5 The resurgence of social movements under the Ma Ying-jeou government

A political opportunity structure perspective

Ming-sho Ho[1]

Applying the political opportunity structure (POS) theory, this chapter attempts to explain why the coming to power of the Ma government brought about a new wave of social protest in Taiwan. After describing the contours of recent social movements, I will argue from a POS theory perspective that three dimensions under the new Kuomintang (KMT) government were conducive to this movement resurgence. They are: the incumbent party's conservative agenda (which is at odds with the liberal politics of the recently resurgent social movements), the closing of the policy channel (which many of those movements had enjoyed with the Chen Shui-bian administration), and the political alliance of these social movements with the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). This chapter concludes with an assessment of the political impact of renewed social movement activism.

Riding on the wave of mass dissatisfaction with Chen Shui-bian's DPP government, the KMT scored a landslide victory in the election of Legislative Yuan in January 2008 by taking nearly three-quarters of the seats. Two months later, Ma won the presidential election by a larger-than-expected margin of more than two million votes. The coming to power of the KMT seemed to promise a dim prospect for many of Taiwan's social movement activists, who have had little ideological affinity with the KMT, often felt abandoned by the DPP and arguably discredited by their involvement in the previous DPP government. Yet liberal-leaning social movements became more active after Ma came to power and as the KMT secured large legislative majorities.

This chapter does not deal with the divisive issue of national identities, but rather with the politics of social movements. The focus of the analysis here is not the KMT's expressed opposition to Taiwan independence and more conciliatory attitude towards the People's Republic of China's territorial claim. The relevant policy issues instead involve the KMT's more "conservative" agenda, which Taiwan's largely "liberal" social movements regard as relatively weak in its commitment to human rights, multiculturalism, labor protection, gender equality and environmental conservation; in short, the moral causes that motivate social movement activism.

Social movements are the sustained collective challenges mounted by a group of people with solidarity in order to facilitate or resist social change (Tarrow

1994: 3–4). This formal definition covers those liberal, left-leaning attempts that aim at promoting a progressive political agenda as well as those conservative efforts to defend the status quo or even to restore the status quo ante. Indeed, as Tilly (2005: 435) observes, "The more equal the polity membership, the greater the resemblance among the claimmaking repertoires of different contenders." In other words, established democracies provide opportunities for their citizens to express their grievances by using the avenue of social movement, regardless of their political inclinations.

While the term *social movement* can apply both to liberal and conservative camps in the United States and Europe, such is not the case for Taiwan. As a nascent democracy, Taiwan saw social movements arise in the great transformation from one-party authoritarianism to an open and plural polity. In pursuing their liberal agenda, Taiwan's social movements not only spoke for underprivileged citizens, but also facilitated the transition to democracy (Fell 2012: 171–191; Ho 2010; Hsiao 1990). Even after the political transition was complete, social movements continued to play an instrumental role in "deepening democracy" (Wong 2003). Thus, in Taiwan's context, social movements typically refer to the efforts to promote environmental protection, gender equity, labor rights and so on; in short, progressive and liberal politics. The analysis in this chapter will show that there have been mobilizing attempts from conservative citizens to oppose these goals. But these incidents of counter-movements are largely episodic, reactive, and are rarely self-styled as "social movements." For these reasons, the following analysis will use the term "social movement" to the collective pursuit for liberal politics.

Although less "conservative" in this sense, the DPP has not consistently pursued an agenda which coincides with that of these social movements. Among the DPP leaders there is little evidence that they personally embrace the movements' ideals with demonstrable commitment. Still, social movement activists find it easier to influence the DPP's behavior, no matter whether it is in power or not. The ideological difference between the KMT and the DPP is only a matter of degree, since there is a shared impression among Taiwan's most committed activists that both parties are "identical" or "indistinguishable." Still, social movement activists find it easier to influence the DPP's behavior, whether it is in power or not.

In 2000 to 2008, many social movements lost much of their momentum. The 1990s decade had witnessed the rise of May Day demonstrations as an annual labor offensive to put forward the political demands. During the DPP government, the May Day demonstrations took place twice in 2001 and 2005 (Chiu 2011: 89). The anti-nuclear movement suffered the same fate. Following the DPP's decision to resume the construction of the controversial fourth nuclear power station in 2001, large-scale anti-nuclear protests had virtually disappeared (Ho 2005a: 344). While some movements underwent a secular decline, others appeared to be outmanoeuvred by their opponents' counter-mobilization. In 2003, and facing challenges that were the near mirror-image of what social movements would face beginning in 2008, conservatives mounted an offensive

to challenge educational reform inspired by the ideal of humanism. In the name of "justice," they sought to restrict the expanded opportunities for college education. Anti-abortion activism was virtually non-existent before 2002; its spectacular rise was exemplified by the legislative attempt in 2005 to 2007 to make abortion more difficult, thus putting feminists in a defensive position to preserve the status quo (Kuan 2011: 231–236).

Although DPP rule had brought its share of frustration to social movements, things looked worse for them after 2008. Facing the new conservative era, the question whether these social movements can be "restarted" (Hsiao and Ku 2010) has been raised. Are these Taiwanese social movement organizations still capable of mobilizing their mass constituencies after several years of working more cooperatively with the government? This chapter finds that the answer to that question is likely yes. First, I assess the resilience of Taiwan's civil society under the new KMT government by looking at some important cases of social movements. Second, I use the perspective of political opportunity structure to explain why the seemingly unfavorable environment for these social movements engenders renewed social movement activism. I will conclude with an analysis of how social movement revitalization affects the mainstream political parties in Taiwan.

Social movement revival

Social movements often proceed in a cyclical pattern; intensive public involvement is usually followed by a period of quiescence (Hirschman 1982). Taiwan's social movement activists persisted in their efforts under the DPP's relatively sympathetic government. They showed a remarkable revival in the seemingly less hospitable political environment after 2008. This pattern deserves a closer look. Although Ma Ying-jeou de-emphasized ideologically charged domestic policy issues during his campaign, his government quickly put forward many policies that alarmed social movement activists. Issue-based movements that had become dormant gained new life. Student activism, which had increasingly become less likely to be motivated by larger political concerns following the Wild Lily (*yibaihe*) Movement of March 1990 (Wright 2001: 95–128) and which had faded due to students' disenchantment with the "excessive partisanship and political chaos" (He 2001: 74), experienced a resurgence. In November 2008, the student movement made an unexpected comeback to protest what participants saw as excessive policing when the Ma government received China's emissary. Self-consciously following the precedent of 18 years earlier, the student protesters called their movement "Wild Strawberry" (*yecaomei*), and their campaigns extended beyond Taipei to Hsinchu, Taichung, Chiayi, Tainan and Kaohsiung. As in 1990, the students in 2008 stepped outside the campus and claimed the mantel of society's moral conscience when the opposition political party was in disarray and unable to mobilize citizens.

The labor movement showed a similar pattern of resuscitation. On May Day 2008, when Ma Ying-jeou, then the President-elect, visited the Taiwan Confederation of Trade Unions (TCTU), he was given a heroic welcome.[2] Ma's

honeymoon with labor was brief, as his government was perceived to fail to protect dismissed and furloughed workers in the wake of financial tsunami in 2008. In 2009 and 2010, the TCTU took the lead to launch the May Day demonstrations, which mobilized 10,000 and 7000 participants respectively.[3] In 2011, four events of May Day protests were staged by different labor movement organizations and labor unions.[4] A rejuvinated labor movement not only revived the annual May Day demonstrations, but was also able to expand beyond traditional constituencies of blue-collar workers to include nurses and social workers.[5]

The farmers' movement, which had spearheaded post-martial law radicalism in the late 1980s, had made a brief comeback in 2003 in response to the DPP's attempt to reform the debt-ridden rural credit cooperatives, organizing large-scale demonstrations by farmers and their political leaders (Ho 2005b: 415). After Ma assumed office, the farmers' movement gained new momentum. In December 2008, a group of rural activists and intellectuals, who were concerned about the Statute for Farm Village Rejuvenation promoted by the KMT, established the Taiwan Rural Front (TRF). The TRF succeeded in organizing farmers whose landownership was threatened by government-sponsored development projects all over Taiwan. The TRF launched an overnight protest in front of the Presidential House in July 2010. It was estimated that 1000 farmers and more than 3500 supporters took part in that event (Tsai 2010: 324). In addition, the Fukushima disaster in March 2011 gave rise to a global renewal of the anti-nuclear movement. Anti-nuclear demonstrations, which had virtually disappeared in Taiwan for a decade, once again became an annual ritual.

As these old movements revived, those based on new constituencies arose as well. Since the mid-1990s, the media reform movement had parted company with the DPP and lost its mass supporters. It had become a narrowly based campaign led by academics (Wei 2009: 328). In response to the KMT's clumsy effort to control the program of the Public Television Service, however, media reform activists launched a mass protest to save its political independence in January 2009.[6] For the first time, the Public Television audience took to the streets to support this agenda.

The Consumers' Foundation, which maintained an officially non-partisan profile, initiated a signature-collecting campaign for a referendum to veto Ma's decision to allow the import of American beef in October 2009. Previously, the consumers' movement had been associated with middle-class professionalism, not movement politics. Its post-2008 political turn largely reflected the widespread fear of beef contaminated with mad cow disease pathogens (Ho and Hong 2012).

In September 2010, a so-called "White Rose" (*baimeigui*) movement emerged to protest what was perceived as the judiciary's excessive leniency towards sex offenders who targeted children.[7] The White Rose protest pressured Ma and forced one of Ma's nominated candidates for the Constitutional Court (Taiwan's equivalent to the US Supreme Court) to resign because of her involvement in a controversial ruling in a child sex offense case. In all of these new areas,

members of the middle class, who used to stay away from rowdy protest politics, became the new recruits for social movement activism.

With the simultaneous emergence of new issues and the re-emergence of old issues, some of these social movements were able to score electoral or legislative victories on an eclectic collection of issues in spite of an unfriendly political environment of the KMT rule. Take the casino dispute in Penghu, for example. KMT politicians were determined to legalize the gambling industry in the offshore island. To this end, they instituted a relaxed referendum procedure and used questionable tactics to silence the opponents. The pro-casino local government, for example, used public funds to proclaim the economic benefits of the gambling industry, rather than staying neutral in holding the referendum. Nevertheless, the anti-casino activists won an unexpected victory when 55.9 percent Penghu citizens expressed their opposition in the referendum in September 2009 (Zheng 2009).

In their campaign against the KMT-proposed Statute for Farm Village Rejuvenation, the TRF activists were mainly concerned that the so-called "revitalization" might open the door to a massive wave of land grab by big corporations. Although the KMT enjoyed an overwhelming majority in the Legislative Yuan, the TRF activists succeeded in arousing public opposition so that the final version adopted a greatly restricted scope for land revitalization.[8]

Finally, the defeat of Kuokuang Petrochemical Project, a large-scale wetland reclamation project for a polluting industry to be undertaken by a public–private joint venture in April 2011, was widely seen as a triumph for environmentalists. The Kuokuang project was initiated by the DPP government in 2005, and the proposed site was in Yunlin County. In early 2008, the Kuokuang investors decided to relocate the project to Changhua County, probably because they perceived that the local KMT dominance provided a more favorable environment. However, environmentalists launched a successful campaign by enlisting the support from students, artists, writers and scholars. In November 2011, more than 10,000 people participated in an anti-Kuokuang demonstration in Taipei, which showed how strongly the values of wetland preservation had won support from the urban middle class. Facing increasingly vocal opposition, Ma Ying-jeou announced that he had decided to abandon the project in an emergency press conference (Shieh and Ho 2012).

In sum, social movements not only gained new momentum in 2008 to 2012, but they were also able to win some critical battles. How were movement activists able to accomplish this, despite the seemingly unfavorable environment of the KMT's control of government? I will use the theory of political opportunity structure (POS) to explain this puzzle.

An analysis of protest events

Researchers commonly use protest event analysis to understand the longitudinal development of social movements. The method usually begins with a sampling of protest reportage in selected journalistic sources, and proceeds to code and

analyze their characteristics (Rucht *et al.* 1999). Here I use the *United Daily (lianhebao)* as my dataset (http://udndata.com/library/) and collect its coverage on protests in 2006 to 2011. A protest is defined as a public and confrontational act mounted by an intentionally organized group of people whose claim involves a conflict of interest or preference with state authorities or others holding opposing views. In this sense, social movements necessarily involve the use of protest as a means, but a protest alone does not make for social movement.

Operationally, I search the electronic database by using 25 keywords often used to describe protest events. They are "petition" (*chenqing*, *qingyuan*), "protest" (*kangyi*), "contention" (*kangzheng*), "sit-in" (*jingzuo*), "demonstration" (*youxing*, *shiwei*), "lobbying" (*youshui*), "advocacy" (*changyi*), "gathering" (*jihui*), "collecting signatures" (*lianshu*), "strike" (*bagong*), "slow-down" (*daigong*), "taking leave collectively" (*jiti qingjia*), "hunger strike" (*jueshi*), "barricade" (*weidu*, *weichang*), "filing a lawsuit" (*susong*), "press conference" (*jizhehui*), "protest drama" (*xingdongju*), "occupying" (*zhanling*) and so on. After taking out the irrelevancies and redundancies, there are 3,165 protest events.

In order to form an accurate analysis of social movements, two protest types have to be winnowed out. First, "political protests" are those events planned and executed by politicians, political parties, or similar political organizations. Examples are the protest against China's Anti-secession law, the protest against Chen Shui-bian's corruption, and the protest against the KMT's leaders' visit to China. More often than not, these mobilizations are the spill-over of partisan political rivalries between the KMT and the DPP, rather than autonomous expressions from civil society. Hence they largely reflect the degree of political instability and polarization and the struggles among political elites, rather than relations between the state and civil society. For example, in 2006 when Chen Shui-bian's family members were revealed to be involved in financial irregularities, there were 44 political protests; however, in the relatively more tranquil 2011 there were only 11 cases.

Next, nimbyism ("not in my backyard") should be excluded because it tends to be involved with a specific community's interest without the larger social implications that are essential features of true social movements. I define nimbyism as those collective actions in which local residents mobilize to oppose the construction of facilities serving public welfare, including mobile phone bases, incinerators, landfills, sewage treatment plants, etc. But when cases concerning such matters come with outsiders' support, they are not counted as nimbyism.

In other words, political protests are "overpoliticized" and excessively partisan, and nimby protests are "underpoliticized." Properly speaking, both remain, at most, marginally related to social movements. There is another methodological reason to exclude nimbyism here. It is a reasonable expectation that nimby protests should remain stable over the years given that there has been no major change in Taiwan's environmental governance and other factors that have recently given rise to nimbyist protests. If this expectation is correct, the wide fluctuation in reports of nuimbyist protests – which, according to the *United Daily*'s reportage, range from 175 cases (2006) to 39 cases (2009) – more likely

reflects editorial policy rather than the actual changes in popular behavior. To include such editorial policy-driven changes in protest rates would distort the data and analysis.

Figure 5.1 plots a total of 2549 protest events, after excluding political protests (140 cases) and nimby protests (476 cases).

There is a clear V-shaped pattern of social protests from 2006 to 2011. In 2008 when the KMT resumed the ruling position, social protests were at their nadir, with 308 cases. Afterwards they increased steadily during the following years. In 2011 there were 494 cases, corresponding to the previous peak in 2006.[9] In short, although social protests are not entirely equivalent to social movements, a protest event analysis is consistent with the observation of resurgence in social movements.

A POS analysis of social movements under the Ma Ying-jeou government

POS refers to a set of state-related variables that enable or constrain collective action either by reducing or enhancing the cost of action (McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1989). POS is a useful analytical tool because it highlights the punctuated shifts of the political landscape sometimes caused by periodic power transfers in a democratic polity. In particular, the POS theory predicts a "paradox of protest," which means that social movements are most likely to take place in the intermediate situation between high repressiveness and high openness (Eisinger 1973). If a political regime is hermetically sealed from outside influence and prone to apply violence to suppress dissidents, it is difficult for social movements to survive. On the other hand, if a regime is highly porous and responsive to social inputs, dissidents are easily assimilated and there is little need to resort to protests and the tactics of social movements. In short, there is a curvilinear

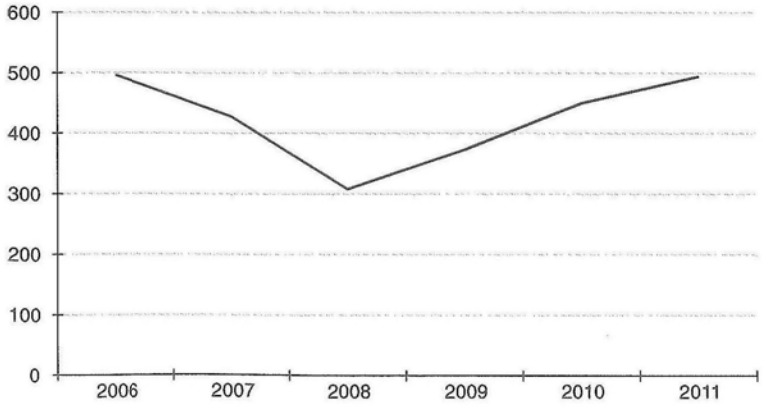

Figure 5.1 Taiwan's social protests in 2006–2011.

relationship between POS and the intensity of social movements, which is illustrated in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2 visually depicts the impact of the 2008 regime change upon social movements in Taiwan. As emphasized by Meyer and Minkoff (2004), the same political environment poses different degrees of openness for different social movements. When conceptualizing the POS, we need to take into consideration the question "opportunity for whom?" As stated above, Taiwan's social movements emerged in the crucible of political transition, and they typically pursued progressive, liberal and pro-democratic agendas. Therefore Figure 5.2 represents the POS according to their perspective, and it follows that Taiwan's conservative camp would have seen things otherwise.

Being a recently democratized country, Taiwanese citizens enjoy freedom of speech, association and public assembly. According to the US-based Freedom House, Taiwan has been consistently categorized as "free" since 2002, when the annual country survey began. The KMT's resumption of power did not produce a significant change in this regard. In 2012, Taiwan's civil liberties were rated at 2 and political rights at 1, with scores identical to those of Japan, South Korea and Israel.[10] Hence, there is no suggestion of any backslide towards authoritarianism with the political resurgence of the KMT, as Taiwan's democracy remains vibrant and resilient.

A POS contraction – movement towards the left along the X-axis in the diagram – may occur without a slide towards authoritarianism. If a new regime in power is – for reasons of ideological preference or procedural habits or political calculation – ill-disposed towards social movements, the advent of the new regime means a decline in "openness" towards the input of social movements. This is a plausible characterization of the case of the KMT's 2008 return to power and its implications for Taiwan's generally liberal social movements. Under these circumstances, POS predicts that the effect will be to intensify social movement activism rather than dampening it. In other words, a simple

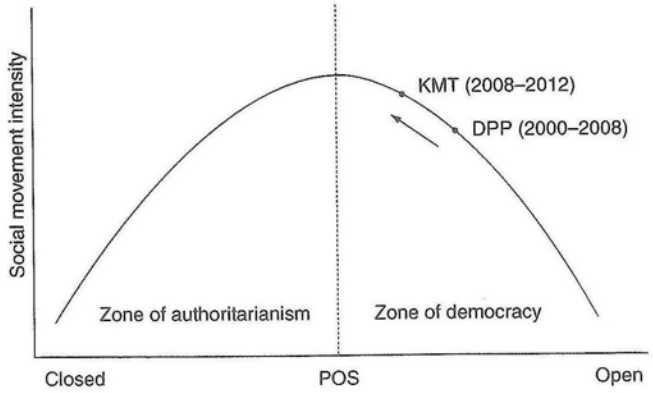

Figure 5.2 The POS perspective of social movement.

expectation of social movement decline after the coming to power of a new (more conservative) regime in Taiwan in 2008 is wrong because of the erroneous assumption of simple linearity between POS and social movement activism.

Researchers have disaggregated POS into a number of related components in order to better locate the specific impact upon social movements (McAdam 1996: 27; Marks and McAdam 1999: 99; Tarrow 1996: 54–56). Although scholars have not established a consensus list of POS components, I conceptualize the POS under the Ma Ying-jeou government into the following three dimensions which are consistent with much of the literature:

1 **Incumbents' agenda:** Depending on the ruling party's ideology as well as its short-term political calculation, a government can practice an exclusive or inclusive approach to the challenge of social movements (Kriesi *et al.* 1995: 33–34). Where social movements are "liberal," conservative government is exclusive and invites social protests because of its overall orientation, while a more liberal or reformist government is more likely to obtain the support of movement activists and reduces their propensity to rely on protest tactics.
2 **Policy channel:** Whether social movement activists have routine access to the decision-making process influences their behavior. When it is possible to work within the state, movement strategy tends to be more assimilative rather than confrontational (Kitschelt 1986). With the "insider" status, movement activists tend to use institutional leverage to engineer policy change, rather than street protest.
3 **Political ally:** Where they enjoy relatively high support of an established political party (or other similar allies), social movement activists find it easier to translate their social mobilization into political influence. In a normal democracy, there are many arenas that exclude the participation of the majority of citizens and grant a say only to a few popularly elected lawmakers, executives or other elites. The support of political parties or allies helps social movements to gain visibility and make it more difficult for the government to ignore their challenge. Parties (or similar allies) can magnify the impact of social movements with which they cooperate, partly by affecting how government institutions behave or broadening the arenas in which policy decisions are made.

With this POS-based understanding, I will proceed to analyze how the advent of the KMT government in 2008 stimulated a wave of social contentions.

1 Conservative agenda of the KMT government

In terms of national identity, the Ma government was said to "herald a return to the KMT's pre-Lee Teng-hui Chinese-centered ideology, which ignores the past two decades of democratization and Taiwanization" (Muyard 2010: 8). A similar diagnosis may be applied to the area of movement politics, which was primarily

structured around a left–right divide, since Ma's KMT government reverted to its previous pro-development and pro-business stand, thus placing itself at odds with the liberal agendas of social movements and jeopardizing some of those movements' achievements during the previous era.

Take the 2003 Protective Act for Mass Redundancy of Employees as an example. This law had been passed in response to the massive wave of illegal factory closures in the 1990s, which left many workers unable to receive their delayed wage, severance and retirement pensions. When the financial tsunami hit Taiwan in late 2008, the new administration's labor officials gave much latitude to the business practice of furloughs. Consequently, many workers were put in the challenging situation that they were not formally laid off, and so were not entitled to severance pay and unemployment benefits, but were also not in a position to seek new jobs because their formal employment relationship with their prior employer remained, so that a job search could jeopardize a possible opportunity to return to their existing work (Xizhu Labor Survey Team 2009). The government then adopted a "three-supports" (*santing*) policy – "the government supports the banks, the banks support the enterprises, and the enterprises support employees" – to deal with the economic tailspin. The result was that bad loans of financial institutions were tolerated and backstopped, and debt-ridden enterprises were relieved but workers lost their jobs or were furloughed. Through such moves that arguably bypassed the pre-existing labor protection measures and that were at odds with their spirit of protecting workers' interests in their employment, the government channeled the problems of economic recession towards the workers.

Environmental politics after 2008 also witnessed a similar trajectory. The controversial Suao-Hualien Highway Project, which critics argued would create an ecological disaster in the geologically fragile area, was vetoed in the last few months of the DPP government. In 2010, the Hualien County Magistrate led his supporters to pressure the central government to approve the project. In response, the KMT government quickly proposed a modified plan. In November, the Environmental Protection Administration approved the plan, and did so with great speed: it was the fastest case ever to pass the mandated process of environmental impact assessment (EIA).[11] The 2002 Basic Environment Act had upheld the principle of "nuclear-free homeland" as the eventual goal. After 2008, however, the KMT government moved to speed up the construction of the fourth nuclear power station in the expectation that it could become fully operative before the Double Tenth Day of 2012, as a "gift for the one hundredth anniversary of the Republic of China" (*jianguo bainian heli*).[12] The plant's coming on line would delay the realization of the nuclear-free agenda indefinitely. The Ma Ying-jeou government officially identified nuclear power as a source of so-called "low-carbon energy." It was only after the Fukushima incident that the KMT backed away from its enthusiasm for nuclear power.

Some KMT efforts to pursue a relatively pro-business agenda raised concern that it was willing to violate the principle of the rule of law. The environmental dispute of the Central Science Park Phase Three project was a notable case. The project was granted approval after a questionable EIA in 2006. Afterwards,

environmentalists launched a legal battle to contest its validity. In January 2010, they succeeded when the Supreme Administrative Court annulled the EIA conclusion. However, the KMT government decided to circumvent the court's decision by "suspending the not-finished construction, but allowing the continuance of production for operating factories (*tinggong bu tingchan*)." Since the previous project-approving EIA was no longer applicable in the wake of the court's decision, the government hastened to complete another EIA, even though the project itself was already half-finished.[13] Taiwan's leading legal scholars, such as Huang Cheng-yi (Institutum Iurisprudentiae, Academia Sinica)[14] and Yen Chueh-an (College of Law, National Taiwan University),[15] criticized this case as "an act of bullying by the executive over the judiciary." Taiwan's Environmental Jurists Association led a campaign to condemn this practice.[16]

The human rights activists' campaign to abolish capital punishment also suffered a reversal of their fortunes. Since 2006, the campaign had attained partial success by persuading the government not to execute those who were already sentenced to death – a difficult achievement given the entrenched cultural preference for capital punishment (Qian 2009: 738). Once he had assumed the presidency, Ma continued the practice until April 2010, when a controversial remark by the Minister of Justice triggered an uproar – from a more conservative direction – which demanded the immediate execution of the criminals on death row. Many of those who believed that the death penalty was justified for those who had committed serious crimes were outraged by the discovery that execution had been suspended for four years. The Minister of Justice was forced to resign, and capital punishment came into force again in Taiwan.

In the view of many of Taiwan's social movement activists, Ma Ying-jeou's conservative agenda seemed sudden and excessive. While they had been disappointed by the performance of the DPP government, which had drifted away from the proclaimed reformist goals, the advent of the new KMT government threatened to annul what they had achieved in the past. In other words, threat of loss, or "the cost it [a social group] expects to suffer if it does not take action" (Goldstone and Tilly 2001: 183), stimulated more protest activities.

2 The narrowed policy channel

Prior to 2008, two decades of democratization had brought about a restructuring of the state–society relationship so that avenues for participation were opened up for social movements. Through these channels, movement activists enjoyed a more routinized access to influence upon the process of formulating and implementing policies. The Committee of Women's Rights Promotion (*funu quanyi cujin weiyuanhui*) (1997), Gender Equity Committee (*xingbie pingdeng weiyuanhui*) (2012), Human Rights Advisory Committee (*renquan zixun weiyuanhui*) (2000), and Nuclear-Free Homeland Commission (*feihe jiayuan weiyuanhui*) (2002) were among the milestones of what Dryzek called "democratic inclusion" in that the defining concerns of these different social movements were assimilated into state governance without the movements losing their autonomy. The promotion of

"deliberative democracy" in the form of citizen conferences under the DPP government was an experiment in deepening democratic participation (Chen and Lin 2008), including by social movements. Participation in these channels was found to empower social movement activists by allowing them the chance to "maximize their impacts on the decision-making process" (Tu and Peng 2008). After the second transfer of presidential power and the continuation of KMT control of the legislature in 2008, the initiative to broaden the avenues of participation appeared to have ended, while existing channels became less accessible to the social movements that predominated on the landscape of Taiwanese social activism.

The Nuclear-Free Homeland Commission, a cabinet-level taskforce set up to supervise the existing nuclear power stations and promote environmental education, was created as a concession to the anti-nuclear movement activists after the DPP government decided to resume the construction of the fourth nuclear power station in 2002. Immediately after Ma took office, the government suspended its operation.

Feminist and human rights social activists' presence on the Committee of Women's Rights Promotion and the Human Rights Advisory Committee was significantly reduced when Ma exercised his power to make appointments to the two committees. KMT appointees to the seats reserved for non-government representatives tended not to be activists. Under the DPP government, movement activists who held such positions had sought to use the leverage they provided to influence the government's decisions. For example, in 2005, the activists in the Human Rights Advisory Committee threatened to resign in protest against the government's attempt to make compulsory fingerprinting a precondition for receiving the new identity cards. They also worked to draw more official attention to the campaign to preserve the Losheng Sanitarium, which was then threatened by a construction project of the Taipei Mass Rapid Transit. The activists on the Committee of Women's Rights Promotion protested against the proposal to introduce a "cooling period" before abortion in 2006.

After 2008, the tactic of working within these government bodies was no longer available to these social activists. Under the KMT government, the Human Rights Advisory Committee was virtually silent during the 2010 controversy concerning capital punishment. In April 2012, when the National Human Rights Report was published as the first official statement since the government agreed to implement the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 2009, the report drew sharp criticism from human rights NGOs. They complained that the official statement overlooked many incidents of blatant human rights violations.[17] The Human Rights Advisory Committee no longer provided an effective mechanism for voicing those concerns inside the government while the report was being formulated.

Similarly, the Committee of Women's Rights Promotion was an ineffective channel for gender movement activists when an aggressive conservative countermovement launched by the True Love Alliance (*zhenai lianmeng*) threatened to derail the Ministry of Education's efforts to incorporate homosexuality in the curriculum in 2011. On these various fronts, the newly narrowed policy channels

open to social movement activists forced them (as well as their opponents, when the KMT government did not heed conservative activists' views on such matters as teaching about homosexuality) to resort to more protest-based, outside-the-government tactics, thus enhancing the movement's intensity.

3 The DPP as political ally

The even-worse-than-expected defeat in the 2008 presidential election as well as the ensuing criminal investigation of Chen Shui-bian's financial irregularities left the DPP in embarrassing disarray. Immediately after Tsai Ing-wen assumed the position of party chairperson, there was discussion about whether the DPP should change its name to emphasize the determination for reform. Among the possible choices, "Social Democratic Party" (*shehui minzhudang*) was the most often mentioned one.[18] This clearly indicated that some of the DPP leaders sensed a growing political market among those who participated in Taiwan's social movements. The proposal to adopt a more left-leaning party name also reflected an assessment that the DPP had suffered at the polls because the Chen Shui-bian government had deviated from the DPP's traditional self-definition as the champion of the underprivileged in an attempt to embrace elusive "mainstream values."

Under Tsai Ing-wen's leadership, the DPP re-established its Department of Social Movements in February 2009. When the DPP was originally founded in 1986, the Department of Social Movements had played a critical role in coordinating the growing political and social protests at that time. In 1996, the DPP reorganized it into the Department of Social Development, redirecting its attention to more broad-based constituencies and symbolically severing its linkage with the social movement community. In an attempt to return to the DPP's earlier connections, Tsai declared 2009 the "Year of Social Movement" for the DPP. At the time, Yang Chang-cheng, Director of the reinstated Department of Social Movements, acknowledged that the DPP in power had given up some of its traditional commitments because it was a minority government, and faced the need to build a broarder social basis. Yang personally hoped that movement activists within the party could grow in strength to exert a greater influence on the DPP. In that case, the DPP would be transformed into an authentic leftist party.[19]

Did reality match the DPP's pro-movement rhetoric? Did the DPP become the political ally of resurgent social movements after 2008? The DPP's involvement and support seems to have played a significant role in the revival of social movements. Take the Kuokuang Petrochemical project as an example. The DPP as a whole reversed its previous stance and became a vocal opponent of the project after it fell from power. In Changhua County, the planned site for the mammoth project, there were six locally elected legislators at that time. All five KMT legislators supported Kuokuang, and the sole DPP legislator mobilized her constituencies to oppose it, working in tandem with environmental activists. Among the opposition camp there were some activists who worried about the

effect of political labeling. In their meeting with Ma Ying-jeou, they expressed the hope that KMT politicians could step forward to support environmentalism. Even though Ma helped to arrange the contact, there were no KMT politicians who publicly expressed opposition to the Kuokuang project prior to Ma's about-face.[20] DPP politicians helped the anti-Kuokuang movement in three ways. First, a politician generally has a stronger or at least a different mobilizing capacity than environmental NGOs; hence his or her mass supporters can be an important asset when launching a demonstration. Second, in the EIA or other public hearings, officials conducting the hearing are generally friendlier towards politicians (even from the opposition party) than they are towards environmentalists (or other social movement activists). Even when making the same argument, politicians' opinions were less likely to be ignored by officials. Finally, presiding officials often decline to reveal certain information to the general public, but are willing to disclose to elected representatives. Hence, politicians were often able to secure information that was denied to the environmentalists. In short, the DPP's support for the anti-Kuokuang movement raised its political visibility – probably one of the contributing factors that persuaded the KMT government to give up the project eventually.

Some DPP politicians have supported social movement organizations with their financial resources. The Youth Synergy Taiwan Foundation founded in 2010 by a former DPP Minister of the National Youth Commission functioned as an important channel in this regard. In 2011, it sponsored ten activists in different NGOs all over Taiwan by paying them an annual wage. This strengthened the links between the DPP and social movements.

Nevertheless, the cooperation between the DPP elites and social movement activists was not friction-free. Many activists still had bitter memories of being abandoned when the DPP was in power. In particular, Tsai Ing-wen's effort to promote the Central Science Park Phase Three and the Kuokuang Petrochemical Project (then in Yunlin County) in 2006, when she was vice premier, drew heavy criticism from environmentalists. Sometimes the DPP's evident opportunism incurred hostility from activists. On March 20, 2011, when the first anti-nuclear demonstration took place after the Fukushima Incident, many DPP primary candidates used the occasion to solicit votes for themselves with little regard for the organizers' agenda. Committed activists found it unacceptable that the DPP in power had renounced the anti-nuclear promise for reasons of political expediency and yet suddenly donned again the mantle of the anti-nuclear crusade immediately after the Japanese disaster.[21]

Political calculation surely played a part in the mind of DPP elites when they decided to align with re-emergent social movements after 2008. After all, the logic of party competition, especially in an increasingly two-party political system, dictates that the enemy of the enemy is a friend. Thus, by supporting the resurgent social movements financially and organizationally, the DPP could also promote its political goal of outmaneuvering the KMT-dominated government.

In the context of Taiwan's consolidated democracy, a POS analysis indicates that the rise of a conservative government triggered a renewed wave of social

movement activism. The incumbents' restorative attempts threatened to erode the social movements' earlier gains so that activists were alarmed and motivated to take action. The closing of government policy channels to social movement groups shifted the terrain of contention outside of state institutions and encouraged the activists to take it to the streets. Finally, whatever the motivations of DPP leaders might have been, opposition politicians' alliance and support also helped make the demands of renewed social movements less likely to be ignored by the government.

The political impact of social movements

As Taiwan's social movements revived after 2008, the public's dissatisfaction with Ma Ying-jeou's performance grew. The government's flawed effort to rescue and relieve the victims of Typhoon Morakot in 2009, in particular, badly hit Ma's credibility and poll numbers (Gold 2010: 74). Affected by the global financial tsunami, Taiwan's economic growth rate turned negative in 2009 and scuttled Ma's campaign promise of "633" (6 percent annual growth rate, unemployment rate less than 3 percent, and per capital income of US$30,000). Although Taiwan's economic situation rebounded in 2010, high unemployment and rising housing prices continued to be sources of public discontent, ranking high in a government survey of the "top ten grievances" (*shida minyuan*).[22] There was a prevalent sense that economic growth was benefiting the few while the majority of the people were left behind.

During this period, a common theme of "justice" emerged and was shared by many social movements. The farmers' movement against the government's compulsory land purchase program raised the slogan "land justice" (*tudi zhengyi*). Anti-Kuokuang activists also used similar rhetoric to defend wetlands, and the oyster farmers threatened by reclamation and industrialization. Critics of urban land speculation and skyrocketing house prices invoked the principle of "residence justice" (*jizhu zhengyi*).[23] In 2011, the Taiwan Labor Front published a popular book that depicted the plight of the younger generation who were facing a dismal prospect of pauperization, corporate domination and bankrupted social insurance (Lin *et al.* 2011). The book's title, *Bomb Generation* (*bengshidai*), highlighted the issue of generational justice.

As the 2012 presidential election approached, the political impact of social movement resurgence became more visible. In order to prevent excessive land speculation, the Ma government put forward a "luxury tax" (*shechishui*) in mid-2011. Since then, those who resell their houses within two years of the initial purchase have had to pay an additional tax. In November 2011, the KMT unveiled a list of candidates for the party slate in the Legislative Yuan election that seemed designed to co-opt social movements. The list included a child welfare activist, an anchorwoman with disabilities, and a scholar famous for his advocacy for progressive tax reform. Clearly, the KMT was attempting to alter its image by signaling a commitment to protecting the underprivileged whose needs were often the focus of social movements.

Under Tsai Ing-wen's leadership, the DPP also sought to harness the new wave of social movements to its advantage. When campaigning for New Taipei City Mayor in 2010, Tsai promoted ideas of "government-initiated urban renewal" and social housing in order to provide affordable residences to younger and less wealthy citizens, which corresponded to the demand raised by urban reform activists. In September 2011, Tsai unveiled the DPP's Ten-Year Platform (*shinian zhenggang*) to challenge Ma Ying-jeou's re-election bid. The Ten-Year Platform incorporated the ideas of public housing, public childcare, increased public higher education and ecological democracy. Apparently, the DPP adopted a liberal or reformist course that sought to address the social inequalities which were the focus of resurging social movements. Tsai also chose "fairness and justice" (*gongping zhengyi*) as her campaign slogan. As noted by Chen (2012: 73), the DPP's 2012 electoral strategy departed from the traditional theme of Taiwan independence and sovereignty, "turning its focus on growing income disparities and class cleavages in Taiwanese societies." The *United Daily*, a pro-China and pro-KMT newspaper, editorialized that Tsai's emphasis on redistributive justice was no less than "socialism with the characteristics of Taiwan independence" (*you taidu tese de shehui zhuyi*).[24] This was probably the first time the DPP had been "red-baited" by its detractors.

The DPP's efforts to attract pro-social movement voters was also evident in the electoral alliance with the Taiwan Green Party (TGP), an environmental movement-based party founded in 1996. Since Taiwan began to adopt the single-district two-vote system in 2008, some DPP leaders have suggested that the DPP should practice strategic cooperation with the TGP by supporting the latter in certain challenging electoral districts. It was argued that the TGP stood a better chance of attracting urban middle-class voters to defeat KMT candidates. In the 2012 Legislative Yuan election, the DPP decided to support the TGP veteran Pan Han-shen in the seventh district of Taipei City by not nominating its own candidate. Pan reciprocated by encouraging the TGP supporters to vote for Tsai in the presidential ballot.

Finally, the surge of social movements also gave direct impetus to the TGP, which had been campaigning for several years without success. In 2008, the TGP received 0.6 percent in the party vote; four years later, the number grew to 1.74 percent, or 229,566 votes.[25] Although the TGP still failed to reach the 5 percent threshold required to win a proportional representation seat, the fourfold increase reflected the emergence of pro-movement voters.

The 2012 presidential election and Ma's second term

On January 14, 2012, Ma Ying-jeou won the presidential election with a margin slightly larger than expectations (51.6%), while Tsai Ing-wen received 45.6 percent. What does Ma's second term (2012–2016) mean for Taiwan's social movements? From the perspective of a POS analysis, the relationship between the progressive politics embraced by social movements and the state is not likely to change if the KMT government's policy orientation remains conservative,

policy channels remain relatively closed to such movements, and the opposition DPP is willing to support movement activism. These conditions persisted into the first part of Ma's second term and seemed unlikely to change.

Even prior to the start of Ma's second term, two noteworthy cases of social protest erupted. One month after its electoral success, the KMT government manifested its intention to legalize the use of ractopamine, a feed additive in the American cattle industry. Ma Ying-jeou argued that it was a necessary quid pro quo in order to sign the free trade agreement with the U.S. Compared with the focus of the American beef controversy in 2009, ractopamine posed additional risks for Taiwan than had mad cow disease because the additive's legalization – in addition to possible health threats – would also open the door to the import of American pork. Taiwan's pig farmers voiced their opposition, and they were more numerous and powerful than local beef producers, and farmers have been an important base for the recent social movements. Nevertheless, the KMT government remained adamant on this issue.

In March 2012, the KMT-run Taipei City government sent nearly 1000 policemen to evict protestors challenging the government's decision in a controversial case of urban renewal, and proceeded to demolish a private house whose owner disagreed with the project. The police's use of coercion as well as the pro-business tint of urban renewal regulation drew heavy criticism, and protesters continue to occupy the construction site to this day (May 2013).

The ractopamine issue and the urban renewal controversy demonstrate that the three POS factors conducive to a resurgence of progressive social movements are likely to continue through Ma's second term. If that is the case, the rest of Ma's presidential term is likely to witness more intensified challenges from social movements.

Notes

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2 www.tctu.org.tw/front/bin/ptdetail.phtml?Part=magazine-28&Category=173720 (2012/4/24).
3 *United Daily*, 2009/05/02, A4, 2010/05/02, A12.
4 *United Daily*, 2009/05/02, A5.
5 http://2011antipovertymarch.blogspot.com/ (2012/4/24).
6 *United Evening Post*, 2009/01/01, A5.
7 *United Daily*, 2010/9/26, A1.
8 www.coolloud.org.tw/node/53188, (2012/4/29).
9 It is a reasonable guess that the *United Daily* might devote more attention to social protest under the DPP government than in the KMT era, given its staunch pro-KMT stand. Hence, there is a possibility that protests in 2006 to 2008 are "overreported" while those in 2008 to 2011 are "underreported." Methodologically, a more satisfactory solution may be to use a less partisan media (which unfortunately does not exist in current Taiwan), or to include a pro-DPP journalistic source to neutralize the partisan bias. Given the time constraint, I have not been able to adopt the latter approach.

10 www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2012/taiwan (2012/10/17).
11 www.coolloud.org.tw/node/55538, (2012/4/29).
12 www.coolloud.org.tw/node/51358, (2012/4/29).
13 www.coolloud.org.tw/node/54071, (2012/5/2).
14 www.peopo.org/news/47888 (2013/5/2).
15 www.coolloud.org.tw/node/57973 (2013/5/2).
16 www.eja.org.tw/2/category/2081a784db/1.html (2012/5/2).
17 https://docs.google.com/file/d/0BxViEd1ZNUfNNENVQk96MGk0SEE/edit?pli=1, (2012/5/1).
18 www.libertytimes.com.tw/2008/new/jul/7/today-fo2.htm, (2012/5/2).
19 A private discussion with Yang Chang-cheng (2009/3/10).
20 Interview with Lai Lung-hsiao, the President of the Society of Wilderness (2010/5/6).
21 www.coolloud.org.tw/node/58331 (2012/5/2).
22 www.merit-times.com.tw/NewsPage.aspx?Unid=157332 (2012/5/2).
23 www.epochtw.com/11/7/11/169993.htm (2012/5/2).
24 *United Daily* (2012/1/16), A.2.
25 http://db.cec.gov.tw/vote30.asp?pass1=B200800000000000aaa, www.greenparty.org.tw/index.php/election (2012/5/2).

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