



# Taiwan and International Organizations – Between Security, Cooperation and Identity

Edited by

**Agust Börjesson**

**Yi-Chieh Chen**

Special Paper | August 2024



Institute for Security &  
Development Policy



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# Abbreviations

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ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ADB	Asian Development Bank
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CPTPP	Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EU	European Union
FIFA	International Football Association (Fédération Internationale de Football Association)
FIVB	Fédération Internationale de Volleyball
FTAAP	Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICDF	International Co-operation and Development Fund
IO	International Organization
IOC	International Olympic Committee
KMT	Kuomintang
MFN	Most-Favoured-Nation
MoC	Ministry of Culture
MPIA	Multi-Party Interim Arbitration Arrangement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

PRC	People's Republic of China
RCEP	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
ROC	Republic of China (Taiwan)
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
TIFA	Trade and Investment Framework Agreement
TPE	Chinese Taipei
TPKM	Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu
TRA	Taiwan Relations Act
TSMC	Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
U.S.	United States
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

# List of Contributors

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**Tao-Tien Hsiung** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Turkish Language and Culture at National Chengchi University and an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences at National Taiwan Normal University. He also serves as the Chairman of the Taiwan Turkish Culture Association. Dr. Hsiung holds a doctoral degree in Physical Education and Sport Sciences from National Taiwan Normal University. His areas of expertise include international organizations and Turkey, international relations, sports organizational behavior, sports management and sports governance.

**Antonina Luszczykiewicz-Mendis**, the former founding director of the Taiwan Lab Research Center at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland, has until recently served as a Fulbright senior scholar at Indiana University-Bloomington in the United States. Assistant Professor at the Institute of the Middle and Far East of the Jagiellonian University, she is a research fellow at the Central European Institute of Asian Studies. Dr. Luszczykiewicz received international scholarships and grants to support her research from the American-Polish Kosciuszko Foundation in New York, the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education, and the Confucian Scholarship of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

**Patrick Mendis**, a presidential advisor to the U.S. National Security Education Board, is the inaugural Taiwan chair and distinguished visiting professor of international relations at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow and a distinguished visiting professor of transatlantic relations at the University of Warsaw. He previously served as a distinguished visiting professor of global affairs at the National Chengchi University as well as a distinguished visiting professor of culture and diplomacy at the Chinese Culture University in Taipei. A former American diplomat and military professor in the NATO and Indo-Pacific Commands during the Clinton,

Bush, and Obama administrations, Prof. Mendis held senior government positions in the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Energy, and State. He also most recently served two terms as a commissioner to the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO at the Department of State, represented the U.S. government at the United Nations, and worked at the World Bank.

# Introduction

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## Agust Börjesson and Yi-Chieh Chen

International organizations are a historical point of contestation between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC), today commonly known as Taiwan. As of 2024, only 11 United Nations (UN) member-states and the Holy See diplomatically recognize Taiwan. However, 70 years ago the situation was very different. As the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) established its rule in China in 1949, it started from a position of little international recognition. At that time, the ROC not only represented China in the UN system but also held a seat at the UN Security Council. Since then, the situation has effectively been reversed. Today, the PRC is diplomatically recognized by most UN member-states and is a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Taiwan, on the other hand, is facing an uphill struggle for greater international space, participation, and inclusion.

Although claims from the ROC to represent all of China in the international system have faded over the years, the PRC has steadily maintained a claim of sovereignty over Taiwan. On June 21, 2024, the PRC issued new legal guidelines to amend its 2005 Anti-Secession Law. The guidelines targeted what Beijing views as separatist forces in Taiwan that advocate for the island's independence. However, they also effectively criminalized any advocacy for Taiwan to join international organizations that are limited to sovereign countries. As the PRC considers unification with Taiwan inevitable, it views Taiwan's participation in international organizations as an avenue for separating the two.

In the decades following the PRC's establishment, it was debated that it was unreasonable to keep a significant actor of world affairs on the outside of the

UN's international cooperation. With the PRC's and ROC's positions having been reversed over the years, today's debate is instead about Taiwan's lack of international participation. This debate became tangible for many people in the international community during the COVID-19 pandemic. As the globe faced a common threat, it was highlighted that Taiwan, and its citizens were kept outside of cooperation on matters of international health in the World Health Assembly (WHA) and World Health Organization (WHO).

International cooperation on health is merely one aspect of the global community's efforts to work together. International organizations come in many forms and cover a range of issues including global governance, security, trade, and sports. Given Taiwan's difficulties with international participation and the PRC's hardening position on the matter, Taiwan's situation with international organizations and its implications are increasingly relevant and important to understand. To elucidate on this topic, the Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP) has brought together four contributions from distinguished experts to expound on Taiwan's situation with international organizations from different perspectives. The contributions in this volume offer insights regarding Taiwan's situation in areas including international politics, security, trade and economic cooperation as well as identity.

In the first article of this volume titled "*The Political Dimension of Taiwan's Exclusion from International Organizations*", Dr. Antonina Luszczkiewicz-Mendis and Dr. Patrick Mendis detail Taiwan's history with the UN and its current situation. They argue that the PRC has used UN Resolution 2758 in a campaign designed to weaken Taiwan's international position and strengthen China's influence in international organizations. The authors also examine what Taiwan's exclusion from the UN system means for its people and the international community, how China's influence can be counterbalanced and what stands in the way of greater international support for Taiwan. The authors conclude that keeping Taiwan out of international organizations has been part of China's grand strategy to exercise non-military coercion and advance its own objectives to modify global governance. They

note that supporting Taiwan's meaningful international participation is also a means to preserve liberal global governance.

In the second article titled *“Implications of Participating in International Organizations for Taiwan’s National Security”*, Dr. William Chih-tung Chung examines Taiwan's situation in the context of Cross-Strait relations and Sino-U.S. competition. The author argues that the PRC has used its “one-China principle” and UN Resolution 2758 in efforts to internalize the Taiwan issue and delegitimize international intervention in Cross-Strait conflict. He holds that Taiwan's international participation demonstrates Taiwan's difference with the PRC and that it affirms its international existence as a separate political entity. He further argues that participating in international organizations promotes the internationalization of Taiwan's security. The author concludes that active international participation can help avoid a situation of international isolation, which will have a decisive impact on Taiwan's security.

The third article of this volume by Dr. Hanns Günther Hilpert is titled *“Taiwan in the World Economy and in International Economic Organizations”*. In his article, the author examines Taiwan's economy and the unique conditions for its trade relations and agreements. The author expounds on Taiwan's globally competitive microelectronics industry and the Taiwanese government's defensive trade policy. He also examines the history of Taiwan's participation in international economic organizations and future prospects. Dr. Hilpert concludes that the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) is strategically relevant to both global supply chains and Taiwan's foreign and security policy but also that Taiwan is vulnerable through its integration into China's industrial production. He notes that Taiwan has seen some diplomatic success at the foreign trade level but that reaching bilateral and regional trade and investment agreements have remained piecemeal.

The fourth article of this volume by Dr. Tao Tien Hsiung is titled *“Taiwan’s Participation and Self-identity with Regard to International Sports*

*Organizations*". In his article, Dr. Hsiung examines Taiwan's history on participating in international sports competitions under different names. The author parallels this history with the emergence of a distinct Taiwanese national identity and details how Taiwan's government has considered the implications of competing under different names at different points in history. The author expounds on the current complexities of Taiwan competing in the Olympic Games as "Chinese Taipei" in relation to the decline of a Chinese identity in Taiwan and the PRC's pressure and influence. He concludes that although Taiwan faces pressure from the PRC in the international sports realm, it continues to assert its presence in the global sports community despite challenges and upholds its national identity through sports diplomacy.

This Special Paper was undertaken by ISDP's Stockholm Taiwan Center as part of its Taiwan Studies Project. The Stockholm Taiwan Center extends its gratitude to the authors who contributed to this important and timely project. The project could be realized with the support of the Taipei Mission in Sweden to which the Stockholm Taiwan Center also extends its gratitude.

# The Political Dimension of Taiwan's Exclusion from International Organizations

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**Antonina Luszczkiewicz-Mendis & Patrick Mendis**

## Introduction

This chapter focuses on the political dimension of barring the Republic of China (ROC, or Taiwan) from “meaningful participation” in the United Nations (UN) and other international organizations (IOs).<sup>1</sup> The authors argue that this “comprehensive isolation campaign against Taiwan” has been part of China’s coercive, anti-Taiwan strategy.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the two authors illustrate the consequences of China’s coercive actions against Taiwan for the international community. Finally, they also explain whether—and how—Taiwan can stand up to China’s pressure and, with the wider international support, (re)join or gain meaningful participation in a range of IOs, including the UN and its related agencies.

## Background: Excluding the ROC from the UN

The Chinese Civil War between the nationalists headed by Chiang Kai-shek and the forces led by Mao Zedong ended in 1949 with the victory of the communists. Whereas the People’s Republic of China (PRC) was established in the mainland with Beijing as a capital, the nationalist government of the ROC evacuated to Taipei on the island of Taiwan. After that, both Beijing and Taipei maintained the “One China” concept, resulting in an ongoing competition for diplomatic allies. As of 2023, this rivalry has reduced the number of countries recognizing the ROC to 12 (including the Vatican) as the vast majority of states have switched their diplomatic recognition from Taipei to the communist government in Beijing over the decades.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the proclamation of the PRC in 1949, the ROC—one of the founders of the United Nations<sup>4</sup>—managed to keep the “China seat” in the UN until 1971. Soon afterwards, the so-called ping pong diplomacy between China and the U.S. resulted in Washington ceasing its official relations with Taipei and instead establishing diplomatic ties with Beijing in 1979. Nevertheless, Washington maintained unofficial relations with Taiwan and guaranteed its security through the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) of 1979, three U.S.-China joint communiqués of 1972, 1978, and 1982, as well as the Six Assurances.<sup>5</sup>

The normalization of relations between China and the U.S. was a turning point for Taiwan’s presence in IOs. Even though the United States itself opted for dual representation, i.e., keeping representation of the ROC and granting a seat to the PRC at the same time,<sup>6</sup> the UN General Assembly eventually voted in favor of including the PRC and removing the ROC.<sup>7</sup> UN Resolution 2758 on the Restoration of the Lawful Rights of the PRC in the UN, adopted at the 1976<sup>th</sup> plenary session on October 25, 1971, mandated:

to restore all its rights to the People’s Republic of China and to recognize the representatives of its Government as the only legitimate representatives of China to the United Nations, and to expel forthwith the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek from the place which they unlawfully occupy at the United Nations and in all the organizations related to it.<sup>8</sup>

In other words, the UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 clarified that the representation of the PRC was the only legitimate representative of China to the UN. Since then, however, Beijing has been trying to link the resolution to its One China “Principle”—which states that Taiwan is part of the PRC and that there is no sovereign ROC—to prevent Taiwan from participating in international diplomacy.<sup>9</sup> It is important to stress, however, that the 1971 UN resolution did not even include the names “Republic of China” or “Taiwan”—it only placed the PRC in the UN China seat.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Resolution 2758 neither affirmed nor denied the status of the ROC as a state. In this light, the ROC has accused the PRC of “intentionally misinterpreting” the 1971 UN resolution.<sup>11</sup>



Naturally, expulsion from the UN does not mean that Taiwan is absent from all IOs. The ROC has a full membership in 40 intergovernmental organizations and their subsidiary bodies—including the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the World Organization of Animal Health, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration. Moreover, Taiwan holds an observer (or other) status in a range of intergovernmental organizations and their ancillary bodies—such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) as well as the committees of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Central American Integration System.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, the ROC was not expelled from all various organizations at once in 1971—for example, it remained a member of the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) for another 13 years after the original exclusion from the UN.<sup>13</sup> In other cases, the process of joining IOs has been arduous and compromising, as Taiwan has sometimes been forced to operate under a name other than the ROC. The most well-known case is Taiwan’s membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO), where Taiwan has been defined as the “Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu (Chinese Taipei).”<sup>14</sup>

## China’s Anti-Taiwan Campaign in IOs

China has used the UN’s resolution to carry out a disinformation campaign aimed at weakening Taiwan’s international position and strengthening Beijing’s influence in IOs. As a result, Taiwan has faced a range of obstacles when seeking meaningful participation in—and contribution to—IOs within the UN system and beyond.

Beijing has been able to put pressure on IOs and influence their policy positions on Taiwan due to several factors:

- a) Succeeding in having a vast number of its nationals employed in the UN at various levels (there were over 1,300 Chinese citizens among the regular staff of the UN as of 2019);<sup>15</sup>

- b) Placing Chinese nationals in senior ranks across the UN funds and programs, its principal organs, and other UN-affiliated IOs;<sup>16</sup> and,
- c) Inserting non-Chinese who are supportive of the Beijing agenda in IOs.

For example, in light of controversies related to the Chinese authorities' handling of the COVID-19 virus and Beijing's communication strategy, the World Health Organization's (WHO) Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus from Ethiopia has been considered by many as an outspoken advocate for the Chinese government's epidemiological response.<sup>17</sup>

This grand, multi-layered strategy has led to the strengthening of China's influence in IOs and—consequently—the promotion of China's anti-Taiwan campaign in the UN. It is important to observe that Beijing not only prevents the Taiwanese representation from the UN itself, but also influences a wide range of its activities and events by:

- a) Editing UN documents to accommodate the PRC's preferences;<sup>18</sup>
- b) Excluding Taiwanese nationals from scientific conferences co-sponsored by the UN and its specialized agencies;<sup>19</sup> and,
- c) Restricting NGOs from UN access and accreditation, if they do not comply with Beijing's narrative, and demand the name of "Taiwan" to be revised into "Taiwan, Province of China" on their websites and publications.<sup>20</sup>

A striking example was provided in 2020 and 2021 when Beijing blocked Wikimedia Foundation's accreditation to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Beijing accused the Foundation of spreading disinformation through its independent, volunteer-led Taiwan chapter.<sup>21</sup>

## **The Global Consequences of Excluding Taiwan from IOs**

Taiwan's lack of participation in IOs has far-reaching consequences for both Taiwan itself as well as for the international community. For years, Taipei

has pleaded to be granted an observer status at the World Health Assembly (WHA)—the decision-making body of the WHO. Even though Taiwan is not a member of the WHO, it was the first country to inform the agency about the suspicious virus transmissions originating from the Chinese city of Wuhan.<sup>22</sup> On December 31, 2019, Taiwan notified the WHO about its understanding of the disease and requested further information from the international body.<sup>23</sup> Later, the White House accused the WHO of ignoring Taiwanese warnings over China’s coronavirus outbreak.<sup>24</sup>

Since then, Taiwan made international headlines as an aid donor through its “Taiwan Can Help, and Taiwan Is Helping” campaign<sup>25</sup> and was globally praised for combatting the COVID-19 virus very successfully.<sup>26</sup> However, despite successes in foreign assistance projects, Taiwan has faced its own problems due to lack of membership in the WHO and China’s interference. For example, Taipei accused Beijing of putting pressure on a German firm producing COVID-19 vaccines, as China made it nearly impossible for Taiwan to buy vaccines directly.<sup>27</sup> As a result, Taiwan had to initially rely on vaccine donations from abroad. This episode has been a reminder of Taiwan’s “geopolitical vulnerability” and a self-explanatory example as to why Taipei decided to develop its own COVID-19 vaccine.<sup>28</sup>

Without a doubt, securing an observer seat in the WHO is an important goal for Taiwan as it would not only allow it to meaningfully participate in WHA discussions, but also to contribute to the global community. Notwithstanding, Taiwan was barred from participating in official WHO consultations, during which Taiwanese experts, experienced in combating the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) back in 2003, were not able to share their knowledge and experience at the WHO.<sup>29</sup>

## **Counterbalancing China: The Case Study of UNESCO**

From the legal point of view, Taiwan’s campaign for gaining meaningful participation in the UN family of specialized agencies is not a lost cause. *First*, the WHO, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the United

Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and many other international organizations do not require UN membership to join. *Second*, whereas statehood is a prerequisite in various agencies,<sup>30</sup> the very term “state” is not defined by the UN Charter.<sup>31</sup> It is crucial to observe that neither the 1971 resolution, nor any other UN document clarified the status of Taiwan.

An interesting case—and an important political lesson—for Taiwan about joining UN agencies despite international controversies is provided by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).<sup>32</sup> Taiwan is currently excluded from UNESCO as it has neither member nor associate member status.<sup>33</sup> However, Taiwan’s Ministry of Culture (MoC) has prepared a list of potential UNESCO World Heritage Sites.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, China has been blocking the recognition of those MoC sites by the Paris-based organization.<sup>35</sup>

Palestine provides a highly controversial yet successful example of gaining full membership of UNESCO without prior inclusion in the UN.<sup>36</sup> Palestine was accepted as a UNESCO member—and a state—despite the opposition from many countries, including the United States, on October 31, 2011. It was possible thanks to the fact that every member of the Executive Board has one vote, there is no veto power, whereas general voting is based on a majority rule.<sup>37</sup>

Interestingly, Palestine is not the only example of a nation state joining UNESCO prior to entering the UN or without joining UN at all. For instance, Austria,<sup>38</sup> Hungary,<sup>39</sup> and Japan<sup>40</sup> joined UNESCO years before entering the UN.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, apart from Palestine, there are currently two other UNESCO member-states which are not UN members: Cook Islands<sup>42</sup> and Niue in the Pacific.<sup>43</sup>

## **International Support for Taiwan’s Meaningful Participation in IOs**

Since 1971 and the exclusion from the UN, Taiwan has gone a long way to transform itself into the strongest, most stable democracy in Asia and

one of the most vibrant democracies in the world.<sup>44</sup> As a consequence, the support for Taiwan and its presence in IOs has significantly risen from other democracies in recent years.<sup>45</sup>

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken stressed on October 26, 2021, that “Taiwan’s exclusion undermines the important work of the UN and its related bodies, all of which stand to benefit greatly from its contributions,” and called for supporting Taiwan’s meaningful participation.<sup>46</sup> A few days earlier, the European Union (EU) announced a similar policy recommendation: According to the European Parliament Recommendation of October 21, 2021, the European Parliament strongly advocated for:

Taiwan’s meaningful participation as an observer in meetings, mechanisms and activities of international bodies, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). . .<sup>47</sup>

Yet, despite such support from like-minded countries, the door to a wide range of IOs remains closed for the 24-million island nation. It can be speculated that most UN members do not intend to push for including Taiwan as they are concerned about possible retaliations from China. Based on several examples from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), including Lithuania, the Czech Republic, and Poland, it can be argued, however, that countries that have limited economic ties with China (or are characterized by a significant trade imbalance) can possibly display more eagerness to support Taiwan—especially in combination with developing stronger economic cooperation with Taipei.<sup>48</sup>

Another discouragement for CEE countries from keeping close relations with Beijing at the expense of Taiwan has been China’s support for Russia in its war against Ukraine since February 2022. Due to historical reasons, Beijing’s unofficial support for Putin’s war has increased distrust among a wide range of CEE states, which in the past struggled to free themselves from the influence of the Soviet Union.

## Conclusion

Barring Taiwan from any form of participation in IOs—be it full membership or observer status—has been part of China’s grand strategy to exercise non-military coercion.<sup>49</sup> In the meantime, Taiwan’s campaign for meaningful participation in IOs and the efforts of its democratic allies for limiting China’s pressure and influence continues.<sup>50</sup>

It is important to stress that China’s scheme is not just to exclude Taiwan from international diplomacy, but also to take control over IOs and, consequently, impose its own rules and modify global governance.<sup>51</sup> Without a doubt, Beijing’s views on international order are very different from those held by the United States, the European Union, and other like-minded democratic allies and partners;<sup>52</sup> thus, it may be assumed that if China takes the lead in shaping the world order through IOs, global efforts to protect human rights and democratic values might weaken and decrease.<sup>53</sup>

Everything considered, it seems justified for the United States, the EU, and other like-minded democratic countries to support Taiwan’s meaningful participation in the UN. For them, it is “not a political issue, but a pragmatic one”<sup>54</sup> to preserve liberal order in global governance.

## Endnotes

- 1 This article is partly drawn from the research project of the authors, “Taiwan’s Participation in International Organizations: The Current Position of Poland and Its Possible Ways of Supporting Taipei,” February 2023, <https://wnpism.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Taiwan-Report-on-Poland-and-IOs-by-Luszczkiewicz-and-Mendis-February-2023.pdf> (accessed August 28, 2023).
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# Implications of Participating in International Organizations for Taiwan's National Security

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## Introduction

Taiwan's situation with international organizations is mainly affected by four major factors—great power competition, China's international status, Cross-Strait relations, and the phenomenon of globalization. There is no doubt that Beijing plays a decisive role against Taiwan participating in international organizations. Taiwan's exclusion from the World Health Organization (WHO) during the COVID-19 pandemic reflected one tangible aspect of China's influence in this regard. Nevertheless, because of globalization and Taiwan's connectivity to global politics, from global supply chains to geostrategic roles, Taiwan has been closely interlinked with international society. In this context, demands for Taiwan's international participation have increased significantly in spite of China's diplomatic obstruction. All these factors have profound effects on Taiwan's national security.

## Overviewing Taiwan's Participation in International Organizations

According to Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Taiwan has full membership in 45 intergovernmental international organizations, multilateral mechanisms and their affiliated institutions around the world. Taiwan participates in 4 organizations under the name "Republic of China" or "Republic of China (Taiwan)", 11 under "Taiwan", 23 under "Chinese Taipei", 5 under "Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu", 1 under "Fishing Entity of Taiwan", and 1 under "Taipei China". In addition to the above-

mentioned 45 organizations, Taiwan also participates in 28 international intergovernmental organizations as an observer or an informal member (such as guest). Within these 28 organizations, there are 4 in which Taiwan participates under the name “Republic of China”, 3 under “Taiwan”, 16 under “Chinese Taipei”, 2 under “Taipei (Chinese) Separate Customs Territory”, 2 under “Taipei China”, and 1 under “Taiwan, Province of China.<sup>1</sup> Evidently, Taiwan’s government has adopted pragmatic and flexible ways to participate in international organizations under various titles.

As Taiwan’s visibility in the international community has increased, China has also intensified its suppression of Taiwan’s participation in international organizations. It has thereby been undermining Taiwan’s international status and forcing Taiwan and the international community to accept its “one-China principle”. It is worth noting that Beijing manipulates Taiwan’s limited participation in international organizations as a means to either affirm or punish Taiwan’s governments for their respective positions on the “one-China” issue. The Kuomintang’s (KMT) Ma Ying-jeou administration, for example, adopted the so-called “1992 Consensus” and “one-China with respective interpretations”. Taipei then accepted that both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to one China. Beijing, accordingly, allowed Taiwan to participate in the WHO as an observer in 2009 under the name of “Chinese Taipei”, and accepted that Taiwan attended the 38th International Civil Aviation Organization’s (ICAO) General Assembly in 2013 as the “special guest” of the chairman of the council. However, after the Tsai Ing-wen government of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) came to power in 2016 and rejected the so-called “1992 Consensus”, Beijing revised its position and refused Taiwan’s participation in the WHO and ICAO. In fact, during the DPP’s rule, China has done whatever it could to obstruct Taiwan’s participation in international organizations.

## **China’s Manipulation of UN Resolution 2758 Against Taiwan**

Taiwan’s participation in international organizations not only promotes national development and solves specific issues, but it also entails enhancing Taiwan’s

international recognition and its national existence. These are vital to Taiwan's national security. In fact, the issue of Taiwan's participation in international organizations began with the confrontation between the Republic of China (ROC) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) over the right to represent China in the UN. The UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 from October 25, 1971, decided on the issue of China's representation and recognized the PRC as the only legitimate representative of China in the UN. As a result, the ROC, or "Chiang Kai-shek's representative" as stated in the Resolution, lost the right to represent China and was forced to leave the UN and all its affiliated agencies. Since then, Beijing has blocked Taiwan's participation in international organizations in accordance with Resolution 2758, thereby denying the existence of the ROC, as a sovereign and independent country.

However, Resolution 2758 does not mention or deal with the issues of Taiwan's sovereignty and the statehood of the ROC. The United States, for example, continued to maintain diplomatic relations with the ROC until ties were severed on January 1, 1979. Beijing manipulates Resolution 2758 by conflating it with what it calls the "one-China principle", advocating that "there is only one China in the world, the government of the People's Republic of China is the only legitimate government representing China, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory."<sup>2</sup> Beijing argues that "161 countries have established diplomatic relations with the PRC. They all recognize the one-China principle and are committed to handling relations with Taiwan within the one-China framework."<sup>3</sup> However, only 51 of 193 member states of the United Nations accept Beijing's "one-China principle"; nearly three-quarters of the member-states with an absolute majority, faced with Beijing's one-China argument, have instead proposed their own "one-China policy" in vague response to Beijing's claim.<sup>4</sup>

China zestfully uses the so-called "one-China principle" to obstruct Taiwan's diplomatic relations and its participation in international organizations. The purpose is to internalize the Taiwan issue. Then, through diplomatic isolation of Taiwan, to counter the possibility and legitimacy of the international community's intervention in Cross-Strait confrontation. The international

community's general reservation about Beijing's "one-China principle" has gradually become a major challenge for Beijing in countering the internationalization of security across the Taiwan Strait.<sup>5</sup>

## Demonstrating Differences between the ROC and the PRC

The issue of Taiwan's international participation can be seen as a continuation of Cross-Strait sovereignty competition by different means. However, this sovereignty competition between the ROC and the PRC has changed from the representation of China in the past to the statehood of the ROC (Taiwan) now. As far as Taipei is concerned, its participation in international organizations demonstrates the reality that the ROC (Taiwan) and the PRC are two different political entities. As such, it is a competition for neither side of the Taiwan Strait to be subordinate to the other, as well as a competition for the ownership of Taiwan's sovereignty. From Beijing's perspective, this sovereignty competition involves the definition of Cross-Strait relations in terms of "one China" instead of "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan."

Affected by China's diplomatic isolation and suppression, Taiwan's participation in international organizations is limited to non-political, functional, or regional international organizations. It is also not able to participate in any military or security oriented international organizations. In spite of this Taiwan has over the years actively participated in various intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and their related activities in order to expand its international connections. Taking international NGOs as an example, Taiwan currently has more than 2,000 memberships. Although Taiwan's participation in international organizations is not directly related to traditional security issues, the symbolic significance is greater than its substantive significance. Participation demonstrates the fact that Taiwan exists independently in the international community and indirectly demonstrates the national subjectivity of the ROC (Taiwan).

Since President Chiang Ching-kuo's "total diplomacy" (*quan fangwei waijiao*) in the 1980s, Taiwan has adopted a pragmatic diplomacy to present the very

existence of the ROC. It has made use of comprehensive sectors—political, economic, trade, scientific, technological, culture and sports, etc.—to achieve new levels of substantive participation, cooperation, and interaction with international organizations. Moreover, Taiwan’s participation in international organizations has significantly reinforced Taipei’s belief in and practice of its “status quo” strategy. This led the Tsai Ing-wen administration to articulate its redefined sovereign status as the ROC (Taiwan) in the international community. To articulate the existence of Taiwan is designed to overcome the international isolation which had defined the ROC (Taiwan) as a “pariah state” and fundamentally undermined its existing statehood. In fact, international isolation not only put Taiwan’s security in serious danger but also frustrated the Taiwanese people’s desire for self-respect and recognition as a sovereign state within the international community. Despite the lack of formal recognition of the ROC (Taiwan) as an independent sovereign state by much of international society, Taipei’s energetic international activities, such as participating in international organizations, does not only boost the ROC’s international visibility, but would eventually give solid evidence of its de facto statehood against Beijing’s strategy to internalize the Cross-Strait issue.

## **Taiwan’s “Meaningful Participation” in International Organizations**

Since the ROC government retreated to Taiwan in 1949, the United States has consistently played a key role regarding Taiwan’s participation in international organizations. Although there are no formal diplomatic relations between the ROC and the U.S., Washington and its Western allies have in recent years begun to help with Taiwan’s “meaningful participation” in international organizations. This will have a very positive and far-reaching impact on Taiwan’s international participation.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the ROC being forced out of the UN, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken issued a statement calling on all UN member-states to join the U.S. in supporting Taiwan’s “meaningful participation” in the UN System and international organizations.<sup>6</sup> Blinken said that supporting Taiwan’s participation in the UN system is “not a

political issue, but a pragmatic one.” Over the past 50 years, Mr. Blinken argued, Taiwan’s active participation in some UN specialized agencies has fully proven Taiwan’s value to the international community. He also pointed out the irrationality of ICAO and the World Health Assembly (WHA) in excluding Taiwan. The U.S. has taken the lead in calling on the international community to adopt a “pragmatic” stance and support Taiwan’s “meaningful participation” in international organizations. On one hand, this demonstrates Taiwan’s indispensable role in the international community, and on the other, it highlights the fundamental differences between the U.S. and China on issues related to Taiwan.

Unsurprisingly, China criticized the U.S. for supporting Taiwan’s “meaningful participation” in the UN System. China argued that not only does the U.S. support violate UN Resolution 2758, but also that it “seriously violates the one-China principle and the provisions of the three Sino-U.S. joint communiqués, violates its own commitments, and violates the basic norms of international relations.”<sup>7</sup> The contrasting stances of the U.S. and China on Taiwan’s international participation reflect the fundamental differences between Washington’s “One-China Policy” and Beijing’s “One-China Principle”. On October 21, 2021, Rick Waters, the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, made rare public criticism of China for “misusing” UN Resolution 2758 to prevent Taiwan from “meaningful participation” and “denying the international community the ability to gain valuable contributions that Taiwan offers.”<sup>8</sup>

The U.S. State Department also stated that the U.S. and Taiwan are discussing how to assist Taiwan with “meaningful participation” in UN affairs. “Meaningful participation” in this context includes five major areas: Global public health, the environment and climate change, development assistance, technological standards, and economic cooperation, with specific participation including the WHO and the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC). While Beijing is increasingly attempting to suppress Taiwan’s international participation based on its “one-China principle”, the U.S. has, on the contrary, actively assisted Taiwan in participating in international



organizations. This shows that not only is the competitive relationship between the U.S. and China continuing to heat up, but the consequences of the differences in Sino-American perceptions of Taiwan issues significantly affects Taiwan's security environment.

## **Internationalizing Cross-Strait Competition**

The internationalization of Taiwan's security refers to international society interfering in Cross-Strait competition through active or passive means. This entails countering the PRC's will and capability in unilaterally resolving Taiwan issues and preventing Cross-Strait competition from becoming Chinese domestic affairs. Taiwan's expanded participation in international organizations promotes the idea of internationalizing Taiwan issues, which will have a critical impact on Taiwan's security. This is something Beijing is trying its best to prevent. Accordingly, Beijing regards Taiwan's participation in international organizations, especially in political ones such as the UN, without China's consent as a conspiracy to support "Taiwan independence." Washington's push for Taiwan's "meaningful participation" in the UN System will undoubtedly increase tension between the U.S. and China. The Biden administration is likely well aware of this, but still actively assists Taiwan in participating in international organizations despite Beijing's opposition. This reflects the continued competition between the U.S. and China. The Biden administration's "diplomacy first" thinking for maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait is to expand Taiwan's international participation, increase Taiwan's functional connections with the international community, and gradually internationalize Taiwan issues to counter Beijing's expansionist attempts to use force to unilaterally change the status quo in the Taiwan Strait.

The internationalization of Taiwan issues and Taiwan's international participation are mutually constructed. How to avoid international isolation and thereby internationalize Taiwan's security is a key strategy for Taiwan to build a favorable strategic environment to counter the threat from China. Active participation in international organizations will not only highlight differences between Taiwan and China in terms of two existing political

entities, but will also help to promote the idea of internationalizing Taiwan's security. To make use of external resources, including the strength of others, or to deal with international political structures to secure a favorable strategic environment, constitutes an important option for Taiwan's strategic arrangements in enhancing its security against a much stronger opponent in China. Lacking credible material power to deal with Beijing alone, Taiwan's security strategy has consistently been designed to bring in the intervention of external powers which is closely related to the internationalization of Taiwan issues.

Strengthening the security connection between Taiwan and the U.S. is one of the most important and effective means to internationalize the issue of Cross-Strait competition. In fact, as competition between the U.S. and China continues to increase, Taiwan has once again become the focal point of Sino-American competition. DPP President Tsai Ing-wen's steady "pro-American" but "non-provocative and non-aggressive" Cross-Strait policy has been well affirmed by the U.S. led Western world. Washington supports Taipei's meaningful international participation which has internationalized Taiwan Strait security to a considerable extent. On the one hand, this reflects the international community's affirmation of Taiwan's roles and values. On the other, it can also be seen as a major setback for China's aggressive attempt to internationally isolate Taiwan.

## **Conclusion**

The security of Taiwan is affected by its international context. Particularly by the Sino-American relationship, which closely relates to Taiwan's international connectivity. The extent of Taiwan's participation in international organizations, which is mutually constructed by way of Taiwan's international connectivity, has been severely conditional on China's attitude since Taiwan's exclusion from the UN in 1971. Because Taiwan's participation in international organizations has been limited to a non-political and non-military extent because of China's obstruction, the effects from the relationship between Taiwan's international participation and its security still needs to be further explored.

Moreover, because China views Taiwan's international participation as an alternative way to promote the idea of "Taiwan independence", there are competing views on whether to prioritize improving relations with China or to vigorously participate in international activities for the improvement of Taiwan's security. However, what is certain is that active international participation can help avoid a situation of international isolation, which will have a decisive impact on Taiwan's security. Facing China's diplomatic containment, the question of how to demonstrate that Taiwan's international participation is an asset rather than a burden to the international community is a vital issue. International cooperation on "substantial needs-issues", such as non-traditional security, makes Taiwan's further international participations a smart place to start.

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# Taiwan in the World Economy and in International Economic Organizations

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**Hanns Günther Hilpert**

## Introduction

For Taiwan, survival as a state and an independent nation depends at least as much on its own economic and technological strength as on its politics, diplomacy and defense capabilities. Taiwan has to strive to be as economically independent of China as possible and indispensable to third parties. Taiwan's government is therefore actively supporting the country's companies and research institutions to achieve and strengthen economic and technological competitiveness. In addition to direct support through industrial and technology policy, there is also indirect support through foreign trade policy. In this respect, membership in international economic organizations is an obvious objective. Taiwan's full membership in the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) is not only a manifestation of national independence but also a political gain in reputation and self-esteem. These memberships are of great importance to the well-being and success of the Taiwanese economy. Through its APEC and WTO memberships in particular, Taiwan is firmly integrated into the international economic system. They also serve as a kind of insurance policy against China's diplomatic efforts to isolate Taiwan in international trade.

## Taiwan in the World Economy

Despite its relatively small population (23.6 million) and diplomatic marginal position, Taiwan's global economic weight should not be underestimated.

With a gross domestic product (GDP) of US\$752 billion, Taiwan ranked 22nd among the world's economies in 2023. With a per capita income of US\$32,339 in 2023, Taiwan is one of the richest countries in Asia. At 35.8 percent, the manufacturing industry's share of Taiwan's total value added is exceptionally high.<sup>1</sup> Electronic components are by far the country's most important export. Through production and supply chains, Taiwan is deeply embedded in the regional division of labor of "Factory Asia". In terms of domestic value added, exports and imports accounted for 115.6 percent of value added in 2023.<sup>2</sup>

One area where Taiwan excels in global competition is microelectronics. Taiwan holds a key position in the production of semiconductors, the basic material and technological driver of the digital age. In 2022, Taiwanese companies accounted for 20.8 percent of global sales in chip design, 77.6 percent in chip manufacturing and 53.9 percent in chip packaging and testing.<sup>3</sup> Taiwanese companies are world leaders in these areas as well as in wafer manufacturing. In particular, the dominant market position and technological leadership of Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) in chip manufacturing stands out. The TSMC currently holds around 60 percent of the global market for chip contract manufacturing<sup>4</sup> and is at the forefront of innovation, having been the first to begin commercial production of 2-nanometre-wide semiconductors. The TSMC's latest generation semiconductors are indispensable for the manufacturing of products such as high-speed computers, cloud servers, 5G communication systems, autonomous driving and artificial intelligence applications. The virtual monopoly of TSMC's technologically advanced semiconductor facilities in Taiwan is of strategic importance not only for global industrial value chains, but also for foreign and security policy. An act of war by China against Taiwan would endanger the global supply of this particularly critical input, as well as disrupting supplies to mainland China. Metaphorically speaking, Taiwan has a "silicon shield."<sup>5</sup>

## Taiwan's Defensive Foreign Trade Policies

Taiwan's deep integration into the international division of labor, the prominent role of Taiwanese firms in international value chains, and the island's openness to imports and direct investment clearly illustrate the need for and importance of an appropriate foreign economic and trade policy for the island. Given the challenge posed by China's claim of sovereignty over its territory, Taiwan's trade policy can only be defensive. For Taiwan, the focus is less on expanding export opportunities and thereby increasing income, employment, and growth. Rather, it is about avoiding, or at least limiting, harmful trade discrimination in the face of China's efforts to isolate Taiwan in a world of growing number of global trade agreements. As the liberalization measures agreed elsewhere apply only to members of the trade agreement, "Made in Taiwan" goods and services are being discriminated against. They are still subject to higher tariffs and non-tariff barriers. In view of the gravitational attraction of the massively profitable (Cross-Strait) Chinese mainland market, the general requirement for Taiwan's foreign trade policy is to work towards diversifying its own sales and investment markets. This is also to be understood as part of the defensive foreign trade policy. There is great concern in Taiwan that if economic dependence on the mainland, and thus political vulnerability to the People's Republic of China (PRC), becomes overwhelming, domestic resistance to China's annexationist efforts could be broken. Therefore, the general objective must be to actively seek closer relations with third countries and to reduce economic dependence (and vulnerability) on the mainland. Beyond these geo-economic motives, Taiwan's trade policy inevitably has a general political component. Every trade agreement with a third country and every membership in a multilateral organization symbolizes the country's sovereignty and thus has a foreign policy value in and of itself.<sup>6</sup>

However, it is not easy for Taiwan to secure trade agreements. Beijing's vehemently championed "one China principle" systematically restricts Taiwan's ability to enter into bilateral trade agreements with third countries, to join a regional trade agreement or an international economic organization. There is little doubt about Beijing's determination to inflict economic or political damage on third countries. Against this background, trade policy agreements

are only possible for Taiwan if Beijing explicitly agrees to them or if the partner(s) are prepared to resist pressure from the PRC. The former applies to Taiwan's memberships in the ADB, APEC and the WTO, as well as to the exceptional economic cooperation agreements that Taiwan has struck with Singapore and New Zealand. Both countries concluded trade agreements with China during Taiwan's Ma Ying-jeou administration (2012-16), when Beijing was much more tolerant of Taipei's efforts to enter into trade agreements with third parties than it is now. This window of opportunity to have trade agreements with third countries with Beijing's blessing was apparently only open for a short time.<sup>7</sup> The latter applies to Taiwan's free trade agreements (FTAs) with countries that have or have had diplomatic relations with Taiwan (as the Republic of China), among them Panama, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and the Marshall Islands. Far more important for Taiwan, both economically and politically, are the more sectoral trade agreements that it has with the U.S. and Japan. Both countries, while respecting the "one China policy", are willing to withstand China's diplomatic pressure and have always considered it possible in principle to agree on a FTA. The U.S. has had a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) with Taiwan since 1994. The TIFA serves as a mechanism for bilateral dialogue on trade issues and as a framework for specific sectoral agreements. Japan has concluded a number of sectoral agreements with Taiwan, while avoiding direct government contacts. These include agreements on investment, open skies, financial information exchange, fisheries, industry, e-commerce and patent protection.<sup>8</sup>

## Taiwan in International Economic Organizations

While Taiwan's efforts to conclude bilateral and regional trade and investment agreements remain piecemeal, it has been more successful in gaining membership in key international economic organizations, becoming (or remaining) a full member of the ADB, APEC and the WTO. Apparently, China considered membership in these organizations to be so important to the mainland's economic development that Taiwan's parallel membership could be accepted. However, Taiwan had to agree to a name other than "Republic of China" in order to be represented.



**ADB:** When the Asian Development Bank (ADB) was established in 1966, Taiwan was a founding member and initially represented the whole of China under the name “Republic of China”. In 1986, China joined the ADB as the “People’s Republic of China”, anxious to gain favorable development loans. Taiwan was, however, able to remain in the development bank as “Taipei, China”. At the ADB, Taiwan supports the development of Asian countries through its International Co-operation and Development Fund (ICDF) by providing technical co-operation, lending, investment, and humanitarian aid.

**APEC:** In 1991, under the name “Chinese Taipei”, Taiwan became a member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), an organization that had been deliberately set up only two years earlier by “economies” rather than “states”. Taiwan joined APEC in parallel with the PRC and Hong Kong, then a British crown colony. The reason for the approval was that China was also seeking membership at the time, eager to support its own outward-looking economic reforms, and there was a political link between the two applications.<sup>9</sup> Within APEC, which currently has 21 members, Taiwan has been able to participate in the annual Leaders’ Conferences and its many councils, working groups and initiatives.

**WTO:** Under the name “Separate Custom Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu”, Taiwan joined the WTO on January 1, 2002, exactly one month after the PRC. Taiwan was able to join because WTO membership according to the WTO treaty is not contingent upon statehood. This WTO designation offers Taiwan a politically viable way to enter into bilateral agreements without violating the “one China principle”, as Taiwan has done with its free trade agreements with Singapore and New Zealand. In the WTO itself, Taiwan is a full member with all associated rights and obligations. Most importantly, Taiwan enjoys reciprocal, i.e. mutually beneficial, most-favored-nation (MFN) market access in the WTO and in return is bound by the commitments made in import liberalization and tariff setting. An important WTO obligation is the regular Trade Policy Review by the WTO Secretariat. This has already been carried out five times for Taiwan. As a WTO member, Taiwan actively participated as fully as any other country in the negotiations

of the Doha World Trade Round, which later failed. Taiwan also acceded to several plurilateral WTO agreements: The Agreement on Trade in Civil Aircraft (2002), the Agreement on Government Procurement (2009), the Information Technology Agreement (1996/2015) and the Agreement on Trade Facilitation (2015). Taiwan also does not shy away from using the WTO dispute settlement mechanism when it feels it has been unfairly disadvantaged by import protection. In fact, the seven cases brought by Taiwan against the EU, India, Indonesia, Canada, and the U.S. all ended successfully. On the other hand, no dispute settlement proceedings have yet been initiated against Taiwan, which can be seen as evidence of the island's open trade policy that conforms to the rule of law. By participating as a third country in 138 consultations to date in the context of dispute settlement proceedings, Taiwan is demonstrating a presence on the international stage and building up legal expertise in international trade law.<sup>10</sup>

In principle, even China and Taiwan, both members of the WTO, can settle their trade disputes before a neutral international forum in accordance with the rule of law.<sup>11</sup> However, neither China nor Taiwan has invoked the WTO dispute settlement procedure against each other, despite the fact that both sides seriously violate WTO norms and obligations in their bilateral economic relations. Moreover, Taiwan is not (yet) a party to the Multi-Party Interim Arbitration Arrangement (MPIA), which was established after the Appellate Body was blocked in 2019.

**New applications:** Taiwan's membership in the APEC is significant for the island's regional trade policy ambitions. APEC provides a foreign policy framework for realizing the long-held vision of a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP), which is the ultimate goal of all bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements in the region and was repeatedly invoked at APEC summit declarations. Multilateral FTAs, such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) or the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), have been recognized as the pathways to implementing the visionary FTAAP.<sup>12</sup> For the time being, however, accession to the RCEP is out of the question for Taiwan, as RCEP

member China is unlikely to agree. The chances of joining the CPTPP, however, are better, since the accession clause of the CPTPP allows for the inclusion of Taiwan. Like the WTO, the CPTPP is also open to separate customs territories.<sup>13</sup> In fact, Taiwan—like China shortly before it—officially submitted an application at the end of September 2021. China will find it difficult to meet the high CPTPP standards, i.e. the benchmarks adopted by the CPTPP Commission in 2019. Unlike China, Taiwan, on the other hand, should be able to meet the CPTPP accession criteria well and quickly, even if the liberalization of agricultural imports is domestically sensitive for Taipei. However, China is exerting political pressure on all CPTPP members to refuse to admit Taiwan. It is therefore conceivable that Taiwan's and China's applications for membership will be politically linked, as was the case with APEC and the WTO. China will probably only be admitted to the CPTPP if Taiwan is also admitted.

## Conclusion

Despite its relatively small geographical size, Taiwan is a formidable player in world trade and the global economy, especially in the field of electronic integrated circuits. Due to its technologically leading production facilities and globally dominant market position, the TSMC has strategic relevance not only in supplying global value chains, but also for foreign and security policy. However, Taiwan is also subject to economic extortion and vulnerabilities in the course of its economic integration into mainland industrial production. What is more, in view of the growing number of free trade and investment agreements worldwide, Taiwan's economic policy faces the difficult task of minimizing discrimination against it and keeping up with new trade policy regulations. Although Taiwan has been more diplomatically successful at the foreign trade level than in other areas, given its memberships in the ADB, APEC and WTO, the country's efforts to reach bilateral and regional trade and investment agreements remain piecemeal. Given China's and Taiwan's parallel ambitions to accede to the CPTPP, there is reasonable chances for the Taiwan membership here.

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# Taiwan's Participation and Self-identity with Regard to International Sports Organizations

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**Tao Tien Hsiung**

## Introduction

Taiwan, an island nation located in East Asia, has long grappled with complex geopolitical challenges. This includes its self-identification and participation in international sports organizations. Taiwan's official name in the international community is the Republic of China (ROC), but in the international sports world, its name is Chinese Taipei (TPE). Although not recognized by most countries, Taiwan's strong economy and highly developed science and technology, coupled with its important strategic position, make it impossible for the international community to ignore this important country or marginalize it. The issue stems from the delicate balance of power between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (PRC), which claims sovereignty over Taiwan. This geopolitical tension has spilled over into the realm of sports, impacting Taiwan's ability to fully engage in the international sporting community.

Many countries or political entities in the world use sports to achieve political goals and demands, and the distribution and ranking of Olympic medals often become a measure of a country's national and economic strength. In recent years, international organizations have become another focus of sports diplomacy. Large sports organizations such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Football Association (Fédération Internationale de Football Association, FIFA), in addition to promoting sports development, also play an important role in international relations.<sup>1</sup>

Taiwan has a population of just over 23 million, but at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, Taiwan ranked 22nd on the medal list with a total of 12 medals. This shows that Taiwan's national strength in addition to its economic development are some of the world's foremost. Moreover, due to frequent diplomatic and political obstacles, sports events and international sports organizations have become opportunities for Taiwan to be seen by the international community. Every major sports event unites the Taiwanese people further and further. During international competitions, the Taiwanese people are always able to put aside differences between political parties and factions and unite to cheer for the national team and players. However, in recent years, the issue of Taiwanese identity has also gradually come to the surface. From a past of using "Chinese Taipei Team" to more and more people instead using "Taiwan Team", the Taiwanese people's self-identity has been changing over time. This chapter delves into the intricacies of Taiwan's participation and self-identification in international sports organizations, exploring the challenges it faces and the strategies it employs to overcome them.

## **Taiwan's Participation in International Sports Organizations**

The roots of Taiwan's sports diplomacy can be traced back to the mid-20th century, following the Chinese Civil War in 1949. The Republic of China, established in mainland China in 1911, was at that time the only legal regime in the world recognized as representing China. It was not only a member of the United Nations (UN), but also one of the five permanent member-states of the UN Security Council. But after the emergence of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), a civil war broke out in mainland China. After the government of the Republic of China was defeated, it went to the island of Taiwan to continue its regime. The large areas that nominally belonged to the Republic of China were eventually inherited by the new government established by the Chinese Communist Party, and then the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established in 1949 to continue to rule mainland China.

Since the establishment of a new government in China in 1949, there have been disputes between the two Chinas regarding the issue of international

representation. At the time, several countries, led by the Soviet Union, believed that the Taiwan government (ROC) should not represent all of China. If China competed under the name of the Republic of China (ROC), athletes from mainland China would not have been able to participate in a variety of different sporting events. At the 1959 International Olympic Committee (IOC) annual meeting, the Republic of China was expelled from the Olympic family. In the end, although the IOC agreed to the government of Taiwan using the name of the Republic of China Olympic Committee to re-join, it had to add “Formosa” or “Taiwan” to participate in the Olympic Games. Therefore, Taiwan used the name “Formosa” in the 1960 Rome Olympic Games, while “Taiwan” was used to compete in the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games and the 1968 Mexico Olympic Games.<sup>2</sup>

In 1971, the government of the Republic of China withdrew from the UN as a means of protest because it did not support the United States’ proposal to allow the PRC to join. Unexpectedly, with this withdrawal, the PRC not only joined the UN, but also replaced the ROC as a permanent member of the UN Security Council. It also inherited all the legal status of the ROC as the representative of China in the international community. After that, under the one China principle, countries around the world began to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC, causing the ROC to become isolated.

Since the 1970s, the ROC has lost its membership in many international sports organizations. Especially after the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) excluded the Republic of China from its membership in 1974. Taiwan not only lost more of its voice in the international arena, but also domestically in the development of various sports. After the withdrawal from the UN in 1971, the international sports community also gradually recognized the PRC instead. The Federal Republic of Germany, however, which was in the world’s liberal camp at the time, allowed the government of Taiwan to compete as the ROC when it hosted the Munich Olympics in 1972. In the 1976 Montreal Olympics, Canada prohibited Taiwan from participating under the name of ROC, and instead only accepted the name “Taiwan.” At that time, Taiwan’s government considered this an undermining act and therefore refused to

participate.<sup>3</sup> It was not until 1981 that Taiwan's government began to face the international situation and realized the importance of sports diplomacy, whereafter it actively reconciled with the International Olympic Committee and signed the "Agreement between the International Olympic Committee, Lausanne and the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee, Taipei" to establish the Olympic Protocol.<sup>4</sup>

The Olympic Protocol not only ensures that Taiwanese athletes can participate in international sports events, but also provides Taiwan with more space in international sports organizations. In 2022, Taiwan had 177 individuals and 224 seats holding important positions in international (including Asian) sports organizations. Compared with only 166 people and 211 seats in 2021, there were 11 more people and 13 more seats in 2022. Distinguished by region, those holding positions in international sports organizations accounted for 71 seats, corresponding to 31.7 percent of the total amount of seats. There are also 153 individuals holding positions in Asian regional sports organizations, accounting for 68.3 percent.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the Olympic Protocol being used in all international sports organizations and events, many non-sports-related international organizations, competitions or conferences also follow the Olympic Protocol and allow Taiwan to participate under the name of "Chinese Taipei (TPE)." Although the Olympic Protocol provides a space for Taiwan to survive in the international sports community, it also makes it more difficult for the Republic of China (Taiwan) to speak out in the international community under the name of "Taiwan." Taiwan has also used other names to participate in various international organizations, such as using "the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu (TPKM)" to join the WTO or using "Fishing Entity of Taiwan" to participate in various international fisheries organizations. In any case, Taiwan cannot use "Republic of China" to participate in the international sporting community. If the government of the ROC had accepted using "Taiwan" as the name for participation in the 1976 Olympics, perhaps the entire situation would be completely different now. However, this process also parallels changes in the self-identity and consciousness of the Taiwanese people over time.



## The Transformation of Taiwan's Consciousness and Self-identity

In recent years, there has been a notable decline of people in Taiwan identifying as Chinese. The Chinese people who fled to Taiwan with the government of the ROC in the early days had extremely deep feelings for the land where they were born and raised. War also separated loved ones from each other. But as times have changed, new generations of Taiwanese people have developed connections and emotions towards the island of Taiwan. With Taiwan's first direct presidential election in 1996, the Taiwanese people began to have the right to determine their own future. In addition, many native Taiwanese people have over the years gradually become the elite of society and their connection with China has gradually faded. Although the ancestors of their grandparents' generation came from mainland China, the vast majority of modern Taiwanese people no longer have Chinese sentiments and are even less likely to identify with and connect with a foreign land.

According to a Pew Research Center survey in 2023, published in 2024, only 3 percent of people in Taiwan consider themselves as primarily Chinese, while 28 percent think of themselves as both Taiwanese and Chinese. The largest share (67 percent) see themselves as primarily Taiwanese with 83 percent of adults under the age of 35 especially likely to identify as solely Taiwanese.<sup>6</sup> Although few people in Taiwan identify as primarily Chinese, there are still 40 percent of people in Taiwan that show an emotional connection to the mainland, which is likely cultural and not political. This kind of emotional attachment to China is more common among older adults. While 46 percent of Taiwanese people at an age over 35 report an emotional connection with China, only 26 percent of those under 35 say the same.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the decline of a Chinese identity, the government of the PRC keeps using Chinese nationalism and cultural appeal to draw Taiwan closer to the mainland. Furthermore, Beijing has tried very hard to influence elections in Taiwan and make Taiwanese voters choose the party that is closer to Beijing. However, this has backfired by pushing Taiwan further away. The Taiwanese people are searching for an alternative identity to demonstrate their difference to the PRC.

In a 2018 referendum, there was a question on the ballot concerning representation in international sports games. The question was “do you agree to the use of “Taiwan” when participating in all international sport competitions, including the upcoming 2020 Tokyo Olympics?” The proposal was rejected by 54.8 percent of voters. This surprising result does not show that Taiwanese people have a strong sense of identification with Chinese Taipei, but instead reflects the Taiwanese people’s lack of concern about this issue. Many Taiwanese athletes have also been manipulated by malicious actors to promote false information on the internet, telling the public that insisting on competing under the name “Taiwan” would lead to the total exclusion of Taiwanese athletes from the Olympics and all other sports events, and that the efforts of Taiwanese athletes will be in vain. Ultimately, the 2018 referendum result may also reflect that for the majority, it is most important that Taiwan competes rather than risks exclusion from international sporting events.

## Conclusion

Thanks to the efforts of the Taiwanese government in recent years, Taiwan’s name has become more and more widely known, and it has become more and more separated from the “Republic of China.” Countries around the world are also more able to clearly distinguish the difference between the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of China, Taiwan. However, although more and more Taiwanese people self-identify as Taiwanese rather than Chinese, it does not mean that the PRC’s suppression of the Taiwanese regime will gradually lessen. On the contrary, after the 2024 presidential election, the Chinese Communist Party’s use of force to intimidate Taiwan and its cognitive manipulation are increasing day by day. This includes the 22nd Asian U20 Men’s Volleyball Championship in 2024, which was originally going to be held in Taiwan. It was suddenly canceled and instead moved to Indonesia. According to reports in Iran, this was because China intervened and said that if it was held in Taiwan, they would not be able to send a delegation to Taiwan to compete. Therefore, the Asian Volleyball Federation decided to cancel Taiwan’s hosting of the event.<sup>8</sup>

Taiwan's participation and self-identification in international sports organizations remains a contentious issue shaped by geopolitical tensions and diplomatic maneuvering. Despite facing numerous challenges, Taiwan continues to assert its presence in the global sports community and uphold its national identity through sports diplomacy. By leveraging diplomatic channels, engaging in sports exchanges, and advocating for its rights, Taiwan strives to overcome the obstacles posed by the "one China principle" and secure its rightful place in the international sporting arena. As Taiwan forges ahead on its quest for athletic recognition, the world watches closely, recognizing the importance of sports as a vehicle for promoting peace, understanding, and mutual respect among nations.

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