

# **The Limitation of Neo-functionalism for Explaining Cross-Taiwan Strait Relations (1979-1996)**

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**Abstract:**

According to the neo-functionalist point of view, cross-Taiwan Strait relations could be an appropriate example of the process of political integration. Cultural homogeneity and increased economic transactions between the two Chinas during 1979-1996 was in any case likely to spillover to the political arena. However, the increasing socioeconomic exchanges between the two sides did not promote sort of political cooperation by 1996. The case of the “SEF and ARATS talks” lead to the conclusion that there existed a disjunction between the economic and political aspects of relations across the Taiwan Strait due to the unsettled sovereignty dispute.

**Keywords:**

Taiwan, China, international relations, neo-functionalism, integration

## **The Limitation of Neo-functionalism for Explaining Cross-Taiwan Strait Relations (1979-1996)**

The relationship between Taiwan and Mainland China during the period 1979-1996 changed dramatically. Internationally, the U.S. shifted its diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in January 1979. This was a diplomatic turning point for both Beijing and Taipei. On January 1, 1979, Beijing sent a message to Taiwan that offered to foster links and promote exchanges across the Taiwan Strait and to negotiate with the Taipei authorities for national reunification. One very special characteristic of the relationship across the Taiwan Strait during 1979-96 was that the two sides developed fairly good non-official contacts though they strongly disagreed over political issues and both of them regarded the other as their potential enemy. For instance, Sino-Taiwanese trade increased dramatically from US\$77.76 million in 1979 to US\$11.3 billion in 1996, and the PRC ranked as Taiwan's fourth largest trading partner after the United States, Japan, and Hong Kong. By 1994, Taiwanese businessmen had invested US\$84.47 billion in 27,229 investment projects in mainland China, making Taiwan the second largest foreign investor on the mainland China after Hong Kong and Macao.<sup>1</sup> Aside from economic transactions, personal contacts across the Taiwan Strait increased remarkably after Taipei first permitted its citizens to visit the mainland in 1987. By the end of 1995, Taiwanese had made over 8 million trips to the mainland while 121,564 mainlanders had come to Taiwan.<sup>2</sup>

This abnormal relationship of "political animosity and economic amity," as Hsin-hsing Wu has suggested, is indeed a challenge to any exploration of Sino-Taiwanese relations. (Wu H., 1995a:52) Was mutual economic benefit or political nationalism the dominant variable of the cross-Strait relations between 1979 and 1996? Did the "spillover" effect that neo-functionalists suggest occur in the environment of the Sino-Taiwanese relationship? This article seeks to answer these questions. It has attempted to assess the utility of neo-functionalist approach for explaining Sino-Taiwanese relations between 1979 and 1996 – though it is not intended as a challenge to neo-functionalism itself.

This article begins by introducing various definitions and concepts of integration. Then it focuses on the "spillover" effect, the main theme of neo-functionalism, to examine its applicability in the two Chinas issues. Some of the basic obstacles to the cross-Taiwan Strait integrative process are then pointed out. Overall, it argues that neo-functionalism fails to offer a satisfactory explanation for

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<sup>1</sup> *Liang'an jingji tongji yuebao* (Monthly Statistical Report on Cross-Strait Economic Relations), February 1997, 20, 46.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 37-38.

the evolution of the complex Sino-Taiwanese relationship during 1979-1996. Contrary to neofunctionalist theme that states incline to cooperate over high-politics issues once they have achieved integration in matters of low-politics, in the 1979-96 cross-Taiwan Strait relations economic cooperation did not obviously exert any sort of “spillover” effect. Because of China’s refusal to renounce the use of force against Taiwan and its denial to countenance any policy that recognized Taiwanese claims to sovereignty or independence, the role of bureaucratic practice and the creative interventions of political elites within in process of cross-Strait integration were limited.

### **The Concepts of Integration**

The studies of regional integration began in the 1950s during the blossoming in Europe of political efforts to build a united continent and “integrate” Western Europe. However, the term “integration” in common usage is often confusing. The dictionary definition of integration as “combining parts into a whole” leaves open wide ranges of ambiguity. (Hornby, 1948:556) In general, integration is based upon a strong cohesiveness within a social group. The process of integration is “non-coercive” in character and is self-consciously not the result of the use of force. (Lindberg and Scheingold, 1971; Jacob, 1964:4)

Functionalism, in its contemporary form, precedes integration theory and constitutes more than a theory. According to Joseph Frankel, functionalism is “a philosophy based upon attempts to eliminate friction inherent in interstate relations. This is done by ignoring state boundaries or by setting up international organizations devoted to the various functions arising from the satisfaction of man’s socio-economic needs.”(Frankel, 1973:48) The basic hypothesis of functionalism is that “national loyalties can be diffused and redirected into a framework for international cooperation in place of national competition and war.” (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 1981:419) David Mitrany, the first major proponent of functionalism, broached the doctrine of “ramification” whereby international cooperation in one field leads to cooperation in other fields. In particular, Mitrany indicated “economic unification would build up the foundations for political agreement.”(Mitrany, 1966:97) After Mitrany, scholars of integration developed their own definitions of integration. “Political integration,” in Philip Jacob’s view, “generally implies a relationship of *community* among people within the same political entity. That is, they are held together by mutual ties of one kind or another which give the group a feeling of identity and self-awareness.” (Jacob, 1964:4) Leon Lindberg regards political integration as a part of a broader process of international integration in which “a distinctive aspect of a more inclusive process whereby larger groupings emerge or are created among nations without the use of

force.” (Lindberg and S. Scheingold: 45) Their leaders may hold more or less reliable expectations, which may or may not be shared by the populations, that common problems will be resolved without recourse to large-scale violence. (Lindberg, 1970:649) Joseph S. Nye thinks political integration has been a particularly unclear term. Generally, it suggests that integration is a process “leading to a political community—a condition in which a group of people recognizes mutual obligations and some notion of common interests.” (Nye, 1965:84)

Too often there is an implicit assumption that integration is a “good thing,” or that more integration is always good for peace, prosperity, or whatever. Yet this is not necessarily true. The most serious shortcoming of integration theory, in Lindberg’s words, is “the failure to achieve conceptual clarity with regard to the dependent variable that is the putative object of analysis.” (Lindberg & Scheingold: 46) There is also no adequate scheme for translating the concept used by one scholar into that used by another. One of the most influential definitions of integration in the context of regional integration theory is Karl Deutsch’s concept of security-community—the attainment of “institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a “long” time, dependable expectations of “peaceful change” among its population.” (Deutsch, 1957:2) He defines political integration as the integration of political actors or political units in regard to their political behavior. In politics, integration is a relationship in which the behavior of such political actors, units, or components is *modified* from what it otherwise would be. (Deutsch: 2) Also influential has been Ernst B. Haas’s definition of integration as “the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities to a new center whose institutions process or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states.” (Haas, 1958:16) Amitai Etzioni defines integration as “the ability of a unit or system to maintain itself in the face of internal or external challengers.” (Etzioni, 1965:330) However, scholars who study international integration all focus on cooperation and integration among or between countries. In one common theme, they all focus on “what makes a system cohere through peaceful means.” (Hayward, 1970:920) Furthermore, they are all concerned with “the process by which loyalty is shifted from one center to another.” (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff: 424) In general, integration theorists hold that persons adopt integrative behavior because of expectations of joint rewards or penalties. (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff: 424)

### **Functionalism and Neo-functionalism**

Functionalism involves “international or supranational organizations for specific purposes.” (Deutsch: 222) Ernst B. Haas suggests that “functionalists are

interested in identifying those aspects of human needs and desires that exist and clamor for attention outside the realm of the political.” (Haas, 1964:6) According to Haas, “functionalists believe in the possibility of specifying technical and ‘non-controversial’ aspects of governmental conduct, and of weaving an ever-spreading web of international institutional relationships on the basis of meeting such needs. The theory of functionalism in international relations is based on functional organizations where each of these organizations will become in time *supranational*, that is, superior to its member governments in power and authority. In this way, the world’s nations will gradually become integrated into a single community within which war will be impossible. However, this hope seems rather uncertain because of all these organizations cannot legislate. Neither do these agencies have the power to tax, nor do most of them have any effective powers of sanctions.

Ernst B. Haas therefore has postulated that actors’ decisions to proceed with integration, or to oppose it, depend upon their expectations of gain or loss within the unit to be integrated. In Haas’s work *The Uniting of Europe*, he assumes that integration proceeds “as a result of the support of the relevant elites or vested interest groups of countries for essentially pragmatic rather than altruistic reasons.” (Haas, 1964:13) Similar to David Mitrany’s doctrine of “ramification,” Haas also advanced the concepts of “spillover,” which he refers to as “expansive logic of sector integration” to explain the increasing momentum of integrative activities. (Haas, 1964:38; 1961:372)

In general, neo-functionalism introduced two important innovations. First, it avoided the technical self-determination approach that suggests technical bureaucracy will determine and dominate the integration process. This technical self-determination approach seemed to lead to the exclusion of participation of political sectors in the process of integration. In contrast, neo-functionalists emphasize the relevance of political sectors involved in the integration process. (Haas, 1961:372) As a result, “political leadership” is an important part within neo-functionalism. Haas argues that integrative interest is based merely upon pragmatic considerations—for example, expectations of economic gain or improved technical functions. Therefore, he stresses the analysis and observation of actors’ perceptions and behavior toward integration. (Haas, 1961:285) Secondly, neo-functionalism’s deliberate design of institutions would lead to further integration, not only in the classical functionalist sense of the transfer of “lessons of benefits” of technical self-determination from one field to another, but through “the expansive logic of sector integration.” In short, the neo-functionalists argue that power and welfare cannot be kept radically separate and that true technical self-determination on non-controversial topics will be condemned

to triviality.

Neo-functionalists tend to emphasize solutions requiring more highly institutional involvement than found with the classical functionalist piecemeal approach. However, both approaches have certain fundamental points in common: First, both stress welfare. Though the neo-functionalists are more realistic about the impossibility of totally separating welfare from politics, they nonetheless stress its primary importance. Second, both tend to downgrade the role of symbols and identity and to emphasize utilitarian factors in community formation. Third, both tend to rely on pluralistic societies in which individuals and groups are free to shift their activities and loyalties. Fourth, both tend to emphasize the role of the technocrat, though the neo-functionalist technocrat is expected to have close links with the centers of power.

Yet, neo-functionalist approach has its shortcomings. First, neo-functionalism is mainly criticized for its Europe-centric character. It is embedded in modern pluralistic-industrial democratic polity such as that found in western European countries, though this has so far sufficed. If it had been applied to the Third World nations, it might have faced great difficulty and failure. Second, it is difficult to judge "how much successful integration" is to be made. Is it a condition of some actual shared values and rewards among units or some degree of general common identity or loyalty among governments? Third, it has not been falsified in the sense that a successful community has been achieved by virtue of processes not contained in the theory. Nor can the theory fully validated as long as it is unable to explain how and why a postulated condition is attained. (Haas, 1971:24)

As suggested earlier, neo-functionalism developed in the 1950s and 1960s, and its fate was linked to the fate of EC. Hence, as the EC later developed in ways other than theorists expected, the theory gradually fell into disfavor and was eventually abandoned in the mid-1970s. (Taylor, 1989:23) However, the concepts of neo-functionalism began to appear again after 1985. The later development of neo-functionalism is based on earlier functional thinking, which emphasizes transactional, technocratic problem-solving encouraged by spillover, or processes whereby functionally specific cooperation in a given policy area will encourage cooperation in related areas. (Huelshoff, 1993:621) Although the implication of "spillover" has been modified and has now somehow a different meaning from the old one, the tenet of neo-functionalism is still that the integration process spurs further integration and spillover. (Huelshoff: 622)

In summary, neo-functionalism argues, first, states cooperate in narrow socio-economic areas in the hope that, over time, this will strengthen their political cooperation. Secondly, states focus on through peaceful means to make a system cohere. Finally, they are concerned with the process by which loyalty is shifted from

one center to another. (Haas, 1958:16 & 38; 1961:372; Karl Deutsch, 1957:2; Groom & Taylor, 1975:2; Hayward, 1970:920; Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 1981:424) Following the logic of these accounts, the burgeoning socio-economic relations between Taiwan and China after the late 1970s should have spilled-over into more politically harmonious Sino-Taiwanese relations. Moreover, the two sides cooperate in narrow socio-economic areas that over time “spillover” effects will occur that will strengthen political cooperation. The next section starts to evaluate the integrative process across the Taiwan Strait between 1979 and 1996 by considering the “spill-over” hypothesis. The series of *SEF* and *ARATS* talks are examined in the following section in an attempt to explore the relevance between the economic and political aspects of cross-Strait interactions.

### **Neo-functionalism in the Sino-Taiwanese Case (1979-1996)**

According to functionalists’ point of view, integration is based on strong cohesiveness within a social group. The process of integration is a “non-coercive” characteristic and is self-consciously not the result of the use of force. (Lindberg and Scheingold; Jacob, 4) Therefore, those nations who share the same culture and historical background are easier to integrate. (Wu, H., 1995b:13) In the Sino-Taiwanese case, nationality identity seems never to have been a serious problem before the 1990s. Generally, the nationalism of China and Taiwan are built upon a common cultural legacy. Both emerged from the crisis of late imperial China. The two societies shared a sense of “Chineseness” and belonged to the “first symbolic universe” of Chinese culture. (Tu, 1991:12-14) Their overlapping national myths, according to George T. Crane, “provide a social rationale for integration.” (Crane, 1993:715) Although the two sides have been separated since 1949, both governments stressed national homogeneity and employ the image of a singular Chinese people to promote their plans for reunification prior to the 1990s.<sup>3</sup> In this sense, it could be argued that factors such as cultural homogeneity, the emotion of Chinese nationalism, historical background, the demand for economic interest, etc., would gradually draw the two Chinas together although the two sides strongly disagree over political issues.

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<sup>3</sup> The ROC government emphasises that ‘both the mainland and Taiwan are parts of Chinese territory. Helping to bring about national unification should be the common responsibility of all Chinese people.’ (*Guidelines for National Unification*, Taipei: The Mainland Affairs Council, ROC, 1). The Chinese government proclaims its basic position to national unification as being “one of ‘peaceful reunification’; ‘One Country, Two Systems’ and stresses that the Chinese people on both sides of the Strait all believe that there is only one China and espouse national reunification.” “To settle the Taiwan question and achieve national reunification - this is a sacrosanct mission of the entire Chinese people.” (*The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China*, Taiwan Affairs Office & Information Office, State Council, Beijing, China, 1993, 14 &17.

## Burgeoning Transactions, 1979-1996

Integrationist scholars argue that the process of integration starts from simple issues that pervasively expand to difficult issues among states. Furthermore, the effect of “spillover” will cause states to upgrade their common and shared interests. (Haas, 1961:372) Obviously, the dramatically increasing transaction flow that occurred between China and Taiwan after 1979 provides an attractive example for integrationists to examine their assumptions.

Mutual trade between Taiwan and China increased speedily from US\$77.76 million in 1979 to US\$11.3 billion in 1996 (Table 1). The quantity of trade transactions between the two sides of the Strait increased 145 times during 1979-1996. These figures, which were given by the Hong Kong Customs authorities, do not include illegal cross-Strait smuggling, trans-shipment trade and triangular trade through other countries. According to the ROC government’s estimates, actual cross-Strait trade between 1979 and 1995 reached US\$22.53 billion.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 1. Trade across the Taiwan Straits (1979-1995)\***

Unit: Million US\$

Year	Total two-way trade			From Taiwan to China			From China to Taiwan			Surplus
	Amount	+/- (%)	% of total	Amount	+/- (%)	% of total	Amount	+/- (%)	% of total	
1979	77.76		0.25	21.47		0.13	56.29		0.38	-34.82
1980	311.18	300.18	0.79	234.97	994.41	1.19	76.21	35.39	0.39	158.76
1981	459.33	47.61	1.05	384.15	63.49	1.70	75.18	-1.35	0.31	
1982	278.47	-39.37	0.68	194.45	-49.38	0.88	84.02	11.76	0.44	110.43
1983	247.69	-11.05	0.55	157.84	-18.83	0.63	89.85	6.94	0.44	67.99
1984	553.20	123.34	1.06	425.45	169.55	1.40	127.75	42.18	0.58	297.70
1985	1102.73	99.34	2.17	986.83	131.95	3.21	115.90	-9.28	0.58	870.93
1986	955.55	-13.35	1.49	811.33	-17.78	2.04	144.22	24.43	0.60	667.11
1987	1515.47	58.60	1.38	1226.53	51.18	2.29	288.94	100.35	0.83	937.59
1988	2720.91	79.54	2.47	2242.22	82.81	3.70	478.69	65.67	0.96	1763.53

<sup>4</sup> *Liang'an jingji tongji yuebao* (Monthly Statistical Report on Cross-Strait Economic Relations) (Taipei), February 1997, 57.



1989	3483.39	28.02	2.94	2896.49	29.18	4.38	586.90	22.61	1.22	2309.59
1990	4043.62	16.08	3.32	3278.26	13.18	4.88	765.36	30.41	1.40	2512.90
1991	5793.11	43.26	4.16	4667.15	42.36	6.12	1125.95	47.11	1.79	3541.20
1992	7406.90	27.86	4.83	6287.93	34.73	7.72	1118.97	-0.62	1.55	5168.96
1993	8688.98	17.31	5.36	7585.42	20.63	9.25	1103.56	-1.38	1.43	6481.86
1994	9809.50	12.90	9.30	8517.20	12.30	15.70	1292.30	17.10	2.20	7724.90
1995	11,456.97	16.79	9.80	9882.80	16.03	16.00	1574.17	21.81	3.00	8308.63
1996	11,300.00	-1.37	10.95	9719.61	-1.67		1582.39	2.24		14704.4

\* Trade via Hong Kong only (It does not include illegal smuggling, transshipment trade and triangular trade through other countries). The actual amount of across-Strait trade should be more than the figures have been showed.

**Source:** Hong Kong Customhouse, *Monthly Statistical Report on Cross-Strait Economic Relations 54* (Taipei), February 1997, 19-20.

Meanwhile, mutual dependence on trade between Taiwan and China also grew. The ROC's export dependence on the PRC market jumped from only 0.13% in 1979 to 16% in 1995. However, the PRC's export dependence on the ROC was relative low mainly due to Taipei's trade policy which only permits selective materials and products to be imported into the ROC because of considerations of national security. Aside from the burgeoning trade relations, Taiwanese businessmen had invested US\$27,140 million in 30,492 investment projects in mainland China by 1995 (Table 2), making Taiwan the second largest foreign investor in the mainland China after Hong Kong and Macao.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 2 Taiwanese Investments toward China, 1991-1995**

Unit: Million US\$

	1991 <sup>※</sup>	1992	1993	1994	1995	Total
Cases	3,815	6,430	10,948	6,247	3,052*	30,492*
Amount	3,450	5,540	9,970	5,397	2,783*	27,140*

<sup>※</sup> The figure includes investments before 1991. The ROC government formally ended the ban on Taiwanese businessmen investing in mainland China at the end of 1990.

\* Figures are issued by September 1995 only.

**Source:** Department of Trade and Economic Co-operation, PRC. *Monthly Statistical Report on Cross-Strait Economic Relations 42* (Taipei), February 1996, 28.

Since the end of 1987 when Taipei lifted its ban on its citizens visiting their relatives live on mainland, the interactions between the societies across the Taiwan

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 20.

Strait have shown noteworthy trends. In 1988, about 450,000 Taiwanese visited mainland China; in 1989 – the year of the Tiananmen incident – this had grown to 500,000; and in 1990, 1991 and 1992, the annual totals swelled to over 900,000, 940,000 and 1,500,000 respectively. (Lin, C., 1993:133) Although there remain some restrictions on mainlanders visiting Taiwan, the number had grown remarkably from 28 in 1987 to 46,634 in 1995.<sup>6</sup> In 1988, the residents of China's Fujian province made 130,000 telephone calls to Taiwan. By 1989 the number had increased to 450,000 and in 1990 it was 1,009,000.<sup>7</sup> From the beginning of 1989 to the end of September 1995, Taiwanese made total 134,546, 234 calls to China and received 98,849,831 calls from mainland China.<sup>8</sup>

In September 1988, Taipei unprecedented sent Academic Sinica scholars to attend the 22nd International Science Congress in Beijing. Since then, cross-Strait cultural exchanges, such as academic conference, athlete games, and religious activities, have never stopped. By 1995, a total of 17,973 people had been to Taiwan on cultural or educational visits.<sup>9</sup> On balance, the social interactions across the Taiwan Strait exhibited a greater integrative than disintegrative trend even under the shadow of divisions at the political level between Taipei and Beijing.

Many analysts, such as Hsin-hsing Wu, argue that the two Chinas have followed the concept of “spillover” to develop their relations since 1979. (Wu, H., 1995b:14) Wu indicates that Beijing put forward the policy of “three links and four exchanges” in 1979, which corresponded to the spirit of integration, i.e., contact and exchanges, starting from non-controversial and simple problems between nations. Wu also notes that Taipei and Beijing sent high ranking “non-official” delegations to meet in Singapore in April 1993, and argues the existence of an emerging “Greater China Economy” as two examples demonstrating that “this approach has fostered a more friendly political atmosphere across the Taiwan Strait in the past several years.” (Wu, H., 1995b:14)

### Spillover or Deadlock?

Of course, it may be argued that the increasing trade volumes merely reflect the desires of commercial interests among countries that have nothing to do with successful political integration. Stanley Hoffmann argues that “low politics” (culture and economic affairs, etc.) are less critically in need of integration. Furthermore, integration at a “low” level will not necessarily spill over into “high politics” (national security, sovereignty, and military affairs, etc.) which are much more complicated

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<sup>6</sup> According to the statistics from the ROC Immigration Bureau in *Monthly Statistical Report on the Cross-Strait Economic Relations* 42, 38.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Direct telephone calls from Fujian to Taiwan’, *Shijie ribao*, December 26, 1990, 11.

<sup>8</sup> According to the statistics of the ROC Transportation and Communication Department.

<sup>9</sup> MAC ROC, *The Annual Report of Mainland Affairs Council*, 124.

areas. (Frankel, 1973:55) Ernst Haas also stresses the importance of analysis and observation of the political leaderships' perceptions and behavior toward integration. Haas argues that the integrative interests based only on pragmatic considerations – for example, expectations of economic gain or improving technical functions. He also argues that integration would be “ephemeral” unless such an integrative process is supported by a political commitment on the part of statesmen. (Haas, 1958:285)

The Sino-Taiwanese case, in George T. Crane's view, is even more vexing, with its unique and confounding features. Crane argues “economic complementarities between the two sides [China and Taiwan] are high, culture affinities are evident, but political obstacles are formidable.” (Crane, 1993:705) He explains that the cross-Strait trade could not be discussed because it is still defined as political by the government. Thus, Crane suggests that the expected “spillover” of economic cooperation into political cooperation, the centerpiece of theorizing about the European Community, may be delayed for China and Taiwan; the two must settle fundamental political questions before they can formalize economic integration. (Crane, 705) Indeed, at a time when cross Taiwan Strait economic interaction had developed an upward trend, both Taipei and Beijing governments identified such transactions were not simply spontaneous acts of individual enterprise, but rather were part of the overall national strategy.<sup>10</sup> As the PRC's former President Yang Shangkun said in December 1992, “While economic laws are to be observed, economic work toward Taiwan should serve the political task of realizing peaceful unification.”<sup>11</sup> Lately, the PRC President Jiang Zemin reiterated this philosophy at the Working Conference on Taiwan in April 1994 and clearly pointed out that:

Enhancing cross-Strait economic exchanges and cooperation will contribute to the performance of both sides' economy on the one hand, and increase the mutual understanding and consensus on the other hand. All of these will be useful to boost the development of cross-Strait relations and national reunification.<sup>12</sup>

Also, Taipei defined its powerful economic force as the only weapon in the competition with China. According to words from the formal report of the ROC's Mainland Affairs Council:

Given the preponderance of the Chinese Communists in military strength, sophisticated technologies, foreign diplomacy and participation in international

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<sup>10</sup> ‘Economic Work Toward Taiwan As the Foundation for Political Reunification’, *China Times*, April 16, 1994, 1.

<sup>11</sup> Yang Shang-k'un, “Speech at the National Conference on Taiwan Work,” (December 6, 1990), in *Mainland China's Policies Toward Taiwan: Selected Document, 1949-1991*, ed. Kuo Li-min (Taipei: Yung-yeh Publishers, 1992), vol.2, 1143.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Economic Work Toward Taiwan As the Foundation for Political Reunification’, 1.

organizations, we should carefully exert our economic superiority and strive to maintain our economic power to maximize our room for survival. (Kao, 1993:29)

However, it is doubtful that simply relying on the increasing transactions between the two Chinas will result in political integration across the Taiwan Strait if the socioeconomic and political conditions of the two sides remain unbalanced. In general, there were four main obstacles to Sino-Taiwanese integration during 1979-96. First, neither China nor Taiwan accepted the peaceful solutions from the other. Taipei refused Beijing's "one country, two systems" proposal which intends to subordinate Taipei. In Taipei's view, the "one country, two systems" premise was nothing but a demand for the Taiwan area to surrender to Chinese Communists. According to Taipei authority, Beijing's proposal of "one country, two systems" was infeasible and unacceptable to the people of Taiwan.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, Beijing did not want to accept Taipei's integration model, that was, unification in gradual phases on the principles of reason, peace, parity, and reciprocity. Beijing claimed that Taipei was trying to prolong its separation from the mainland and had even set up barriers to curb the further development of the interchanges across the Straits.<sup>14</sup> More importantly, whether Beijing's proposal as an integration proposal remains doubtful. China's aim of "one country" policy was not "integration," but "re-unification." Also, Beijing's strategy of "two systems" is incompatible with the very meaning of integration, which means "combining parts into a whole."

Second, Beijing's refusal to exclude the possibility of the use of force against Taiwan, and its strategy of isolating the ROC internationally constantly offended the Taiwanese people, devaluing Beijing's efforts to court the Taiwanese Chinese, and caused the Taiwanese people suspected Beijing's sincerity concerning the peaceful resolution of the Sino-Taiwanese issue. According to a public opinion poll in 1996, 75.7% of Taiwanese believed that China is prepared use of force against Taiwan, (Cheng, 1996:92) especially after the PRC held its guided missile exercise in the Taiwan Strait in March 1996. Although the PRC preferred a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan problem, it also announced that it would never promise to renounce using force against Taiwan under any circumstance. This sort of tension cast a shadow over cross-Strait relations and undermined integration. The tension finally ignited the Taiwan Strait crises in 1995 and 1996. In this regard, the integrationist's main argument of "peace-oriented" is not fit for explaining the cross-Strait interactions.

### **Table 3 Public Opinion on Taiwanese Independence**

<sup>13</sup> *There Is No 'Taiwan Question,' There Is Only A 'China Question'* (Taipei: MAC, ROC, 1993), 7.

<sup>14</sup> *The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China* (Beijing: Taiwan Affairs Office & Information Office, State Council, 1993), 23.

Date	Survey conductor	Approval / disapprove (%)
11 / 1988	PORF	2 / -
08 / 1989	PORF	16 / -
12 / 1989	PORF	8.2 / -
06 / 1990	PORF	12.5 / 67.0
10 / 1990	Lianhebao	21 / 57
12 / 1990	PORF	12.0 / 61.7
06 / 1991	PORF	12.7 / 65.3
09 / 1991	Lianhebao	18 / 54
10 / 1991	Lianhebao	14 / 58
10 / 1992	PORF	15.1 / 63.3
10 / 1992	Lianhebao	16 / 51
03 / 1993	Lianhebao	17 / 49
05 / 1993	PORF	23.7 / 55.3
04 / 1994	Lianhebao	33 / 41
02 / 1995	Lianhebao	24 / 42
06 / 1995	Lianhebao	28 / 36

**Source:** 1. Mainland Policy: Selected Opinion Polls Conducted in Taiwan, 1988-92, Mainland Affairs Council ROC (Taipei), 1992, 6.  
2. Zhongyang ribao (Central Daily), November 1, 1992, 1; May 11, 1993, 1.  
3. Lianhebao (The United News), June 20, 1995, 10.

Third, the Taiwan independence movement was considered a substantial obstacle to the integration of the two Chinas. Although most Taiwanese eschewed formal declarations of independence to avoid antagonizing the militarily powerful China, the Taiwanese-orientated Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) fared quite well in the 1992 parliamentary elections under the banner “one China, one Taiwan.”<sup>15</sup> As Table 3 has shown, the proportion of Taiwanese people who support Taiwanese independence increased significantly from 1988 to 1995. This development alarmed PRC leaders. PRC President Jiang Zemin reiterated China’s right to counter Taiwanese independence and indicated that it “will never condone any maneuver for Taiwan independence.”<sup>16</sup>

Fourth, the difference between the political institutions, social systems, even life styles of China and Taiwan also hampered the prospect of their integration. After five decades of division under two different systems, there was an obvious disparity in economic and social development between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait by 1996. The fundamental reason why China cannot be unified, in the ROC’s government view, was “that the political system and level of economic development in mainland China, and its frequent large-scale and violent power struggles, have destroyed the people’s confidence in the CCP regime.”<sup>17</sup> Table 4 demonstrates that many Taiwanese after visiting China might prefer to adopt the course of maintaining

<sup>15</sup> On 21 December 1991, for the election of 325 seats in the National Assembly of Taiwan, the ruling KMT won 254, the DPP won 66, and other parties and independents won 5 seats. Some in the DPP had sought to use the election as a popular referendum on whether Taiwan should become an independent country, separate from mainland China.

<sup>16</sup> *The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China*, 24. The latest formal warning against Taiwanese independence came from Jiang Zemin’s speech at of the Conference on the Taiwan Strait Relations. “If Taiwan declares independence or foreign forces create separation on the island.” he said, “we will take drastic measures.” (*Renmin ribao*, December 16, 1992).

<sup>17</sup> *Relations Across the Taiwan Strait* (Taipei: MAC, ROC, 1994), 21.

the *status quo* to a long period of time or disintegration rather than integration. Put simply, there was little intention to enhance further integration on high politics level in the near future.

**Table 4 Taiwan People's Expectations toward the Relations between Taiwan and Mainland**

Unit: %

	February 1994	August 1995
Taiwanese dependence as soon as possible	4.4	5.9
Unification with Mainland as soon as possible	4.2	2.8
Maintain of status quo then independence	8.1	9.9
Maintain of status quo then unification	23.4	22.7
Maintain of status quo, wait- and- see	32.3	35.4
Maintain of status quo forever	12.5	11.1
No comment	15	12.1
(N)	1581	1633

**Source:** I-yiag Cheng, *Mainland Policy and the Cross-Strait Relations* (Taipei: MAC, ROC, 1996), 89.

#### **Limitation of cross-Strait Integration - the Case of SEF and ARATS Talks (1991-1996)**

Integration is usually a matter of sovereign states, each with a distinct national mythology, working together to rationalize their economic interdependencies. (Crane, 1993:713) Thus, the mutual recognition of sovereignty is a prior condition for cooperation among state leaders on economic policies, exchange rates, tariffs, and macroeconomic coordination. Take the example of the EC, which rests on the reciprocal surrender of power to control national economics. It is an attempt to transcend state sovereignty and construct a supranational organization. (Haas, 1967:327) But this process proceeds from an initial recognition of the right of national economic management. Indeed, "sovereignty cannot be ceded if it is not first granted." (Crane, 1993:713) It is obvious that China and Taiwan did not fit this pattern in the period of 1979-96. Politically, neither recognized the other as a sovereign entity. As a result, the way they had developed would not follow European practice. George T. Crane, therefore, indicated three differences between the case of the EC and the cross-Taiwan Strait interactions. (Crane, 1993:713-715) First, direct negotiation of the details of economic cooperation between China and Taiwan was constrained. Second, the possibility that low-level mediation of economic issues might "spillover" into broader political cooperation was also hampered by the lack of recognition between Beijing and Taipei. Third, the complications of spillover suggest that if deeper integration of China and Taiwan is to occur, it is likely to be as the result

of a political transformation, not economic intermingling. In sum, the lack of mutual recognition was a serious obstacle to Chinese fuller integration between 1979 and 1996. Although economic ties between China and Taiwan had grown in spite of political barriers, further cooperation was limited by contested sovereignty. The SEF and ARATS talks between 1991 and 1995 demonstrated this difficulty.

#### The establishment of the SEF and ARATS (1991)

The rapid expansion of economic transactions and the widening scope of sporting, academic, cultural, religious and the other exchanges between China and Taiwan after 1979 raised many practical problems. They included trade disputes, document authentication, marital relations, illegal entries, property inheritance and so on. In the absence of inter-governmental contacts Taipei established the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) in February 1991 as a technically non-governmental organization empowered to negotiate authoritatively over such matters with Beijing. It received the legal endorsement of the ROC's Mainland Affairs Council in April 1991. Beijing soon followed suit in establishing the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS), which also was technically a non-governmental body empowered with similar authority.

Although officially private, neither ARATS nor SEF is a purely civilian organization. The SEF is two-thirds government funded and one-third by private contributions. (Wu, L., 1994:98 ) Both the President and Chairman Koo Chen-fu (a member of the KMT Central Standing Committee) have designated the directors of SEF. ARATS has sixty-five board members ranking from professionals in the mainland's scientific, commercial, and educational fields, to government officials. A membership analysis of 1992 shows that fifty of them were either card-carrying Chinese Communist Party members or previous municipal and provincial high-level officeholders who continued to receive government salaries. (Ding, 1992:121) It is clear that the two sides were unofficial in name only.

#### Dialogues between Beijing and Taipei (1991-1995)

In November 1991, members of the SEF were authorized by the Mainland Affairs Council of the ROC to go to the mainland to negotiate with ARATS on the issue of taking joint measures to crack down on maritime smuggling and piracy. However, negotiations soon became deadlocked over the Chinese government's insistence on inserting "the principle of one China" in the preamble of the proposed agreement. (Chiu, 1993:10) On May 20, 1992, the Standing Deputy Chairman of the ARATS Tang Shubei proposed a compromise solution to resolve the issue of the "the principle of one China." He suggested both sides temporarily would table the issue of the meaning of "one China," and take a more pragmatic approach to resolve some of

the practical issues generated by the exchanges between Taiwan and China.<sup>18</sup> Once this issue was resolved, it appeared that both sides would reach agreement on the substance of the issues, but it did not happen. ARATS insisted that the proposed agreement would be applicable only to the Taiwan Straits area, while the SEF wanted to have a more general application of the agreement.<sup>19</sup>

The SEF and ARATS also began to negotiate two other agreements, dealing with the question of notarization of official documents issued by the Chinese regime and the question of tracing and compensating for lost registered mail. These negotiations again became deadlocked over the issue of how to express “the principle of One China” in the agreement, but through prolonged efforts, both sides agreed that the “One China” principle could be presented verbally but would not be included in the written agreement. (Chiu, 1993:11)

However, Taipei’s Mainland Policy reached a new stage in February-March 1991, when the National Unification Council—a presidential task force set up in October 1990—and the Executive Yuan adopted the *Guidelines for National Unification*.<sup>20</sup> On April 27-29, 1993, the leader of SEF and ARATS, Koo Chen-fu and Wang Daohan, held formal talks in Singapore. Agreement was reached about important technical matters necessary for the conduct of economic relations. Although there was no agreement about the protection of Taiwanese investments on the mainland, both sides declared the meeting to be a great success. Interestingly, they disagreed about its significance. Beijing professed to see it as an important milestone on the way to eventual unification. Taipei saw it as demonstrating the equality between the two sides and as a boost to its own international standing.<sup>21</sup> However, it appears these talks between the SEF and ARATS demonstrated the willingness of both sides to work through ambiguous political circumstances but they did not serve as forum for national economic issues. In the meantime, they were relatively low-level channels used to resolve narrowly defined problems. Many talks, which had gone quite smoothly at the outset when they were confined to technical issues, broke down

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<sup>18</sup> This compromise solution is also known as the “Common Consensus of 1992.” *Shijie ribao* (World Daily), May 21, 1992, 2.

<sup>19</sup> *SEF Yearbook 1991* (Taipei: SEF, 1992), 58-59.

<sup>20</sup> *Guidelines for National Unification* divides the process of national unification into the following three terms: (1) short term—a phase of exchanges and reciprocity; (2) medium term—a phase of mutual trust and co-operation and; (3) long term—a phase of consultation and unification. See Huang Kun-huei, *The Key Points and Content of the Guidelines for National Unification* (Taipei: MAC, 1991), 5.

<sup>21</sup> For more details about the “Koo-Wang Talks,” see Hungdah Chiu, “The Koo-Wang Talks and the Prospect of Building Constructive and Stable Relations Across the Taiwan Straits,” *Issues & Studies* 29, no. 8: 1-36; Michael Yahuda, “The Foreign Relations of Greater China,” in David Shambaugh ed., *Greater China: The Next Superpowers?* 50-51; Linjun Wu, “How Far Can the ROC’s Informal Diplomacy Go?” *Issues & Studies* 30, no. 7 (1994): 98-100; and Sung Kuo-cheng, “The Koo-Wang Talks: Their Significance and Function in Taiwan-Mainland Relations,” *Issues & Studies* 29, no. 5 (May 1993).



after Beijing insisted on clarification of the “One China” issue.

**Table 5 The SEF and ARATS talks (1991-1996)**

Date	Place	Agenda	Results
1 1991 Nov. 03-07	Beijing	Maritime smuggling and piracy.	Disagree the ‘One China’ principle, and the definition of ‘Taiwan Strait’, ‘maritime area.’ Negotiations become deadlocked.
2 1992 March 22-25	Beijing	Notarization of official documents and registered mail.	Disagree the ‘One China’ principle. Negotiations brake down.
3 Oct. 27-31	Hong Kong	Notarization of official documents and registered mail.	Disagree the ‘One China’ principle. Negotiations become deadlocked.
4 1993 March 26-28	Beijing	Notarization of official documents and registered mail.	Reach agreement about notarization of official documents and registered mail transactions
5 April 07-10	Beijing	‘Koo-Wang talks’ preparatory meeting.	Sign the draft agreement about notarization of official documents and registered mail transactions; arrange the procedure of the ‘Koo-Wang talks’
6 April 27-29	Singapore	The non-governmental, economic, practical, and functional issues cross-Strait.	Sign an agreement of routine consultations, registered mail transactions; cultural and scientific exchanges, and document verification.
7 Aug 28-Sep 2	Beijing	The 1st following discussions of the ‘Koo-Wang talks.’	Disagree about the meeting procedure; meeting shift to an earlier time.
8 Nov. 02-07	Xiamen	The 2nd following discussions of the ‘Koo-Wang talks.’ Repatriation of illegal immigrants and hijacker, fishermen arguments, and mutual visiting arrangement between two organizations.	Meeting cut off due to the disagreement to the jurisdiction and proposal of repatriation process.
9 Dec. 18-22	Taipei	The 3rd following discussions of the ‘Koo-Wang talks’ Repatriation of illegal immigrants and hijacker, fishermen arguments, and mutual visiting arrangement between two organizations	Meeting reach no agreement because of the disagreement to the jurisdictional and humanitarian problems.
10 1994 Jan.31-Feb.25	Beijing	The 1st vice-Chairmen meeting between two organizations	Reach an agreement in general affairs between two organizations and issue joint news after meeting.
11 March 25-31	Beijing	The 4th following discussions of the ‘Koo-Wang talk’ Repatriation of illegal immigrants and hijacker, fishermen arguments, and mutual visiting arrangement between two organizations	Dispute about the issues of sovereignty and jurisdiction. No agreement reached.
12 July31-Aug.7	Taipei	The 5th following discussions of the ‘Koo-Wang talk’ The 2nd vice-Chairmen meeting between two organizations	Reach a common understanding about staff mutual visits, enlargement of mail transactions, cultural and scientific exchanges, property inheritance, and document verification.
13 Nov.21-29	Nanking	The 6th following discussions of the ‘Koo-Wang talk’	No formal agreement reached about the details of staff mutual visits, enlargement of mail transactions; cultural and scientific exchanges, property inheritance and document verification.
14 1995 Jan.21-29	Beijing	The 7th following discussion of the ‘Koo-Wang talk’ The 3rd meeting of vice-Chairmen between two organizations	Continue discussing the given issues, but without any agreement. There appear serious differences on procedural matters.
15 May 26-29	Taipei	The 1st preparatory meeting of the second ‘Koo-Wang talks’	Confirm the agenda and procedure of the second ‘Koo-Wang talks’
16 June 27 -	Taipei	The 2nd preparatory meeting of the	(Postponed)

July 01		second 'Koo-Wang talks'	
17 July 20-23	Taipei	The second 'Koo-Wang talks'	(Postponed)
18 1996	Taipei	The third 'Koo-Wang talks'	(Postponed)

Source: 1. *China Times*, May 28, 1995, .2; 2. Hungdah Chiu, "The Koo-Wang Talks and the Prospect of Building Constructive and Stable Relations Across the Taiwan Straits," *Issues & Studies* 29, no. 8: 1-36

It was hoped that after the Koo-Wang talk in spring 1993, the SEF and the ARATS would carry out their functions more smoothly. From a long-term perspective, this would certainly have contributed to stable and constructive relations between Taiwan and China. Moreover, as Haas's argument, the negotiating process whereby Beijing and Taipei could be encouraged to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities to a new center whose institutions process over the pre-existing systems. However, as table 5 has indicated, it was difficult to reach such harmonious relations because the basic issues—the PRC's threat of using force against Taiwan and its policy of isolating Taiwan in the international community—remained unresolved. While cross-Strait economic relations continued without interruption, Beijing decided to cut off all dialogue between ARATS and the SEF soon after the 1995 Taiwan Straits military crisis—a crisis that was itself provoked by Beijing's fury over Taipei's continuing "pragmatic diplomacy."<sup>22</sup> After 1995, cross-Strait political relations reverted to hostility in spite of the increasing socio-economic exchanges. It appears that the neo-functional main theme of the "spillover" effect did not take place in the two-Chinese case.

### Conclusion

If one looks at Sino-Taiwanese relations between 1979 and 1996 from an economic or cultural perspective, then they could become an integrative union—even a reunited country—quite naturally. As integrationist analysts argue, those nations that share the same culture and historical background are easier to integrate. In their view, the rapid growth in transaction flows between China and Taiwan should inevitably have spilled over into political phenomena. Interestingly, Sino-Taiwanese relations during 1979-1996 display two features. The first is that the political atmosphere between the two sides did not affect cross-Strait economic transactions. Second, changes in the quantity of transactions did not on the whole lead to changes in the quality of cross-Strait relations. In other words, there was no spillover effect.

An examination of the talks between SEF and ARATS shows that they were a seeming institutional involvement between China and Taiwan. However, the developing patterns of 1979-96 Sino-Taiwanese relations suggest that the political

<sup>22</sup> On June 16 of 1995, Beijing announced the postponement of the second round Koo-Wang Talks. ARATS gives notice to the SEF to delay meetings between two sides. It does not resume talks at the end of the twentieth century.

differences across the Taiwan Strait undermined the possibility of spillover from socio-economic issues into broader political cooperation. The example of the SEF and ARATS series of talks demonstrates the way both China and Taiwan developed did not simply follow the functionalist perspective because of the unsettled sovereignty disputes.

Furthermore, neo-functionalists suggest that the instrumental motives of political elites are perhaps the most important factor in determining the role that nations play in the process of integration or disintegration. (Haas, 1958:285) As the case outlined has shown, Beijing's policy toward Taiwan was dominated by political nationalism and affected only marginally by economic development. The economic or political ties between China and Taiwan were not part of any organized effort. However, the increasing economic interactions worried Taiwan's leaders who feared that economic dependence might someday become a political disadvantage. It also distressed conservatives in the PRC, who saw "socialism" slipping away.<sup>23</sup> Almost all the policies and measures governing cross-Strait economic relations adopted by the two sides carried political overtones between 1979 and 1996.

Neo-functionalism does not provide a convincing explanation of 1979-1995 cross-Taiwan Strait relations though it successfully predicted that the path of European integration. The reasons are: first, there is no serious sovereignty dispute among European states; second, there is frequent communication among European states so that negotiation can proceed effectively; third, a military coercive strategy has not been used during the process of European integration. In the Sino-Taiwanese case, however, the possibility of a state of war remained high. These relations by no means followed the "peace-orientation" emphasis of neo-functionalism. In the absence of direct communication between China and Taiwan, the idea of a unified political system remained impracticable.

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<sup>23</sup> See Hu Yaobang, "About the Work of Ideological Politics," *Remin Ribao*, January 2, 1983, 1; An-chia Wu, *Cross Taiwan Strait Relations: Retrospect and Prospect* (Taipei: Yung-ye Books, 1996), 30-31; Center For China Affairs, *Breaking Out: An Attempt by Zhao Ziyang and a New Generation* (Hong Kong: Mirror Books, 1998), 93-99.

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