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Review of "Consolidating Taiwan's Democracy"

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decision-making systems make serious talks difficult. In Taiwan, cross-Strait relations are bound up in bitter partisan electoral politics; on the Mainland, Taiwan policy is connected to rivalries among the elite.

The last section of this volume is devoted to examining various formulas that might reduce tensions, if not actually reconcile the two sides. Bush explains why various models for reorganizing China's polity to include Taiwan, such as federalism or a confederation, face almost insurmountable barriers on the Mainland. He concludes by proposing a measured programme of "self-strengthening" for Taiwan, not to facilitate independence, but to prevent a lack of confidence that "will place it at the mercy of Beijing and render it overly dependent upon the United States" (p. 339). This short review cannot do justice to the richness of Bush's study. *Untying the Knot* does not offer easy solutions to cross-Strait relations, but does force readers to take a realistic view of the potential for long-term peace between Taiwan and the Mainland.

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STEVEN PHILLIPS

CONSOLIDATING TAIWAN'S DEMOCRACY. *By John F. Copper. Lanham (MD), Boulder (CO), New York, Toronto, Oxford: University Press of America. 2005. v, 191 pp. US\$30.00, paper. ISBN 0-7618-2977-6.*

John Copper's latest book continues to emphasize the importance of electoral politics in Taiwan's democratization process. It examines in detail Taiwan's 2000 presidential election and 2001 legislative election, which are significant because they represent the peaceful transition of power from the ruling Kuomintang Party (KMT) to the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). At the time of the 2000 election, many hailed it as a watershed event marking the consolidation of Taiwan's democracy. Contrary to this view, Copper argues that these elections did not in fact contribute to the consolidation of Taiwan's democracy. Rather, the political impasse that Taiwan has experienced since the 2000 election has meant that much-needed political reform has stalled, the economy, national security and foreign policy have suffered and social polarization has increased, impeding Taiwan's democratic development. In his final analysis, the underlying reason for this is that the transfer of political power to the opposition occurred "prematurely"—the DPP was not ready to govern, and the KMT was not prepared to be a loyal opposition.

In the first three chapters Copper delivers a rich description of the candidate selection processes, the candidates and their campaign platforms, the campaign processes, the major issues of public concern, the electoral outcomes and their immediate implications, all within the wider domestic and international political context. Therefore, the book is useful not only

for those who are particularly interested in these two elections, but is also instructive to new students of Taiwanese politics. In the concluding chapter, it also becomes apparent that these elections raise interesting theoretical questions as to what democratic consolidation means and by what criteria we should judge whether a democracy is consolidated.

Copper's analysis of why the DPP got into power in the 2000 election is interesting in this light. Apart from the peculiarities of Taiwan's electoral system, two factors seem most important: the KMT's internecine struggle and the China effect. According to Copper, it was the split of the traditional KMT vote between James Soong and Lien Chan that gave Chen Shui-bian the slim margin of victory. Further, had China not attempted to pressure the Taiwanese electorate into choosing candidates deemed to be more in line with its national interests, a significant bloc of swing votes might not have gone to the DPP. However, this suggests that the reasons for which the opposition party got into power were exogenous to its ability to do so, begging the question of whether Taiwan really had a political opposition that could truly challenge the KMT's electoral dominance, and thus, whether Taiwan's democracy was as far advanced as it is usually thought to be. It would seem that more serious treatment of this fundamental question would have added greater value to Copper's later arguments against the success of Taiwan's democratic consolidation.

The elections of the mid-1990s have since demonstrated the increasing importance of the national identity issue on Taiwanese politics, making Copper's treatment of Taiwanese identity as a major cause of the political gridlock between the "blue" and "green" camps both interesting and timely. However, further elaboration could have been made in the introductory chapter to help readers understand the complex process in which Taiwanese identity has developed, particularly the role that elections held since the mid-1990s have played. Given that Copper has claimed Taiwanese identity as a significant cause of political impasse in Taiwan, it would also be worthwhile to evaluate the impact of the 2000 and 2001 elections on the development of Taiwanese identity, and how the politics of identity may continue to affect Taiwan's democratic consolidation in the future.

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NOTES FROM TOYOTA LAND: An American Engineer in Japan. By *Darius Mehri*. Ithaca (New York): Cornell University Press. 2005. xviii, 231 pp. (Pictures.) US\$26.00, cloth. ISBN 0-8014-4289-3.

Mehri, an American engineer who travelled in 1996 to Japan to work for three years as a computer simulation engineer at a Toyota-group company, builds on his experience to offer a critical view of organizational culture in a