


RESEARCH ARTICLE

Political scientists' Track II diplomacy: the International Political Science Association and Cross-Strait relations

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Abstract

The International Political Science Association (IPSA) is a unique case against the common perception that Beijing has the upper hand when the two regimes by the Taiwan Strait contest to join international (non-governmental) organisations. Beijing relentlessly pushes international organisations to acknowledge the One China principle; Taipei also relentlessly denies this principle while it seeks to join. In the 1980s, Chinese and Taiwanese political scientists, representing their own regimes, applied Track II diplomacy to compete over membership of this organisation. IPSA membership mattered to both regimes and their political scientists. After many years of Track II competition, The Chinese Association of Political Science in Taipei became a “collective” member without compromising on how to name itself in April 1989. As a result, Beijing’s counterpart withdrew from the IPSA. This situation has now persisted for over thirty years. The IPSA case not only challenges the current understanding of Cross-Strait relations but also throws light on the theoretical understanding of Track II diplomacy.

Keywords: China; Cross-Strait relations; International Political Science Association; One China principle; Taiwan; The Chinese Association of Political Science; Track II diplomacy

Introduction

The two China regimes either wise of the Taiwan Strait often trouble international society. One is the People’s Republic of China. The other is Taiwan, officially called the Republic of China. The current state of their relations, also known as Cross-Strait relations – to a degree, comparable to West and East Germany, North and South Korea, and North and South Vietnam – can be traced back to the Cold War (Bush 2013, pp. 9–10; Cohen 2013, pp. 22–78; Lin 2016; Su 2009, p. 16). Germany was unified peacefully, whereas Vietnam was by force. Both Seoul and Pyongyang have entered the UN and acquired many countries’ dual recognition. Determining Taiwan’s status vis-à-vis the PRC, on the other hand, is a major source of tension in international society. Beijing and Taipei relentlessly dispute how to address Taiwan. The former sees Taiwan as a breakaway territory with strict adherence to the so-called One China principle; it tolerates no connotation that might undermine its sovereign claim over this self-ruled island. The latter’s constitution, passed in Nanjing in 1947, suggests its ownership over the Chinese mainland, which remains controversial in domestic politics (Fell 2018, pp. 19–21, 57–58). Taipei wants to maintain its status and avoid any expression complying with Beijing’s sovereign claim. The two regimes have been playing out the nomenclature contests for decades. In short, Cross-Strait relations are one of the most delicate issues in the globe.

At large, Beijing has gained the upper hand in the nomenclature contests since the 1970s. As Washington reached out to Beijing to counter Moscow, Beijing’s strategic importance was elevated in geopolitics (Cohen 2013, pp. 174–208; Vogel 2013, pp. 311–48). Beijing not only entered the UN at

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the cost of Taipei's seat in 1971 but also established official ties with Washington in 1978. Meanwhile, more and more countries chose to diplomatically recognise Beijing instead of Taipei. Taipei's status turned upside down. Since then, it has struggled to establish semi-official ties with other countries and to seek parallel participation and dual recognition in international society (Lin 2021, pp. 434–40; Taylor 2000, p. 363).

Regarding international (non-governmental) organisations, Taipei's tactics can be regarded as Track II diplomacy. In theory, Track II diplomacy is to communicate with foreign countries or organisations through unconventional channels. The intermediaries can be academics, business people, religious leaders, retired officials, or other civilian agents. Track II diplomacy, facilitating rather than replacing, is complementary to Track I, which is handled by formally authorised delegates (Davidson and Montville 1981; Jones 2015). The primary purpose of Track II diplomacy is for de-escalation and conflict resolution (e.g., Diamond and McDonald 1996; Kaye 2007). Because significant variation exists among the cases of Track II diplomacy, researchers are inclined to draw theoretical propositions from case studies (e.g., Agha *et al.* 2003; Jones 2015; Kaye 2007).

Track II diplomacy is intricate in Cross-Strait relations. Beijing combines Track I and II diplomacy to impose the One China principle globally, eager to demonstrate that Taiwan belongs to the PRC. As for Taipei, Track II diplomacy is vital since Track I is blocked by Beijing. Taipei sees Track II diplomacy as the necessary means to enhance international visibility and create precedents showing that the two regimes by the strait are separate and equal. Taipei keeps flexibility in nomenclature when negotiating to join international organisations. Putting it another way, track II diplomacy may intensify their tension instead. However, scholars have tended to overlook such scenarios. In this article, I study one case of Beijing and Taipei's Track II contests to explore the theoretical implication underneath.

The case selected is an international non-governmental body: the International Political Science Association (IPSA). To be sure, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is perhaps the most widely known case in this category. Since the IOC already recognised China and acknowledged the One China principle, Taiwan had to accept the use of "Chinese Taipei" as a compromise in the early 1980s (Chan 1985; Huang and Wang 2013; Yu 2008).¹ It is the so-called Olympic formula, which is also applied to other international sporting organisations. In the same period, Chinese and Taiwanese political scientists, representing their respective regimes, applied Track II diplomacy to compete over the IPSA collective membership. After many years of Track II competition, Taipei's association became a full member without compromising on how to name itself in April 1989. Taipei sought parallel participation and dual recognition in the IOC as well as the IPSA when Beijing's geopolitical rise reshaped Cross-Strait relations. Yet the results were different. In this regard, the IPSA is a unique case against such a common perception that Beijing usually has the upper hand while Taipei seeks to join international organisations. This case has been over thirty years. And it has been understudied. Neither has its theoretical implication per Track II diplomacy. Conducting archival research, I study the unpublished documents at Montreal's IPSA headquarters and New Taipei City's Academia Historica to reconstruct Chinese and Taiwanese political scientists' Track II diplomacy to compete over the IPSA membership. By doing it, I aim to challenge the current understanding of Cross-Strait relations and offer an alternative theoretical account of Track II diplomacy.

Why does the IPSA matter?

The IPSA has a history of more than seventy years. It was born in 1949 under the auspices of the UNESCO Department of Social Sciences (Boncourt 2009, pp. 11–19; Coakley and Trent 2000, pp. 14–18). Immediately after World War II, a group of sociologists, political scientists, and other specialists affiliated with this department intentionally searched for an academic way of promoting democratic values (Selcer 2009, p. 309; Wisselgren 2017). As Walter Sharp says, UNESCO is "an instrument for helping to reconcile at some future time conflicting East-West ideologies, or for defending and

¹Chinese Taipei is translated into *Zhonghua Taibei* 中華台北 in Taiwan but *Zhongguo Taibei* 中国台北 in China. *Zhonghua* is more cultural, whereas *Zhongguo* indicates the PRC.

consolidating the values of the non-Soviet world here and now, or possibly both” (1951, p. 249). Several international disciplinary societies were founded in response to such ideological thinking during the Cold War. The IPSA was one of them.

The steady growth of the IPSA can be illustrated with numbers. It has three categories of membership: collective, institutional, and individual. Collective and individual memberships were set up from the beginning. Firstly, there were merely four collective members in 1949: the American Political Science Association, Canadian Political Science Association, French Political Science Association, and Indian Political Science Association (Boncourt 2009, p. 15; Coakley and Trent 2000, pp. 40–44). Other national associations joined the IPSA in the later decades. There are now fifty-nine collective members (IPSA 2023, p. 9). Secondly, the number of individual members fluctuates in a broader range. Fifty-two experts initially registered as individual members. The size of individual members greatly expanded after the late 1970s (Coakley and Trent 2000, pp. 50–51). The number dropped from 3,527 to 2,235 in 2020 “due to the Covid-19 pandemic.” It then climbed to the record-breaking number of 4,165 in mid-2023 (IPSA 2023, p. 6). Thirdly, institutional membership is a category that has been newly introduced in recent years. Now, seventy-four libraries and organisations subscribe to it (IPSA 2023, p. 9). In terms of membership subscriptions, the size of the IPSA has significantly expanded since its birth. Today, it covers members from every part of the world. Its growth reflects the worldwide development of political science in the second half of the twentieth century.

As far as I am concerned here, the IPSA collective membership makes itself haunted by the One China principle. Beijing has The Chinese Association of Political Science (*Zhongguo Zhengzhi Xuehui* 中国政治学会), which has withdrawn from the IPSA for over thirty years. Taiwanese political scientists are now collectively represented by The Chinese Association of Political Science, Taipei (*Zhongguo Zhengzhi Xuehui* 中國政治學會), which has been an IPSA collective member since April 1989. It is unusual that Taipei can join an international organisation – having a close affinity with UNESCO – without compromising on how to name itself. According to the IPSA constitution, “Article 7: Collective members shall consist of national (and regional) associations by the Executive Committee as being representative of political science in their respective countries (or regions).” “Article 8: There shall normally be only one collective member from a country, but if, in any country, two or more eligible groups are candidates for collective membership, the Executive Committee, at its discretion, may seek the establishment of a joint committee to which collective membership may be granted, or it may admit one or more of the groups as collective members” (IPSA 2021, p. 2). In principle, the IPSA policy is to “encourage the formation of a common organisation or representative when two associations from the same country ... apply for collective member status.” In practice, the IPSA stays pragmatic. When the Hallstein doctrine was abolished, the IPSA agreed West and East Germany to have their own collective members in the early 1970s. Likewise, when confronted by “internal divisions in Belgium,” the IPSA dealt “separately with two associations recognised as representatives of the two major communities within the country.” The Belgian Institute of Political Science (l’Institut Belge de Science Politique) and the Flemish Political Science Association became the IPSA collective members in the late 1970s (Coakley and Trent 2000, p. 39, 42–46). In short, the IPAS always wants to include as many collective members as possible.

Still, the IPSA faced the challenge of Cross-Strait relations in the 1980s. When Taipei tried to reach the IPSA through Track II channels, Taiwanese political scientists studied an older version of its constitution. There was a small but critical difference between the wording of the current version and the old one, which turned the IPSA into a Track II battleground of Chinese and Taiwanese political scientists. The old version stipulated, “Article 7: Collective members shall consist of national (and regional) associations **recognized** [emphasised by the author] by the Executive Committee as being representative of political science in their respective countries (or regions).”² “Recognized” was the very

²The IPSA constitution, September 1964. File number: 1280032980212A. Academia Historica, New Taipei City. The word “recognized” still appeared in Article 7 in the 1980s; for example, John Trent to Chen Weidian, 16 August 1983. National Association Box 1. IPSA Archives, Montreal.

difference. Beijing relentlessly reiterated the One China principle – comparable to the Hallstein doctrine – which remains unchanged today. Likewise, Taipei also relentlessly searched for parallel participation and dual recognition, endeavouring to prove itself a separate regime not belonging to the PRC, which remains unchanged today. In the 1980s, both regimes wanted the IPSA to recognise their own associations of political science. Both associations used *Zhongguo* “China or Chinese” to name themselves. They were the national societies in their respective territories, had close relationships with their respective governments, and simultaneously aimed at the IPSA collective membership. Hence, the IPSA recognition was at stake when both Beijing and Taipei approached it through Track II channels. Which association (and its regime) should be recognised? Was it possible to recognise both of them? What was Taiwan’s status vis-à-vis the PRC? These political questions troubled the IPSA in the 1980s.

Beijing’s Track II engagement with the IPSA

The PRC and political science

Chinese political scientists’ Track II diplomacy is predetermined by Beijing’s relationship with this discipline. Only in the early 1980s did Beijing and the IPSA begin to contact each other through Track II channels (Lin 2001, p. 108). To be sure, political science had evolved into a full-fledged discipline prior to the PRC’s birth in 1949 (Wang and Pan 2005, pp. 417–22). This discipline was institutionalised in higher education. Scholars obtaining doctoral degrees overseas returned to teach and conduct research in universities and colleges. The first national society, The Chinese Association of Political Science, was created for professional advancement. This association, together with the Chinese Nationalist Party (also known as the Kuomintang, KMT), moved to Taipei after 1949 (Han 1982, p. 6; Wei 1992, pp. 20–21). On the mainland, political science came across the Chinese Communist Party’s ideology during Mao Zedong’s era. It was seen as a pseudo-discipline serving Western imperialists’ interests. Political science departments were abolished, and political scientists were reassigned to teach Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (Fu 1991, pp. 228–33; Zhao 1984, pp. 745–49). As Beijing negated the legitimacy of political science, the Track II engagement with the IPSA was impossible.

The situation changed during Deng Xiaoping’s era. On 30 March 1979, he gave a speech at the conference that focused on the theoretical principles for future tasks. He not only proclaimed that CCP comrades must insist on pursuing the “four modernisations” (*sige xiandaihua* 四个现代化), but he also redressed the importance of political science as a discipline in China. He added:

For many years we have neglected the study of political science, law, sociology and world politics, and now we must hurry to make up our deficiencies in these subjects. ... Now we should admit that we also lag behind in our study of the social sciences, insofar as they are comparable in China and abroad. Our level is very low ... So our ideological and theoretical workers must make up their minds to catch up (1995, p. 188).

His remarks de-ideologised Chinese political scientists. Political science was no longer a false ideology. Chinese political scientists were encouraged to catch up with foreign academics. They were eager to learn new theories to reassess Beijing’s ongoing reform. In addition, political science departments were set up again in universities and colleges. Monographs, textbooks, and references were published. Foreign titles were translated. Students were sent to study abroad. Exchange programmes were started between China and foreign countries (Wang and Pan 2005, pp. 423–26, 461–69). Supporting the growth of political science with state power was manifested in the Sixth Five-Year Plan (Renmin chubanshe 1983, p. 128; Zhengzhixue yanjiu 1985a, p. 80). With Deng’s endorsement, political science in China was re-established as a legitimate discipline. Catching up with foreign theorists was backed by the party-state apparatus and became the primary goal of Chinese political scientists in this period. The Track II engagement with the IPSA accordingly became desirable.

Contacting the IPSA

The above-mentioned changes led to the birth of Beijing's association of political science in December 1980. The new association aimed to join the IPSA. In November – the month before its official commencement – this association formally applied for the IPSA collective membership. Secretary-General Chen Weidian expressed to IPSA Secretary-General John Trent that Chinese political scientists were now “making an active study of whatever way appropriate for becoming a formal member of IPSA and all the relevant problems.”³

One of the problems, perhaps the most urgent, was how to define Taiwan's status in relation to the One China principle. As I will discuss in detail in the next section, Taipei's association also applied for the IPSA collective membership in the same period. Beijing and Taipei competed over the IPSA recognition. For Beijing, if both could join the IPSA, there would be two collective members called *Zhongguo*. This situation would be an unacceptable precedent for two Chinas and undermine the One China principle. Moreover, Beijing's association had limited autonomy. It was a “people's academic society under the leadership of the party and the government” (Zhang 2001, p. 50). It was formed to prepare a new political science institute at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Fu 1991, p. 236). The Chinese Academy was a governmentally sponsored research syndicate to advise policy-making (Sleeboom-Faulkner 2007). Before pursuing the IPSA collective membership, it received the State Council's approval in September 1981 (Xu 2001, p. 124). Putting it another way, Beijing's association was a part of China's party-state apparatus. When Chinese political scientists negotiated to join the IPSA, carrying out Beijing's Track II diplomacy, they must strictly obey the One China principle.

In fact, the IPSA already anticipated that Beijing's membership application would be politically intricate. In July 1980, the IPSA received a letter from UNESCO demanding it not to establish links with “the Chiang [Kai-shek] clique and illegally usurping the name of China.”⁴ Trent replied, “[T]he International Political Science Association has no tie whatsoever with the Political Science Community in Taiwan,” and “while our association has not taken any formal positions on the question, there are many members who regret the fact that UNESCO feels that it must be so aggressively immerst [immersed] in such a political issue ...”⁵ By then, Beijing's association was still a few months away from formal commencement. The PRC, nevertheless, wanted to impose the One China principle on the IPSA and block Taiwanese political scientists' collective representation from the UN position that it had secured in 1971.

Because of sensitivity, Beijing's and Taipei's membership applications were on the agenda at the IPSA executive meeting in March 1982. Mushakoji Kinhide suggested, “We should leave things as they are for the moment. We should encourage them to adopt the parallel solution, but we cannot impose that solution on them. The matter must be decided by them.” Daniel Frei seconded, “We should not press for a solution now. We should not act to exclude either of the associations.”⁶ The IPSA intended to include both on the condition that the two associations could find an agreement determining Taiwan's status vis-à-vis the PRC. However, there was no official or semi-official channel across the strait. In 1979, Chiang Ching-kou initiated the “three no's” (*san bu zhengce* 三不政策) – “no contact, no negotiation, and no compromise” – to respond to Beijing's call for peaceful unification (Lin 2021, pp. 434–37; Taylor 2000, pp. 343–44). Direct negotiation between Chinese and Taiwanese political scientists was impracticable. The IPSA chose to step in, negotiating with the two associations parallelly. It sent delegates to visit each party to “discuss various possibilities for the participation of the two political science communities.”⁷

³Chen Weidian to Trent, 2 May 1983. National Association Box 1. IPSA Archives.

⁴UNESCO to the IPSA, 9 July 1980. National Association Box 1. IPSA Archives.

⁵Trent to UNESCO, 18 August 1980. National Association Box 1. IPSA Archives.

⁶Minutes: Executive Committee meeting, Tokyo, 27–28 March 1982. National Association Box 1. IPSA Archives.

⁷Ibid.

In the same meeting in March 1982, Mushakoji also reported that he asked Chinese political scientists to “accept the formula for a parallel participation of the two associations – one called China and the other Taiwan like other scientific associations.” Nonetheless, he was informed that Beijing’s association would not accept “parallel participation” and only allow Taiwanese political scientists to be individual members.⁸ In July 1983, Chen Weidian reiterated Chinese political scientists’ dogged stance:

It is known to all that there is only one China in the world, that is, the People’s Republic of China. Taiwan is an inseparable part of China. We are opposed to any emergence of a situation of “Two Chinas” or “One China one Taiwan” ... According to the Regulations of IPSA, it is CAPS [Beijing] which should be the only collective member representing China. The Political Science Association in Taiwan which is a part of China should not be taken to as a collective member of IPSA, otherwise, a “Two Chinas” situation would be created.⁹

Chen further proposed how to name Taipei’s association.

If any political science academic institution of China’s Taiwan wants to join IPSA as a[n] associate member, its title can only be “the Political Science Association of Taiwan, China.” Neither “The Republic of China”; nor merely “Taiwan” should be used in its title instead of “Taiwan, China.”¹⁰

Obstructing Taipei’s membership application, Beijing continued to compel the IPSA to acknowledge the One China principle through Track I and II channels. This principle was a red line that Chinese political scientists must guard.

Even though, the IPSA still wanted to strike a deal with Beijing’s association. IPSA President Klaus von Beyme expressed to it that “... to carry on the negotiations with the two Chinese associations [Beijing’s and Taipei’s] ... our basic objective is to obtain the broadest possible representation of Chinese political scientists in the IPSA ...”¹¹ He also said, “we are eager to move ahead with the negotiations. In particular, we would very much like to obtain a decision from the April 1984 meeting of our Executive Committee so that we could be sure of the participation of Chinese scholars in the World Congress in Paris in July 1985.”¹² The IPSA wanted to settle an agreement with Chinese political scientists as soon as possible, hoping that Beijing’s and Taipei’s associations could both attend the coming IPSA event. Seemingly, von Beyme’s words signalled that the IPSA was slightly diverted from the position made in 1982’s executive meeting.

David Easton’s defence

Then, David Easton played a crucial role in pushing the IPSA further toward Beijing. In mid-1983, he travelled to China and met “a great many persons who called themselves professional political scientists, of many ranks, ages, and statuses.”¹³ Writing to von Beyme after his trip, Easton’s remark was extraordinarily positive. He noted:

In general, wherever I went there was a deep interest in what I had to say, a high respect for scholarship, much discussion, open scholarly criticism ... and an obvious eagerness to know and understand what has been going on in the last few decades in the West in the area of the social

⁸Ibid.

⁹Chen to Trent, 19 July 1983. National Association Box 1. IPSA Archives.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Von Beyme to Chang Youyu, 24 November 1983. National Association Box 1. IPSA Archives.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Easton to von Beyme, 26 October 1983. National Association Box 1. IPSA Archives.

sciences. I have never seen a country whose scholars are more parched for knowledge and understanding.¹⁴

China demonstrated a strong commitment to re-establishing political science during Deng's era. Easton anticipated that "in due course, the numbers of people involved in the professional study of politics will be considerable."¹⁵ Not only was he impressed by the openness of political science, but he was also convinced that such a trend of disciplinary growth would persist in China. Easton's optimistic observation led him to the conclusion that the IPSA needed to help Chinese political scientists advance their discipline.

Easton ascertained that the IPSA inclusion of Beijing was mutually beneficial. He explained:

Political scientists in the rest of the world will have much to learn from interaction with our Chinese colleagues and, hopefully, from the inclusion of China itself as another major and different kind of country in our comparative research base. Chinese political scientists will themselves have much to gain from their association with their counterparts in the international sphere.¹⁶

In comparative politics, "a new wave of scholarship emerg[ed] in the 1980s which stressed the need to return to the study of institutions and to restore primacy to an analysis of 'the state'" (Mair 1996, p. 315). The state was treated as a unitary actor, and its regime type was a key variable in policy-making. China's regime type was distinct from liberal democracies in the West. Studying China's policy-making was to develop the research of comparative politics further. In other words, Chinese political scientists' collective representation in the IPSA was a way of enhancing the understanding of China as a subject matter in comparative politics. In short, this part of Easton's justification was for the sake of knowledge.

On the other hand, Easton's justification was political too. China's economic and governmental reforms continued in the mid-1980s. There were mixed signs of democratic transition (Gewirtz 2022; Goldman 1994). It seemed that Deng was willing to undertake democratisation to a certain degree. Samuel Huntington articulated, "Where democracy is strong, political science is strong; where democracy is weak, political science is weak." "The centralized authoritarianism of the Chinese political system has, however, had its correlate in the undeveloped state of Chinese political science" (1988, pp. 7–8). If political science could thrive in China, the prospect of democratic transition could be enhanced. Easton elaborated on the causality between political science and democracy. He argued:

Thus, the establishment of democratic institutions helps to foster a political and cultural climate more conducive to the emergence of political science as a discipline, and the discipline itself can contribute to the institution and further evolution of democracy in a given country. This is because political science as a discipline, however defined, seems most able to flourish in an environment of liberal discussion and criticism, limited state control, and autonomous professional development. Professional political scientists, in turn, are more likely to favor or actively promote regimes that foster such conditions. (Easton *et al.* 1995, p. 19)

Huntington's and Easton's viewpoints reflected why political science was deemed indispensable to China. The steady growth of this discipline had the potential to enhance China's prospect of democratic transition. In other words, Chinese political scientists' Track II engagement was not only for academic development but also for democratic transition.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

Although Easton understood the sensitivity of “the complications that are involved in arranging for representation in IPSA for our colleagues in both the People’s Republic of China and Taiwan,” he reiterated, “It would be unfortunate if, at the present time, we were to take steps that would make it very difficult, if not impossible, for our colleagues in the People’s Republic of China to have normal, professional relationships with IPSA at any time in the future.”¹⁷ The IPSA planned to include both Beijing’s and Taipei’s associations, expanding its global influence. Political science was believed to flourish in China. So was its sociopolitical impact there. After weighing the circumstance, sooner Track II interconnection with China, to Easton’s mind, deserved a higher priority.

The IPSA conceded after Easton’s letter. Von Beyme and Trent made an agreement with Chinese political scientists in Beijing in February 1984 (*Zhengzhixue yanjiu* 1986, p. 78). Two months later, the IPSA granted collective membership to Beijing’s association. Furthermore, the IPSA accepted the conditions proposed by Chen Weidian. Taipei’s association could only be an affiliate member. It was not allowed to use its original title and had to be renamed “The Chinese Taiwan Political Science Association.” “No ‘Republic of China’ designation should be allowed to appear at any of the IPSA meetings, or in any of the IPSA documents and materials ... nor should the ‘Taiwan’ designation be used separately ...” In addition, Taiwanese political scientists would not be “entitled to being elected to the IPSA Executive Committee.”¹⁸ The IPSA complied with the One China principle; Taiwan was treated as a part of the PRC. It also offered travel grants to the Chinese delegates who were going to attend the World Congress in Paris, including Yan Jiaqi and Wang Huning.¹⁹ In July 1985, Beijing’s association enjoyed a historical appearance as China’s only rightful representative at the congress (*Zhengzhixue yanjiu* 1985b). Until now, Chinese political scientists’ Track II diplomacy was successful. This nomenclature contest, nonetheless, was not yet concluded, and the One China principle continued to trouble the IPSA in the second half of the 1980s.

Taipei’s Track II engagement with the IPSA

Before the 1980s

As discussed in the previous section, about three years of Chinese political scientists’ Track II diplomacy made the IPSA accept their collective representation and acknowledge the One China principle. In fact, Taipei’s association filed its membership application earlier than Beijing’s counterpart. In 1977, Han Lih-wu, a retired governmental official who chaired Taipei’s association, wrote to Trent, “As ... the President of the Political Science Association of the Republic of China, may I inquire when the application of my Association for national membership will be discussed?”²⁰ In 1979, Frei repeated to Trent, “I very much regretted our decision not to accept the request for membership of our Taiwanese colleagues.”²¹ In 1981, Lien Chan, Han’s successor, asked again, “[W]e have indicated our desire to adhere to IPSA for quite some time. If you wish, my colleagues and I would like to explore with you a feasible approach to the solution of problems involved.”²² Taipei’s association wanted to obtain the IPSA collective membership to prove Taiwan’s separate and equal status vis-à-vis the PRC. Meanwhile, Taipei’s association already sensed that some problems existed and the IPSA was inclined to defer the membership application. The problems, to a degree, came from Beijing’s Track I and II campaign of the One China principle.

To be clear, Taipei’s association has a longer history than Beijing’s, and its historical development is intertwined with the KMT. While the KMT still governed the Chinese mainland and Taiwan was

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸The bold words are emphasised by the author. Chen to Trent, 20 November 1983. National Box 1. IPSA Archives.

¹⁹Zhang Youyu to Trent, 22 April 1985. National Box 1. IPSA Archives. Yan lived in exile after the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown. Wang is now a member of the CCP Politburo Standing Committee.

²⁰Han to Trent, 3 May 1977. National Association Box 1. IPSA Archives.

²¹Frei to Trent, 24 September 1979. National Association Box 1. IPSA Archives.

²²Lien to Trent, 24 December 1981. National Association Box 1. IPSA Archives. Lien was Taiwan’s Vice President from 1996 to 2000.

under Japan's colonial rule, the young Han initiated liaising with Hsiao Kung-chuan, Tsiang Ting-fu, and other political scientists to create a national society for their discipline. In Nanjing in 1932, they founded The Chinese Association of Political Science (Han 1990, pp. 10–11). The association was the first of its kind dedicated to this discipline on the Chinese mainland in modern times. Its head office moved from Nanjing to Chongqing when Japan launched a full-scale invasion in the late 1930s. It returned to Nanjing after World War II (Wei 1992, p. 22). In its early years, Han and Wang Shih-chieh were in charge of its business. The two scholars were Chiang Kai-shek's advisers at the same time. Their political positions made this association establish a close affinity with the KMT government (Feng 2024). Analogous to Beijing's counterpart, Taipei's association was also expected to support the KMT politically.

After the CCP triumphed over the civil war and founded the PRC in 1949, the association moved to Taiwan with the KMT. Although the political connections were retained, the association became less active due to the lack of funding (Chang 1975, p. 1). It initially learnt about the IPSA in the 1960s. As it aimed to join the IPSA, this association became active. One of the officers recalled:

A few years ago, UNESCO once asked the cultural attaché at our embassy in France and our representative to UNESCO to contact us to join the IPSA. At that time, we knew so little about this organisation that our membership application yielded no result after years. In 1964, as an individual member, I went to the Sixth IPSA World Congress in Geneva. ... During the congress, I had several conversations with Secretary-General Dr Serge Hurtig. According to Hurtig, our association is welcome to apply to join the IPSA. Regarding the procedure for [collective] membership application, the following two conditions must be met: (A) a list of members, and (B) a scholarly periodical. (Tu 1970, p. 146)

In the 1960s, Taipei, exclusively representing China's sovereignty, was still a member state of the UN. On the other hand, political science was deemed reactionary on the Chinese mainland. It was not surprising that UNESCO informed Taiwanese political scientists to reach out to the IPSA and apply for collective membership. In terms of the second condition, publishing a scholarly periodical was an objective declared by Han and other members in the early 1930s (Wei 1992, p. 3). But Taipei's association never had one. Now, Taiwanese political scientists needed to do it to meet this condition. As a result, *Zhengzhi xuebao* 政治學報 (*Political Science Review*) came into existence in 1970.²³ The motivation was not only for the sake of knowledge. This new periodical was to show that Taipei's association was eligible for the IPSA collective membership.

Nevertheless, running a scholarly periodical was by no means a guarantee, for the IPSA consideration was not purely academic either. The global balance of power was reshaped in the 1970s. The situation was different from the previous decade. Beijing replaced Taipei to enter the UN. It began to play a vital role in Washington's grand strategy of countering Moscow. The US-China rapprochement accelerated (Cohen 2013, pp. 174–208). Cross-Strait relations were tipped. Beijing's status improved at the cost of Taipei's. The former endeavoured to impose the One China principle transnationally through Track I and II channels. Hence, the latter's Track II engagement with the IPSA was affected, and the membership application was delayed.

Searching for parallel participation and dual recognition

For Taipei's association, acquiring the IPSA collective membership was even more challenging in the 1980s, as there was a rival with an identical name appearing in Beijing. Taiwanese political scientists understood that it was unrealistic to exclude the collective representation of Chinese political scientists

²³After Beijing's association was born, it also published two periodicals for the same purpose. The first was *Zhengzhi yu zhengzhi kexue* 政治与政治科学 (*Politics and Political Science*). It was later succeeded by *Zhengzhixue yanjiu* 政治学研究 (known as *The CASS Journal of Political Science* in English).

in the IPSA. Instead, they sought parallel participation and dual recognition. In this decade, this pragmatic strategy became increasingly important to Taipei. Taipei shifted from Chiang Kai-shek's Hallstein doctrine to this pragmatic strategy during his successor Chiang Ching-kuo's presidency. Taipei no longer demanded other countries and international organisations to choose either Taipei or Beijing exclusively (Lin 2021, pp. 438–40; Taylor 2000, p. 363). Meanwhile, Taipei was ready to compromise on how to name itself, showing flexibility whenever necessary in exchange for sustaining external relationships and joining international organisations. For example, the Olympic formula was made in this period. Yet compromises did not mean without bottom lines. Taipei searched not only for equal footing but also for a modified name without suggesting that Taiwan belonged to the PRC. While Taiwanese political scientists approached the IPSA through Track II channels, they followed this pragmatic strategy.

As early as January 1982, Frei and Karl Deutsch assisted Taiwanese political scientists in passing a potential solution on to the IPSA.²⁴ This solution was derived from the precedents made by the members of the International Council of Scientific Unions. One of them was the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, which recognised both the “Chinese Chemical Society” and the “Chinese Chemical Society located in Taipei, China,” effective from 1 January 1980.²⁵ Frei was in favour of these precedents. He elaborated:

As you [Trent] know, international associations active in the natural sciences have found an easy way out of the dilemma by accepting both Chinese Associations and by carefully avoiding any indication that the Association located in Taipei represents the whole China. This model is now widely used in associations within ICSU ... as a UNESCO sub-structure ... Therefore, seen from the UNESCO perspective, I do not see any obstacle for us to apply the same solution.²⁶

So was Deutsch. He expounded:

IPSA should try to adopt ... the model of the Scientific Union within the International Council of Scientific Union[s] ... These organizations operate under UNESCO-Auspices ... They have admitted the Chinese Chemical Society (... in Beijing) and at the same time also something called the “Chemical Society located in Taipei.” Both Chinese sides have appro[p]riate agreements which appear to sa[v]e everybody['] face.²⁷

To be specific, Taiwanese political scientists' preference, namely what Frei and Deutsch lobbied for, was to pinpoint the location immediately after the formal name. The formulas could be:

- (1) The Chinese Association of Political Science (Taipei)
The Chinese Association of Political Science (Beijing)
- (2) The Chinese Association of Political Science (Taiwan)
The Chinese Association of Political Science (Mainland)
- (3) The Chinese Association of Political Science located in Taipei
The Chinese Association of Political Science located in Beijing²⁸

These formulas carried the same meaning: Taipei's association was parallel with Beijing's counterpart, indicating that their regimes were separate and equal. Why did Taiwanese political scientists choose to use “Chinese” instead of “Taiwanese”? Chinese nationalism, forged by the KMT, was still predominant

²⁴Frei to Trent, 18 January 1982; Deutsch to Trent, 27 January 1982. National Association Box 1. IPSA Archives.

²⁵The IUPAC agreement, unknown date. File number: 1280032980212A. Academia Historica.

²⁶Frei to Trent, 18 January 1982. National Association Box 1. IPSA Archives.

²⁷Deutsch to Trent 27, January 1982. National Association Box 1. IPSA Archives.

²⁸From: Shaw Yu-ming; To: Members of the Executive Committee of IPSA; Re: The membership question of the CAPS (Taipei) in IPSA, 20 July 1985. National Association Box 1. IPSA Archives.

in Taiwan in the 1980s (Fell 2018, pp. 24–26). These formulas were rooted in the KMT variant of Chinese nationalism. Given that the IPSA once received Beijing's pressure via UNESCO, Taiwanese political scientists believed that referring to the precedents of the ICSU, which was also supported by UNESCO, might help the IPSA circumvent the perceived obstacles.

However, international politics caused the IPSA to be caught in a dilemma. Also in January 1982, Frei observed some IPSA officials' indecisiveness. "[Mushakoji] pointed at Japanese-PRC relations which he says are rapidly evolving." "The Americans are also inclined to avoid any steps which might generate misunderstandings on the part of Mainland China." "[T]he way scholars from Taiwan are treated since 1971 is clearly unacceptable and hypocritical."²⁹ In the 1970s, Beijing's status became more and more important in the global balance of power. The IPSA needed to take this geopolitical shift into consideration while it expanded transnationally. Although the IPSA wanted Beijing and Taipei to join together, its position discreetly altered. In April 1983, William Riker noticed, "[T]he IPSA officials seem to believe that the issue of nomenclature cannot be settled until there is an association in the People's Republic. ... I should think something like 'Association for Political Science in the Republic of China (Taipei)' would circumvent all the difficulties."³⁰ Riker continued to suggest:

[I]f they [the IPSA officials] then refused, we would know that it is indeed political hostility to the Republic of China that is slowing up your application. Up to now the pretense has been presented as one of bureaucratic formalities. ... And if they revealed hostility, then we could attack them as unscholarly. Such an attack would, I believe, almost certainly result in the admission of the CPSA [Taipei] into IPSA.³¹

Taiwanese political scientists adopted Riker's bold suggestion and requested the IPSA to use the "Association for Political Science in the Republic of China (Taipei)" as its name.³²

Intriguingly, von Beyme tailored Taiwanese political scientists' statement. He, without specifying their preference, asserted that they were willing to change the title of Taipei's association. Von Beyme conveyed such a misleading interpretation to Beijing's association:

We hope there is some possibility for movement and agreement by all concerned. For instance, we have had a letter from the Association in Taipei stating that they are willing to change the name of their Association, although they have not yet used exactly the same formula you have proposed.³³

Meanwhile, he rejected Taiwanese political scientists' request. He said:

It may be helpful at this time, if I inform you that the Association in Beijing has written us to say that the name they would prefer would be as in ICSU, that is the "Political Science Association of Taiwan, China" and that neither "The Republic of China" nor merely "Taiwan" should be used instead of "Taiwan, China." Also, the Chinese Association of Political Science [Beijing] is only proposing Associate membership for your Association. Although this does not fully meet IPSA's objectives, there does seem to be some movement toward agreement ...³⁴

In April 1984, the IPSA exploited von Beyme's twisted interpretation to make a resolution, granting collective membership to both associations while accepting Chinese political scientists' demands unconditionally. The IPSA unilaterally renamed Taipei's association to the "China Taiwan Political

²⁹Frei to Chang King-yuh, 26 January 1982. File number: 1280032980212A. Academia Historica.

³⁰Riker to Wei Yung, 5 April 1983. File number: 1280032980212A. Academia Historica.

³¹Ibid.

³²Chu Chien-ming to Trent, 8 August 1983. National Box 1. IPSA Archives.

³³Von Beyme to Chang Youyu, 24 November 1983. National Association Box 1. IPSA Archives.

³⁴Von Beyme to Chu Chien-ming, 24 November 1983. File number: 1280032980212A. Academia Historica.

Science Association” to comply with the One China principle. This resolution was made without the knowledge of Taiwanese political scientists, let alone their consent. They were unable to revoke this resolution. Then, Taipei’s association kept its distance from the World Congress in Paris in July 1985. Only Shaw Yu-ming, one of its officers and a governmental think-tanker, communicating with Taipei’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs in advance, travelled there and voiced Taiwanese political scientists’ opposition in front of the IPSA executive committee (2013, pp. 241–43). To be sure, von Beyme wanted to settle down the years-long nomenclature contest and grant collective membership to both associations. Aligning himself with Beijing, however, his solution prioritised the PRC over Taiwan. This solution did not yet put an end to Tow groups’ Track II competition over the IPSA membership.

Turning the tables

Although Taipei’s association obtained the IPSA collective membership, the name given unilaterally denoted that Taiwan belonged to the PRC. The IPSA resolution of 1984 damaged Taiwan’s status in international society. Taiwanese political scientists wanted to renegotiate with the IPSA over this matter. Wei Yung was appointed to lead a team to study and find a solution to it.³⁵ He was an expert in international affairs, who had Chiang Ching-kuo’s trust (Taylor 2000, p. 325). On the other hand, the IPSA reshuffled its leadership. Von Beyme, who was sympathetic toward China, stepped down. Mushakoji succeeded. He was whom Taiwanese political scientists approached through Track II channels in the second half of the 1980s.

Wei proposed a theoretical justification for Taiwanese political scientists’ collective representation in the IPSA. It was drawn from his theory of multi-system nations. Wei’s theory was to legitimise Taipei’s search for parallel participation and dual recognition. This theory was first put forward at the beginning of the 1980s (Wei 1981). It was derived from Easton’s theory of political systems. According to Easton (1971), a political system, consisting of formal and informal decision-making structures, was not necessarily a sovereign state. To Wei, if a nation, such as China or Korea, was divided, multiple political systems emerged. Each political system partially owned its nation’s sovereignty. Before this nation unified, no political system had the exclusive right to represent this nation in international society. Wei argued that all political systems of a divided nation were equally entitled to enjoy sovereign rights and that their representations jointly manifested this nation as a whole (Wei 1981). In this light, Taipei’s and Beijing’s associations were both eligible for collective membership with full rights to represent their respective political systems in the IPSA. Their dual presence signified one China rather than two Chinas.

In March 1987, Mushakoji was invited to visit Taipei. He met with Wei and other Taiwanese political scientists. Wei held that the IPSA was caught “between two systems of a divided state.”³⁶ Recapitulating what had happened in the first half of the 1980s, he articulated:

[The] membership of the CAPS [in Taipei] in the IPSA should be totally separated from that of the “Chinese Association of Political Science” of Mainland China. Nowhere in the IPSA’s Constitution has there been any stipulation that the admission of a new member should be subjected to the consent of any existing member of the IPSA.³⁷

If the IPSA had obeyed the constitution, according to Wei, Beijing’s association should not have interfered in Taipei’s membership application. To follow the IPSA constitution was to review the two membership applications separately.

³⁵Developments of the CAPS’s application for membership in the IPSA: A chronological list, 12 March 1987. File number: 1280032980211A. Academia Historica.

³⁶Summarised minute of discussion on CAPS membership in IPSA, 11 March 1987. File number: 1280032980211A. Academia Historica.

³⁷Ibid.

After Mushakoji left, Wei continued to defend Taipei's position with the theory of multi-system nations. He reiterated:

[T]he IPSA is not in the position to settle the political differences between various parts of divided states. This applies, of course, also to the Chinese situation. The IPSA should deal with the issue strictly according to its Constitution and should not assume the role of a negotiator or mediator between two competing political systems. It, therefore, should not be influenced by either side to impose its will upon the other ...³⁸

Wei linked his interpretation of the IPSA constitution with the theory of multi-system nations. Mushakoji seemed persuaded; he admitted that misunderstanding and miscommunication existed between the IPSA and Taipei's association. Taipei's association was already a collective member, but its name had been used by Beijing's association since 1984.³⁹ What the IPSA needed to do was to reconsider the name of Taipei's association independently. Taiwanese political scientists suggested using parentheses to indicate the locations of Beijing's and Taipei's associations.⁴⁰ Mushakoji cautiously looked for advice in private. He was informed that Michel Oksenberg, who "headed the China desk of the National Security Council during the Carter administration," "believes that ... 'Political Science Association of China (Taipei),' might be acceptable to the PRC association as long as the Chinese language version also had Taipei in parenthesis."⁴¹ Now, Taipei's position was grounded in three justifications: (1) the theory of multi-system nations, (2) an interpretation of the IPSA constitution, and (3) a former White House official's analysis. The tables were turned.

Approved by Lee Teng-hui, Chiang Ching-kuo's successor, Wei led a delegation to attend the IPSA executive meeting in Paris in April 1989. The delegates persuaded the IPSA to change its previous decision, and the IPSA resolved that Taipei's association could use "The Chinese Association of Political Science (Taipei)" as its name.⁴² This new resolution upset Beijing. After two years of fruitless efforts, Beijing's association announced its withdrawal from the IPSA before the 1991 World Congress in Buenos Aires because Chinese political scientists firmly maintained that the One China principle was not negotiable.⁴³ From then on, Taipei's association has been the only collective member with the name of *Zhongguo* in the IPSA.⁴⁴

Conclusion

What if Beijing's association had not withdrawn after the IPSA agreed with Taipei's counterpart to reclaim "The Chinese Association of Political Science (Taipei)"? Wei said, "We sincerely hope that our colleagues from Mainland China return to the IPSA activities. We look forward to future contacts and cooperation with them through the IPSA framework."⁴⁵ Taipei's association seemed to envision the IPSA as a Track II channel to communicate with Beijing. Given that Chinese and Taiwanese

³⁸Wei to Mushakoji, 2 May 1987. File number: 1280032980211A. Academia Historica. Wei sent a copy of this letter to Deutsch, Seymour Lipset, and Riker, and he also wrote to lobby them for their support. Wei to Deutsch, Lipset, and Riker, 15 May 1987. File number: 1280032980219A. Academia Historica.

³⁹Lui Fei-lung to Mushakoji, 28 March 1987. File number: 1280032980211A. Academia Historica.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Harold Jacobson to Mushakoji, 18 April 1988. National Association Box 1. IPSA Archives.

⁴²Wei, Ni yingyao canjia guoji zhengzhi xuehui nianhui bing xiangji gonggu woguo zhengzhi xuehui zai gaixuehui zhi huiji ji diwei, 11 August 1988. File number: 1280032980219A, Academia Historica. Extract of EC meeting no. 58., Paris, 10–11 April 1989. National Association Box 1. IPSA Archives.

⁴³Extract from the EC minutes no. 92, 20 July 1991. National Association Box 1; Zhang Youyu to Carole Pateman, 1 September 1991, Dublin Box 8, IPSA Archives.

⁴⁴It is now known as "The Chinese Association of Political Science, Taipei." Using a comma renders the same connotation as parentheses.

⁴⁵To: the IPSA; From: Wei Yung; Re: Collective members of the two Chinese associations in IPSA, 21 July 1991. File number: 1280032980210A, Academia Historica.

political scientists were closely connected with their governments, the IPSA could have occupied a crucial place in Cross-Strait relations. The above might not be a wishful thinking. In fact, the IPAS only suspended rather than cancelled Chinese political scientists' collective membership.⁴⁶ They could return to the IPSA anytime. Collectively representing the two groups of political scientists, nonetheless, indicated Taiwan's status vis-à-vis the PRC. Beijing insisted on the One China principle, demanding to treat this self-ruled island as a part of the PRC. Taipei wanted to prove the two regimes separate and equal. In terms of recognition, Beijing and Taipei had conflicting expectations in international society. Hence, the IPSA failed to create a win-win situation as it had wished in the 1980s.

Concerning Taiwan's status vis-à-vis the PRC, the IPSA case shows that Beijing and Taipei have had contradictory expectations since the 1980s. Regardless of identity politics, the two regimes share no common ground. Their contradiction is persistent before and after the so-called 1992 consensus: "one China, respective interpretations." Beijing's and Taipei's respective interpretations come from their contradictory expectations. It is why the two regimes relentlessly dispute each other on how to determine Taiwan's status, which troubles international organisations. This contradiction is also an obstacle to establishing constructive Track II communication between the two regimes. The 1992 consensus merely conceals Beijing's and Taipei's opposite interpretations of Taiwan's status. It cannot dissolve the two regimes' contradiction. Putting it another way, Cross-Strait relations will be a constant source of tension in international society unless both regimes compromise to settle their contradiction.

Moreover, the IPSA case throws light on the theoretical understanding of Track II diplomacy. Researchers are inclined to assume that Track II diplomacy can be a sustainable way of reducing miscalculations and misjudgements to move the parties concerned towards de-escalation and conflict resolution. However, Track II diplomacy is by no means purposive. Its objective is decided by the governments and agents who apply it. As I have shown in this case study, Beijing and Taipei apply Track II diplomacy for their conflicting purposes. Track II diplomacy forms an arena for competition rather than reconciliation. Track II diplomacy does not de-escalate the tension inbetween. In this regard, Track II diplomacy can be aggressive as well.

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