan public opinion poll) regarding willingness to engage in political negotiation and the acceptable conditions to do so, including attitudes towards the status of the negotiating entities, the political relationship between the two sides, and requirements for legislative and popular oversight.

Several methodological issues should be noted here. First, using surveys to estimate the win-set in an authoritarian country like China is obviously problematic. To begin with, survey research on sensitive political issues like Taiwan is strictly controlled and conducting an independent public opinion poll on cross-Strait political negotiation in China is currently not feasible. However, as noted earlier, Beijing's endorsement of "public discussion" of cross-Strait political issues has allowed the PRC's Taiwan experts more freedom to participate in research such as the elite survey conducted for this study. A second problem is that domestic constraints on policymaking in authoritarian states are much less transparent than in more democratic ones. However, the win-set concept can be applied to regimes like China's as long as decision making on international negotiation follows some majority rule principle within the ruling bloc.[28] Although policymaking on Taiwan is made at the highest levels of the PRC party-state and is

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28 Putnam 1988, 436–37; Lin 2000, 16–19.

not subject to real legislative or popular oversight, it has become increasingly institutionalized and requires coordination among Party, state, and military bureaucratic and functional constituencies, or "systems." These systems are represented on the Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group (TALSG), China's highest policymaking organ on Taiwan issues. Since the Jiang Zemin 江泽民 era, decision making within the CCP's high-level decision-making bodies has become more consensus oriented. It is reasonable to assume that any proposed cross-Strait political agreement would have to win majority approval by the representatives of the various systems in the TALSG. This study therefore uses questionnaire surveys of Taiwan-policy experts in research institutes affiliated with those systems to estimate China's win-set.

Other methodological issues emerge regarding the gap in time between the elite survey and Taiwan public opinion poll as well as factors that influence the win-set which cannot be measured by survey research. In the period between the two surveys, the Sunflower protests in 2014 and the independence-leaning DPP's resounding victory in the November 2014 local elections shifted Taiwan's political climate in a direction less favourable to political accommodation with China. These developments are unlikely to have resulted in any significant change in elite opinion on the two sides; however, they are likely to have caused slightly lower rates of support in the Taiwan public opinion survey for the categories of political agreements more acceptable to China and lower identification with the Pan-Blue coalition than if the public survey had been conducted concurrently with the elite survey. However, as explained in the section below, the categories of potential agreements included in the win-set are based on a range of preferences for cross-Strait relations which have shown consistently substantial levels of support in polls in Taiwan, suggesting that the parameters of the win-set – i.e. the range of agreements included in the win-set – would not have changed during this period and that the time gap between the surveys does not significantly weaken the findings regarding the potential for cross-Strait political negotiation in the near term derived from combining the surveys.

It is important to note that using survey research to estimate the two sides' win-sets according to Putnam's definition of win-set as the set of agreements that could be approved by a domestic majority offers only partial insight into the prospects for cross-Strait political negotiation. Putnam suggests the size of the win-set is determined by three factors: domestic (Level 2) preferences and coalitions; domestic (Level 2) institutional structures (such as the form of ratification); and the strategies of international (Level 1) negotiators. Survey research can be used to examine the first factor by allowing for analysis of the distribution of preferences and the potential for coalitions based on that distribution. However, opinion surveys cannot capture important domestic institutional factors such as constitutional and other legal constraints on both sides regarding Taiwan's legal status (for example, the evolving supervisory institutions for cross-Strait negotiations and the high threshold for referendum passage in Taiwan), or the strategies towards political negotiation adopted by leaders and their negotiators

in Taipei and Beijing, although these variables are key determinants of whether or not the two sides commit to negotiation.

Survey subjects

The survey of elite opinion on cross-Strait political negotiation used purposive sampling to select experts on cross-Strait relations in China and Taiwan. Elite survey respondents completed survey questionnaires between October 2012 and October 2013, a period during which several high-profile unofficial forums on cross-Strait political issues took place between experts from the two sides.[29] In total, 80 respondents were chosen: 40 from China and 40 from Taiwan. These experts, all of whom participated in unofficial cross-Strait political dialogue during Ma Ying-jeou's presidency, had policy advisory and opinion-making roles and most participated in the survey under their affiliations with think tanks and university-based research institutes. Both sides have emphasized think tanks as a conduit for cross-Strait dialogue because these organizations allow individuals with strong government ties and political party affiliations on both sides to interact in a nominally unofficial academic or research capacity. Choice of survey subjects was designed to include representatives affiliated with the full spectrum of key constituent groups on both sides. Their views are used to estimate the overall win-set for China and the distribution of preferences for Taiwan's Pan-Blue and Pan-Green elites.

On the PRC side, experts were selected from research institutions affiliated with each of the five major "systems" with consistent representation in the TALSG: the People's Liberation Army (PLA); the Ministry of State Security (MSS); the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA); the Taiwan Affairs Office (CCTAO/TAO)/Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS); and the United Front Work Department (UFWD)/Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress (CPCC).[30] To minimize any sample bias owing to potential differences in Taiwan policy views at think tanks in different regions, the survey sample included respondents based at institutes in the Beijing, Shanghai/ Nanjing and Xiamen areas. For example, with regard to the "system" and regional categories, survey respondents included experts affiliated with the China Association for Promotion of Chinese Culture (PLA/Beijing), Shanghai Institute for International Studies (TAO-ARATS/Shanghai) and Xiamen University Taiwan Research Institute (UFWD-CPCC/Xiamen). It should be noted that while these think tanks are affiliated with different systems, experts in China's Taiwan work system primarily serve policy advocacy roles and are

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29 Highly publicized unofficial cross-Strait forums on political issues during this period included the December 2012 Taipei Forum, June 2013 Beijing Forum and October 2013 Cross-Strait Peace Forum. These forums received extensive coverage by the Hong Kong-based *China Review News*. See http://www.chinareviewnews.com. Accessed 1 September 2016.

30 Identification of the five key TALSG "systems" follows Yu, Chih-wei, and Chen 2011, 73–75; system affiliations of research institutes are based on Kuo 2008, 161–249.

bound by laws, CCP protocols and state propaganda controls to promote unification and follow the Party line on Taiwan policy.[31] Therefore, it can be expected that their views generally represent the range of PRC elite opinion permitted within what Beijing has promoted since 2009 as "public discussion" of cross-Strait political issues.

For the Taiwan elite opinion sample, respondents were divided evenly between cross-Strait policy experts affiliated with both the Pan-Blue and the Pan-Green coalitions, with 20 experts selected from each camp. Cross-strait relations continue to be the defining factor in Taiwan's political spectrum, with the Pan-Blue coalition more supportive of political accommodation with Beijing and the Pan-Green coalition more independence-leaning. Taiwanese elite survey respondents included current or former legislators from both coalitions and experts associated with research institutions or think tanks representing the full spectrum of cross-Strait policy preferences and party and government affiliations. On the Blue–Green spectrum, they ranged from "deep Blue" unification advocates in the Cross-Strait Integration Society and 21st-Century Foundation, organizations which took the lead in cooperating with Beijing to organize the unofficial political forums mentioned above, to "deep Green" independence supporters in the Taiwan Brain Trust. Their institutional affiliations include party-run think tanks like the KMT's Institute for National Policy Research and the DPP's Taiwan Think Tank and New Frontier Foundation, national security system-affiliated organizations such as the Foundation on Asia-Pacific Peace Studies and Prospect Foundation, and influential university-based institutions including the NCCU Institute of International Relations.

The Taiwan public opinion poll of attitudes regarding cross-Strait political negotiation surveyed a random sample of 1,601 voting-age citizens nationwide (excluding the offshore islands of Kinmen 金門 and Matsu 馬祖) through computer-assisted telephone interviewing between 1 September and 19 September 2015. Respondents were asked to identify their political party preferences in order to examine the potential for coalition formation in favour of negotiation among citizens who identify as Pan-Blue, Pan-Green, or independent. Party identification among the respondents was roughly balanced between the Pan-Blue coalition (26.5 per cent), Pan-Green coalition (31.6 per cent) and independents (39.0). This distribution is consistent with surveys tracking party identification in Taiwan which show a significant drop in identification as pro-KMT and increased identification as pro-DPP or independent following the Sunflower movement in March 2014.[32]

Win-set categories

The spectrum of potential cross-Strait political negotiation outcomes presented in the two surveys is roughly based on categories used in annual opinion polls,

31 Glaser and Saunders 2002.
32 Taiwan Indicators Survey Research 2015b.

conducted since 1992 by Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council (MAC), to gauge public preferences regarding Taiwan's relationship with mainland China.[33] We chose to model our cross-Strait political agreement categories on these survey options because of their long-term and consistent use in polls in Taiwan and because they are familiar to experts on both sides as well as to the Taiwanese people. This facilitated comparison of elite and public opinion. Our surveys slightly modified the MAC survey choices. Cross-Strait political integration, not a choice in the MAC survey, was added as a possible negotiation outcome. Importantly, while the MAC survey asks respondents to choose their preferred option, our surveys asked respondents to choose *all* political negotiation outcomes they could accept in order to estimate the win-set.

The seven negotiation outcome choices are listed as follows (the abbreviated categories used in this paper are in bold, followed by the choices as they were written in the surveys):

- **Unification**: unification (*tongyi* 統一);
- **Integration**: integration (*tonghe* 統合); example: EU, British Commonwealth;
- **Status quo-to-unification**: maintain the status quo and unify later (*xian weichi xianzhuang, yihou tongyi* 先維持現狀, 以後統一);
- **Status quo-to-decide later**: maintain the status quo and choose unification or independence later (*xian weichi xianzhuang, yihou zai jueding tongdu* 先維持現狀, 以後再決定統獨);
- **Permanent status quo**: maintain the status quo permanently (*yongyuan weichi xianzhuang* 永遠維持現狀);
- **Status quo-to-independence**: maintain the status quo and Taiwan becomes independent later (*xian weichi xianzhuang, yihou Taiwan duli* 先維持現狀, 以後台灣獨立);
- **Diplomatic normalization**: recognize Taiwan is a country, two countries establish diplomatic relations (*chengren Taiwan shi guojia, liangguo jianjiao* 承認台灣是國家, 兩國建交).

Official or unofficial proposals have been made for each category of potential cross-Strait political agreement – with the exception of status quo-to-independence – and many unofficial proposals, including draft agreements, were exchanged in the aforementioned expert forums held during Ma Ying-jeou's presidency. Although the details of these proposals are beyond the scope of this research, it is useful to point out concrete examples of the types of proposals in the various categories in the win-set range.[34] Proposals for unification agreements include the PRC's long-standing "one country, two systems" formula and PRC academic Yu Yuanzhou's 余元洲 2002 draft constitution for a Federal Republic of China comprised of both the PRC and ROC, which would

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33 Mainland Affairs Council 2014.
34 For detailed and comparative discussions of these proposals, see Yang 2010; He 2010, 70–102, 150–179; Shaw 2013b, 171–188.

replace the PRC internationally as the legal representative of China.[35] Proposed integration agreements include former KMT chairman Lien Chan's 連戰 2001 confederation model,[36] Taiwan professor Chang Ya-chung's 張亞中 2008 "Basic agreement for cross-Strait peaceful development,"[37] and the "greater one-China framework" endorsed in 2014 by a bipartisan group of Taiwanese former officials and party leaders.[38] These integrationist proposals envision shared sovereignty arrangements through the creation of supra-national legal entities through which the two sides would participate equally and/or jointly in international organizations.

Various proposals for peace agreements or peaceful interaction span the spectrum of categories in which the status quo is kept for a period, maintained permanently, or formalized through diplomatic mutual recognition. With respect to the status quo-to-unification category, both sides have made official proposals of this type, with the major difference being that proposals made by Taipei in the early 1990s (now off the table) made the unification process conditional on the mainland's democratization and renunciation of force. In the early 1990s, the ROC National Unification Guidelines (now defunct) called for a phased progression to unification talks after those conditions were met. During that same period, Taipei also secretly proposed a peace treaty based on the 1972 Basic Treaty between the two German states. Under such a treaty, the ROC and PRC would normalize diplomatic relations and participate equally in international organizations prior to unification.[39] Maintaining the status quo until unification is the essence of Beijing's current proposal for a cross-Strait peace agreement "under the special situation in which the country is not yet unified." China's version of a peace agreement, the contents of which have been discussed by PRC experts, envisions a domestic pact to end the Chinese Civil War which unambiguously seals Taiwan's de jure status as part of "one China" (leaving no room for "respective interpretations"), and implicitly or explicitly commits Taipei to security cooperation with Beijing to defend China's territorial integrity.[40]

The Ma administration's version of a peace agreement under his government's mainland policy of "no unification, no independence, no use of force" fits the category of status quo-to-decide later. Drafts of this type of agreement proposed by Taiwanese academics and former officials generally involve ambiguous acknowledgement of "one China" and expression of opposition to Taiwan independence. They call for an indefinite or fixed interim period of mutual non-denial

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35 Yu, Yuan-zhou 2002.
36 "Xin lantu xin dongli Lian Zhan xinshu changyi liang'an lianbangzhi" (New blueprint, new force; Lian Zhan's new book advocates cross-Strait confederation), *Central Daily News* (Taipei), 5 January 2001, 1.
37 He 2010, 150–161.
38 "Dayizhong jiagou liang'an xin xuanxiang" (Greater one-China framework; cross-Strait new option), *Lianhe wanbao*, 27 May 2004.
39 Shaw 2013b, 149–170.
40 He 2010, 82–90.

between the two sides, giving Taiwanese time to come to a consensus on relations with the mainland.[41] An example of a permanent status quo agreement is the DPP's proposal for a "Cross-Strait peace and stability framework," which was laid out by the Chen Shui-bian 陳水扁 government in 2004 and referenced in the ten-year political platform of DPP presidential candidate Tsai Ing-wen 蔡英文 in 2011.[42] The proposal calls for peaceful interaction facilitated by closer economic and social integration and is based solely on a "peace principle." Finally, the "brotherly states" arrangement proposed by Taiwan independence movement leaders at the 2013 Cross-Strait Peace Forum is an example of a diplomatic normalization agreement. Such an agreement would emphasize the historical and cultural bonds between Taiwan and the Chinese mainland as the basis for a peaceful partnership between de jure independent states.[43]

Research Findings

A comparison of the estimated win-sets for cross-Strait political negotiation outcomes for China and Taiwan shows no zone of possible agreement and indicates that the win-sets of the two sides are weighted heavily towards outcomes at opposite ends of the win-set range (see Table 1). As shown in Figure 1 below, no negotiation outcome in the win-set range received 50 per cent acceptance from domestic constituencies on both sides. The China win-set includes only the unification and the status quo-to-unification outcomes, while the Taiwan win-set includes only agreements that would maintain the status quo without a commitment to unification. Moreover, those outcomes with the strongest majority approval – unification for China and diplomatic normalization for Taiwan – were least acceptable to domestic constituents on the other side. All outcomes in the Taiwan win-set were acceptable to less than 15 per cent of PRC respondents. The outcomes with the shortest distance between acceptance rates were status quo-to-unification, and integration. The former outcome showed the most potential for overlap, with 42 per cent acceptance from the Taiwanese public and 69.7 per cent approval from PRC elites.

Before looking closer at the potential for coalitions in favour of the two outcomes with some potential for overlap, it is important to note the overall distribution of preferences towards negotiation outcomes among PRC and Taiwan elites as well as among major voter groups in Taiwan. Table 2 shows the distribution of acceptance rates for each negotiation outcome among five groups: PRC elites, Taiwan Pan-Blue elites, Taiwan Pan-Green elites, Taiwan Pan-Blue voters, Taiwan Pan-Green voters, and Taiwan independent voters. Figure 2 shows the distribution of preferences from the elite survey of PRC, Pan-Blue and Pan-Green experts, and Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of preferences

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41   He 2010, 71–81; Yang 2010.
42   Mainland Affairs Council 2011; Democratic Progressive Party 2011.
43   Lin, Cho-shui 2011.

Table 1: **Estimated Acceptance Rates for Political Negotiation Outcomes for China and Taiwan**

	China	Taiwan
Unification	**80%**	25.2%
Integration	26.4%	47.8%
Status quo-to-unification	**69.7%**	42%
Status quo-to-decide later	12.8%	**65.8%**
Permanent status quo	10.8%	**63.4%**
Status quo-to-independence	5.3%	**71.5%**
Diplomatic normalization	0%	**84.7%**

Notes:
　Percentages in bold are in the win-set.
Source:
　Authors' surveys.

Figure 1: **Estimated Acceptance Rates for Political Negotiation Outcomes for China and Taiwan**
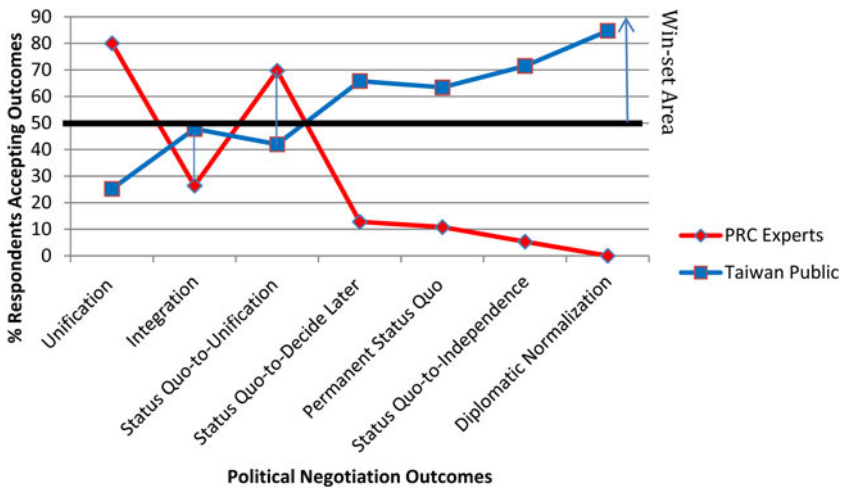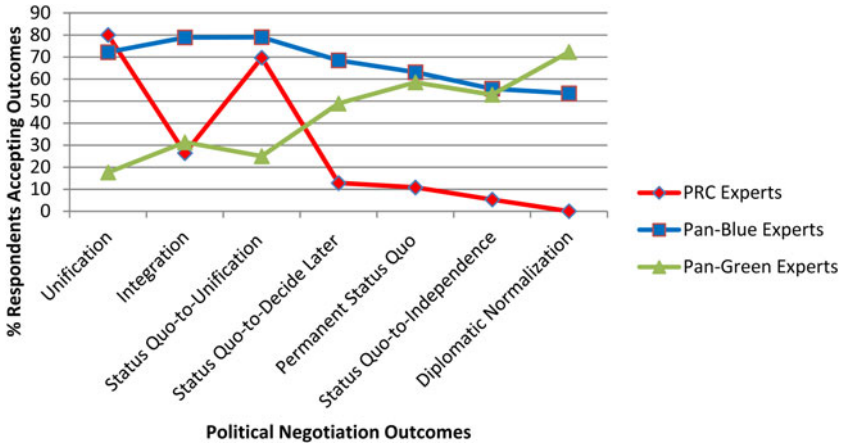

Source:
　Authors' surveys.

among PRC elites and the three voting groups in Taiwan. Some general trends are observable. The clearest trend, predictably, is polarization between the preferences of PRC elites and Taiwan's Pan-Green elites and voters. This divergence is especially evident at the elite level, suggesting that Beijing's promotion of unofficial political dialogue did little to sway Pan-Green elites towards greater compromise on political negotiation. Second, the preferences of independent Taiwan voters, who made up nearly 40 per cent of survey respondents, generally trend in the middle ground between those of Pan-Blue and Pan-Green voters, making them a potential swing group with respect to political negotiation.

Table 2: **Distribution of Elite and Public (Taiwan) Acceptance Rates for Negotiation Outcomes**

	PRC Elites	Taiwan Pan-Blue Elites	Taiwan Pan-Green Elites	Taiwan Pan-Blue Public	Taiwan Pan-Green Public	Taiwan Independent Public
Unification	80	72.2	17.6	41.4	13.5	24.5
Integration	26.4	78.9	31.3	59.2	38.6	49.0
Status quo-to-unification	69.7	79.0	25.0	55.8	32.3	40.7
Status quo-to-decide later	12.8	68.5	48.9	48.1	81.7	65.8
Permanent status quo	10.8	63.1	58.5	63.9	68.6	60.5
Status quo-to-independence	5.3	55.6	52.9	78.3	69.7	69.5
Diplomatic normalization	0	53.3	72.3	81.0	88.5	85.7

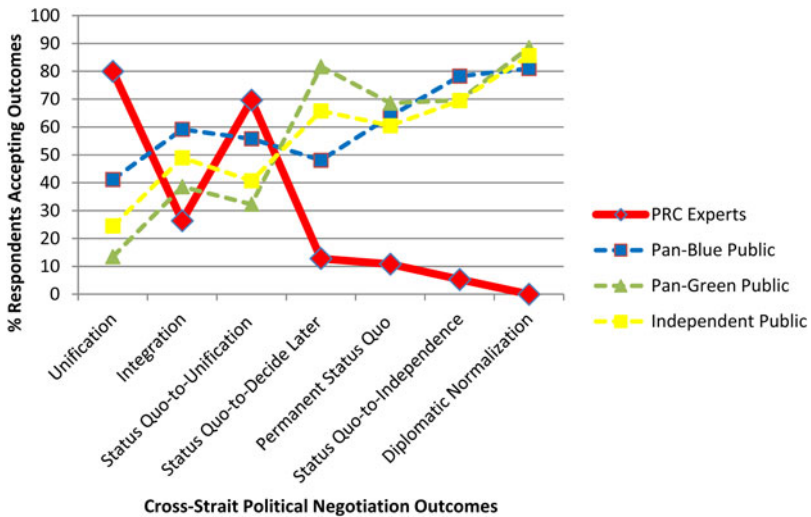*Source:*
   Authors' surveys.

Figure 2: **Distribution of PRC and Taiwan Elite Acceptance Rates for Negotiation Outcomes**

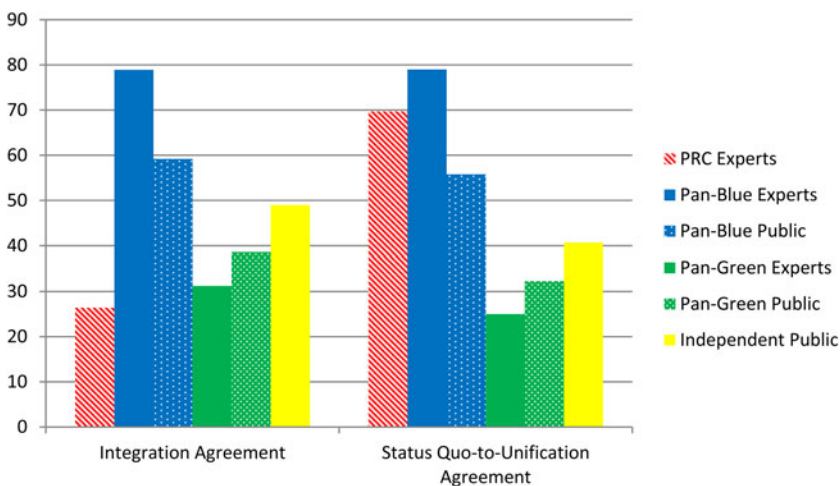Figure 3: **Distribution of PRC Elite and Taiwan Voter Group Acceptance Rates for Negotiation Outcomes**

Other notable trends involve the distribution of preferences of Pan-Blue elites and Pan-Blue voters. Acceptance rates among Pan-Blue elites for outcomes involving unification (unification or status quo-to-unification) were closer to those of PRC elites than to those of fellow Taiwanese, including Pan-Blue voters. For all

other outcomes, including integration, acceptance rates among both Pan-Blue elites and Pan-Blue voters converge more closely with Pan-Green coalition preferences than with PRC elite preferences. Importantly, a majority of Pan-Blue elites could accept each outcome in the win-set range, and a majority of Pan-Blue voters indicated acceptance of all outcomes except unification and status quo-decide later, although both of these outcomes also received over 40 per cent acceptance from this voter group. These preferences show the Pan-Blue camp to be the strongest force behind some type of political agreement on the Taiwan side, making it a potential coalition partner with Beijing in favour of negotiation. However, acceptance rates for outcomes closer to unification were substantially higher among Pan-Blue elites than among Pan-Blue voters. Notably, the outcomes receiving the highest approval from Pan-Blue voters were in fact closer to diplomatic normalization. This suggests that Pan-Blue elites may have difficulty rallying support in their camp for negotiation outcomes more acceptable to Beijing.

Next, we look closely at the options showing the most potential to bring the two sides to the table, status quo-to-unification and integration (see Figure 4). Acceptance rates for a status quo-to-unification agreement, the outcome showing the most promise for win-set overlap, show clear potential for cross-Strait coalitions between Beijing and Pan-Blue elites and voters but also strong opposition from elites and voters in the Pan-Green camp. This outcome won 40 per cent acceptance from independent voters, who would need to be brought into a coalition in support of this type of agreement. Compared with a status quo-to-unification agreement, the integration agreement category showed even higher acceptance rates among the Pan-Blue camp and less opposition from the Pan-Green camp, particularly

Figure 4: **Distribution of Elite and Public (Taiwan) Acceptance Rates for Status Quo-to-Unification and Integration Outcomes**

among Pan-Green voters. Importantly, nearly 50 per cent of independents indicated acceptance of this outcome, suggesting a potential coalition between Pan-Blues and independents in support of an integration deal. But, less than 30 per cent of PRC experts accepted the integration outcome, showing that this type of agreement would be a hard sell in Beijing. However, considering that China has always publicly rejected proposals for a cross-Strait confederation or EU-style integration agreement, the fact that one in four experts at government-run think tanks indicated acceptance of this option suggests at least increased consideration of this type of agreement in Beijing.

To better gauge the potential for coalitions in favour of an integration or a status quo-to-unification agreement, it is useful to look at other data from the Taiwan public opinion poll regarding willingness to engage in political negotiation and acceptable conditions for an agreement, including the status of the negotiating entities, the political relationship implied in the deal, and requirements for legislative and popular oversight. Table 3 shows some important indicators of the push and pull the Taipei government faces from the public as it considers whether or not to enter into political negotiation with Beijing. On the push side, the survey shows strong support across all voter groups for the leaders of the two sides to engage in political negotiations regarding the future relationship between the two sides. Moreover, among Pan-Blue and independent voters, more respondents indicated it would be better for cross-Strait political negotiations to take place sooner rather than later. Perhaps most notably, a near majority of both Pan-Green supporters and independents indicated that they could accept an agreement of "no independence for no war," which is at the core of the peace agreement proposals of both Beijing and the Ma administration.

While showing fairly high support for political negotiations of some kind, the Taiwan public opinion survey suggests strong domestic constraints on negotiation of a status quo-to-unification or integration agreement. As discussed above, these two types of agreements would likely require Taipei to accept a clearer expression of "one China" than the "92 consensus," clear renunciation of Taiwan independence, and a definition of cross-Strait relations as being between two domestic political entities. First, strong majorities, including among Pan-Blue voters, indicated that Taipei should not accept Beijing's "one-China principle" as a precondition for political negotiation. When asked which definitions of the cross-Strait political relationship they could accept if Taipei entered into political negotiation with Beijing, less than 25 per cent of Pan-Green supporters and independents indicated they could accept "both sides belong to one China," and only the Pan-Blue camp showed majority support for some version of the "92 consensus." Strong majorities in all of Taiwan's voting groups indicated acceptance of the "special state-to-state" definition of cross-Strait political relations while, most notably, Pan-Blue respondents indicated stronger acceptance of "one country on each side" than of the "92 consensus" if the latter did not include specific reference to "respective interpretations."

Table 3: **Key Attitudes of Taiwan Voter Groups Towards Political Negotiation**

Issue	Response	Pan-Blue	Pan-Green	Independent
Political negotiation between leaders	Approve	77.5	64.5	64.7
Timing of political negotiation	Sooner is better	51.0	41.4	38.4
	Later is better	39.3	42.7	34.6
	Depends on situation	4.7	6.0	11.5
Interim/peace agreement	Approve "No war for no independence" agreement	71.3	45.9	49.4
One-China principle precondition	Accept	32.2	11.8	15.1
	Don't accept	61.2	84.6	72.2
Political relationship between negotiating sides	Both sides belong to one China	43.0	8.6	20.1
	92 consensus	61.2	21.0	32.2
	One China, respective interpretations	67.5	38.2	45.0
	Special state-to state	71.2	73.8	70.0
	One country on each side	63.9	90.1	76.9
Ratification	Referendum needed to authorize negotiation	63.4	84.8	71.5
	Referendum needed to approve negotiation outcome	65.2	88.5	74.6
	Approval by legislature needed	65.6	68.7	63.4
Status of negotiating entities	Two separate countries	43.0	67.9	64.6
	Two separate political entities	28.4	18.9	16.2
	Two governments of one country	14.9	4.0	4.8
	Two regions of one country	7.8	2.8	3.8

Source:
   Authors' survey.

Regarding the status of the two sides, the survey shows a majority of Taiwanese expected cross-Strait political negotiation to recognize the Taiwan side as a de facto independent state. A majority of Pan-Green and independent supporters viewed the two sides as two separate countries. Less than 30 per cent of each group would view political negotiation as between two "political entities"; less than 15 per cent of each group would consider it to be between two governments or regions within one country. Finally, the survey indicates that the government would face pressure for strong public and legislative oversight of any cross-Strait political negotiation. A strong majority among all three groups indicated that in addition to supervision by the legislature, national referenda would be needed both to approve negotiations and to ratify any agreement.

Conclusion

Comparison of the estimated win-sets for China and Taiwan during Ma Ying-jeou's second term shows no zone of possible agreement and indicates

the win-sets of the two sides were skewed towards opposite ends of the win-set range. Although a strong majority of Taiwanese supported cross-Strait political negotiation and many approved of an interim "no independence for no war" agreement, the potential for coalitions in favour of negotiation outcomes with the most potential for win-set overlap – status quo-to-unification and integration – was highly constrained by several factors: low support across all voting groups in Taiwan for a political agreement based on a clearer commitment to "one China," strong demands among Taiwanese for public and legislative oversight of political negotiation including national referenda to authorize negotiations and approve any agreement, and weak support in the PRC for looser forms of cross-Strait integration.

The study suggests that China's encouragement of unofficial political dialogue among academics and think tank experts during Ma's presidency made little progress in moving the preferences of Pan-Green elites or the Taiwanese public towards the political negotiation outcomes desired by Beijing and that domestic preferences on both sides are unlikely to provide ripe conditions for formal cross-Strait political negotiations in the near future. Finally, the survey findings are consistent with previous public polling in Taiwan showing strong support for engaging in political negotiation with the mainland but low approval of the conditions and proposals for negotiation preferred by Beijing. Given the influence of Taiwanese public opinion on Taipei's policy towards cross-Strait negotiations, including referendum power, this unstable and paradoxical public attitude might push the two sides towards premature political negotiations that could break down and lead to instability.

This study is a small step towards exploring the prospects for political negotiation between China and Taiwan. Survey research to estimate the win-set will need to be refined and conducted regularly to allow for comparison across time. Future opinion surveys of Taiwanese attitudes regarding cross-Strait political negotiations should attempt to measure the effect of China's military threat and political development on Taiwan's win-set.[44] Moreover, follow up research using the two-level game approach must address the other variables that affect win-set size, including Level 2 ratification procedures on both sides and the Level 1 negotiating strategies of leaders in Taipei and Beijing. At the same time, other approaches to pre-negotiation research which look at negotiation formulas, the role of third parties, and transfer effects from problem-solving dialogues should be applied to the China–Taiwan case. For example, detailed comparative analysis of the various proposals for a political agreement, historical studies of the triggers of past instances of cross-Strait political dialogue and the role of the United States in those cases, and in-depth interview research with participants in unofficial political forums could provide important insights into the

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44 The effect of these factors has been examined in the Taiwan National Security surveys which attempt to capture conditional preferences among Taiwanese regarding the future of cross-Strait relations. See Niou 2005.

process that may eventually lead China and Taiwan to undertake formal political negotiations.

Acknowledgement

Biographical notes

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摘要: 本研究采取「前置谈判」(pre-negotiation) 研究途径来探讨国内因素如何影响两岸开启政治谈判之可能性, 将分析焦点置于罗伯特·帕特南 (Robert Putnam) 的「获胜集合」(win-set) 概念。作者利用针对中国大陆与台湾之两岸事务专家以及台湾民众所作的调查, 估算马英九第二任期 (2012–1016) 内两岸各自的获胜集合, 意即能获得国内多数同意之政治协议方案的集合。文章接著分析双方的获胜集合是否重叠而得以形成「协议区」 (zone of possible agreement) 以及赞同政治谈判的潜在联盟。本研究发现该时期内两岸在胜利集合上不存在重叠之处, 形成推动政治谈判之潜在联盟的空间亦相当有限。本研究因此指出, 两岸展开政治谈判的国内条件难以在近期内臻於成熟。

关键词: 两岸; 前置谈判; 双层赛局; 获胜集合; 调查研究; 协议区; 政治谈判; 台湾; 中国

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