

# **DEMOCRATIZATION OF LENINIST PARTIES**

## **CAUSES FOR THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY AND CHINESE NATIONALIST PARTY'S DIVERGENCE OF REFORM OUTCOMES DURING THE LATE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

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Jasper Alphons Geert Roctus

Studentennummer: 01500695

Promotor(en): Prof. Dr. Bart Dessen

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## General Preface

The topic of the democratization—or the lack thereof—in Greater China has been the focus of my interest ever since I decided to pursue a Bachelor of Arts in Eastern Languages and Cultures at Ghent University. For my bachelor dissertation, I was able to conduct research on a zoomed-in topic related to this overlying subject and attempted to answer this question: Why did the People's Republic of China's (PRC) former paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, oppose democratic reforms during the late 1970s and early 1980s in face of calls for liberalization both within and outside the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). While researching this subject led to some satisfactory conclusions, I was left hungry for more. One unanswered question that fell outside the concise scope of my bachelor's thesis in particular inspired me to continue my research during my subsequent master's degree, namely: Despite the fact that the PRC and the Republic of China (ROC/Taiwan) both claim a common revolutionary forerunner in Sun Yat-sen and, nominally, adhere to his ideology of the Three Principles of the People, why did the PRC retain its authoritarian ways while Taiwan eventually democratized?

During my subsequent preliminary study into this topic, I came to realize that the oblique influence of the ideology of Leninism on Sun Yat-sen and the PRC and ROC's governmental systems, was a knowledge gap in need of filling. The diverging interpretations of the concept in the two entities is in my opinion a somewhat unrepresented, yet decisive, determinant in the eventual success (ROC) and failure (PRC) of democratization. In the first three chapters of this thesis, I hope to contribute a useful framework for further research through an analysis of different Leninist applications, their relation to democratization, and their influence on Sun Yat-sen. In the final section, I will provide an answer of the main research question. Working on the thesis was—despite the COVID-related impediments—beyond doubt a joyous experience, which I hope to export to a PhD mandate.

Finally, I would like to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Bart Dessein, for his invaluable advice during the writing process of this thesis, as well as for further reinforcing my interest in contemporary Chinese politics through his thought-provoking classes. Also, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the faculty of Arts and Philosophy and its staff, as well as Ghent University in general, for allowing a certain degree of flexibility in face of the ongoing corona crisis. Graduating during the lockdown has been challenging, to say the least, but the university's efforts in limiting the influence due to the virus are much appreciated.

Jasper Roctus, Ghent, Belgium, August 12, 2020.

## Preamble Concerning COVID-19

Since I am mainly engaged in the humanities, the prime form of academic research constitutes review of primary and secondary literature. This means that unlike certain sciences where from the onsite testing or experiments are required, I was able to write my master's dissertation along my original plan, receiving a relatively minor direct impact from COVID-19.

This sadly does not mean that I have not encountered indirect research impediments due to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. I would summarize the prime "COVID-19 obstacles" as follows: (1) losing access to a small but significant number of sources, which were not available online, nor requestable for scanning in the Arts and Philosophy faculty library (mostly Chinese-language sources in the Taiwan Research Centre); (2) spending considerable time and resources to search for sources online that I would otherwise have directly accessed in the faculty library. In some cases, I had to search for "loopholes" by asking (foreign) acquaintances, thereby yielding even more time; (3) being unable to conduct research in a suitable environment due to the lockdown, thereby lowering my research productivity.

The third point probably presented the most significant repercussions for my master's dissertation. Being confined to a home not suited for self-study between March and July 2020 resulted in considerably lower research speed and focus in comparison to my usual productive studies in the faculty library. Having written most of my previous papers buried between the ever-silent books in said library, the contrast of suddenly having to deal with clamorous family members was especially striking. Therefore, I am extremely grateful that by mid-July Belgium and my home country of the Netherlands had reopened their borders, and Ghent University's student dormitory decided to end its lockdown measures. Thus, I could finally return to my room and use the university's self-study facilities during the last month before the deadline.

In conclusion, on the one hand I consider myself fortunate not to be engaged in a fieldwork/experiment heavy major; on the other hand, I still dearly regret the many miscellaneous research impediments due to COVID-19. It is however what it is. At the very least, the corona-obstacles served as an extra difficult final test for my future PhD ambitions, which I hope to have passed.

This preamble was approved by the student (Jasper Roctus) and the supervisor (Prof. Dr. Bart Desein) after consultation.

Jasper Roctus, Ghent, Belgium, August 12, 2020.

## Synopsis (English)

This dissertation elaborates how the starkly different outcomes of the democratization processes in the People's Republic of China and Republic of China (Taiwan) during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century came into being. To this purpose, the question is asked as to why the Kuomintang (KMT) succeeded in its democratic reforms, while the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), to this day, has held on to its monopoly on political power.

Since the CCP and KMT share a similar Leninist background, a concise theoretical framework on Leninism and the ideology's influence on democratization is constructed. Subsequently, a brief explanation on the importance of the temporal and spatial settings of democratization and the influence of Sun Yat-sen on the ideology of both the KMT and CCP is provided. Through these variables, this dissertation lists ten reasons to elucidate the success and failure of the process of democratization in, respectively, the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the People's Republic of China.

## Synopsis (Nederlands)

Dit proefschrift richt zich op het verklaren van de sterk verschillende uitkomsten van de democratiseringsprocessen in de Volksrepubliek China en de Republiek China (Taiwan) in de late 20<sup>ste</sup> eeuw. Hierbij is de vraag gesteld waarom de Chinese Nationalistische Partij (KMT) slaagde in haar democratische hervormingen, terwijl de Chinese Communistische partij tot op de dag van vandaag vasthoudt aan haar monopolie op politieke macht.

Aangezien de CCP en KMT een gelijkaardige leninistische achtergrond kennen, is de thesis voorzien van een beknopt theoretisch kader over leninisme en is de invloed van de ideologie op democratisering bestudeerd. Tevens is een korte uitleg gegeven over het belang van de temporele en ruimtelijke aspecten van democratiseringsprocessen en is de invloed van Sun Yat-sen op de ideologie van zowel de KMT als de CCP bestudeerd. Door middel van deze variabelen is deze thesis tot tien redenen gekomen om het succes en mislukken van de democratiseringsprocessen in, respectievelijk, de Republiek China (Taiwan) en de Volksrepubliek China te verklaren.

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## Introduction

### The CCP and KMT: Estranged Siblings

At the onset of conducting research on the history of the Chinese Nationalist Party (*Zhongguo Guomindang* 中國國民黨, KMT) and Chinese Communist Party (*Zhongguo Gongchandang* 中国共产党, CCP), a researcher might, at first glance, be inclined to note the starkly divergent principles and histories of the two parties, as well as the numerous incidents of hostility between them.<sup>1</sup> For a considerable period of time, the two parties seemed to be a manifestation of the struggle between the pro-capitalist, US-inclined Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 (1887-1975), leader of the Republic of China (*Zhonghua minguo* 中華民國, ROC) established in 1911, and the communist, Soviet-inclined Mao Zedong 毛泽东 (1893-1976), leader of the People's Republic of China (*Zhonghua renmin gongheguo* 中华人民共和国, PRC) founded in 1949.

This dichotomous categorization of the two leaders and their respective parties might, however, be a gross oversimplification of the facts. The early KMT experienced periods of cordial relations with the USSR, which, at least nominally, supported the KMT during certain periods before the establishment of the PRC in 1949. Jonathan Spence, for instance, remarked upon the support of the USSR for Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙<sup>2</sup> (1866-1925), the founder and leader of the KMT, in the early 1920s. Sun invited Soviet advisors to help construct the CCP-KMT alliance that would later be known as the First United Front (*di yi ci guogong hezuo* 第一次国

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<sup>1</sup> In this dissertation, the English prevalent abbreviation “CCP” will be used to refer to the Chinese Communist Party. “KMT” will be used for the Chinese Nationalist Party, which follows the formerly popular Wade-Giles transcription of “*Kuomintang*” Most other abbreviations will accord to the most common English occurrences. For names, the personal preference of the person in case will be followed for transcription and romanization. Whenever this is unclear or subjected to ambiguity, the PRC’s *hanyu pinyin* (汉语拼音) system of romanization will be employed to transcribe his/her name. Transcription in *Hanyu pinyin* and *jiantizi* (简体字, “simplified characters”) will also be pursued for political concepts, unless said concept is directly cited from a primary manuscript using *fantizi* (繁体字, “traditional characters”), or is directly linked with conceptualizations or institutions primarily existing in Taiwan. Finally, except for the subsequent translation of governmental texts with official English versions, all translations, as well as transcription choices, are the sole responsibility of this dissertation’s author, J.A.G. Roctus.

<sup>2</sup> “Sun Yat-sen” is the most commonly used transcription of Sun’s name outside the PRC. It follows the Cantonese Yale transcription of the name he received as a medical student after being baptized in Hong Kong. Sun, whose native tongue was Cantonese, also used this denomination when signing his name in English. In the mandarin-speaking parts of the PRC and the greater Sino-sphere, the *pinyin*-transcription Zhongshan (中山) is more prevalent, which is based on his Japanese pseudonym “Nakayama”.

共合作, 1923-1927).<sup>3</sup> Spence particularly emphasized the important role the Soviet advisor Mikhail Borodin (1884-1951) played in strengthening Sun's leadership by introducing the Leninist concept of "democratic centralism" (*minzhu jizhongzhi* 民主集中制) to the KMT.<sup>4</sup>

Even after the KMT's retreat to Taiwan in 1949 (*1949 nian Zhonghua minguo zhengfu huantai* 1949年中華民國政府遷台), after it had been militarily defeated by the CCP in the Chinese civil war (*Guogong neizhan* 国共内战, 1927–1937 and 1945–1949), the KMT should not be lightly denominated as being unitarily "capitalist and pro-US." Some KMT members were at times deeply suspicious of the US intentions—especially during Chiang Kai-shek's leadership (1927–1975). An example of Chiang's deep suspicion toward the US was his fear of being replaced by more US-inclined, liberal intellectuals or militarists during the early 1950s.<sup>5</sup> General Sun Li-jen 孫立人 (1900–1990), the frontrunner to replace Chiang at the time, is said to have opposed the reorganization and Sovietization of the surveillance of the officer corps under the command of Chiang's Soviet-educated son, Chiang Ching-kuo 蒋经国 (1910-1988), and was at the time considered as an alternative to Chiang Kai-shek by the CIA.<sup>6</sup> In the end, General Sun was charged with conspiracy in 1955 and spend most of the remainder of his life under house arrest, while father and son Chiang remained in power until the late 1980s and held on to many Soviet-inspired Leninist state structures.

Similar to the KMT, one can also not lightly encapsulate the history of the CCP into the narrow constraints of a categorization marked by the abovementioned notions of being communist and pro-USSR. After all, the CCP fell out with the USSR during the so-called Sino-Soviet split (1956-1966) and was on the brink of—possibly nuclear—war multiple times with the latter, most strikingly so during the Sino-Soviet conflict of 1969, where both sides fought over the control of some minor islands along their borders, with the main military action occurring in the vicinity of Zhenbao (珍宝)/Damansky Island, east Manchuria.<sup>7</sup> After sensing

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<sup>3</sup> Spence (2012: 301-09). The period is, perhaps more fitting, also known in China under Sun's own somewhat ambivalent policy denomination of "ally with the Soviets, *tolerate* the communists" (*Lian E rong Gong* 联俄容共).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. (306-07).

<sup>5</sup> Taylor (2000: 199) Hu Shih 胡适 (1891-1962), who lived in New York for some time, is also said to have been a candidate that was considered by the CIA for replacing Chiang as leader of the ROC. However, when Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs Dean Rusk (1909-1994) visited Hu in June 1950, he refused to entertain the idea of replacing Chiang.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. (194-200). Chiang Ching-kuo also tightened the link between the KMT and the army during his years as director of the secret police (1950-1965), basing himself on the Leninist system that he had witnessed during his time in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s.

<sup>7</sup> Gerson (2010: 39-42). Whether a nuclear conflict would have occurred is debatable. While the PRC owned nuclear weapons at this point, with its first successful nuclear explosion having taken place in 1964, the country's arsenal and capacity were still very limited in comparison to their Soviet neighbors. The Soviet leadership was

the existential danger of this border conflict and the threat posed by his heir apparent Lin Biao 林彪 (1907-1971), who according to Frank Dikötter opposed viewing the Soviet Union as an enemy on par with the US,<sup>8</sup> Mao Zedong decided to reconcile the PRC with its former nemesis to form a common front against the Soviets in the early 1970s. In July 1971, this led to the announcement that the US president Richard Nixon had been invited to visit the PRC. This event indirectly had its due influence on the United Nations' vote in October that year, in which Chiang Kai-shek's ROC was formally expelled from the organization in favor of the PRC. Jonathan Spence stressed the paradoxicality of this event, as the interests of the pro-US ROC were hurt by an American president who, at least in theory, was resolutely anti-communist and could have been expected to support Taiwan.<sup>9</sup> Nixon's secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, would later address this conflicting reality of the early 1970s in his memoirs and admitted: "No government less deserved what was about to happen to it than that of Taiwan."<sup>10</sup>

The ambiguity surrounding the ideology of both the CCP and KMT extends back to Sun Yat-sen, the two parties' common forerunner. Sun was the leader of the KMT until his death and never joined the CCP during his lifetime. Therefore, the observation that Sun recently has been increasingly revered and invoked within the CCP-dominated PRC might seem somewhat contra-intuitive. An example of recent "Sun reverence" was the 70th anniversary of the founding of the PRC, which occurred on the first of October, 2019. Here, Sun's portrait was teleologically shown at the beginning of the celebratory parade as the first chapter in the rise of the CCP and its eventual founding of "New China" (*Xin Zhongguo* 新中国) in 1949. To a non-expert spectator of the event, Sun might have been mistakenly perceived as the founder of the CCP, or at least as a prominent revolutionary communist, and not as the first leader of the party's former archrival. When one adds in the observation that the government of the ROC still lists Sun as "Father of the Nation" (*Guofu* 國父), as for example described on its official

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confident their armed forces could completely wipe out the PRC's nuclear capacities in a single preventive strike. Mao Zedong also privately admitted to the secretary of the Australian Communist Party that upon a hypothetical preventive Soviet nuclear strike, the Chinese would at best merely be able to retaliate with conventional weaponry.<sup>8</sup> Dikötter (2017: 245). Lin was resolutely opposed to any reconciliatory approach to the US and could therefore have been considered as a candidate to lead a hypothetical pro-soviet Chinese puppet government after a Soviet victory over Mao's China. The extent of the Lin's ties with the Soviet government nevertheless remains unclear and subject to speculation. See also Dillon (2010: 342-47).

<sup>9</sup> Spence (2012: 567-68). In October 1971, an US-sponsored motion that would have allowed the ROC to keep its seat was defeated by 59 to 55 with 19 abstentions. After this, a roll-call vote on an Albanian draft that would grant the PRC the seat that was previously held by the ROC was passed by 76 to 37 with 17 abstentions, thereby formally expelling the ROC from the UN. See also *United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758* on <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/192054> (last accessed July 26, 2020).

<sup>10</sup> Kissinger (1979: 733).

website,<sup>11</sup> and the fact that Sun was a Christian,<sup>12</sup> the situation in the PRC becomes even more puzzling.

The abovementioned precedents and general observations are mere examples of the difficulties one encounters when studying the background of the KMT, CCP, as well as their “common ancestor” Sun Yat-sen and his political philosophy of the “Three Principles of the People” (*San min zhuyi* 三民主義, see also chapter three). The general observations above show that the two parties may very well not be as antithetically opposed as one might assume at first glance. This comes as no surprise, as certain Leninist similarities between the KMT and CCP on the organizational level are very much apparent.<sup>13</sup> As mentioned before, both parties adhered to the Leninist principle of democratic centralism (see also *infra*, 1.2), which was introduced during a period of cooperation between the two parties in the early 1920s under the influence of Soviet advisors. At the time, Sun Yat-sen, nominally the leader of this “United Front”, actively stimulated dual membership of the KMT and CCP, as he considered close cooperation and a potential merger of the two parties to be in the interest of the Chinese Revolution.<sup>14</sup> After Sun’s death in 1925, the KMT reaffirmed its support to the United Front and the political philosophy of democratic centralism that Sun had stressed in his political will.<sup>15</sup> It was not until early 1927, after the rise to prominence of Chiang Kai-shek, that dissension between the CCP and KMT started to manifest itself.

Even while trying to expel CCP members from the KMT after his rise to power, Chiang Kai-shek took great care to emphasize that the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin (1878-1953) supported the KMT’s leadership over the United Front. Chiang spread some of the Soviet leader’s telegrams, which praised the cooperation with the KMT, among the party’s members and, for a short period, indeed retained Soviet support to his operations.<sup>16</sup> However, after the KMT’s crackdown in Shanghai on the communist forces on April 12, 1927, a definite split between the KMT and CCP emerged.<sup>17</sup> The Chiang-led KMT leadership legitimized this

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<sup>11</sup> See the section ‘中華民國簡介’ (*Zhonghua minguo jianjie*, “Concise Introduction to the Republic of China”) on: <https://www.president.gov.tw/Page/49> (last accessed July 23, 2020).

<sup>12</sup> Schiffrin (1968: 14-17). Despite his family’s staunch opposition, Sun converted to Protestant Baptism at the age of eighteen.

<sup>13</sup> See for example Matlin (2018: 48-50).

<sup>14</sup> Woo (1975: 151-53). It should be noted however, that even during Sun’s leadership of the KMT many doubts among KMT members persisted about the ongoing cooperation with the CCP. Many right-leaning members feared a gradual transfer of power to the CCP.

<sup>15</sup> Shieh (1970: 106). Taken from “The Kuomintang Manifesto on Accepting dr. Sun Yat-sen’s Will” of May 16, 1925.

<sup>16</sup> Wilbur (1984: 143-46).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* Right before the KMT crackdown on the communists, the KMT’s leadership expressed its eternal gratitude to Mikhail Borodin for his contributions to the Chinese Revolution, thereby signaling that it did not intend to break (completely) with the Soviets. The event is known as the “April 12 cleaning of the party” (*si yi'er qingdang* 四一

repression by stating that all the activities of the communists had been inimical to the KMT and instigated by “foreign elements.”<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, Chiang’s “right-wing faction” accused the CCP of preparing a coup d’état to overthrow the KMT, which was not believed by left-wing KMT members under the leadership of Wang Jingwei 汪精衛 (1883-1944).<sup>19</sup> Wang’s “left-wing faction” temporarily distanced itself from the KMT central leadership in what would later be known as the “Nanjing–Wuhan split” (*Ninghan fenlie* 宁汉分裂).<sup>20</sup> When Stalin in June 1927 through a telegram finally clarified that he allowed the CCP to mobilize its forces against the KMT, Wang realized his position was isolated and his faction was now caught between two fires without outside support.<sup>21</sup> He started negotiations to reconcile with Chiang, a process that was sped up by the CCP’s Nanchang uprising (*Nanchang qiyi* 南昌起义) of August 1927, which occurred within Wang’s “territory.”<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, before the warring KMT factions reunited in September, numerous members of Wang’s faction defected to the CCP in face of having to rejoin the Chiang-led KMT, which realigned the KMT even further to the right.

After this split, the CCP and KMT would continue gradually to realign themselves according to left-wing and right-wing opposites. Despite the formation of the Second United Front (*di er ci guogong hezuo* 第二次国共合作, 1937-1946) in the face of Japanese aggression, the parties remained politically estranged. Despite this political rift, some ideological similarities in the two parties’ governmental structures would remain in place. This phenomenon has been remarked upon by Mikael Mattlin, who stated that the KMT once more reverted to its Leninist party structure as established by Sun Yat-sen after its retreat to Taiwan, and more or less succeeded in reestablishing a strong party-state on the island. Mattlin stated that the KMT emulated many aspects from the organizational model that the CCP employed on the Chinese Mainland in their own governing model.<sup>23</sup>

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二清黨) in KMT historiography, while the CCP commonly refers to the “April 12 counter-revolutionary coup” (*si yi'er fangeming zhengbian* 四一二反革命政变)

<sup>18</sup> Shieh (1970: 135-36). Taken from “A Dispatch on the Need of Purifying the Party from Communist Elements” of April 10, 1927.

<sup>19</sup> Woo (1975: 248-49). Woo, who originally wrote his treatise during the KMT split in 1928, expressed his support for Wang’s faction in his treatise as he predicted the right-wing crackdown on the communists would damage Sun’s revolutionary cause and would have adverse effects on the stability of the country in the long run.

<sup>20</sup> *Ning* (宁) refers to the old denomination for Nanjing: 江宁 (*Jiangning*), which was the seat of Chiang’s government, while *han* (汉) concerns the city of Wuhan, Wang Jingwei’s main base.

<sup>21</sup> Harrison (1972: 108-111).

<sup>22</sup> Wilbur (1984: 157-59).

<sup>23</sup> Mattlin (2018: 46-48). Mattlin remarks upon the rejuvenated strength of the KMT party organization in the early 1950s, when all major policy decisions and personnel appointments, even on the local level, had to be approved by the party. See also Dickson (1997: 78-82).

Embarking from this partly similar heritage of Leninism and democratic centralism, the two parties would in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century set themselves upon a series of reforms that despite their starkly different outcomes would also eventually improve the relationship between them. Since the rise of the pro-independence Democratic People's Party (*minzhu jinbu dang* 民主進步黨, DPP) in democratized Taiwan during the 1990s, the KMT has become the best option for the CCP in achieving its goal of de facto incorporating the island into the PRC.<sup>24</sup> In researching how the CCP and KMT reached this seemingly paradoxical situation, it is imperative to first investigate how their common heritage of Leninism was perceived differently in both the PRC and ROC. As Bruce Dickson aptly summed up: "It is the similarities [in Leninist developments] that make a comparison [between the CCP and KMT] possible, but it is the differences that make the comparison meaningful."<sup>25</sup>

## Research Objectives

This dissertation mainly focuses on how the starkly different outcomes of the democratization processes in the PRC and ROC during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century came into being. To this purpose, the question as to "why the KMT succeeded in its democratic reforms, while the CCP, to this day, has held on to its monopoly on political power", is of primary concern. Answering this complex question would admittedly require a research far beyond this thesis' limited scope, therefore a focused study on the specific influence of Leninism on the democratization processes in both entities is pursued.

Since the CCP and KMT share a similar Leninist background, a concise theoretical framework on Leninism and the ideology's possible influence on democratization is therefore provided. Herein, this dissertation mostly limits itself to elaborating the prevalent Leninist conceptualization of *vanguardist* one-party state structures. Except for a brief explanation of Leninism's differences with Marxism, more specific ideologic discrepancies with other communist denominations are put aside so as to not infringe on this thesis' focus. Next, a brief

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<sup>24</sup> Relations significantly improved during the tenure of DDP-leader Chen Shui-bian 陳水扁 (1950-) as president of the ROC (2000-2008). In 2005 a delegation of the KMT visited mainland China and met with CCP officials, which was the highest level of exchange between the two parties since the breakdown of the Second United Front in 1946. Relatively cordial relations continued during and after KMT-leader Ma Ying-jeou 's 馬英九 (1950-) presidency (2008-2016).

<sup>25</sup> Dickson (1998: 350). In an earlier work, Dickson also elaborated on the high research value of a CCP-KMT comparative study: "The comparison between the CCP and the KMT is particularly meaningful because several key factors are held constant: both parties shared the same traditions of governance based on centuries of imperial rule, both were embedded in the same political culture, and both were initially organized as Leninist parties." See Dickson (1997: 3).

explanation on the importance of the temporal and spatial settings of democratization is provided, as these two variables arguably exert a major influence on the outcome of this process. Subsequently, the influence of Sun Yat-sen on the ideology of both the KMT and CCP is studied. In doing this, the alleged Leninist influence on Sun, as well as his ostensibly ambiguous ideas on democracy, shall be of prime focus. In the subsequent chapter, research is conducted on the precise reforms of the KMT and CCP during the 1980s and 1990s.

As Sun's influence, being the party's founder, on the KMT was arguably more direct, and the successful nature of the ROC's democratization process offers more useful "starting points" for comparative research than the failure of said process in the PRC, democratization in both entities will be approached under the research auspices of the ROC's "democratic success". Finally, this dissertation investigates the results from the CCP-KMT comparison on Leninism in order to discover as to why the process of democratization had different outcomes. On the basis of the results of this comparative study, a conclusion is drawn on the import factors that resulted in the democratization of the ROC, and the enduring authoritarian resilience of the PRC.

## 1. Theoretical Framework Leninism

Before conducting research on the Leninist heritage of the KMT and CCP and investigating the influence of this heritage on the different paths of reform in the PRC and ROC during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is imperative to clearly distinguish Leninism from Marxism. This is admittedly a difficult undertaking, as many (formerly) communist nations often combined the communist classics of Marxism and Leninism—as well as their amalgamation, Marxism-Leninism—with the varying circumstances, policies, and practices of local communist leaders. This eventually led to a wide array of local communist variants, such as Stalinism in the Soviet Union, Hoxhism in Albania, and Titoism in Yugoslavia. The PRC was no exception to this phenomenon, with the philosophy of Mao Zedong becoming known as Maoism (*Mao zhuyi* 毛主义), or Mao Zedong thought (*Mao Zedong sixiang* 毛泽东思想), and the political ideology of his successor Deng Xiaoping 邓小平 (1904-1997) being christened Dengism (*Deng zhuyi* 邓小平主义), or Deng Xiaoping theory (*Deng Xiaoping lilun* 邓小平理论).<sup>26</sup> When researching the state of Leninism in the PRC, it is therefore necessary to take heed of the gradual *Sinification* of Marxism-Leninism along the lines of the PRC's local circumstances, as well as Leninism's dichotomous relation with Marxism on the subject of state building.

While the abovementioned communist variants—despite their many local variations—at least nominally shared certain Marxist-Leninist ideals and more or less all belonged to the greater communist family, the situation in Taiwan during the KMT's one-party regime was arguably more complex. After generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's retreat to Taiwan, Leninist one-party structures and anti-communist policies often co-existed—and possibly even reinforced one other. The rebuilding process of the KMT's Leninist one-party state in particular gained traction during the opening phase of the anti-communist White Terror (*baise kongbu* 白色恐怖, 1947-1987).<sup>27</sup> Even Chiang himself, who in a 1961 address on Christianity stated that communism was “a calamity that made the biblical deluge pale in comparison”, had during his formative years shown some interest in communist ideology under the influence of his political

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<sup>26</sup> While the definitions of Maoism, Dengism with their respective official designations of Mao Zedong thought and Deng Xiaoping theory are in essence homologous, there exists subtle connotational differences. “Maoism” and “Dengism” in essence correspond with adherents of the two ideologies outside of the PRC, while the two official denominations of “Mao Zedong thought” and “Deng Xiaoping theory” concern the application within Chinese borders.

<sup>27</sup> Ho Ming-sho (2007: 167-68).

mentor Sun Yat-sen.<sup>28</sup> To obtain a deeper understanding of the seemingly conflicting ideological persuasions of both Chiang and Sun, one has to first understand how they accepted specific parts of communism, such as Leninism, while sometimes quite harshly rejecting others. Thereto, this chapter both provides an introduction to Leninism and the concept of democratic centralism in the first two subchapters, as well as a concise Status Quaestionis of Leninism in the PRC and ROC in the third and fourth subsections.

### 1.1. Differentiating (Marxism-)Leninism from Marxism

Leninism is said to have arisen against the backdrop of ideological conflicts between socialists, social-democrats, and more hardline communists. Neil Harding noted that some hardline socialists were disappointed that many European left-wing parties supported the war effort in their respective countries at the onset of the First World War. Harding reported that this movement “was, if anything, more bitter in its denunciation of rival socialist and Marxist schemes of thought than it was of liberalism or conservatism.”<sup>29</sup> A similar kind of “bitterness,” vis-à-vis former allies, had also been visible in Vladimir Lenin’s (1870-1924) 1902 work *What Is to Be Done?*, which was written with the objective of uniting the various Russian socialist groups under his banner and is often considered the cradle of Leninism.<sup>30</sup>

By means of writing *What Is to Be Done?*, Lenin hoped to turn socialists and communists away from the “opportunistic” ideas of the German social-democratic Marxist theorist Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932), who he saw as an anti-revolutionary bourgeois reformist.<sup>31</sup> The adherents of the faction led by Lenin would later be known as the *Bolsheviks*, or “majority,” as opposed to their early opponents the *Mensheviks*, or “minority.” These denominations technically referred to a split vote in 1903 over the relatively minor issue of

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<sup>28</sup> Loh (1970: 219 and 231). Loh observed how Chiang during the First United Front had stated: “in our Academy, in our party army, there is no such thing as the Communist faction or the anti-Communist faction; [there is only a common struggle] based completely on the Three Principles of the People, to achieve the national revolution.” This stood in sharp contrast with Chiang’s 1961 statement in which he compared the communists to the biblical deluge. For Chiang’s original statement, which he made when he was invited to write a sermon for the *Christian Herald*, see Qin Xiaoyi (1984: 242, scroll 35): “If we compare the catastrophes caused by the threat of communism, even the Great Flood recorded in the Old Testament of the Bible becomes insignificant.” Own translation, original text: “...若以共產主義的威脅所造成的災禍來比較，則聖經舊約所記載的大洪水，也就微不足道了。”

<sup>29</sup> Harding (1996: 52).

<sup>30</sup> Buzuev and Gorodnov (1987: 45-46). The two Soviet authors remarked that Lenin “exposed” the opportunistic trends of the social-democrats in his work, hereby proving they were non-revolutionary elements and “merely” could be regarded as reformists working within the old bourgeoisie-led system.

<sup>31</sup> Lenin (1969: 1-2). Lenin loathed Bernstein’s rejection of scientific socialism, his opposition to the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat, his refusal to see the principal antithesis between socialism and liberalism, and—probably most vehemently—his view that the theory of class struggle could not be applied to a democratic society governed by the will of the majority.

party member rules within the Russian Social Democratic party, which Lenin had founded. The true seed of contention had however already been sown two years earlier when Lenin had stated that if a select core of professional revolutionaries did not maintain strong control over the working class, the workers might lose sight of the revolution's main goals or even abandon it entirely, which some party members had disagreed with.<sup>32</sup> Lenin's arguments in 1903 can be considered a precursor of his later political philosophy which advocated for professional revolutionaries and strong party-states, thereby differing greatly from Marx's call for a world revolution by the proletariat. The extreme bitterness toward the "revisionism" of former ideological allies shown by Lenin in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—which sometimes seemed fiercer than his opposition to bourgeois elements—is important to remember in the context of the KMT and—especially—CCP.

While Lenin nevertheless claimed to build on the political philosophy of Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), his view on the role of national parties significantly differed from Marx and Engels' ideology. Marx and Engels had stated in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) that "since the working men have no country, we cannot take from them what they have not got."<sup>33</sup> Whereas the ideology proposed by Marx and Engels, in essence, strived to eliminate national imbalances, to create an equal society, and thereby to construct an egalitarian world without borders,<sup>34</sup> Leninism seemed more inclined to hold onto a hierarchical structure concerning national administration. Specifically, Leninism can be considered an approach to the seizure of power *for* and, in name only, *by* the proletariat, which would result in a *dictatorship of the proletariat*—and only much later in Marx's egalitarian stage. Thereby, Lenin's ideas legitimized long-term revolutionary action by an authoritarian national *Bolshevik*-led ruling party on behalf of the working class.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, unlike Marx and Engels, Lenin prominently included the peasantry in the revolutionary forces required to

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<sup>32</sup> Pipes (1995: 105-06). Lenin had also described this in *What Is to Be Done?*, stating: "Workers, average people of the masses, are capable of displaying enormous energy and self-sacrifice in strikes and in street, battles with the police and the troops, and are capable (in fact, are alone capable) of *determining* the outcome of our entire movement—but the struggle against the *political* police requires special qualities; it requires *professional* revolutionaries." See Lenin (1969: 69).

<sup>33</sup> Marx et al (2002: 164).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. (149). Marx and Engels referred to nation-state as a bourgeois construct which kept class oppression in place, stating: "the executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."

<sup>35</sup> Bottomore (1991: 311). Bottomore also weighed in on the Leninism/*Bolshevism* discussion, and emphasized that while Leninism and *Bolshevism* stem from the same ideas, *Bolshevism* is essentially the political practice or political movement based on Leninism, the political philosophy. However, *Bolshevism* has over time gotten an increasingly negative connotation and has recently more often been used by opponents of Leninism or Russian communism in general. This "Russian connotation" also extended to the CCP, where a group of 28 early members of the CCP that had received their education at the Moscow-based Sun Yat-sen University became known as the '28 and a half *Bolsheviks*' (*ershiba ge ban bu'erweishike* 二十八个半布尔什维克) after their return to China.

seize power and foresaw a greater role for *undeveloped* and *semi-colonial* nations in the communist revolution, while Marx and Engels had predicted a “spontaneous” revolution in urban, developed cities by—almost exclusively—the revolutionary proletariat.<sup>36</sup> Finally, and probably most relevant when discussing the common Leninist heritage of the CCP and KMT, as well as the ideological persuasions of their common ancestor Sun Yat-sen, it is worth mentioning the Leninist notion of a necessity for a strong, one-party state, controlled by a vanguard party.

According to Philip Selznick, the essence of Leninist vanguardism consists of concentrating total social power in the hands of a ruling party. After this high degree of power is achieved, it becomes possible that the relationship between a Leninist country, its constitution, and the ruling party becomes diffuse, sometimes to the extent that these three notions might partly merge into one.<sup>37</sup> Amos Perlmutter remarked that another essential feature of the Leninist vanguard system is the institutionalization of hierarchical parallel structures in every layer of society, and stated: “[in Leninist societies] each state and societal structure and geographical unit is directly controlled by a functionally equivalent unit in the party.”<sup>38</sup> These descriptions demonstrate the belief by Leninists that remolding society through the institutions of the nation-state is feasible and warranted. The tension between the Leninist social need for national hierarchy under strict party control and the Marxist expectation of an egalitarian emphasis on socio-economic and political changes can lead to governance tensions. This phenomenon was to be observed in some nations that were—and some still are—ruled by overly Leninist-influenced parties, as the ruling forces of these nations often had a relatively broad (Marxist), but nonetheless still exclusive (Leninist), member base.<sup>39</sup> This member base was considered the elitist vanguard of the revolution and was supposed to set a good example for the proletariat. It is worth noting that Lenin extrapolated his vanguardism to international politics as well, by stating that Russia could serve as a “vanguard” to liberate the revolutionary proletariat abroad in *What Is to Be Done?*.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the abovementioned divergences in the connotations of Marxism and Leninism, the concepts have often been combined. This seems reasonable given that Lenin did not attempt to create an anthesis between Marxism and his own ideas, but was instead opting for a more

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Selznick (1952: 5).

<sup>38</sup> Perlmutter (1981: 13).

<sup>39</sup> Nelson (1982: 309). Nelson cited that party membership in communist states ranged 6.5% to 17% of the adult citizens in all communist states at the time of writing.

<sup>40</sup> Lenin et al (1969: 15).

realistic implication of revolutionary communism to oppose Bernstein's social-democratic reformist ideas. Most Marxist-Leninist inspired researchers, therefore, have opted for a chronological, but complementary, theoretical order, with Lenin being proposed as second revolutionary generation after Marx and Engels.<sup>41</sup> Charles Andrain explained the complementarity between the two theories, and suggested that a Marxist-Leninist party is the vanguard—a Leninist notion—for the political, economic, and social transformation of a capitalist society into a socialist society, which is a lower stage of socio-economic development and progress toward the upper-stage communist society, which is stateless and classless—a Marxist notion.<sup>42</sup> One could therefore say that Marxism-Leninism is a layered theory to appeal to multiple segments of society: (1) Marx's scientific theory, sufficient to keep the intellectuals occupied—or at least distracted—for a long period of times; (2) a simplified theory (first formulated by Marx himself), with an explanatory adequate for the ideologically faithful; (3) a hidden version for the vanguard initiates, first appearing with Lenin, which makes the absolute party the supreme objective and the focal point for the transformation of history.<sup>43</sup>

Daniel Nelson noted that despite the fact that many Marxist-Leninist ruling parties primarily adhered to Leninist vanguardism, Marxist philosophy had not entirely been forgotten by them. Party membership in the communist world by the 1980s was no longer confined to the ranks of an elite vanguard; it also encompassed nominal party identity for many intellectuals and ordinary citizens. In this way, these ruling parties attempted to also cover their citizens' Marxist needs.<sup>44</sup> However, experience has shown that the Marxist-Leninist vanguard governments invariably escaped any actual control by the working class and merely became an instrument of domination by a small elite. After a series of purges, vanguard parties often grew into powerful bureaucracies which assumed total control over most spheres of public life,

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<sup>41</sup> Buzuev and Gorodnov (1987: 11-52). The two late-Soviet authors proposed (1) Utopian Socialism, (2) Marx and Engels, and finally, (3) Lenin, as the chronological order that gave shape to 'Marxism-Leninism'. Despite Joseph Stalin, Lenin's eventual successor as leader of the Soviet Union, playing an important role in making Marxism-Leninism the main governing principle of the Soviet Union, and eventually developing it into Stalinism, the authors choose to ignore his contributions. The discussion surrounding Stalin's role—or lack thereof—in developing Marxism-Leninism and developing it into Stalinism, is highly complex. Daniels (2007: 199-200) noted that Stalinism was not generated by ideology (unlike Marxism) but by historical contingency. Apart from the revolutionary reality on the ground in Russia, Stalinism could not have existed. Stalin's extremely totalitarian governance eventually caused rifts among communists outside of the Soviet Union, who were split between a group that perceived Stalin's regime as an example of a Marxist government having realized 'scientific socialism' in spite of Marx and Engels' failure to predict a revolution in a backward country like Russia, and a group that saw him as a traitor to the Marxist cause by pointing to the horrors that were committed under Stalin's reign.

<sup>42</sup> Andrain (1990: 140).

<sup>43</sup> Castoriadis and Curtis (1990: 373).

<sup>44</sup> Nelson (1982: 307-09). People's councils, soviets, united fronts, and local quasi-legislative assemblies often held hundreds of thousands of members in larger communist nations, which provided a degree of "Marxist" political identity for people not part of the vanguard.

politics, economy, and culture.<sup>45</sup> While the Marxist slogan of dismantling the bourgeois concept of the state altogether is often still present in the rhetoric of Marxist-Leninist governments, penetration in established state structures is often preferred. Phillippe Selznick remarked that later adaptations of Leninism (“Post-Leninist *Bolshevism*”) went a step further than merely maintaining bourgeois state structures, and was even willing momentarily to accept the existence of (semi-)democratic institutions and to engage with them for the benefit of the party’s political strength.<sup>46</sup>

The fact that certain Marxist principles, such as world revolution, were somewhat diluted in states led by Marxist-Leninist parties was often legitimized through the notion of Lenin’s awareness that a governing party standing up for the interests of the proletariat is unmissable for the lower classes, as they themselves are unable to formulate their aspirations properly.<sup>47</sup> While worldwide borderless egalitarianism was, in name, still the ultimate goal of Marxist-Leninist ruling parties, in practice it meant that its adherents often employed strong Leninist one-party state structures, with worldwide unity being reduced to an abstract, and somewhat neglected, long-term objective. The Soviet-led Communist International (Comintern, 1919-1943) could be considered a typical international extension of Marxist-Leninist ideology, with an exemplary Leninist vanguard (the Soviet Union) working to spread the Marxist world revolution.

## 1.2. Democratic Centralism

Parties with a Leninist background, such as the KMT and CCP, are often inclined to make use of the system of democratic centralism among their party members in administering the country. According to Lin Gang, democratic centralism refers to the relative freedom to discuss policy decisions among party members. However, whenever the party leadership commits itself to a certain position, dissenting opinions should obey party discipline and silence themselves to the majority opinion.<sup>48</sup> The scholar also remarked upon the democratic obstacles intrinsic to the system of democratic centralism and Leninism in general. He stated that Leninist parties tend to accept a single power center as an unshakable norm, making it very difficult to establish

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<sup>45</sup> Bottomore (1991: 543). The author commented that these vanguard parties often “conveniently forgot” Marx and Engels’ promise that property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes and the right of inheritance would be abolished, all ownership by emigrants and contra-revolutionaries would be revoked, and all enterprises would gradually pass into the hands of the State. See also Marx et al (2002: 166).

<sup>46</sup> Selznick (1952: 216-17).

<sup>47</sup> Buzuev and Gorodnov (1987: 172-73).

<sup>48</sup> Lin Gang (2004: 272-73).

horizontal check-and-balance mechanisms within the party, let alone outside of the party.<sup>49</sup> While democratic centralism ostensibly was meant to broaden intraparty discussion and prevent strongman rule, it left the exact boundaries of the term *democracy* in the context of the concept undefined. This has caused stagnation and a lack of reform in some (Marxist-)Leninist parties, and it did not adequately prevent the rise of authoritarian tendencies.<sup>50</sup>

The above description by Lin Gang roughly corresponds to the original values of democratic centralism that Lenin described in his 1902 work, namely, allowing relative freedom of discussion within a Leninist party until the moment of final decision, after which complete party unity is required.<sup>51</sup> It should not be forgotten that, in this sense, *democratic* only refers to discussion within the party, which serves as the core of the system of democratic centralism. Ultimately, decisions within this political system are not made *by* the people, but *for* the people.<sup>52</sup> However, while the principles of democratic centralism are intraparty of nature, they can be extended to non-party organizations as well. While the vanguard of the ruling Leninist party still makes the important decisions in such a situation, democratic centralist principles in non-party institutions “help” the people outside the party to affirm the correct line and ascertain a unified position among the masses. As even the very concept of *truth* is partisan in Leninist societies, unified standpoints are crucial.<sup>53</sup> The extension of democratic centralism outside the party (e.g., to state institutions) depresses the separation between party and state and leads to further Leninist diffusion in the long term.

Under the influence of Lenin’s philosophy of democratic centralism, the one-party vanguard structure, and the struggle for survival against its many opponents, the Communist Party of Russia acquired a form and spirit essentially militaristic in nature.<sup>54</sup> The Leninist philosophy of democratic centralism based on this militaristic spirit was ultimately propagated abroad by Soviet Comintern advisors under Lenin and Stalin in the 1920s. Its recipients included both the KMT and the CCP.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid. (2004: 273-74).

<sup>50</sup> Alam (2009: 37). Alam aptly remarked that the concept of democratic centralism itself implies a certain inflexibility for foreign adherents. It has often been used as a general principle for building a communist organization, while it actually was tailor-made for the specific organizational demands of the Russian *Bolsheviks* in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Tsarist Russia. This view seems to tally with the observation of Scott (1998: 204), as he noted that a surprising amount of tsarist policies overlapped with the early *Bolshevik* policies.

<sup>51</sup> Lenin et al (1963). Lenin does not use the term “democratic centralism” literally in his treatise, but does mention many values that would later form the core of said political theory.

<sup>52</sup> Benton and Hunter (2015: 302). Taken from chapter six, written by Su Shaozhi.

<sup>53</sup> Selznick (1952: 95-96).

<sup>54</sup> Daniels (2007: 201).

### 1.3. Status Questionis of (Marxism-)Leninism in the PRC

In the PRC, researchers often view Marxism-Leninism as one of the core principles among the country's leading ideological pillars. The two concepts of Marxism and Leninism are seldom separately distinguished; instead, they are framed as a holistic whole in addition to the main theories of the five main<sup>55</sup> paramount leaders of the PRC since its founding: Mao Zedong 毛泽东 (1893-1976), Deng Xiaoping 邓小平 (1904-1997), Jiang Zemin 江泽民 (1926-), Hu Jintao 胡锦涛 (1942-), and Xi Jinping 习近平 (1953-). This is not surprising, considering that the preamble of the PRC's current constitution states that development in China occurs under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism and the five political ideologies of the said paramount leaders.<sup>56</sup> Consequently, one constitutionally could construct a case that the importance of Marxism-Leninism has slowly diminished over the years, as multiple new local guiding principles have been added to the constitution. For example, in the 1984 version of the constitution Marxism-Leninism was one of the two main guiding principles listed, second only to Mao Zedong thought. After the latest amendments in 2018 however, it had been reduced to the status of being one of six guiding principles.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, as no new “foreign” theories have been imported after the inclusion of Marxist-Leninism in the constitution, one could say that Marxism-Leninism—or communism in general—in China is ostensibly being *Sinicized*.

The perceived “Sinification of Marxism” (*Makesizhuyi Zhongguohua* 马克思主义中国化) is a theme that often returns in treatises of PRC researchers. The emphasize on this process has intensified after the creation of “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics” (*Zhongguo tese*

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<sup>55</sup> Hua Guofeng 华国锋 (1921-2008) is often considered to have been the paramount leader of the PRC between September 1976 and December 1978, when he was criticized by a group of party veterans at a conference and eventually faded into obscurity. His main political ideological contribution of the “Two Whatever” (*liang ge fanshi* 两个凡是) was disregarded after his downfall, making him the only (former) paramount leader without a constitutionalized political philosophy.

<sup>56</sup> The 2018 version of the preamble of the PRC's constitution states that that societal progress has occurred “under the leadership of the CCP and the guidance of Marxism-Leninism (*Makesi Liening zhuyi* 马克思列宁主义), Mao Zedong Thought (*Mao Zedong sixiang* 毛泽东思想), Deng Xiaoping Theory (*Deng Xiaoping lilun* 邓小平理论), the Important Thought of Three Represents (*san ge daibiao zhongyao sixiang* 三个代表重要思想), the Scientific Outlook on Development (*kexue fazhanguan* 科学发展观), and Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era (*Xi Jinping xin shidai Zhongguo tese shehui zhuyi sixiang* 习近平新时代中国特色社会主义思想). See also: [http://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2018-03/22/content\\_5276318.htm](http://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2018-03/22/content_5276318.htm). (last accessed July 22, 2020)

<sup>57</sup> Deng Xiaoping theory was written in the preamble of the constitution in 1997, and the important thought of the Three Represents in 2004. The Scientific Outlook on Development and Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics were both added in 2018. The addition of Xi's political theory was especially striking, since unlike the addition of his predecessors' ideologies, the supplementation occurred during, and not after, his tenure as paramount leader of the PRC. See also: [http://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2018-03/22/content\\_5276318.htm](http://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2018-03/22/content_5276318.htm) (last accessed July 22, 2020)

*shehui zhuyi* 中国特色社会主义) during the tenure of Deng Xiaoping as paramount leader of the PRC (1978-1989), despite Deng never having specifically spoken about any Sinification process himself. The topic has nonetheless gained traction among Chinese researchers after his tenure. After the economic disasters of the Mao era, Deng raised the need for economic reform and free market incentives.<sup>58</sup> This implied that China required tailor-made policies, as the country was still in the primary stage of socialism (*Shehui zhuyi chuji jieduan* 社会主义初级阶段), an idea prominently spread by Deng's right hand man Zhao Ziyang 赵紫阳 (1919-2005) in 1987,<sup>59</sup> since the situation in the country did not tally with Marx's prediction of an urban proletarian revolution.<sup>60</sup> While the primary stage theory technically merely stated that objective conditions had determined that China could not yet enter the Marxist stage, it effectively suggested that for the unforeseeable future capitalism would be allowed.<sup>61</sup> In other words: Marxist principles would temporarily be abandoned in favor of free market incentives, and through the theory some ideological legitimization for Deng's economic reforms could be salvaged.

The process of the Sinification of Marxism is a rare instance where Marxism and Leninism are clearly separated as theoretical concepts among PRC researchers, who usually seem inclined to combine the notions. Most researchers have only spoken of an ongoing Sinification of Marxism, leaving out any mention to Leninism when they invoke the process. Wu Guihan, for instance, implied that the CCP has an ultimate societal objective of Sinicized Marxism. Clearly for him, Leninism and China's own political philosophical additions are means to achieve the ambiguous long-term goal of an egalitarian Marxist society, which might only be brought about if the CCP takes heed of China's unique circumstances and the evolving

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<sup>58</sup> Deng Xiaoping (1993: 3). The need to "build Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" and "walk one's own road" first appeared in a speech of Deng on September 1, 1982 given at the opening ceremony of the CCP's 12<sup>th</sup> national congress. Original text: "把马克思主义的普遍真理同我国的具体实际结合起来，走自己的道路，建设有中国特色的社会主义，这就是我们总结长期历史经验得出的基本结论。" Translation: "Combining the universal truth of Marxism with the concrete reality of our country, following our own path, and building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, this is the basic conclusion of our summary of long-term historical experiences."

<sup>59</sup> Ding (1994: 172).

<sup>60</sup> He Yuhua (2001: 305-06). The concept of 'primary stage of socialism' was however not created by Zhao or Deng, as Mao Zedong had already invoked it as early as 1958. It had however been relatively neglected until Deng's tenure as paramount leader. He Yuhua noted that an editorial by the People's Daily titled "Putting into Effect the Socialist Principle of Distribution According to Work" of May 5, 1978 was imperative in popularizing the idea that China was still in the primary stage of reaching "true communism", and that some market incentives were necessary in rewarding the farmers and workers. The article, which argued that "distribution according to labour" (*an lao fenpei* 按劳分配) was not anti-revolutionary but socialist, should be seen in the light of Deng's power struggle with Mao's designated left-wing successor Hua Guofeng.

<sup>61</sup> Ding (1994: 172-73).

demands of subsequent generations.<sup>62</sup> Li Yujie emphasized that while the “Sinification of Marxism” equals a “Sinification of Marxism-Leninism,”<sup>63</sup> the two concepts have to be separated from each other. The scholar stated that the term possibly has been over-abbreviated in the PRC, since its definition of Marxism-Leninism (*Makesi Liening zhuyi* 马克思列宁主义) would imply the existence of only one “-ism” (*zhuyi* 主义), and therefore incorrectly suggests the existence of an ideology like “Marx-Leninism”, while the ideology in fact consists of two individual and equal -isms: Marxism and Leninism.<sup>64</sup>

This notion has arguably triggered further ambiguity surrounding the CCP’s ideology, as it has become unclear where the borderline between Marxism and Leninism is situated. Chen Xueming noted this, and explained: “Marxism changed socialism from fantasy to science, and Leninism in turn changed socialism from ideal to reality [through its nationalistic component].” Furthermore, unlike some of his colleagues discussing the Sinification of Marxism, he accentuated that the Sinification of Marxism is impossible without a clear understanding of Leninism, and he saw the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics as inseparable with the Leninist ideology.<sup>65</sup> This roughly corresponds to the abovementioned mainstream view that Leninism can be more realistically applied—especially in states that did not conform with Marx’s prediction of a proletarian revolution in a developed society—than Marxism through its affirmation of the role of the authoritarian one-party nation-state.

The observation of Leninism being separated from Marxism among PRC academics raises the question whether Leninism has been exempt from the process of Sinification, and if so, whether it still exists in its original—non-Sinicized—form. After all, many Marxist principles, such as class struggle and egalitarianism, have indeed been abandoned by the CCP since its adoption of the primary stage theory and Socialism with Chinese characteristics. On the other hand, the PRC is still very much a Leninist diffused vanguardist party-state (see also *infra*, 4.4).

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<sup>62</sup> Wu Guihan (2011: 295). In Wu Guihan’s treatise, every single appearance of the word “Leninism” is preceded by “Marxism”. He only separated the concept of Marxism from Leninism when he wanted to emphasize the societal goal of an egalitarianism.

<sup>63</sup> Li Yujie (2014: 31). Original text: “‘马克思主义中国化’实际上就是马克思列宁主义中国化。”

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. Original text: “只有中文才简化为‘马克思列宁主义，甚至更简化为‘马列主义’。” Translation: “Only in Chinese [the term] is abbreviated to ‘*Makesi Lienin zhuyi*’, or even more shortened to ‘*malie zhuyi*’”

<sup>65</sup> Chen Xueming (2018: 58 and 61). Original text: “作为马克思主义中国化的另一大理论成果——中国特色社会主义理论体系，其形成就离不开中国共产党人对列宁主义的科学认识。” Translation: “The theoretical system of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics being a major theoretical achievement of the ‘Sinicization of Marxism’, its creation is inseparable from the scientific understanding of Leninism by those of the CCP.”

#### 1.4. Status Questionis of Leninism in the ROC

Unlike the PRC's constitution, the 1947 version of the ROC's constitution (as well as its subsequent amendments) did not make any reference to either Leninism, Marxism, or Marxism-Leninism. This however does not mean that Leninist influence was absent during the KMT's one-party regime on Taiwan (1945-1991), but merely implies that the party's Leninist heritage differs from other (Marxist-)Leninist parties, such as the CCP. This difference can be summarized by Leninism not having undergone a process of diffusion with Marxism and communism, but primarily having been based on the legacy and teachings of Sun Yat-sen.<sup>66</sup> This is still visible today, as the preamble of the ROC's constitution states that its articles are "promulgated in accordance with Sun Yat-sen's legacy of founding the ROC,"<sup>67</sup> while the first article of the general provisions specifically affirms that the ROC is a "democratic republic founded on the basis of the Three Principles of the People."<sup>68</sup> One could therefore constitutionally make a case that, at least obliquely, Leninism still persists in the ROC through the inclusion of Sun's persona and ideology in its constitution.

The Leninist heritage in the ROC makes for an interesting case to study as, unlike most other (formerly) Leninist states that often could be considered part of the greater communist family, the concept was clearly demarcated from Marxism. Leninist diffusion between party and state became even more apparent after the start of the "Temporary Provisions Against the Communist Rebellion" (*Dongyuan kanluan shiqi linshi tiaokuan* 動員戡亂時期臨時條款), which were added to the constitution on May 10, 1948 and finally abrogated on May 1, 1991. The main source of Leninist diffusion during the KMT's one-party regime came from these provisions, which effectively transformed the ROC from a parliamentary system with a two-term limited (vice-)president (as promulgated in the 1947 version of the constitution) to a

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<sup>66</sup> Bruce Dickson (1998: 349-50).

<sup>67</sup> The preamble of the present constitution of the ROC states: "中華民國國民大會受全體國民之付託，依據孫中山先生創立中華民國之遺教，為鞏固國權，保障民權，奠定社會安寧，增進人民福利，制定本憲法，頒行全國，永矢咸遵。" See: <https://www.president.gov.tw/Page/93> (last accessed August 6, 2020). Translation: "The National Assembly of the Republic of China, by virtue of the mandate received from the whole body of citizens, in accordance with the teachings bequeathed by Dr. Sun Yat-sen in founding the Republic of China, and in order to consolidate the authority of the State, safeguard the rights of the people, ensure social tranquility, and promote the welfare of the people, does hereby establish this Constitution, to be promulgated throughout the country for faithful and perpetual observance by all."

<sup>68</sup> Article one of the general provisions of the present constitution of the ROC states: "中華民國基於三民主義，為民有民治民享之民主共和國。" See: <https://www.president.gov.tw/Page/93> (last accessed August 6, 2020). Translation: "The Republic of China, founded on the Three Principles of the People, shall be a democratic republic of the people, to be governed by the people and for the people."

unitary presidential system without term limits.<sup>69</sup> This in practice meant that the KMT gained an exclusive hold on the government for as long as the provisions were in power, since the functioning of ROC cabinet and the KMT politburo, as well as the role of ROC president and KMT Chairman,<sup>70</sup> essentially overlapped and were unconstrained by the parliament.

The KMT-regime achieved a high degree of Leninist penetration in many layers of Taiwanese society. The constructed Leninist structures by the KMT during the early 1950s were highly hierarchal and visible in almost every stratum of society.<sup>71</sup> Through this far-reaching diffusion, the party proved to be highly effective in rooting out CCP-support in Taiwan. Lin Hsiao-ting, for instance, remarked that the KMT was able to recruit—or “absorb”—many intellectuals on the island, thereby quelling potential dissent in the upper layers of Taiwanese society.<sup>72</sup> Lower classes, such as factory workers, were not neglected either, as the party set up a highly hierarchal special taskforce to speed up party branch creation in every nationalized factory and workshop. Subsequently, worker membership almost doubled between 1952 and 1957, while CCP-sympathizers were gradually weeded out.<sup>73</sup> The support for the CCP further diminished after the KMT’s successful land reforms in the early 1950s.<sup>74</sup>

Historical contingency further allowed the KMT some breathing space. Su Ching-hsuan, for instance, remarked that the Korean War (1950-53) was conducive to the battered KMT

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<sup>69</sup> The first article of the past “temporary provisions” stated: “總統在動員戡亂時期，為避免國家或人民遭遇緊急危難，或應付財政經濟上重大變故，得經行政院會議之決議，為緊急處分，不受憲法第三十九條或第四十三條所規定程序之限制。” Translation: “In this Period of Communist Rebellion, for the sake of avoiding the emergent political crisis, and addressing the mammoth economic change, the president is empowered to adopt emergency measures through a resolution of a cabinet meeting of the Executive Yuan. The president’s power will not be limited by the regular procedures of Articles 39 and 43 of the constitution.” These two articles of the constitution refer to the rights of the parliament to revoke martial law. In addition, article 3 of the temporary provisions stated that “動員戡亂時期，總統副總統得連選連任，不受憲法第四十七條連任一次之限制。” Translation: “During the Period of the Communist Rebellion, the President and the Vice President may be reelected without being subject to the two-term restriction prescribed in Article 47 of the Constitution.” Article 47 had stated that two six-year terms were the maximum length in office for a (vice-)president. See: <https://www.president.gov.tw/Page/93> and <https://law.moj.gov.tw/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=A0000005> for the constitution and temporary provisions (both last accessed August 6, 2020).

<sup>70</sup> This post was originally called “director-general” (*zongcai* 總裁) during most of Chiang Kai-shek’s tenure as leader of the KMT, while after his death in 1975 the name was changed to “Chairman” (*zhuxi* 主席)

<sup>71</sup> Mattlin (2018: 46-48).

<sup>72</sup> Lin Hsiao-Ting (2016: 181). The author reported that the KMT was especially effective in recruiting local university-educated youths, and by 1952 40% of Taiwan-born members enjoyed higher education.

<sup>73</sup> Ho Ming-sho (2007: 163 and 167-68). Ho stated that working life was fragmented into a fiercely individualist competition for personal favours from cadre leaders. Mired in the game of instrumental use of interpersonal relationship (*guanxi* 关系), workers were not able to form common—horizontal—identities required for revolt.

<sup>74</sup> Lin Hsiao-ting (2016: 183). These reforms were considerably less rigorous than the CCP’s land reforms in the 1950s, when former land owners were humiliated, abused and executed. The KMT’s land reforms instead consisted of subsidized redistribution of one fifth of the island’s arable land, after which the new tenants had ten years to acquire sufficient financial means to buy the land below market prices through selling their produce to the state. As the lack of land reforms by the KMT had rallied many farmers to the CCP’s cause during the civil war on the Chinese mainland, the KMT clearly had learned its lesson in the 1950s.

government in its objective of regaining a high level of control over Taiwanese society. As the People's Liberation Army (*jiefangjun* 解放军, PLA) was bogged down in Korea and the US—after some deliberation—decided to reiterate its support for the KMT, the party could focus on domestic affairs.<sup>75</sup> The compact size of the island and its relatively high grade of industrialization, which the KMT had inherited from the Japanese colonizers, also indirectly benefited the party in reestablishing Leninist societal control in a rapid manner. Finally, the fact that Chiang Kai-shek's army still held the edge in the air and on the sea, and regained some morale after successfully defeating the PLA's attempt to seize the island of Quemoy (also known as *Kinmen* 金門) off the coast of Fujian province in October 1949, also made an effective defense of the island more probable.<sup>76</sup>

Tien Hung-mao stated that Leninist party building continued over the subsequent decades and remarked that the KMT successfully became a vanguard of society, as its membership peaked at about one-fifth of the adult population—significantly higher than the CCP at any point of its party history. It differed, however, from many other (Marxist-)Leninist parties in allowing a capitalist economic system, as well as by subscribing—at least nominally—to the democratic principles of Sun Yat-sen, which envisaged a transformation from political tutelage by the party to a democratic system (see also *infra*, 3.3).<sup>77</sup> Ho Ming-sho commented that while Leninist state diffusion in KMT-led Taiwan was relatively deep, there were two factors not present in most other Leninist societies limiting (even) deeper societal penetration: an ever growing free market private sector and an ethnically divided society. The negatives of this ethnical divide were possibly worsened by the fact that the KMT-controlled government was mostly dominated by a small minority of Mainlanders (*waishengren* 外省人, literally “extra-provincial person”) who made up a small portion of Taiwanese society, while local Taiwanese-born (*benshengren* 本省人, literally “inter-provincial people”) were absent in

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<sup>75</sup> Su Ching-Hsuan (2013: 138). The PLA simply lacked the (amphibious) capacity for an invasion of the island, especially after its intervention in Korea of October 1950. The US reiterated its support to the ROC by stationing the US navy's seventh fleet in the Taiwan Strait, as the American leadership had realized the strategic importance of the island in the battle against communism in Asia. Earlier that year the US had actually come close to giving up on the ROC. Lin Hsiao-Ting (2016: 170) reported that US president Harry Truman (1884-1972) originally did not want to alienate Mao Zedong by giving Chiang Kai-shek's rump state too much military support and hoped to entice the PRC into becoming another ‘Titoist state’ outside of the USSR's sphere of influence. However, after the PRC and Russia signed a friendship and cooperation treaty in February 1950, such prospects were virtually eliminated.

<sup>76</sup> Spence (2012: 471-72). Spence also held that Mao Zedong overestimated the strength of the local communist insurgency on the island, which had in reality been weakened greatly with the start of the White Terror after the island wide crackdown of February 28, 1947 (*Ererba Shijian* 二二八事件), and lacked the strength to overthrow the KMT-regime by themselves.

<sup>77</sup> Tien Hung-mao (1989: 1-2 and 66-67).

positions of power. According to Ho Ming-sho, these two factors could have fed the Taiwanese workers with additional resources and incentive for a hypothetical revolt.<sup>78</sup> However, the high organizational strength of the early KMT-regime on the island prevent such an outcome. Wu Yongping for instance noted that the KMT's Leninist structures and (initial) deep distrust of locally-owned business groups from gaining a foothold in government, which had happened in South Korea (*chaebols*) and Japan (*zaibatsu*). The KMT, an economic actor in its own right due to its enormous wealth, subsequently never faced existential danger from the business sector, and instead handed out the ropes through its deep penetration in the economic sphere.<sup>79</sup>

In summary, the Leninist heritage in the ROC roughly subsists to the present day through two interrelated main themes: the direct legacy of the Leninist politics under the KMT's one-party regime, and the indirect influence through retaining Sun Yat-sen as father of the ROC and using his teachings as governmental guideline. While the KMT ultimately democratized and most Leninist state structures were abandoned, a "Leninist ghost" still survives on the island (see also *infra*, 4.3).

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<sup>78</sup> Ho Ming-Sho (2007: 163 and 166-67). Ho Ming-sho described how the Mainlanders immediately caused huge rifts with the local population after the KMT's retreat to Taiwan. Before long an immense power and pay gap between the two groups became apparent.

<sup>79</sup> Wu Yongping (2004: 106-07).

## 2. Theoretical Framework Democratization

Democratization is a topic that has been extensively covered, especially in Western academic circles. Admittedly, before embarking on a research on democratization, one might need first to properly define the term *democracy* itself, as the concept has been defined in many ways across cultural boundaries. For the sake of the brevity of this theses, the concept of democracy used hereafter is generalized as liberal representative democracy along Western lines, or as a system where constituents can at least indirectly influence the course of government through elections and the government is aware of electoral pressure during its decision-making.<sup>80</sup> The subsequently discussed process of *democratization*—or lack thereof—also roughly occurs under these premises. The Chinese interpretation of *democracy*, which is partly connected to Sun Yat-sen’s interpretation of the concept, is nevertheless elaborated on in the next chapter.

By sharing the views of Samuel Huntington on the democratization of authoritarian systems, and briefly explaining Randall Peerenboom’s theory on democratization in developing Asia in the first subsection, as well as specifically elaborating the influence of Leninism on democratization in the second subchapter, this dissertation aims to elucidate the theoretical background of the differing outcomes of democratization in the PRC and ROC of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is, thereafter, used as the framework for Chapter Four and the conclusion, where the actual reforms initiated by the CCP and KMT are discussed.

### 2.1. Democratization in Authoritarian Systems: The Third Wave and the East Asian Model

Democratization of, and societal change within, authoritarian regimes is a topic that has been covered extensively by Samuel Huntington in his works *Political Order in Changing Societies* (1968) and *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (1993). His 1968 work, which focused on order and stability—and not necessarily democracy—being the prime political objective in certain developing societies,<sup>81</sup> was especially influential in the PRC,

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<sup>80</sup> Without further elaborating on the many internal differences within the field of Western democracy, this treatise uses the term refers to the—at least in shared core values—similar form of representative democracy present in the majority of Western countries. For a definition of representative democracy, see for example Rosema et al (2011: 25): “In short, representative democracy is a repetitive decision-making process that provides a method for the citizenry to adjust the course of government, correcting discrepancies in direction that arise from outcomes in the previous election or the autonomous actions of the incumbent government.”

<sup>81</sup> Huntington (1968: 26-27). Huntington for example saw the ‘reemergence’ of a strong and stable Communist Party under Nikita Khrushchev (1894-1971) after multiple decades of wanton Stalinism, as equally impressive to the revival of a strong and stable presidency after the disorderly tenure of American president Ulysses Grant (1822-

where it has been used to legitimize the lack of democratic developments by emphasizing that the country had not yet reached a suitable development level and needed a high degree of stability before embarking on far-reaching democratic reforms.<sup>82</sup> In his work, Huntington argued: “the most important political distinction among countries concerns not their form of government but their degree of government.”<sup>83</sup> Therefore, scholar held that in certain cases a well-led totalitarian regime could be more stable than a weak democracy, and that violence and instability could be in large part the product of rapid social change coupled with the slow development of political institutions.<sup>84</sup>

Adherents of Samuel Huntington’s work in the PRC, who warmly embraced a foreign scholar arguing that a lack of democracy could be a warranted tradeoff for stability, eventually became known as the “neo-authoritarianists” (*xin quanwei zhuyizhe* 新权威主义者). During the 1980s in the PRC, they could be classified as somewhat of an in-between faction between those opting for the long-term continuation of authoritarianism and the liberals urging for democratization on the relative short-term. Looking for stability in the wake of the chaotic Great Cultural Revolution (*wenhua da geming*, 1966-1976), they welcomed a short-term focus on *effective repressive* politics (unlike the *ineffective repressiveness* of the Mao Zedong era) to usher in long-term semi-liberal changes.<sup>85</sup> While the faction’s adherents were not directly present among the top leadership, Deng’s righthand man, Zhao Ziyang (General secretary of the CCP between 1987 and 1989), was seen as ideologically close to the group’s ideas. In 1987 neo-authoritarian adherer Su Shaozhi 苏绍智 (1923-2019) tersely summarized the perceived political needs of the PRC as follows: “What China needs today is a *strong* liberal leader.”<sup>86</sup>

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1885) in the White House. According to him, while the former process was significantly less democratic than the latter, both were equally in the public’s interest.

<sup>82</sup> Moody (2007: 151-53).

<sup>83</sup> Huntington (1968: 1). Huntington proposed that the differences between democratic systems and authoritarian structures are less pronounced than the differences between countries whose politics embody consensus, community, legitimacy, organization, effectiveness, stability, and nations whose political status quo is deficient in those qualities.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. (4-6). Huntington emphasized the need to clearly demarcate *stability* from *economic growth*. While in some situations economic growth can be conducive to achieving stability, in other instances it can even exacerbate instability. For example, whilst growth in 1950s India was much slower than in contemporary Argentina and Venezuela, the country was considerably more stable than the latter two.

<sup>85</sup> Moody (2007: 152-53).

<sup>86</sup> Sautman (1992: 72-75). Italics by this dissertation’s author, J.A.G. Roctus. After Zhao and Su fell from grace after the student crackdown of 1989, both became noticeably more supportive of short-term democratization and dropped—part of—the authoritarian component of the ideology. Su for example started opting for Scandinavian Socialism. Just after the crackdown on the students he stated: “the Swedish model is I don’t know how many times closer to socialism than the Chinese model.” During his house arrest (1989-2005) Zhao also started to argue for a number of beliefs that were much more radical than any opinion he had ever expressed whilst in power. This included (among others) the need for free press, the freedom to organize oneself, an independent judiciary, and a multiparty democratic system. See also Zhao Ziyang (2010).

The view of Samuel Huntington and the Chinese neo-authoritarianists to a certain extent holds similarities to the model proposed in Randall Peerenboom's *China Modernizes: Threat to the West Or Model for the Rest?* In his work, the scholar explained the complicated clash of viewpoints split between the PRC being seen as a potential new superpower and the deeply-rooted fear in the West for its leadership's retention of authoritarian policies. Peerenboom argued that, instead of comparing the PRC with the developed West, it was far fairer to compare the country with fellow lower-middle-income countries on subjects like human rights and democracy.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, he cited the proposed existence of the East Asian model (EAM), which, somewhat reminiscent of Huntington's 1968 work, argues for a focus on stability and institution building while, ostensibly, temporarily delaying liberal democratization. This was apparently a tradeoff which many people were willing to make in Asia's many developing countries.<sup>88</sup> Possible examples of countries where the stability for democracy tradeoff has been made until recently are Malaysia and Singapore.<sup>89</sup> Interestingly, when discussing the success or failure of the tradeoff, even for the countries that underwent democratization during the 1980s and 1990s such as South Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Taiwan, the basic contention seems to hold that if Western democracy had come too early, their respective economic booms might not have occurred.<sup>90</sup> The argument is apparent: wealth creation under authoritarian auspices was conducive in creating liberal democracy in—some parts of—Asia.

Along EAM premises, Randall Peerenboom proposed a chronological six-step path to “constitutional democracy” in Asia: (I) an emphasis on economic growth under authoritarian premises; (II) a pragmatic approach to reforms, with states selectively adopting and rejecting certain parts of the Washington Consensus; (III) a process of the institutionalization and creation of sound(er) legal systems; (IV) acquiring process of great wealth while (liberal) democratic reforms are still postponed; (V) constitutionalism begins to develop, institutions are

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<sup>87</sup> Peerenboom (2007: VII-VIII and 163-64). Peerenboom for instance cited some studies on the Chinese perception of the West's “hypocritical” values-based democracy. Since gross(er) violations of countries with similar or higher development levels than China were being ignored (e.g. Saudi-Arabia), the Chinese felt they were being judged to stricter or double benchmarks. Many felt these double standards were due to the fact China was seen as a political enemy of the West.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. (2007: 21-22). The author did however not make a claim to universalism, and admitted that countries which already had enjoyed a certain level of democratic and civil rights for some time even during times of instability might not want to make the stability for democracy tradeoff and meekly hand their democratic rights back.

<sup>89</sup> Singapore has been led by the semi-authoritarian People's Action Party, which since 1963 has consistently enjoyed a supermajority in parliament. This situation was for a long time analogous to the political situation in neighboring Malaysia, where the Barisan Nasional coalition (and its predecessors) had ruled the country since the country's independence in 1957. In 2018 the coalition lost power for the first time, but regained it after a political crisis in early 2020. While the actual voting process in both countries has always been relatively fair, both ruling parties have been accused of indirect fraud through gerrymandering, media bias, opposition slander, etcetera, to stay in power.

<sup>90</sup> Neher (1994: 959).

strengthened, a civil society begins to develop (albeit sometimes in a different form from the societies in the West); and (VI) a greater protection of civil and political rights after democratization is achieved, including rights that involve sensitive political issues. However, collectivistic approaches incidentally might occasionally still prevail over liberalism.<sup>91</sup> If one combines the logic proposed by Huntington and Peerenboom, the argument that the PRC has simply not yet reached the point where it can—and wants to—make the tradeoff for democracy, as the country can still be situated in the early phase of Peerenboom’s step model, becomes apparent. Similarly, one could argue that Taiwan had reached the required developmental threshold for democratization during the 1980s.

A settlement for a conclusion that the stability and democracy tradeoff—even if enriched by Randall Peerenboom’s interesting model—decided the time-path of democratization in Asia might nevertheless be a considerable oversimplification and underestimation of the process.<sup>92</sup> Many other economic, spatial, and temporal factors also influenced the course of democratization. Samuel Huntington seemed to have realized this by the early 1990s, as he decided to compile a democratic wave theory, which in particular took notice of temporal commonalities between different democratic waves since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>93</sup> In his work, the scholar focused on the third wave between 1974 and 1990 (which is not necessarily the wave’s ending date, merely the end of the author’s analysis) and its immediate consequences. Huntington held that the third wave was brought about by a wide array of factors, including the many legitimacy problems of authoritarian systems due to internal failures (e.g., the Soviet Union’s stagnation and eventual decline in the 1970s and 1980s), the sharp increase in living standards and immaterial demands during the 1960s, the new anti-authoritarian stance of the catholic church, other external factors (e.g., historical contingency), and an unprecedented

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<sup>91</sup> Peerenboom (2007: 31-32). Peerenboom’s “prevailing collectivistic approach” is likely a reference to former Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew’s 李光耀 (1923-2015) proposed existence of “Asian Values”. These values argued that democracy in East Asia should emphasize normative traditional Confucian values such as respect for discipline, collectivism, and authority. See also, Lorenzo (2013: 13-14).

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. (32-33). Peerenboom himself also admitted this, and saw EAM as merely “roughly” corresponding with general developments in Asia. He recognized there were countries that democratized at a low level of wealth (e.g. Indonesia and the Philippines), as well as countries that did not commit to human capital investments and institutional building at all (e.g. North Korea and Laos).

<sup>93</sup> Huntington (1993: 3 and 16). Huntington summarized the three waves and their (partly overlapping) intermezzos as follows: the first “slow wave” (1828-1926) followed by the first reverse wave (1922-1942); the second “short wave” (1943-1962) followed by the second reverse wave (1958-1975); and the third wave, which according to him “began at twenty-five minutes after midnight, Thursday, April 25, 1974, in Lisbon, Portugal, when a radio station played the song *Grandola Vila Morena*.” (signaling the start of the Carnation Revolution in Portugal)

snowballing effect (e.g., a transmittable “yearning for freedom”) of countries inspiring one another.<sup>94</sup>

It was during this perceived third wave that the KMT-regime in Taiwan started to democratize, with ROC president Chiang Ching-kuo formally ending the period of martial law (*Jieyan shiqi* 戒嚴時期) in 1987. At the same time, the PRC embarked on its ongoing economic “reform and opening-up campaign” (*gaige kaifang* 改革開放, 1978-), while crushing a pro-democracy student protest in Beijing (*liu si shijian* 六四事件)<sup>95</sup> in 1989. The developments in Taiwan during the 1980s to a certain extent conform to Randall Peerenboom’s description of the EAM’s six-step path to constitutional democracy. As mature institutions were formed, a civil society with indeed some differences to Western societies developed itself,<sup>96</sup> the rule of law was strengthened, and finally, democratization took place. Peerenboom’s conceptualization of “constitutional democracy” seems strikingly similar to the constitutional government (*xianzheng* 宪政) proposed by Sun Yat-sen, which was the final step of his own democratization schema, and likewise provided “limited” rights and democratic freedoms (see *infra*, 3.3).

The PRC, however, despite its present accumulation of wealth arguably being comparable to or even already exceeding that of 1980s Taiwan,<sup>97</sup> has shown much stiffer authoritarian resilience. According to Andrew Nathan, writing in 2003, this resilience increasingly clashes with the predictions of most Western academics that successful economic development in a globalizing economy eventually requires far-reaching liberal democratization. Therefore, he pondered whether the developments in the PRC might “suggest a more disturbing possibility: that authoritarianism is a viable regime form even under conditions of advanced modernization and integration with the global economy.”<sup>98</sup> This raises the question of whether

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* (25-26, and 45-46). This snowballing effect was not completely equal, and depended on geographical and cultural variables.

<sup>95</sup> The PRC’s denomination of “June four incident” refers to the date of the crackdown. In Taiwan the event is known by “Tiananmen square massacre” (*Tiananmen da tushu* 天安門大屠殺).

<sup>96</sup> Mattlin (2018) discussed the high degree of politicization present in Taiwanese society, which according to him is related to its one-party past. (see also *infra*, 4.3)

<sup>97</sup> From an economic perspective the argument that the PRC has not yet reached democratizing Taiwan’s development level—while still reasonable at Peerenboom’s time of writing (2007)—seems somewhat dated in present context, as the PRC’s current (2020) GDP per capita already exceeds that of late 1980s Taiwan. See also: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/263775/gross-domestic-product-gdp-per-capita-in-china/> (PRC) and <https://www.statista.com/statistics/727592/gross-domestic-product-gdp-per-capita-in-taiwan/> (Taiwan) (both last accessed July 24, 2020). While statistics differ on the exact income inequality of Taiwan during the 1980s, it is very probably that it was at least significantly lower than the PRC’s 2016 GINI coefficient of 46.5 (which is significantly above the UN’s ‘warning’ cut-off rate of 40). See also: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2172rank.html> (last accessed July 24, 2020)

<sup>98</sup> Nathan (2003: 16).

democratized Taiwan or authoritarian China is the odd one out when it comes to the respective success and failure of the process of democratization in the two countries.

## 2.2. Democratization and Democratic Centralism

While Leninism can be seen as an example of an authoritarian system opting for stability along the lines of Samuel Huntington's 1968 work, the system lacks certain internal processes to ensure smooth transition when required. As Leninist systems with democratic centralist processes experience a lack of *feedback mechanisms*, (liberal) democratization becomes a more difficult process. Hardly any party member of a privileged ruling party will feel inclined to give up their unlimited societal power to the opposition. David Shambaugh, therefore, stated that Leninist systems can be both assets as well as liabilities when confronted with governance challenges during a reform process: on the one hand they possess a "strong state (capacity)" in meeting these challenges, yet on the other hand they lack democratic systems' inherent "feedback mechanisms" for properly meeting social needs and demands during the process.<sup>99</sup> Whenever the demand for such a feedback mechanism grows to be larger than the need for strong unitary state structures, democratic centralism can be seen as a hindrance to achieving reform and can transform (Marxist-)Leninist parties into stagnant bodies.<sup>100</sup> Just like Shambaugh, Samuel Huntington also recognized that institutional change toward democratic systems was exceptionally difficult in nations with Leninist state structures, such as 1980s Taiwan, as the diffusion of party and state had to once again be separated from one another. In Taiwan this was made even more difficult by the "temporary provisions" made to the constitution in 1948 (see also *supra*, 1.4 and *infra* 4.2).<sup>101</sup>

While the rigidity imbedded in the system of democratic centralism can be partly relaxed in favor of creating intraparty freedom of speech within its higher echelons, such freedom of speech is not without risk, as it not only promotes intraparty reform but also implies a legitimacy loss due to (more and fiercer) internal criticism on policies. Furthermore, if not strictly applied exclusively within the confines of the party's top bodies, the democratic trend might spread to lower bodies of the party, or even to the rest of the population. Steven Hood has stated that the

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<sup>99</sup> Shambaugh (2008: 6-7).

<sup>100</sup> Alam (2009: 42). Alam stated: "[Democratic centralism will] privilege [party] leaders above democracy and reduce the cadre into, albeit involuntarily, time servers and the communist movements into stagnant bodies watching history pass by."

<sup>101</sup> Huntington (1993: 117). Other examples of Leninist "legal reform difficulties" given by Huntington included Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and East Germany, where constitutional provisions for "the vanguard role" of the local communist parties had to be annulled before democratic elections could take place.

legacy of democratic centralism makes Leninist parties particularly vulnerable during a democratic transition. He related this to the fact that democratic institutions, in particular electoral institutions, might rival the autocratic institutions of the former ruling party that used to put the power of the state in the hands of the party leaders who stand highest in the hierarchal system of Leninism.<sup>102</sup> Although some Leninist parties attempting reform are willing to renounce at least some of their former principles during the process of reforms, they naturally tend to stick to their monopoly on power. The CCP can be considered an example of this trend, as it renounced—or in its own words: “Sinicized”—most of its Marxist principles, such as class struggle in 1978, yet it retained its Leninist role as omnipotent ruler and vanguard of the PRC.<sup>103</sup>

In his study on reform within Leninist parties, Bruce Dickson proposed the concept of (*party*) *adaptability* (with *reactionary change* as antonym), which he defined as a sort of latent potential for “the creation of a political system that is more responsive to the wants and needs of different sectors of society. It can be represented as a movement along a spectrum away from totalitarianism toward democracy.”<sup>104</sup> For the scholar, the lack of adaptability toward democratization shown by many Leninist parties seemed partly connected to a lack of accountability of these parties to popular opinion, as using the party’s almost omnipotent state power to crush any dissent was much simpler than accommodating the needs of the masses. In some cases, one might say that for a Leninist party remolding the very society it governed appeared more appealing than letting societal demands, which might impact its legitimacy, change the party.<sup>105</sup>

However, while cracking down on individuals or groups that refuse to agree with proposed societal norms is indeed a powerful tool that most dominant Leninist ruling parties had at their disposal, such a tool also makes it hard—if not impossible—to allow concessions toward pro-democratic dissent when required for its long term survival. When discussing opposition in Leninist societies, it is important to distinguish *revisionism*, which occurs inside the system but is critical of certain aspects and often opts for a more democratic application of certain aspects, from *dissidence*, which is situated outside the system and argues against its very existence. When opposition is attempted within the confines of the Leninist system through

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<sup>102</sup> Hood (1996: 469).

<sup>103</sup> Dickson (2000: 519-20).

<sup>104</sup> Dickson (1997: 5). Dickson stated that the (*party*) *adaptability* spectrum ranged from unbridled state terror and coercion to full liberal democratization. Furthermore, the scholar stated that the concept of *adaptability* should not be seen as synonymous with (*party*) survivability, as this can imply stagnation. The concept is also not synonymous with economic reform, although greater reliance the free market and economic development often indirectly creates pressure for political change.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.* (2).

revisionism, calls for reform are arguable even harder to tolerate for the ruling party than when encountering dissidence.<sup>106</sup> As stated above, Lenin's opposition to the "revisionist" social-democratic followers of Emanuel Bernstein and the *Mensheviks* was arguably even fiercer than his hatred of class enemies. The same can be said for Stalin's crackdown on other factions within the Russian communist party, such as the Trotskyists, or Mao Zedong's entente with the "bourgeois" US in face of the "revisionist" USSR. To quote Philip Selznick's apt description of this phenomenon:

The communists can compromise with the "class enemy", they can even support him, but they dare not tolerate the political existence of those who may offer the target groups an alternative ideological leadership or who can effectively expose the totalitarian practices of *bolshevism* in power.<sup>107</sup>

It should not be forgotten that the above discussion of Leninist state omnipotence and state remolding to a certain extent is theoretical in nature, as an example of truly all-powerful state power has yet to materialize. No Leninist party has ever reached the level of near-complete societal penetration necessary to freely remold society and discard all forms of accountability to its citizens. Calls for democratization have shown to be ever-present—albeit in differing degrees—in the communist world. Furthermore, as also shown in the first chapter, Leninist ideology has in practice often been diluted by other political philosophies, such as other communist ideologies including Marxism and local communist adaptations. This has been the case with the CCP, where Marxism and local theories were also included in the constitution. In contrast, the KMT in Taiwan combined Leninism with free market principles and was faced with ethnical divisions.

Therefore, considering how the KMT and CCP were unable to achieve a sufficient level of societal penetration to remold society to a degree where calls for democratization would naturally fade away, both were forced to deal with the persistent demands in one way or another. One could say that the KMT and CCP chose opposing sides of Dickson's spectrum in responding to the calls for democratization: while the KMT has shown great adaptability in the

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<sup>106</sup> Joppke (1994: 548-550). Joppke admitted that the boundary between the two concepts is often hard to define. For example, whether the Prague Spring of 1968, where the nominal goal was "socialism with a human face", was a case of "revisionism" or "dissidence", could only have been established if the movement had succeeded. The same arguably goes for the 1989 student protests in China, as the protestors took special care to emphasize that they were not seeking to overthrow the CCP and the socialist system by singing *The Internationale* on multiple occasions.

<sup>107</sup> Selznick (1952: 227). Discovered through Joppke (1994: 549-550).

face of the demands for democratization and transformed itself into a dominant party in a competitive multi-party democracy, the CCP instead has arguably opted for reactionary change by harshly suppressing the democratic demands and by cracking down on revisionists and dissidents alike.

### 3. Sun Yat-sen, Democracy, and the Leninist Roots of the CCP and KMT

As stated in the above chapters, Leninism in both the PRC and ROC (Taiwan) was “diluted” by many other inputs. However, before drawing conclusions on how these factors might have led to the divergent developments in the PRC and Taiwan during the 1980s and 1990s, it is imperative to first conduct research on another important “input” that might have helped decide the outcomes of these processes, namely, the KMT’s founder and the ROC’s first provisional president (1911-12): Sun Yat-sen. Even long after his demise in 1925, Sun indirectly exerted influence on the ROC’s path of democratization. Samuel Huntington, for example, recognized the importance of the flexible way in which KMT reformers appealed to the democratic constituent of Sun’s Three Principles of the People when searching for a legitimacy basis to democratize. Huntington saw some commonalities in the way certain democratizing “third wave party-states” like the KMT searched for ways to survive the process of democratization by claiming a democratic “return to legitimacy.” In the KMT’s case, Sun’s democratic ideas constituted a useful tradition to fall back on (see also *infra*, 4.1 and 4.2).<sup>108</sup>

Investigating the true connotations of Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of the People would require a meticulous discourse analysis of primary sources, which is far beyond this dissertation’s scope. Therefore, while passages deemed most relevant are analyzed below, a comparative study of Sun’s many—sometimes downright contradictory—exhortations is left out. Hereby, the observation that a scrupulous search for the “true doctrine” of Sun might not even lead to satisfying results is taken in account. After all, as Harold Schiffrin has stated, “Sun was not a masterful political philosopher, but a pragmatic improviser.”<sup>109</sup>

The first subsection of this chapter serves as a terse introduction to the complicated legacy of Sun Yat-sen in both the PRC and ROC. By means of the subsequent subchapter, this dissertation attempts to provide some clues as to whether and how Sun’s ideas played a role in shaping the complicated status quo on Leninism in the ROC and PRC. The role of Soviet advisor Mikhail Borodin should be emphasized here in particular, as his introduction of Leninism to Sun indirectly had considerable influence over his main political philosophy, the Three Principles of the People. Sun’s ideology in turn affected both the CCP and—especially—the KMT. Subsequently, this chapter’s third subsection provides an outline of the basic

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<sup>108</sup> Huntington (1993: 138). Huntington compared the way the KMT “used” Sun to legitimize their democratization, with the way Mexico’s Industrial Revolutionary Party and South Africa’s National Party tried to portray their decades of semi-dictatorship in the 1980s as temporary transition periods. Just like the KMT in the 1980s, these parties thereby attempted to gain “backward legitimacy” for their democratic reforms.

<sup>109</sup> Schiffrin (1968: 2).

conceptualizations of “democracy” by Sun. Finally, the fourth subchapter explains how Sun’s ambiguous philosophy on democracy was sometimes (mis)understood as being liberal or pluralistic, thereby imparting a “democratic promise” in need of fulfilling to later generations of KMT leadership.

### 3.1. Sun Yat-sen and the Three Principles of the People: A Complicated Legacy

Sun Yat-sen published many treatises over the course of his life. However, his most known political philosophical work, homologous with his main ideology and essentially a grand summary of his lectures on different subjects, is the *Sanmin Zhuyi* (三民主義, the “Three Principles of the People,” 1924). This treatise’s three main doctrines consist of *minzu* (民族, “nationalism”), *minquan* (民权, “democracy”) and *minsheng* (民生, “people’s livelihood”).<sup>110</sup> Jack Gray remarked that, for Sun, these concepts were inseparable from each other and were mutually supportive. Democracy, or “democratic conscience,” was for him primarily a way to reinforce the national cohesion of China.<sup>111</sup> This might provide an explanation for the recent surge of reverence toward Sun in the PRC, as his idea of a unified China suits the PRC’s long term goal of reunification with “renegade province Taiwan”. Many differing interpretations of Sun’s doctrines exists, and the variation among the interpretations of his ideology might provide some clarification for the fact Sun is to some extent still revered on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, as his beliefs arguably still continue to provide for each his own.

Sun Yat-sen’s persona and ideological legacy are still frequently discussed topics on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, and his evaluation has also transformed during the PRC and ROC’s respective “authoritarian resilience” and “democratization” processes. Whereas Sun was heavily criticized during the Cultural Revolution for his role as KMT founder on the Chinese mainland,<sup>112</sup> his philosophy has gradually made a return to prominence over the last four decades. Xi Jinping, the current president of the PRC and Chairman of the CCP (2012-), has increasingly paid homage to the *minzu* aspects of Sun’s political philosophy and his role of

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<sup>110</sup> The provided translations of all of Sun’s *Three Principles* are highly controversial. Therefore, subsequently their *pinyin* transcription will instead be given to prevent misrepresentations.

<sup>111</sup> Gray (2002: 230).

<sup>112</sup> Gao Wenqian (2008: 135-36). Most of the attacks on Sun during the Cultural Revolution were non-ideological, and more pragmatic of nature. The persecution constituted a conflict between Sun’s widow Song Qingling 宋庆龄 (1893-1981) and Mao Zedong’s wife Jiang Qing 江青 (1914-1991). Jiang had attempted to persuade Song to support the Cultural Revolution, which Song had harshly refused. After the Red Guards (*hongweibing* 红卫兵) started destroying graves of Song’s family and verbally attacking Sun’s legacy, premier Zhou Enlai 周恩来 (1898-1976) interfered on Song’s behalf by ordering the graves to be repaired and allowing Sun’s memoirs be republished.

“Father of the Nation” (*Guofu* 国父). Xi, to an extent, appears to identify himself with Sun’s emphasis on national unity.<sup>113</sup> In contrast, Sun’s fame has declined in Taiwan. As public opinion in Taiwan has been shifting toward independence, this trend seems inversely related to Sun’s improved status in the PRC as a symbol of Chinese unity. Many hardline pro-independence members of the DPP, and some allied pro-independence parties, view Sun as a “Chinese foreigner” blocking the path to independence. While the KMT still defends Sun’s role as “Father of the Nation” in Taiwan,<sup>114</sup> it gradually also seems increasingly reluctant to revoke his *minzu* philosophy. As the KMT attempts to rebrand itself, at least partly, as a Taiwanese party, it instead opts to promote Sun’s democratic ideas, which might resonate better with people on the island (see also *infra*, Chapter Four). This has given rise to a complex situation where “de-Sunification” (*qu’Sunhua* 去孙华) initiatives in Taiwan occasionally invoke the ire of the CCP, as removing Sun is seen as a prelude to further ‘de-Sinification’ (*qu’Zhongghua* 去中国化) and an eventual declaration of independence.<sup>115</sup>

### 3.2. Sun Yat-sen and the Idea of a Leninist Party-state

As mentioned previously, Sun Yat-sen was influenced by the ideas brought in by a Soviet advisor, Mikhail Borodin, during the Warlord Era (*junfa shidai* 军阀时代, 1916-1928). Borodin had come to the KMT’s aid when the party’s area of influence had been reduced to a small base around the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou during the early 1920s. Although originally gaining power after the Xinhai revolution (*xinhai geming* 辛亥革命, 1911) and winning the

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<sup>113</sup> On the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sun Yat-sen’s birth, Xi Jinping held a speech praising Sun’s revolutionary contributions to the founding of the ROC. During Xi’s eulogization of Sun the Chinese word for “nation” and “nationalism” (*minzu* 民族) appeared considerably more often (45 times) than the word “democracy” (*minzhu* 民主) (nine times). Of the 45 instances of *minzu*, the most used combination was “Chinese nation” (*zhongghua minzu* 中华民族) (26 times), which was in ten cases extended to “The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” (*zhonghua minzu weida fuxing* 中华民族伟大复兴). Xi prominently included the slogan of “rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” in his political philosophy of “Chinese Dream” (*Zhongguo meng* 中国梦), thereby linking his own ideology with Sun Yat-sen’s ambition for national rejuvenation and unification. For a transcription of Xi’s speech, see Xue Tao (2016).

<sup>114</sup> Zhang Yan (2017). The chairman of the hardline pro-independence New Power Party (*Shidai liliang* 时代力量) proposed to scrap the obligation to stand upright to the portrait of Sun Yat-sen when taking the official oath as public official, and instead opted to change the ritual to an American-style oath, where one swears upon the national laws (constitution) to an oath taker. The proposed amendment, which would have required a supermajority in parliament, was vetoed by the KMT. John Wong also touched upon the proposed reforms to remove Sun’s image from the oath, and proclaimed his hope that his biographical work on Sun “will contribute a little bit in balancing the current attempts to [historical] “overcorrection” in the Taiwanese pro-independence camp.” Original text: “希望本書..., 能為平衡一下目前台灣綠營的“矯枉過正”, 稍盡綿力.” See John Wong (2016: 708-09).

<sup>115</sup> Yao Xinyu (2016). In 2016, Chinese mainland officials for example criticized a DPP proposal that would remove portraits of Sun from schools and government buildings on Taiwan.

national assembly election in 1913,<sup>116</sup> Sun and his party were ousted from power by the authoritarian military official Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859-1916). Under the advice of Borodin, Sun would decide to construct a united front between the KMT and CCP in 1923 in a bid to regain power.<sup>117</sup> The mission that the Soviet advisor had received from his superiors in Russia was that support was only to be given to the KMT if it would break with right-wing elements in its party, unconditionally support an alliance with the CCP, and strive to improve the rights of the Chinese workers.<sup>118</sup>

After the arrival of Mikhail Borodin, a great shift in Sun Yat-sen's discourse occurred. Whereas Sun, a Christian Baptist, during the preceding decade had ruled with many Christian impetuses,<sup>119</sup> he seemingly discarded this pro-religious stance in the 1920s in favor of embracing the USSR and CCP. Sun's accepting stance toward the communists was likely overly pragmatic in nature and related to his declined fortunes.<sup>120</sup> Jesse Lutz explained that Sun was faced with declining Western aid during the early 1920s. In this desperate situation, a pragmatic alliance with the left while downplaying his Christian heritage might have appeared like the only plausible way forward.<sup>121</sup> It should be stressed that this process was mutual, as most of his early Western supporters, many of which had been Christian missionaries, also abandoned him. Their decision to abandon Sun was probably just as pragmatic as Sun's reasons for allying with the left. While Sun had been the clear "frontrunner" in the 1910s to gain power in China, he had become one among many contenders in the ongoing warlord strife and, thus, the missionaries "hedged their bets."<sup>122</sup>

For many PRC researchers, Sun's embrace of the Soviet advisors and the CCP constitutes a revolutionary awakening, or even an embrace of communism.<sup>123</sup> Some other

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<sup>116</sup> Spence (2012: 266-67). In the national assembly the KMT won 269 of the 596 seats, with the remainder divided up among other parties. The elections of 1913 are sometimes regarded as the only truly competitive election in Chinese history. However, turnout (just over 10% overall) varied greatly and depended on the amount of control the government had over the country's many regions.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid (301-09).

<sup>118</sup> Wilbur (1984: 7-8).

<sup>119</sup> Dong Conglin (1998: 133). For example, during a meeting in Guangzhou in May 1912, Sun said, "right now we are fortunate to have Western Christian missionaries as our visionaries, with this we can enlighten our country." Original text: "今有幸有西方教士為先覺，以開導吾國".

<sup>120</sup> Metallo (1978: 282).

<sup>121</sup> Lutz (1976: 405).

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., Lee (2009: 77-78) and Metallo (1978: 271-73 and 282). Michael Metallo noted that some missionaries in China had held mixed opinions of Sun's Christian devoutness from the very outset for his lack of participation in formal religious activities and later, his disregard of the New Testament by taking a second wife.

<sup>123</sup> Zheng Yongfu and Tian Hailin (1992: 99). The authors held that Sun had managed to suppress his religious views in the last two years of his life and successfully replaced them with scientific thoughts, in this way he "reduced his Christian beliefs to a mere overcoat," which no longer hampered the further development of "proper" revolutionary thoughts. Original text: "基督教在他身上，仅仅成为一件外衣了。" The Taiping rebellion (*Taiping tianguo zhi luan* 太平天国之乱, 1850-1864), which Sun Yat-sen also claimed to have been inspired by

academics in the country, however, hold more moderate standpoints. Tao Jiye, for instance, combined both the “pragmatic” and “awakening” viewpoints and, basing himself on a speech given by Sun during 1924 in which he praised the CCP, stated that for Sun, communism had indeed become the highest ideal to pursue. Therefore, he concluded that the third component of his Three Principles of the People, *minsheng*, could basically be equated to communism.<sup>124</sup> However, Tao did not deny that Sun’s choice in praising communism might have been of, at least partly, a pragmatic nature, and admitted that Sun had to safeguard the alliance between the CCP and KMT that was founded a year before his 1924 speech.<sup>125</sup>

Taiwanese researcher John Wong completely disregarded a hypothetical “embrace of communism” and stated that Sun Yat-sen’s frequently cited oration of “[let us] take the USSR as teacher” (*yi E wei shi 以俄為師*) was only uttered when he was at his most desperate. Furthermore, Sun’s earlier pro-USSR rhetoric became noticeably absent during the last months of his life after conflicts started to arise with Mikhail Borodin.<sup>126</sup> David Godley, opting for a moderate standpoint on the matter, stated that Sun’s *minsheng* initially indeed had drawn upon communist ideology. However, Sun eventually backpaddled to a kind of “third-way semi-socialism” after witnessing how Lenin had to introduce the New Economic Policy after the USSR’s economic collapse in the early 1920s. The KMT regime on Taiwan subsequently followed this line of explanation, using Sun’s “third-way socialist” *minsheng* to both reject

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during his childhood, is another event that has been amply narrated to suit the revolutionary awakening narrative in the PRC. This rebellion is considered to have been (proto-)communist inspired among many PRC researchers, with Lu Yinfeng (2017: 145) for instance stating that the “utopian socialist” and Marxist ideals of the rebels, such as egalitarianism and agricultural land reforms, can be considered an early form of communism. Rolf Tiedemann (2010: 894-95) however accentuated that the leader of the rebels, Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全 (1814-1864), had been primarily Christian inspired in his egalitarianist ideology, hereby instead drawing a “Christian-inspired parallel” with Sun Yat-sen.

<sup>124</sup> Tao Jiye (2012: 119). First, Tao quoted Sun’s statement on August 3, 1924, that “...for this reason, *Minsheng* is socialism, which is also called communism, which in fact is the doctrine of great harmony (*datong zhuyi 大同主义*). Original text: “...故民生主義就是社會主義，又名共產主義，即是大同主義。” See also, Sun Yat-sen (1989: 129-130, volume I). In addition, Tao quoted another speech by Sun on August 10, 1924, where Sun remarked, “For the people, all benefits (lit. that has been produced) and rights to state affairs are to be shared. Only this is the true *minsheng*, and it is precisely the world of great harmony that Confucius longed for.” Original text: “人民對於國家，不只是共產，一切事權都是要共的，這才是真正的民生主義，就是孔子所希望之大同世界。” See also, Sun Yat-sen (1989: 157, volume I). Thereby, through combining the two statements, Tao concluded that for Sun communism and the doctrine of great harmony could both be equated to his *minsheng* by August 1924.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. (119-120).

<sup>126</sup> Wong (2016: 694-95). Wong described how Borodin fabricated some orders by the ailing Sun to harshly crack down on an anti-communist merchant uprising in Guangzhou (*Guangzhou shangtuan shibian 廣州商團事變*, October 1924). The scholar stated that after this incident “Sun Yat-sen will inevitably have thought that Borodin is harboring certain ulterior motives. After this, how could Sun still have continued advocating for ‘[let us] take the USSR as a teacher’?” Original text: “孫中山會無可避免地認為鮑羅廷居心叵測。在這以後，孫中山還能鼓吹‘以俄為師’?”

Marxism while also legitimizing more state intervention than a capitalistic *laissez-faire* economic system would have allowed for.<sup>127</sup>

Regardless of the complex question of whether Sun Yat-sen's acceptance of the alliance with the CCP and the inclusion of Mikhail Borodin implied an "ideologically genuine embrace of communism" or was a politically pragmatic attempt at survival, it is beyond question that the concept of Leninist vanguardism brought in by the Soviets was a major inspiration—or at least a suitable addition—for Sun's own means. After all, Leninism was not only created with "ruling" under the leadership of an single party in mind, but it was also conceived with the very goal of "seizing" power under the guidance of a single party,<sup>128</sup> which made it especially suitable for a statesman faced with diminishing fortunes and an ever-decreasing probability at reunifying his country. Therefore, in 1924 Sun decided to pursue a Leninist-inspired, KMT-led *dangguo* (党国, "party-state") to retake power. Sun had actually stated his preference to "to govern the state through the party" (*yi dang zhi guo* 以黨治國) long before meeting with Borodin, but now he was ostensibly proposing an even higher degree of party-state diffusion by stating his new goal of "to build the state through the party" (*yi dang jian guo* 以黨建國). Sun considered this a necessary adaption to his ideology, as there was no country to govern for the KMT yet. After gaining power, the Soviet Union could be taken as a model.<sup>129</sup> Sun attempted to link the *dangguo* principle to his Three Principles of the People and stated:

During the Russian revolution ... [the *Bolsheviks*'] sole aim was the success of the revolution ... You can see that Russia's revolution is in fact the Three Principles of the People. Its success was due to "party" being on top of "country" ... [We should] reorganize by putting the party (KMT) on top of the state (ROC).<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Godley (1987: 109-110). Godley therefore stated that the KMT effectively handed the narrative of Sun's egalitarian ideas to the CCP. This was readily taken up by Mao Zedong's chief propagandist Chen Boda 陈伯达 (1904-1989), who attempted to popularize Sun as a far-left communist.

<sup>128</sup> Perlmutter (1981: 17). Perlmutter noticed that Lenin went even farther in this than—among others—the Nazi's in Germany or the Fascists in Italy during the interbellum. While also outright rejecting liberal democracy like Lenin, they had not considered the single-party structure as a means of *seizing* power, and only started their respective transitional processes to a one-party state *after* first capturing it through other means.

<sup>129</sup> Fitzgerald (1996: 185-86). Sun had mentioned this in a speech of January 20, 1924: "There is one thing that can serve as a model for us. That is Russia, completely governed by the party, which is a step further in wielding power than the political parties in Britain, the United States, and France [have achieved]. We currently have no country to govern; therefore, we can only propose to build the country through the party". "現尚有一事，可為我們模範，即俄國完全以黨治國，比英、美、法之政黨，握權更進一步；我們現在並無國可治，祇可說以黨建國。" See also, Sun Yat-sen (1989, volume III: 412-14).

<sup>130</sup> Sun Yat-sen (1989, volume III: 412-14). Taken from the same speech of January 20, 1924. Original Text: "當俄國革命時...只求革命成功...，可見俄之革命，事實上實是三民主義。其能成功，即因其將黨放在國上...應重新組織，把黨放在國上。"

Under the auspices of Mikhail Borodin, Sun Yat-sen also decided to introduce the Leninist concept of democratic centralism to the KMT. The Russian advisor helped Sun in creating a democratic centralist interparty system, where KMT members had to reorganize themselves into factions (*dangtuan* 党团) and solve their differences internally before presenting a unified position when participating in non-party organizations, such as the national parliament and the labor unions.<sup>131</sup> The KMT reaffirmed their commitment to this system after Sun's death through a statement in 1925: "[Sun's] intention was to base our party (KMT) on the system of democratic centralism ... only a genuine revolutionary party that has been organized [as such] will be capable of completing the work of the national revolution."<sup>132</sup> However, while democratic centralism was indeed retained after Sun's demise, factionalism within the KMT never truly died out. Instead of further aligning the two parties together and moving toward Sun's dreamed eventual merger,<sup>133</sup> the continued existence of the KMT-CCP alliance only succeeded in invoking the ire of the right-wing and conservative members of the KMT's leadership, such as Chiang Kai-Shek, who were just as inflexible in deviating from their party's line as the orthodox left-wing members of the CCP.<sup>134</sup>

As stated in the first chapter, the legacy of Sun Yat-sen's ideas on establishing a vanguardist *dangguo* during the latter part of his life still lives on through the ROC's constitution. This is not the only Leninist notion that still persist: the ROC's flag, which highly resembles the KMT's party flag, can also be seen as emblematic for the Leninist diffusion that took place between the KMT and the ROC under Sun's command.<sup>135</sup> Perhaps even more striking is the first part of the ROC's present anthem (originally adopted in 1928), which includes a segment of an exhortation by Sun at the opening ceremony of the Whampoa Military Academy (*Huangpu junxiao* 黄埔军校) dated June 16, 1924, which mentions the KMT's elevated position and Leninist concept of vanguardism directly:

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<sup>131</sup> Wilbur (1984: 8-9).

<sup>132</sup> Shieh (1970: 106). Taken from "The Kuomintang Manifesto on Accepting Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Will" (*Zhongguo Guomindang jieshou zongli yizhu xuanyan* 中國國民黨接受總理遺囑宣言) of May 16, 1925. See also Sun Yat-sen (1989: 183-87, volume II). Original text: "其意蓋使本黨依據民主的集權制...惟組織完成之真正的革命黨, 乃能擔負完成國民革命之工作。"

<sup>133</sup> Woo (1975: 151-53).

<sup>134</sup> Wilbur and How (1989: 421).

<sup>135</sup> Fitzgerald (1996: 185). Sun had in 1923 opted to replace the "five-colored flag" (*wuseqi* 五色旗) of the Beiyang Government (北洋政府, 1912-1928) which controlled most of Northern China including capital Beijing with the KMT's party flag (*Qingtian bairi qi* 青天白日旗, lit. the "blue clear sky flag"). Fitzgerald saw this as a signal that Sun had stopped seeing political compromise as an option to deal with China's nominal warlord-dominant government, and started opting for a KMT-led *dangguo*.

The Three Principles of the People; That's what *our party* adheres to; Using [the principles], [we] establish the Republic; Using [the principles], [we] advance into a state of great harmony; Oh, righteous men, for the people, [serve as] *a vanguard*.<sup>136</sup>

Finally, it is worth noting that the brand of democratic centralism introduced to the KMT by Mikhail Borodin was considerably less rigid from what the CCP itself had adopted a few years earlier. The CCP had already been on the influence of democratic centralism before the founding of the First United Front, and it officially adopted the concept through its entrance in the Comintern during its second congress in 1922.<sup>137</sup> As the CCP also subscribed to Marxism, not only Leninist obedience to the CCP's party line was required, but Marxist ideological orthodoxy through subscribing to the proletarian standpoint was also mandatory.<sup>138</sup> Despite not being as orthodox, the period of participation in Sun Yat-sen's First United Front must at least have felt like an affirmation of its Leninist principles for the CCP leadership, while Sun's *dangguo* concept probably served as a useful addition to its own ideological means.

Sun Yat-sen himself did not see democratic centralism as a concept that would necessarily limit the KMT to a small, ideological orthodox membership. Regardless of their past, he recruited and financially supported practically anyone that subscribed to his Three Principles of the People and showed some promise, noting that a strong grassroots base in society was equally as important as a maintaining a strong grip on the KMT's elite.<sup>139</sup> While the KMT and CCP, after Sun's death, would both succeed in creating a Leninist *dangguo* with high societal penetration,<sup>140</sup> the differing degrees of rigidity and ideological orthodoxy

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<sup>136</sup> Original Text: “三民主義，吾黨所宗，以建民國，以進大同，咨爾多士，為民前鋒...” Translation and italics by this thesis' author, J.A.G. Roctus. Many highly divergent English translations exist online, of which some have chosen to not translate “吾黨所宗” in literal manner. Most striking is probably the observation that the official website of the ROC's government does not—dare to—provide an English translation as well. See <https://www.president.gov.tw/Page/97> (last accessed August 2, 2020).

<sup>137</sup> Li Zhijun and Wang Yizhe (2018: 118). Despite democratic centralism only officially being written in the CCP's principles in 1927, abiding by the concept's rules was a requirement for joining the Comintern. As the CCP joined the Comintern in 1922, the authors argued that: “[Any party] joining the Comintern should be established in accordance with the principle of democratic centralism. Therefore, being one of the branches of the Comintern, the CCP naturally established the principle of democratic centralism during the early days of the party's creation.” Original text: “‘加入共产国际的党，应该是按照民主集中制原则建立起来的。’因此，中国共产党作为共产国际的支部之一，自然在建党之初就确立了民主集中制原则。”

<sup>138</sup> Wilbur and How (1989: 415).

<sup>139</sup> Kwei Chung-gi (1970: 10-11). When friends asked Sun if this magnanimity might cause swindlers to take advantage of him, Sun replied: “If one or two percent of the money I have spent on these men can produce some good results, it would be amply worthwhile.”

<sup>140</sup> Huang Xinhao and Lai Minglun (2015: 4). The authors stated: “The CCP and the KMT [historically] share many similarities: in addition to having a Chinese cultural background, more importantly, they possess identical Leninist/one-party *dangguo* structural systems and have penetrated [their] societal and economic systems.”

embedded in their respective systems of democratic centralism would have considerable consequences for the extent that discussion on reform would be tolerated in the future. Later mass campaigns in the PRC, such as the Cultural Revolution, were arguably emblematic for the Marxist orthodoxy that was demanded of CCP members on top of the required absolute Leninist obedience under said democratic centralist principles. This was absent under the KMT regime in Taiwan, where most crackdowns during the White Terror were aimed at weeding out anti-regime dissidents, regardless of their political and ideological background, and where “Leninist obedience” to the party line was sufficient.

### 3.3. Sun Yat-sen and Democratization: Ambiguity Prevails

As shown above, one might crudely summarize the diverging interpretations of two of the three main pillars of Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of the People as follows: Sun’s *minzu* (民族, “nationalism”), his related struggle for national unity, and his related role as “Father of modern China” are increasingly frequently invoked in the PRC to promote the territorial integrity of the PRC (including Taiwan), while support for *minzu* is roughly split along party lines in Taiwan. While the KMT still supports him as the “Father of the ROC”, some in the DPP see him as a figure blocking the path to independence. Sun’s *Minsheng* (民生, “people’s livelihood”), meanwhile, has been readily embraced in the PRC as (proto-)communism created during Sun’s revolutionary awakening, while the left-wing connotation of the concept has been mostly rejected by the KMT regime on Taiwan.<sup>141</sup> This leaves the final—and probably most ambiguous—component of Sun’s ideology: *minquan* (民權, “democracy”) up for discussion.

The uncertainty about the definition and connotation of *minquan* starts with the very term itself. While it is often translated and understood as “democracy,” one might notice that the prevalent term for democracy in China is actually *minzhu* (民主). This means a connotational difference exists between the second parts of *minquan* and *minzhu*, respectively *zhu* (主, lit. “master/lord”) and *quan* (權, lit. “right/power”). Lei Guang has argued that even the predominant term of *minzhu* already holds a different connotation than the English “democracy” and explained that *minzhu* lacks an “individual” connotation, unlike its Western counterpart of “democracy,” and it instead pertains to the relation between the people as a

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Original text: “中共與國民黨有許多相似處：除皆具中華文化背景，更重要的是具相仿的列寧式 / 一黨黨國體制架構與滲透社會、經濟體制。”

<sup>141</sup> Godley (1987: 121-22). After first describing *minsheng* as a sort of third-way socialism (see supra, 3.2), the left-wing connotation was almost removed in its entirety by Chiang Kai-shek’s KMT after its retreat to Taiwan.

collective body *min* (historically, the subjects) and their masters *zhu* (historically, the high-ranked mandarins).<sup>142</sup> This collective definition of *min* seems similar to Sun's definition of *min* during his first lecture on the subject of *minquan* on March 9, 1924: "To define *minquan*, we must first know what *min* is. Generally speaking, the masses who group and organize [themselves] are called *min*."<sup>143</sup> Subsequently, Sun went on to explain *quan*: "What is *quan*? *quan* is power and authority. Power that is as large as a country, that is what is called *quan*."<sup>144</sup>

Through Sun Yat-sen's definition of *minquan*, one can clearly see the rationale under which he was proposing democracy: unlike the Western conceptualization of "democracy," where an individual liberates itself and achieves personal rights and freedoms, Sun was searching for "national freedom" to strengthen the country. Therefore, one could opt for a translation of *minquan* as "governmental rights" or "constitutional rights." Sun had concluded that the Europeans had fought more for individual democratic freedom since they felt they had lacked it, while the Chinese in contrary had more than enough individual rights and instead needed more "national freedom."<sup>145</sup> This kind of opinion probably stemmed from Sun's experiences during his youth in a highly decentralized and faltering Qing Empire (*Da Qing* 大清, 1636/1644–1911),<sup>146</sup> which was arguable in desperate need for his national definition of *minquan*.

This observation does, however, not imply that Sun Yat-sen was downright opposed to a state of "constitutional democracy" with certain rights for the Chinese people—regardless of whether these "rights" were national or individual of nature. During his fifth lecture on *minquan* on April 26, 1924, Sun stated the people could enjoy four *quan* (here "rights"): "[the people] are to have four rights. These four rights are the right to elect, the right to recall, the right to initiative, and the right to referendum."<sup>147</sup> These four rights probably constitute the most controversial part of Sun's political philosophy in the PRC, where said rights have been either only nominally present, or absent altogether, until the present day. A somewhat emblematic popular example of the sensitivity surrounding Sun's *minquan* ideology is how censors in the PRC cut out most of Sun's speeches on the subject from the critically acclaimed drama *Towards*

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<sup>142</sup> Lei Guang (1996: 419-20).

<sup>143</sup> Sun Yat-sen (1989, volume I: 55-56). Original text: "現在要把民權來定一個解釋，便先要知道甚麼是民。大凡有團體有組織的眾人就叫做民。

<sup>144</sup> Ibid. Original text: "甚麼是權呢？權就是力量，就是威勢；那些力量大到同國家一樣，就叫做權。"

<sup>145</sup> Hart and Lodén (1995: 7).

<sup>146</sup> The Qing dynasty was officially established in 1636 and captured China's capital Beijing in 1644. It took until 1683 (surrender of Taiwan) before they controlled the whole empire.

<sup>147</sup> Sun Yat-sen (1989: Volume I: 113-128). Original text: "...是要有四個權。這四個權是選舉權、罷免權、創制權、複決權。"

*the Republic* (*Zouxiang gonghe* 走向共和, 2003), while maintaining his speeches on the doctrines of *minzu* and *minsheng*. One of the cut scenes included a lecture where Sun lamented the suppression of democracy by his successor, Yuan Shikai, and stressed that the masses should at all times hold the right to impeach their leaders.<sup>148</sup>

The four proposed constitutional rights seemingly conflict with Sun Yat-sen's proposed Leninist *dangguo*. However, this could be explained by Sun likely seeing the rights as only applicable in a later stage of development. Sun remarked that "democracy is the government of cultural maturity," meaning that the implementation of the concept is "utopian" until a society reaches a cultural level where democracy is actually feasible as a political system. In his first speech on *minquan*, Sun Yat-sen cited a few ancient Chinese sages, who he argued had been aware of the importance of *minquan* thousands of years ago. However, according to him, these sages had realized that their society was not yet advanced enough to implement them.<sup>149</sup> Sun envisioned a three-step transition necessary to creating a society where said rights are applicable. First, a short period of military dictatorship (*junzheng* 军政) to unify and pacify China. This would be followed by a second period of hybrid "tutelary democracy" (*xunzheng minzhu* 训政民主) to imprint "correct values" on the Chinese people under the guidance of the KMT. This essentially implied a political situation with no separation of powers between the government and ruling party, corresponding to Sun's proposed *dangguo* with the KMT on top. Finally, the tutelary stage would eventually result in the abovementioned mature constitutional democracy (*xianzheng* 宪政).<sup>150</sup> This "constitutional" phase, with more rights but a retained focus on collectivist approaches and national unity, seems somewhat similar to the final step in Randall Peerenboom's East Asian model (see *supra*, 2.1).

However, Sun remained extremely ambivalent about the exact temporal length of these three steps, as well as China's precise development progress at the moment of writing. Furthermore, Sun seemed to somewhat contradict himself by simultaneously seeing *minquan*

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<sup>148</sup> Kraus (2004: 153). A cut speech from the historical drama, which essentially constitutes an amalgamation of Sun Yat-sen's lectures on *minquan*, can still be found on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8rfp3CLtA> (last accessed August 4, 2020).

<sup>149</sup> Sun Yat-sen (1989, volume I: 113-128). Sun Yat-sen stated: "But at that time, [the sages] thought they could not be achieved. Foreigners seem to call this a 'utopia,' it is an idealistic thing, not something that could be achieved immediately." Original text: 不過那個時候，還以為不能做到，好像外國人說烏托邦，是理想上的事，不是即時可以做得到的。"

<sup>150</sup> Ibid. (Volume II: 171-73) Taken from "The Declaration of the Outline of National Reconstruction's Formulation" (*zhiding jianguo dagang xuanyan* 制訂建國大綱宣言) of September 24, 1924. Sun Yat-sen stated: "The revolutionary construction will be divided into the three periods of military regime, tutelar administration, and constitutional government. I expect that stable and gradual progress will complete our revolutionary work." Original text: "分革命建設為軍政、訓政、憲政三時期。期於循序漸進，以完成革命之工作。"

as an alien concept—thus, requiring considerable time to implement—and viewing it as a concept that had already been understood by the Chinese for a far longer time than the Westerners—thereby warranting immediate implementation.<sup>151</sup> The question, of course, remains whether Sun had indeed meant for the Leninist *dangguo* stage to be of a temporary nature, and whether he would have supported a move toward full democratization—be it national or individual. Sun’s speeches certainly grew increasingly authoritarian as time passed, and he increasingly complained about the “unbridled freedom” of the Chinese during the Qing dynasty, which had made an effective response to the foreign powers impossible. He famously called the Chinese “a sheet of loose sand” (*yi pian sansha* 一片散沙), stating: “Why are Chinese people a sheet of loose sand? It is because everyone has too much freedom. Because the Chinese people have too much freedom, China needs a revolution.”<sup>152</sup> David Lorenzo, therefore, wondered whether Sun ever truly cared for individual freedom, liberalism, and democracy and merely rebelled against the Qing dynasty due to their governmental incompetence.<sup>153</sup>

It is admittedly impossible to come to a certain conclusion on Sun Yat-sen’s stance on democracy. It is nevertheless important to at least take heed of the context of Sun’s declining health when observing that Sun’s lectures became more authoritarian over the years. Audrey Wells noticed that most of Sun’s lectures on *minquan* occurred during the final year of his life, by which point he had already become quite ill. These lectures might, then, show more digressions of thought patterns characterized by frailness than his earlier discourse on *minzu* and *minsheng*.<sup>154</sup> It is therefore entirely possible that due to his frailness Sun might have been more readily swayed into accepting Mikhail Borodin’s Leninism than during his heydays as provisional president of the ROC.

For the KMT and the CCP alike, an explanation that Sun Yat-sen did not equate governmental responsiveness to allowing citizens to weaken China’s central authority (“national freedom”) became a useful way to incorporate Sun in their chronology. Just like Sun, the early KMT and CCP both declined to interpret democracy as meaning unfettered individual

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<sup>151</sup> Lorenzo (2013: 41-43).

<sup>152</sup> Weatherley (2014: 80). Sun Yat-sen (1989, volume I: 67-76). Taken from Sun’s second speech on *minquan* on March 16, 1924. Original text: “中國人為甚麼是一片散沙呢? ... 就是因為是各人的自由太多。由于中國人自由太多, 所以中國要革命。” Sun appeared to employ the “sand metaphor”, which he invoked as many as 37 times in said speech, to show his confusions on democracy: on the one hand he wanted more rights for the Chinese people, on the other hand he observed that the Chinese people already were “too free.”

<sup>153</sup> Lorenzo (2013: 79). Lorenzo noted how Sun has never fully guaranteed (eventual) multi-party elections, checks-and-balances, and rule of law, despite being very well-read on the subjects.

<sup>154</sup> Wells (2001: 73). Despite many of his lectures on *minsheng* also occurring during the final year of his life, Sun had already build a relatively solid theoretical framework around it in earlier years. It should nevertheless come to no surprise that the vagueness surrounding *minsheng* was only second to the ambiguity surrounding *minquan*.

freedom.<sup>155</sup> Be that as it may, Sun's promise of eventual constitutional rights and a gradual process toward democratization—despite said prevailing temporal ambiguity—has served as a constant pressure, or “promise,” for eventual democratization during the KMT regime in Taiwan. Sun being the KMT's founder, the party could never lightly censor incompatible parts of his ideology as the CCP did. Regardless of what Sun's ambiguous *minquan* philosophy pertained to originally, many still choose to interpret it as implying an eventual move to some form of liberal democracy, which is arguably more significant than its original connotation.

### 3.4. Sun Yat-sen and the Democratic Promise

Sun Yat-sen's ambivalent statements surrounding the timetable of democratization and the definition of his desired version of *minquan* have caused early scholars working on this subject to hold differing interpretations on Sun's democratic intentions. Such views were often highly positive, and seemed to equate Sun's ideas on *minquan* to a promise of eventual democratization. American sinologist George Lacy (1888-1951), for instance, investigated whether China was a democracy during the Sino-Japanese war (*Kangri zhanzheng* 抗日战争, 1937-1945), how far democratization in the country had progressed, and what its future prospects were. He concluded that successful liberal democratization in China was a matter of time, since both the ruling KMT and the “red guerillas under Mao Zedong” had included references to “democrat” Sun Yat-sen and his Three Principles of the People in their respective party programs.<sup>156</sup> Harvard scholar Paul Linebarger (1913-1966) was similarly optimistic and spoke highly of Sun's familiarity with American political ideals and noted “[Sun's] aspiration to build a modern democratic republic amidst the ruins of the medieval Manchu Empire.”<sup>157</sup> Lacy and Linebarger's statements present a Western-centric and modernist outlook of Sun's views on democracy, as well as an overoptimistic view of the narratives that the KMT and CCP had constructed around his ideology in their party programs after Sun's death.

Early overly optimistic views on democratization were not limited to Western scholars. KMT diplomat and contemporary of Sun Yat-sen, Alfred Sao-Ke Sze 施肇基 (1877-1958), for instance, stated that the temporary authoritarian rule during the Warlord Era was merely a kind of “growing pain” (“the Chinese are absorbing Western knowledge too fast. Hence the great

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<sup>155</sup> Guo Dingping (2004: 186-87).

<sup>156</sup> Lacy (1943: 127 and 144-49). Lacy spent multiple decades in China in his position as American missionary and would die under house arrest after the CCP's victory. Lacy was, to date, the last official Methodist bishop on the Chinese mainland.

<sup>157</sup> Linebarger (1937: 2).

friction and the seeming disorder and confusion.”) of the process. Therefore, he criticized pessimists that believed that China could not democratize. Furthermore, similar to Sun’s statement on the matter, Sze remarked that democracy in China was applicable since the concept had already had been present in the country during ancient times.<sup>158</sup> Finally, even the son of Sun Yat-sen, Sun Ke 孫科 (1891-1973, more commonly known as “Sun Fo”) in 1944 seemed—admittingly, in an equally ambiguous fashion as his father—to imply that a more pluralistic form of democracy would eventual manifest itself in postwar China:

[Our allies] think that a government that is not formed through the procedure of an election by the people cannot be regarded as a democratic government. In fact, other parties do exist in China. As soon as we realize the principle of democracy in the postwar world, this misunderstanding on the part of British and American public opinion will be automatically removed.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Sze (1922: 243-45). Sze’s pro-Western stance is admittedly not a surprising, as he was fluent in English, had lived in the US for a decade, would always sign documents with his English name, and had become the first Chinese student to graduate from Cornell University in 1902.

<sup>159</sup> Sun Fo and Swing (1944: 77).

## 4. Leninism and Democratization in the PRC and ROC

In the final chapter of this dissertation, the factors that led to the success and failure of the process of democratization in, respectively, the ROC and PRC are closer elaborated. First, the “successful” case, the democratization of the ROC under the KMT regime, is investigated before attention shifts to the PRC what Andrew Nathan has called the “authoritarian resilience” of the CCP in the PRC, which has continued to resist liberalization and pluralization in spite of the predicted inevitability of such reforms by most Western scholars working on democratization in Asia.<sup>160</sup> As shown above, despite the similar Leninist roots of the CCP and KMT, both parties have been faced with highly divergent variables during their respective histories. Therefore, a focused comparison is made through the discussed Leninism-related inputs, such as the differences in the rigidity of the systems of democratic centralism, and the dissimilar legacy of Sun Yat-sen’s philosophy. In the first three subsections, the “successful” Taiwanese democratization is described, and then the results are extrapolated to the case of the CCP’s authoritarian resilience in the fourth subsection. Finally, the fifth segment concisely elucidates the enduring influence of Taiwan’s democracy on the legitimacy of the CCP in the PRC.

### 4.1. Leninist Authoritarianism under Father and Son Chiang

Democratization in Taiwan can be considered to have arrived relatively suddenly. As previously described, many Leninist measures were reinforced under Chiang Kai-shek’s leadership to gain control over the Taiwanese people after the KMT’s retreat to the island, and a KMT-led *dangguo* (党国, “party-state”) somewhat reminiscent of the CCP’s governmental system on the Chinese mainland was established.<sup>161</sup> In May 1949, Chiang decided to reorganize the KMT’s intraparty structures and ambiguously stated that the party from then on was to be a democratic revolutionary party. Chiang’s orders included a broadened recruitment drive, an affirmation of the Leninist principle of democratic centralism, and strict requirements for party members to believe in Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of the People and obey all KMT

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<sup>160</sup> Nathan (2003: 6). Nathan admitted in his treatise that he himself had been one of those who had wrongly predicted a democratization of the PRC by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>161</sup> Mattlin (2018: 46-48). Dickson (1997: 78-82).

decrees.<sup>162</sup> While Chiang appeared to hold general contempt for liberal democracy, perhaps even more so than his predecessor Sun Yat-sen,<sup>163</sup> he had at least nominally subscribed to Sun's three-step *minquan* (民权, democracy) schema on democratization (see supra 3.3). Chiang nevertheless also pragmatically used Sun's philosophy as a means to legitimize his opposition to democratization, as he held that one of the reasons for KMT's defeat during the civil war was its overeager attempts to evolve to the third stage of constitutional democracy (*xianzheng* 宪政). With this accusation, Chiang referred to the semi-free elections that had been held in 1947 and 1948, which, in his opinion, had caused infighting and had greatly weakened the KMT.<sup>164</sup>

It is likely that Chiang pragmatically used this argument to divert some of the blame for the defeat in the civil war to fellow party members as well as to legitimize the indefinite continuation of the KMT regime's tutelary government (*xunzheng* 训政). The elections of 1947 and 1948 would nonetheless set the stage for future local elections in Taiwan, which would allow for the participation of two small parties and independents (*dangwai* 黨外).<sup>165</sup> While heavily skewed in favor of the KMT, these elections would put constant pressure on the KMT's tutelary regime to allow further democratic rights by indirectly "reminding" it to eventually fulfill Sun's (perceived) "democratic promise." Elections were continuously held throughout the KMT's reign in Taiwan, and locally competitive elections were organized as early as the 1950s.<sup>166</sup>

While Chiang heavily based his conceptualization of democracy on Sun Yat-sen's *minquan* lectures, he put even more emphasis on the—seemingly Confucian-inspired—moral

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<sup>162</sup> Tien Hung-mao (1989: 66-67). During this reorganization the abovementioned pro-democratic Sun Ke was removed from the central committee of the KMT, just like many other top members that had crossed paths with Chiang in the past.

<sup>163</sup> Lorenzo (2013: 190). While Sun had remained ambivalent about individual rights and pluralism, he had at most only *hinted* his disapproval for such concepts. Chiang had however openly stated his opposition to them on multiple occasions.

<sup>164</sup> Taylor (2009: 422-23).

<sup>165</sup> The two parties that were allowed to participate in elections during the KMT-regime on Taiwan were the "China Youth Party" (*Zhongguo qingnian dang* 中國青年黨), and the "China Democratic Socialist Party" (*Zhongguo minzhu shehui dang* 中國民主社會黨). The latter was found by the prominent political philosopher Zhang Junmai 張君勱 (1886-1969, popularly known as Carsun Chang). Candidates of these two parties occasionally won legislative seats and even managed to get elected to local and provincial magistrate offices. However, unlike some of the *dangwai* candidates, the two parties never displayed systemic opposition the KMT-regime. One might therefore say they constituted "controlled" opposition. Unlike the KMT and the *dangwai* that would later form the DPP, the two parties did not survive the democratic transition during the 1980s and 1990s.

<sup>166</sup> Cai Jiaying (2016). Cai described how as early as 1951 a *dangwai* candidate managed to get elected as mayor of Taipei, gathering more than 65% of the votes. The author remarked that among the winning candidates in the first direct mayoral elections of that year, seventeen out the 21 held KMT-membership, one was a member of the Chinese Democratic Socialist Party, and three were *dangwai*. The turn-out in cities with direct elections was close to 80%.

accountability of the KMT's governmental officials. Rather than opting for institutional or popular checks and balances, Chiang believed that cultivating both the virtuousness of the officials and the common people was a prerequisite for democracy.<sup>167</sup> Referring to Sun's "loose sheets of sand" metaphor, which described the excessive individual freedom of the Chinese people, Chiang Kai-shek stressed that the country first needed unity among its masses before any form of democratization could be attempted. Therefore, he stated that an *indefinite* period of political tutelage under the KMT, strongly resembling Sun's second tutelary stage under a Leninist KMT-led *dangguo*, was imperative before democracy could be implemented.<sup>168</sup> In doing so, Chiang arguably went a step further than Sun, as the latter had merely remained ambiguous about the length of the "tutelage stage," while Chiang held it was *indefinite*. Sun's third stage of "constitutional democracy" was, for Chiang, not an option unless the ROC managed to completely regain and pacify the Chinese mainland. However, Chiang also saw Taiwan's limited democracy as a useful tool for mobilizing the people, and for legitimizing his regime both domestically and internationally.<sup>169</sup> He kept allowing limited democratic freedoms throughout his rule, and Sun's democratic promise consequently lived on among the people of Taiwan.

When Chiang Kai-shek's son Chiang Ching-kuo (referred to as "Ching-kuo" below) took over as president of the ROC a few years after his father's death, not many changes to existing governmental structures were expected. Ching-kuo had been educated in the Soviet Union and was highly familiar with Leninist state structures and their advantages.<sup>170</sup> Just like Sun and his father, Ching-kuo attempted to relate democracy to traditional Confucianist values of ancient China, and seemed bent on first raising the moral superiority of the KMT's members before engaging in democratization. Thereby, he aimed to ascertain that the KMT would be capable of effortlessly winning elections in the future.<sup>171</sup> Ching-kuo seemed ambivalent toward the capacities of the public in developing useful opinions on policymaking that could be

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<sup>167</sup> Lorenzo (2013: 103-04 and 108-110). Chiang stressed the need for unity among the Chinese people, which was to be achieved through the cultivation of Confucian virtues such as filial piety and loyalty. Chiang's believe in Confucianist morals to promote the cohesion of the Chinese masses became even stronger after hearing about the PRC's Cultural Revolution and the anti-traditional Red Guards' trail of destruction.

<sup>168</sup> Taylor (2009: 260). Unlike some researchers that depict Chiang's nationalist views as having drawn from fascism, Taylor refused to see Chiang as more radical than an authoritarian nationalist. Despite the military cooperation of Chiang with the Nazi's during the 1930s, Taylor stressed that Chiang opposed notions such as "racial superiority".

<sup>169</sup> Lin Hsiao-ting (2016: 9).

<sup>170</sup> Dickson (1997: 43-44). Dickson reported that Ching-kuo joined a branches of both the CCP's youth corps and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union during his twelve year stay (1925-1937) in Russia.

<sup>171</sup> Chao and Myers (1998: 113-14). Ching-kuo in particular seemed to stress "impartialness" and "unselfishness" (*Dagong wusi* 大公无私) among KMT party members in establishing their moral superiority.

beneficial to the tutelary KMT *dangguo* government,<sup>172</sup> and seemed to hold a general disdain for liberal democracy as present in the West.<sup>173</sup> Similar to his father, for Ching-kuo, the elections that were being held in the ROC were a means of legitimizing the KMT's "wise" rule, not a way to show accountability,<sup>174</sup> and were a means to discipline the energies of the masses and create a unified position on matters.<sup>175</sup> Therefore, one might summarize Ching-kuo's political visions as being overly Leninist and technocratic, with Confucian stability as the highest ideal.

However, by the early 1980s Chiang Ching-kuo seemed to have come to terms with allowing more non-KMT political participation. He legalized the DPP by 1986 and ended martial law a year later. He did this in an almost nonchalant fashion and suddenly proclaimed that Taiwan had always had been a constitutional democracy under the KMT, as it had regularly held elections.<sup>176</sup> Thereby, Ching-kuo contradicted his earlier focus on the continuation of the KMT's tutelary government. According to Ramon Myers and Linda Chao, Ching-kuo had come to believe that the worldwide trend toward democracy was inevitable. Furthermore, he seemed to believe democratization was a means for himself and the KMT to leave behind a positive mark on history, thereby ensuring the party's survival. Moreover, democratization was the only realistic way left for the KMT in achieving unification, as maintaining a successful democracy might exert pressure on the CCP and bring about its downfall.<sup>177</sup> Thus, Ching-kuo aimed to prevent being swept by what Samuel Huntington has described as a "snowballing effect" of the third democratic wave in Asia during the 1980s, and instead shifted the democratic pressure from his own regime to the CCP. In addition, Ching-kuo attempted to obtain "backward legitimacy" to increase the KMT's future chances in competitive elections by fulfilling Sun Yat-sen's "democratic promise."<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Lorenzo (2013: 150). While Ching-kuo told his fellow party members to diligently listen to the people's ideas, he also held that the KMT had the right to "instruct" the people to prevent them from straying from the correct path.

<sup>173</sup> Taylor (2000: 221- 224), and Lorenzo (2013: 190). Lorenzo depicts father and son Chiang as sharing roughly similar views on most political matters, but argued that Ching-kuo was even more vehemently opposed to liberal democracy than his father. While his father had remained ambivalent towards pluralism and political equality on the long term, Ching-kuo had openly expressed his opposition to the concepts.

<sup>174</sup> Lorenzo (2013: 158-59).

<sup>175</sup> Leng Shao-chuan (1993: 51). Taken from a chapter written by Andrew Nathan and Helena Ho.

<sup>176</sup> Lorenzo (2013: 159-160).

<sup>177</sup> Chao and Myers (1998: 115-16).

<sup>178</sup> Huntington (1993: 103 and 138). Particularly the downfall of Fernando Marcos (1917-1989) in February 1986 stimulated anxiety among authoritarian leaders in Asia. The fast speed with which the DPP was legalized by Ching-kuo in September of 1986, and the lifting of martial in July 1987, were likely no coincidences under given context.

#### 4.2. Democratization in the ROC: The Fulfillment of Sun Yat-sen's Democratic Promise

As noted above, the constant pressure of Sun Yat-sen's (perceived) promise for eventual constitutional democracy, no matter how vague, was one of the primary reasons why calls in Taiwan became too deafening for Chiang Ching-kuo to ignore. Even before the 1980s, father and son Chiang, while ostensibly being more inclined to an indefinite *dangguo* tutelary style of government with the KMT on top, had no choice but to—at least nominally—continue to pay homage to Sun's *minquan* ideas. While the temporary provisions to the ROC's constitution provided an impermanent “cork” on the people's pro-democratic sentiments,<sup>179</sup> it was by no means an end to their long-term demands.

Chiang Ching-kuo's abovementioned pragmatic reasons for democratization, however, do not fully do justice to the ample reasons why the pressure from Sun Yat-sen's democratic promise became so intolerable that he gave up the KMT's *dangguo*. As stated in the previous section, semi-competitive local elections were always maintained in Taiwan. Linda Chao and Ramon Meyers reported that, while in the 1950s and 1960s these elections in Taiwan seemed no more than an elaborate façade for providing the KMT some legitimacy and reshuffling the local elites to its liking, they did play an important role in the development of an anti-systemic opposition (known as the *dangwai yundong* 黨外運動, lit. “movement of independents”) in the long term. The *dangwai* gradually gained strength during these elections and, during the 1970s and 1980s, became a systemic threat to the KMT's rule.<sup>180</sup> Father and son Chiang did not have much of a choice in allowing these elections: besides the latent pressure of Sun's democratic promise, the government was claiming the areas still under its control to be the “Free area of the ROC” (*Zhonghua minguo ziyou diqu* 中華民國自由地區). This claim would be an

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<sup>179</sup> By stating that the KMT-dominated National Assembly elected in 1947 would keep representing the people until the communists had been defeated, the Temporary Provisions had provided some legitimization for indefinitely postponing new elections. The 1947 assembly would become popularly known as the “10000 year National Assembly” (*wannian guohui* 萬年國會) for its seemingly endless reign. The provisions' article six section two legitimized this in the following way: “The first central public legislators were elected by the people across the whole country. They will [continue to] exercise their powers in accordance with the law. The same applies for co-elections and by-elections. After the recovery of the mainland, elections for central public legislators will once more be organized.” Original Text: “第一屆中央民意代表，係經全國人民選舉所產生，依法行使職權，其增選、補選者亦同。大陸光復地區次第辦理中央民意代表之選舉。” Retrieved from <https://law.moj.gov.tw/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=A0000005> (last accessed August 6, 2020).

<sup>180</sup> Chao and Myers (2000: 392-95). During the early elections the KMT would occasionally not field candidates in certain districts to hand the “controlled” opposition a few seats and thereby reward them for not striking up dissent against the regime. Furthermore, whenever the KMT needed full assurance that a certain candidate was to be elected in a district, its members would mobilize the party's “block vote” (*tiepiao* 鐵票, lit. “Iron vote”) to carry said candidate to victory. In the 1950s and 1960s this tactic had an almost perfect success rate, with only incidental failure when fielded candidates had been extremely disliked by the public. The KMT vote in county magistrate and city mayoral elections peaked in 1972 at just over 76%, but subsequently fell until it reached just 55% in 1981.

extremely difficult one to justify if the KMT did not at least allow nominal democratic freedoms. On top of its general anti-communist stance, the status of being “more free than the PRC” was extremely important for retaining American support and recognition during the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>181</sup>

It is also important to remember that the KMT has been plagued by internal factionalism since its very inception.<sup>182</sup> Sun Yat-sen chose a less rigid form of democratic centralism than the CCP and opted for a broad approach in recruiting members to the KMT (see supra 3.2). This approach was maintained during the KMT’s Leninist reorganization in Taiwan in the early 1950s, when the party attempted to increase its societal penetration on the island through recruitment. Tien Hung-mao reported that, while in December 1950 KMT membership stood at just over 1% of the population and its grasp on the central government on the island was still lacking, it had deeply penetrated Taiwan’s bureaucratic system a mere two years later. Civilian membership more than doubled by 1952, and in the top layers of the government, the party had basically fused with the state: over 80% of the top level bureaucrats were KMT members.<sup>183</sup> Most successful of all was the KMT’s diffusion into the ROC’s armed forces; by 1954, every unit had a political commissar and 35% of all enlisted troops (of which many were Mainlanders) held KMT membership. Hereby, the KMT effectively prevented the ROC’s armed forces from ever becoming a threat to its authoritarian rule.<sup>184</sup> While the recruitment drive was highly successful in stabilizing the KMT’s rule and weeding out CCP supporters, the broadened and diversified membership also ushered in an indefinite continuation of factionalism within the party.

As the *dangwai* movement gained momentum during the 1970s and 1980s, the KMT once again opted for a recruitment drive to keep up its Leninist societal penetration. This time, increasing membership among the local Taiwanese population was to be the primary goal. During the 1970s, Chiang Ching-kuo therefore allowed a new policy known as “Taiwanization”

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<sup>181</sup> Mattlin (2018: 58-59).

<sup>182</sup> Ibid. (37-40). Mattlin reported the existence of multiple KMT factions during the civil war with the CCP. Many of these factions continued their intraparty struggle after the party’s retreat to Taiwan, where things were further complicated by the addition of many local factions.

<sup>183</sup> Tien Hung-mao (1989: 67-68). Tien reported that by 1952 the share of KMT party members in city and provincial assemblies had also surged, and stood at about 50% in provincial assemblies, and just under 40% in county and municipal bodies.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid. and Dickson (1997: 55-56). Dickson admitted that detailed sources on the KMT’s control over the army are somewhat lacking. It is clear however that the Soviet background of father and son Chiang played an important role in creating the Leninist policy of “leading the army through the party” (*yi dang ling jun* 以黨領軍). This policy appears remarkably similar to Mao Zedong’s “the party commands the gun” (*dang zhihui qiang* 黨指揮槍). See also, Mao Zedong (1938).

(*Taiwan bentuhua yundong* 臺灣本土化運動).<sup>185</sup> This new guideline authorized the recruitment of talented Taiwanese-born youth with political ambitions into the KMT, a group that had previously been largely excluded from the Mainlander-dominated political offices. By recruiting Taiwanese talent, Ching-kuo aspired to prevent a further rise of the *dangwai* movement or worse: organized opposition.<sup>186</sup> However, this time, the consequences of the KMT's broad recruitment campaign would be more significant than having to deal with increased factionalism. While all earlier factions had, despite their mutual differences and frequent struggles, often been more-or-less loyal to father and son Chiang, the stakes of factional strife were heightened as the question of Ching-kuo's succession started to take centerstage in the 1980s. Because of the rapidly increasing numbers of Taiwanese in the KMT's top ranks, a once unfathomable question began to be asked: might the next president be an ethnic Taiwanese? After Ching-kuo's protégée and premier Sun Yun-suan 孫運璿 (1913–2006), a Mainlander, suffered a cerebral hemorrhage in 1984 and the president promised that there would not ever be a third "Chiang" as president of the ROC, the frontrunner for the position indeed became the local-born Lee Teng-hui 李登輝 (1923–2020).<sup>187</sup>

In this complicated situation, the abovementioned observation that Leninist democratic centralism in the KMT, from its founding, was never as strict as within the CCP, as little ideological orthodoxy was demanded from its members, came into play. As the strictness of democratic centralism was further relaxed after the broadened recruitment of new members, the debate on Chiang Ching-kuo's succession easily escaped the narrow confines of the KMT's higher echelons. What was once factional strife now expanded to public debate. Democratic centralism as a governing principle subsequently lost its last bit of legitimacy during this process, and "unified positions after discussion" became a mirage of the past.<sup>188</sup> As it became impossible to define commonalities among the KMT's increasingly broad and diverse membership, this diverse membership also implied that the KMT was gradually losing its vanguard position in society. As the KMT gradually became a reflection of the diverse

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<sup>185</sup> There exists little consensus on the periodization of "Taiwanization". Some say that Lee Teng-hui in the 1990s initiated it with the goals of transforming the KMT to a ethnically Taiwanese party for good (see for example Jacobs and Liu (2007)), but the process definitely already existed under Chiang Ching-kuo through the broadened recruitment policy. One might alternatively even say the process started from the very moment the KMT evacuated from the Chinese mainland, or even, when the Japanese conquered Taiwan in 1895.

<sup>186</sup> Dickson (2000: 529), and Ho Ming-sho (2007: 170). Ho reported that just before the ascendancy of Ching-kuo to the presidency of the ROC, the Mainlanders still made the majority of the KMT's membership, despite only accounting for 10 to 12% of the population on the island.

<sup>187</sup> Chao and Myers (1998: 116), and Roy (2003: 179-80). Sun Yun-suan would likely have been a very suitable compromise candidate, as he, despite his Mainlander-roots, was generally well-respected by KMT-members and *dangwai* opposition alike.

<sup>188</sup> Hood (1996: 469).

Taiwanese society, its members could hardly continue claiming to be “ideological superior vanguards.”

After Ching-kuo’s death in January 1988 and Lee Teng-hui’s subsequent ascendancy to president, the KMT’s many factions roughly realigned themselves into two camps: the “mainstream faction” (*zhuliu paixi* 主流派系), which supported Lee, backed future democratic reforms and mainly consisted of liberal Taiwan-born politicians; and the “non-mainstream faction” (*feizhuliu paixi* 非主流派, also known as the “palace faction”) that opposed Lee, wanted to retain the KMT’s *dangguo*, and was primarily made up of conservative Mainlanders such as Chiang Kai-shek’s widow Soong Mei-ling 宋美齡 (1898–2003). When word of this disunity reached the public, the conservatives, who were accused of being obsessed with achieving reunification and not taking the demands of the Taiwanese locals to heart, faced a public backlash. Thereafter, Lee’s approval ratings skyrocketed, and his position as president stabilized.<sup>189</sup> The reforms initiated by Lee Teng-kui were gradual, but step-by-step, Taiwan democratized, and the KMT’s penetration in society decreased.<sup>190</sup> The significance of Lee’s ability to draw support from the democratic promises of Sun Yat-sen and the Chiangs to legitimize his reforms cannot be understated.<sup>191</sup> Lee did not have to wipe the slate clean and was able to build democratic institutions upon the existing KMT party structures.<sup>192</sup> He did not even have to significantly alter the constitution but rather merely had to abrogate the Temporary Revisions in 1991 to legally permit his democratic reforms.<sup>193</sup> This provided Lee with considerable backward legitimacy, as his government was now much closer to Sun’s stage of “constitutional democracy” than the previous regime of the Chiangs.

During Lee Teng-hui’s first term, legislative elections took place in 1991 and 1992, and presidential elections were held in 1996. While the DPP was able to capture dozens of seats in the legislative elections, all three public elections ended in solid victories for the Lee-led KMT. This performance was even more impressive if one considers that a group of conservative pro-unification KMT members broke away to create a third party and that the Taiwanese public was

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<sup>189</sup> Roy (2003: 180-81).

<sup>190</sup> Ibid. (2003: 181-82), and Ho Ming-sho (2007: 178). Ho Ming-sho described that during the 1990s many trade unions ended their affiliation with the KMT, and KMT membership stopped being an advantage when aiming for promotions or favors.

<sup>191</sup> Lorenzo (2013: 203). A group of conservative Taiwanese elites did nevertheless not fall for Lee’s justifications for democratization, and was dismayed that the president was going beyond his predecessors’ democratic conceptualizations by opting for liberal democracy.

<sup>192</sup> Tien Hung-mao and Cheng Tun-jen (1997: 1-2).

<sup>193</sup> Clough (1996: 1068). Lee did have to amend the constitution to add a provision to allow popular presidential elections. The 1947 version of the constitution had opted for a system where the members of the National Assembly selected the president.

threatened by the PRC not to vote for Lee because of his perceived pro-independence stance.<sup>194</sup> The temporal setting for Lee's democratic reforms could not have been better: the USSR had just fallen apart, Western liberal democracy seemed victorious, and Samuel Huntington's "third democratic wave" was reaching its zenith.<sup>195</sup> As Jonathan Spence proclaimed, with the 1996 presidential vote "one could fairly say that the "tutelage system" envisioned by Sun Yat-sen as the crucial intermediary stage on China's march toward democracy had at last ended—at least for this Chinese society on China's periphery."<sup>196</sup> However, not only was the election the end of the second stage of tutelage: the ROC outright rushed through Sun's third stage to liberal horizons that its founder had probably never imagined.

While the successful outcome of the democratization reforms in Taiwan might appear very logical as presented in the above arguments, it is imperative to at least consider a "counterexample" to not unduly fall for hindsight bias. Despite the "third wave" being conducive to Lee Teng-hui's reforms, it cannot be denied that the democratization in Taiwan in some ways could be seen as an "unlikely outcome." If one, for example, studies a 1989 treatise of Taiwanese scholar Cheng Tun-jen on the prospects of democratization in Taiwan without hindsight, one would assume there was little hope for full democratization in Taiwan in the short term. Cheng reasonably argued that the ROC lacked a democratic legacy and predicted that a Leninist party like the KMT would do its utmost to resist the painful process of institutional transformation from a hegemonic, privileged Leninist vanguard embedded in the government into an "ordinary" party in a competitive political arena.<sup>197</sup> In summary, the author did not seem to anticipate the power transfer to the opposition that would occur within the span of little more than a decade.

In a treatise dated eight years later, in collaboration with Tien Hung-mao, Cheng Tun-jun seemed to have found an answer to democratization's "unexpected success" through the process of the KMT's gradual Taiwanization. While this policy, as explained above, indirectly heralded the end of the KMT's *dangguo*, it was of great importance for the survival of the KMT as a competitive popular party. As intended, the opposition was prevented from obtaining an absolute majority among the non-Mainlander population through the KMT's successful

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<sup>194</sup> Spence (2012: 676). For more on the conservative KMT breakaways who formed the pro-unification New Party (*Xin dang* 新黨), see Chao and Myers (1998: 280-81). After relative success in the 1990s, the New Party has been marginalized in recent years. It is currently the only mainstream party in Taiwan that accepts the PRC's "one country, two systems" (*yi guo liang zhi* 一国两制) plan for reunification.

<sup>195</sup> Mattlin (2018: 330).

<sup>196</sup> Spence (2012: 676).

<sup>197</sup> Cheng Tun-jen (1989: 472-73).

absorption of the local elite before the first free elections.<sup>198</sup> The authors see the successful retention of the KMT's strong local infrastructure, which thereby kept part of its semi-cliental "block vote," as another important reason for the party's survival. Because of its electoral successes in the early 1990s, most party members were confident that the KMT would be able to survive the transformation into an electoral party and therefore did not attempt to backtrack on Lee's reforms. The article raised more reasons for the KMT's successful transformation to a democratic party, emphasizing, among other reasons, its financial wealth, legacy of economic growth, and center position on the ethnic and political spectrum.<sup>199</sup> Considering these arguments, it appears very reasonable that the authors were—still—unable to predict the KMT's electoral defeat in the presidential elections of 2000, which likely would not have occurred had Lee Teng-hui not overplayed his hand.<sup>200</sup>

#### 4.3. Leninist Leftovers in the ROC: A Politicized Society

Despite Taiwan's democratization, the legacy of Leninism remains on the island to this day. Such legacy arguably goes deeper than the symbolic party-state diffusion in the ROC's flag and anthem (see supra 3.2). While the Taiwanization process ushered in the end of many Leninist processes such as democratic centralism, Taiwan's political sphere still partly acts in accordance with the ideology. David Lorenzo noted that the need for "reconciliation" (*hejie* 和解) of the people in Taiwan has been frequently invoked by politicians in both the KMT and DPP. Lorenzo investigated the rhetoric of former president Chen Shui-bian 陳水扁 (1950–), who had argued for the organization of a referendum condemning the PRC's missiles aimed at the island in 2004 and noticed the prevalence of vocabulary such as the need to establish "consensus" (*gongshi* 共识), achieve "harmony" (*hexie* 和谐), and "reconcile" the views of the Taiwanese through the means of a plebiscite. Similar discourse was discernable under Chen's successor Ma Ying-jeou 馬英九 (1950–) of the KMT, who also frequently employed terms like

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<sup>198</sup> Tien Hung-mao and Cheng Tun-jen (1997: 17-18).

<sup>199</sup> Ibid. (18-20).

<sup>200</sup> Jacobs and Liu (2007: 390-393). Lee ideologically slowly moved towards the pro-independence camp, and by 1999 called the cross-strait relations with the PRC "a special state-to-state relationship" (*teshu de guo yu guo guanxi* 特殊的國與國關係), thereby invoking the ire of some KMT members. After a conflict with fellow party-member James Soong 宋楚瑜 (1942–), the latter ran as independent in the 2000 election, effectively splitting the KMT's core vote and handing the DPP's Chen Shui-bian the victory. Whether Lee's "sabotaging" of the election was deliberate remains unanswered. It is however at least clear that Lee promoted the case for Taiwanese independence more openly after 2000, for which he had his KMT membership revoked in 2001.

“reconciliation” and “coexistence” (*gongcun* 共存).<sup>201</sup> In this way, Chen and Ma both strove for unanimous societal consensus after a vote had taken place. The two former presidents’ argument for the right to referendum seems quite close to the aims of the consensus-creating referendum that Sun had envisioned for the constitutional democracy stage of his democratization schema, as well as democratic centralism’s demand for unanimous consensus after a decision has been made.

The observation that the present-day legacy of Leninism in Taiwan is not solely limited to the KMT was also made by some DPP members. Veteran DPP legislator Chen Zau-nan 陳昭南 (1942–) accused the leadership of his party of employing Leninist structures not dissimilar from the KMT and CCP in ruling the island and called for intraparty de-Leninisation reforms after the DPP had been defeated during the 2018 local elections. Chen accused the DPP’s leadership of trying to rule in a Leninist manner by diffusing government institutions with its party structures and feared this diffusion would give rise to authoritarian tendencies similar to the KMT of the Chiangs.<sup>202</sup> Furthermore, Chen lamented that, despite the DPP and its *dangwai* predecessors’ fierce opposition to the KMT’s one-party regime, the DPP still copied many of the KMT’s multilayered, Leninist, hierarchal, structures during its founding. He likened the situation to a newborn (DPP) having just escaped its mother’s (KMT) womb; having only one’s mother as template, the child unavoidably will copy her example to a certain extent, regardless of its own beliefs.<sup>203</sup>

Leninist heritage also persists through Taiwan’s society, which is still highly politicized. Mikael Mattlin explained that, while the KMT has never been able to fully outgrow its role as a “governmental elite” enjoying high Leninist societal penetration, the DPP has been unable to move past its role as “heroic street fighter” against the injustice of the KMT’s privileged elite. Both sides often remain unwilling to compromise unless the other completely capitulates, and this sentiment is extrapolated to Taiwan’s society. Mattlin fittingly stated: “Ironically, both political sides came to be united in a feeling of unfairness. A mutual feeling of historical unfairness and vulnerability is typical of polarizing group conflicts.”<sup>204</sup> Some slight

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<sup>201</sup> Lorenzo (2013: 170-71).

<sup>202</sup> Chen Zau-nan (2018). Translation: “It should be understood that the development and evolution of a rigid Leninist political party will inevitably lead to a dictatorship of a “party-led government”.” Original text: “應知，一個列寧式剛性政黨，其發展演化必然會走向「以黨領政」的獨裁式領導...”

<sup>203</sup> Ibid. Original text: “這有點像新生兒脫離母胎時最先看到母親一樣，就只能跟著模板有樣學樣”。

<sup>204</sup> Mattlin (2018: 256-58). Just like the KMT, the DPP also suffered from factionalism, with one side wanting to abandon the street battles in favor of parliamentarism, while the other wanted to retain the party’s activist roots. In 1991 the DPP organized an intraparty debate whether it wanted to participate in parliamentary elections, as some members viewed participation as compliance with the KMT, and instead opted to continue the street battles to obtain Taiwanese independence. See also, Chao and Myers (1997: 278).

improvements to the politicized status quo are nevertheless visible. As the KMT has realized it can no longer win debates against the DPP on the most polarizing issue of all, identity politics,<sup>205</sup> it has shifted part of its rhetoric to criticizing the DPP's economic performance, a less polarizing field.<sup>206</sup> Whether this will usher in an era of bipartisan parliamentarism free from Leninist tendencies remains to be seen.

#### 4.4. Authoritarian Resilience and the Resurgence of Democratic Centralism in the CCP

As described above, during the period where the KMT strengthened its *dangguo* in the early 1950s, some of its Leninist governmental systems were highly similar to the CCP in the PRC, which had also aimed to rebuild its society by Leninist means after its victory in the Chinese civil war. However, from the outset, some differences were visible in the way both parties rebuilt their systems. The KMT's membership had always been relatively intellectual and elitist, even before its arrival on Taiwan. The party therefore focused on making itself more representative of Taiwanese society—despite maintaining its preference for Mainlanders until the 1970s. The CCP, whose membership had mostly consisted of peasants—thereby making Leninism an especially useful ideology to adopt—instead had to attract the classes of workers and intellectuals. While its high penetration in peasant circles had been useful during the war in gaining the necessary manpower to beat the KMT, the party now required skilled members to rebuild the country. Results were modest. Bruce Dickson reported that by September 1956, peasants still made up 69% of all CCP members, workers 14%, and intellectuals 11.7%.<sup>207</sup>

After 1956, this recruitment drive came to an abrupt end when Mao Zedong decided to crack down on intellectuals in the “Anti-Rightist campaign” (*fan you yundong* 反右运动, 1957–1959).<sup>208</sup> This sequence of events was emblematic of Mao's reign: periods of intellectual tolerance and recruitment were followed by harsh crackdowns. The same would happen during the 1960s when a period of relative calm (1962–1966) was followed by the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). During Mao's reign, power struggles reached far beyond party echelons and were often decided through bloody mass campaigns. The “democratic” in democratic centralism was

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<sup>205</sup> Jacobs and Liu (2007: 392). The authors reported that in June 1992 26.2% of the ROC's inhabitants identified themselves as “Chinese,” against 17.3% favoring “Taiwanese”. By the December 2005 these number had shifted to 7.3% “Chinese” and 46.5% “Taiwanese” (with the rest being ambivalent or seeing themselves as mixture of the two). This trend has subsequently continued.

<sup>206</sup> Wu Yu-shan (2013: 117).

<sup>207</sup> Dickson (1997: 78-80).

<sup>208</sup> Spence (2012: 512). In the span of a few months 300.000 intellectuals would be branded as “rightist”. Even if they survived the campaign, their careers would be ruined for at least the remainder of Mao's reign. In the 1960s many would face renewed persecution during the Cultural Revolution.

largely absent under Mao's rule: disagreeing with the norm (Mao) often implied eventual downfall, even if one could claim to represent the standpoint of the intraparty majority. One Marxist-Leninist characteristic was, at least among the CCP's top leadership, still very much present during the period: "revisionists" were arguably even less tolerated than "class enemies."<sup>209</sup> The distinct contrast between Mao's deep hatred for "revisionist" USSR chairman Nikita Khrushchev and his friendship with "class enemy" US president Richard Nixon seems somewhat representative of this observation.<sup>210</sup>

Only after Mao Zedong's death in 1976 and the subsequent rise of Deng Xiaoping did some Leninist "normality" start to return to the CCP. During this period, Marxism started being Sinicized—which effectively implied "temporarily abandoned" in the economic sphere (see supra 1.3)—while democratic centralism was revived. Deng often searched for common ground with other party members through mutual consultation and occasionally postponed reforms when he felt that intraparty support was lacking.<sup>211</sup> Similar to the KMT's reasons for opting for democratic centralism, it is very likely that, due to the reality of being faced with multiple factions within the CCP, Deng placed a renewed emphasis on Leninist ideology to ensure some level of consensus.<sup>212</sup> After all, Deng simply lacked the infinite credit of his deified predecessor Mao Zedong.<sup>213</sup> If he would have opted to govern like Mao, he probably would have faced the consequence of being overthrown.

Just like father and son Chiang in the ROC, Deng seemed to hold disdain for liberal democracy. The Leninist system of democratic centralism was often viewed as the antithesis to Western liberal democracy in the PRC and had been used to legitimize the absence of democratization by Deng. Rao Zhihua, who researched democratic centralism during Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping's tenures as paramount leader, stated that the terms "democratic"

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid. (623). This argument arguably holds up for the downfalls of Gao Gang 高岗 (1905-1954), which heralded in the end of the early period of relatively open intraparty decision making; Liu Shaoqi 刘少奇 (1898-1969), who was the primary target of the Cultural Revolution; and Lin Biao 林彪 (1907-1971), whose death was eventually followed by the Criticize Lin, Criticize Confucius campaign (*Pi Lin pi Kong yundong* 批林批孔运动, 1973-1976). Gao, Liu, and Lin would all be accused of either "far-left" or "far-right" revisionism.

<sup>210</sup> Much of Mao's incentive for the entente with Nixon was admittedly purely strategic. However, Mao continued to invite Nixon to China even after the latter's downfall, showing his genuine appreciation. Equally noteworthy is Mao's response to the death of archrival Chiang Kai-shek in 1975, who he is said to have sincerely mourned. Nixon's downfall and Chiang's demise probably made Mao aware of his own vulnerability and mortality. During his last meeting with Nixon in 1976 he famously self-depreciated his historical contributions and spoke: "I have only been able to change a few places in the vicinity of Beijing." Original speech: "我能改变的只是北京附近几个地方". See also, Vogel (2013: 173).

<sup>211</sup> Vogel (2013: 392-93).

<sup>212</sup> Chang and Scalapino (1988: 45-49).

<sup>213</sup> Hu Shaohua (2000: 125). According to Hu, unlike the deified Mao, Deng could not count on infinite credit after mistakes due to his (relative) lack of great deeds during the struggle for the foundation of the PRC. See also Dillon (2015: 255).

and “centralism” should be seen as two separate contrasting notions for Mao and Deng. Rao claimed that, according to the ever-differing needs of the respective generations of CCP leadership, they pragmatically either increased “democracy” or focused on “centralism”.<sup>214</sup> For Rao, the malpractices of the Great Cultural Revolution can be explained by a lack of democracy within the CCP.<sup>215</sup> This admission should nevertheless by no account be misinterpreted as a call for democratization but rather constitutes a debate within the boundaries of intraparty democratic centralism. Such a standpoint originated in Deng Xiaoping’s 1987 affirmation that “Democratic centralism is also [our] superiority. The system is more conducive to uniting the people than Western democracy.”<sup>216</sup> In this sense, one can deduce that, for Deng (and his successors), democracy only existed within the confines of the party chambers under a dichotomous relation with centralism.

Despite having a similar disdain toward liberal democracy as the Chiangs, Deng Xiaoping did not have to deal with one variable that the two KMT leaders were faced with, namely, the constant democratic pressure of Sun Yat-sen’s *minquan* ideology. While the CCP has also nominally payed homage to Sun as “Father of the Nation” (*guofu* 国父), Sun’s principles are not enshrined in the PRC’s constitution nor is he the founder of the CCP. Moreover, the abovementioned ambiguity enshrouding Sun’s doctrine of *minquan*, his narrated “awakening” to communist ideology by PRC academic circles, and the CCP’s efforts at censoring the incompatible parts of his ideology, allowed the party to successfully discount a “democratic promise.” Because the CCP itself could not have counted on any “backward legitimacy” through Sun in the case of a hypothetical democratization, its leadership was arguably even more wary of pluralistic competition than the leadership of the KMT-regime.<sup>217</sup> If anything, the CCP only enjoyed “backward legitimacy” for a return to the pre-Mao high tide of intraparty democracy (*dangnei minzhu* 党内民主). This legacy conceivably helped the party construct its claim to having its own superior form of socialist democracy as opposed to

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<sup>214</sup> Rao Zhihua (2016: 24). Original text: “根据不同历史时期的客观形势以及工作重点的需要，我党决定是“民主多一点，还是集中多一点”。”

<sup>215</sup> Ibid. (2016: 23-24). Original text: “在“文化大革命”时期，...要突出强调民主的重要性”。 Rao also referred to the post-Mao (intraparty) democratic reforms as “having made central decision-making more effective and orderly,” original text: “...民主基础上的集中决策也更显高效有序。”

<sup>216</sup> Ibid. (2016: 21). Original text: “民主集中制也是我们的优越性。这种制度更有利于团结人民，比西方的民主好得多”。 See also Deng Xiaoping (1993: 257), taken from a discussion with the secretary of the Communist Party of Hungary on 13 October, 1987.

<sup>217</sup> Being founded as a Marxist-Leninist party under Soviet auspices with the later addition of the authoritarian Mao Zedong Thought, Deng’s CCP lacked a democratic precursor to fall back on. For “backward legitimacy”: see Huntington (1993: 138).

Western democracy.<sup>218</sup> To summarize the situation through Bruce Dickson's concept of adaptability: showing adaptation to democratic demands would most likely not have brought the CCP the certainty of survival, nor was it necessary for its survival—at least in the short term.<sup>219</sup>

Furthermore, unlike the local elections in the ROC with (limited) anti-KMT *dangwai* opposition, the CCP was never faced with internal electoral pressure. The CCP did not feel inclined to organize such elections, as it did not need to keep up a democratic pretense for foreign support, nor would it have survived trying to keep up such a façade.<sup>220</sup> While the CCP also tried to expand its membership during the 1980s and 1990s, the manner in which it did this was different than the abovementioned broad recruitment policy in the KMT. Unlike the KMT, the CCP was never confronted with the problem of representing a small minority but could at all times go beyond any ethnic divide by claiming to be a vanguard of the “the masses” on the basis of its Marxist principles. It also used these very principles to ensure at least a minimum of ideological grounding of its new party members. When Deng Xiaoping's successor Jiang Zemin opted to recruit more members with expertise in December 1989, he stressed that “[The CCP] must make sure that the leading authority of all party and state organs is in the hands of loyal Marxists.”<sup>221</sup> Therefore, unlike the “catch-all” strategy of the KMT, who even purposely recruited potential dissidents among the Taiwanese population to keep them out of the opposition's hands,<sup>222</sup> the CCP maintained its vanguard position by maintaining high ideological standards during recruitment. Like a typical Leninist party, intraparty “revisionism” was to be prevented at all costs.

That is not to say that the CCP never investigated the possibility of breaking up its Leninist *dangguo* structures by separating party and state. During the 1980s, such debates were common and openly discussed, even in the PRC's state media.<sup>223</sup> An especially frequently cited speech was Deng Xiaoping's *Reform of the Party and State Leadership System* of August 18, 1980. In this lecture, Deng affirmed that economic reforms could not sufficiently develop China alone and that political reform was equally important. Deng admitted that the CCP cadres of

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<sup>218</sup> Fewsmith (2013: 69).

<sup>219</sup> Dickson (1998: 363).

<sup>220</sup> Ibid. (364). Dickson held that even if the CCP had organized “KMT-style” local elections with anti-systemic opposition in the 1990s, it would like only have caused its demise. The CCP was not ready to deal with the inevitable social protests that would have erupted, and would likely have been overwhelmed.

<sup>221</sup> Dickson (2000: 524). Dickson noted that many of the new recruits were young, liberal, and had studied in the United States. Without the Taiwanization policy they would have probably have opted to join the DPP.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid. (529-30).

<sup>223</sup> Fewsmith (2013: 170).

Mao's generation had not succeeded in achieving this.<sup>224</sup> While Deng remained vague on the limits of such political reforms, chairman Zhao Ziyang, who had been seen as supportive of the neo-Authoritarianist argument that controlled liberalization on the long-term was warranted (see supra, 2.1), openly admitted that the functions of party and state could be separated through a sort of constitutionalism, stating:

The separation of party and government implies the separation of the [respective] functions of party and government. The party has led the people in formulating the PRC's constitution and laws. The party should act within the scope of the constitution and laws.<sup>225</sup>

Such “de-Leninisation” reforms, which could have been a first step for further democratization, have, however, never been completed due to domestic and international circumstances. In May 1989, three weeks before the crackdown on the students in Tiananmen Square, Zhao Ziyang was forced to resign as chairman of the CCP for his tolerance of the protestors.<sup>226</sup> The massacre subsequently dealt a harsh blow to the pro-political reform faction. Internationally, on the very day of the crackdown, the Soviet-led communist bloc started to collapse,<sup>227</sup> and anti-reform sentiment in the CCP strengthened even further.<sup>228</sup> Reforms separating party and state were subsequently put on hold, and since the ascendancy of Xi Jinping as paramount leader of the PRC (2012–), many of the earlier efforts have been reversed. Emblematic of this governmental backslide was the addition of the sentence “The defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the leadership of the Communist Party of

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<sup>224</sup> Deng Xiaoping (1994: 342). Deng stated: “For [the importance of political reforms], we must have sufficient understanding. Comrade Mao Zedong and other old revolutionaries who have passed away have not been able to complete this task.” Original text: “对此，我们必须有足够的认识。毛泽东同志和其他已经去世的老一辈革命家，没有能够完成这个任务。”

<sup>225</sup> Zhao Ziyang (2016: 238). Original text: “党政分开即党政职能分开。党领导人民制定了宪法和法律，党应当在宪法和法律的范围内活动。” Whether Zhao merely argued for a separation of the “work load” between party and state, or actual separation of powers remains a topic of debate. The second part of the above quote as well as Zhao's later discourse suggests the former being more likely.

<sup>226</sup> Zhao Ziyang (2010: 29-32). While some maintain that Zhao lost a three to two vote in the politburo before martial law in Beijing was instated, Zhao himself claimed the decision was pushed by Deng Xiaoping and no such vote took place.

<sup>227</sup> The Polish Communist Party suffered a crushing defeat in the country's first semi-free parliamentary elections since World War two on June 4, 1989. This made Poland the first Eastern European country with democratically elected representatives since the start of the Cold War.

<sup>228</sup> Li Cheng (2008: 286-87). Taken from a chapter by David Shambaugh. Shambaugh sees the Soviet collapse as a turning point in the discourse of PRC academics. Many of them had originally supported the Soviet Union's reforms, but then started to write on the systemic failures in the Soviet system instead.

China,” to the constitution in 2018.<sup>229</sup> Therefore, whereas Taiwan might still be struggling with certain *specific aspects* of its Leninist legacy, it is clear that the Leninist diffusion of party and state in its *entirety* is still as much alive in the present-day PRC as it was in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In summary, despite the pressure of Samuel Huntington’s “third wave” and the CCP’s plans for political reform during the 1980s, the party has instead shown great resilience in the face of what many have seen as the inevitability of democratization.<sup>230</sup> While for many newly democratic countries, the “liberal snowball” of the late 1980s and early 1990s was conducive to their own democratization processes, the domestic and international events of 1989 arguably led to the opposite in the CCP, where political reform came to a halt. Whether this merely constitutes a “delay” or the emergence of what Andrew Nathan described as the “disturbing possibility of authoritarianism being a viable governmental form for highly modernized regimes,”<sup>231</sup> remains a question to be answered. The CCP is now effectively in “terra incognita,” going places where no autocratic party has gone before.<sup>232</sup>

One should, however, not disregard the possibility that the “high tide” of the third wave simply arrived too early for the PRC, as its wealth creation in the late 1980s and early 1990s was considerably lower than the ROC. On the basis of Randall Peerenboom’s six-step East Asian model, one could therefore claim that, by the time the wave reached its zenith, the PRC had merely reached the second or the third step (selective reform or institutional phase), while the ROC had already made it to the fifth step (constitutional phase), enough to embark on the sixth step of democratization. If the PRC keeps progressing upwards according to this model, it remains to be seen if it will be able to weather a hypothetical “fourth democratic wave.” Peerenboom himself aptly remarked that, while the PRC might on the surface resemble “a country dominated by the rigid ideology of Leninist Socialism,” the CCP’s leadership has in a way been more pragmatic toward reform than their Western counterparts, who have always kept dogmatically pushing for liberal democratization.<sup>233</sup> As the CCP’s leadership has engaged in unpredictable reforms before, there is no reason to assume it might not opt for unexpected policies in the future.

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<sup>229</sup> See the third sentence of the first article of the general principles of the PRC’s constitution “中国共产党领导是中国特色社会主义最本质的特征”。 Retrieved from: [http://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2018-03/22/content\\_5276318.htm](http://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2018-03/22/content_5276318.htm) (last accessed August 10, 2020).

<sup>230</sup> Shambaugh (2008: 4-5).

<sup>231</sup> Nathan (2003: 16).

<sup>232</sup> Shambaugh (2008: 39-40). Shambaugh claimed that the CCP is simultaneously in a situation of adaption and atrophy. Its partial (economical, yet not political) reforms are enough to keep it going forward, yet not sufficient to solve its systemic problems on the long term.

<sup>233</sup> Peerenboom (2007: 290).

#### 4.5. Leninist Pseudo-democratic Initiatives and Taiwanese Pressure on the PRC

While some ostensibly “democratic” reforms in the PRC were undertaken during the Post-Mao era, the legacy of democratic centralism was clearly visible at all times. During the tenures of Jiang Zemin (1989–2002) and Hu Jintao (2002–2012) as paramount leaders of the PRC,<sup>234</sup> some “democratic experiments,” where independent candidates could participate in local elections in a relatively free manner, took place. However, the CCP remained in control of these experiments and by no means could the threat posed by the participating independents be likened to the opposition the KMT faced from the *dangwai*. Interestingly, the success or failure of the local elections in the PRC was measured not according to the prevalent Western criteria of (among others) freedom of participation, electoral turn-out, and diversity of choice, but on the basis of the post-election economic performance of the electoral district and whether the elections increased the overall cohesion among its inhabitants.<sup>235</sup>

While occurring outside of the party and thereby not conforming to the intraparty principles of democratic centralism, Leninist influence can still be discerned among PRC researchers working on these “experiments.” Li Qiangbin, for instance, stated that the most important goal of said democratic experiments in the PRC should be to “guarantee the agreement between the people and increase the ‘quality’ of this agreement.”<sup>236</sup> The focus on the need for absolute “agreement” appears strikingly similar to the main democratic centralist principle of allowing discussion but silencing dissent once the majority opinion has been decided. Despite the differing political circumstances, the end goal of creating “consensus” among the people through democracy seems to also have commonalities with Sun Yat-sen’s focus on national unity and even with the former Taiwanese presidents Chen Shui-bian and Ma Ying-jeou’s call for “national consensus” after elections and referendums had occurred.

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<sup>234</sup> Jiang gained power in 1989 after the downfall of Zhao Ziyang during the student protests of 1989. Deng Xiaoping is nevertheless often considered to have held paramount power until after 1992, when he went on his famed “Southern Tour” (*nanxun* 南巡) to push for the continuation of his economic reforms. Jiang in turn is said to have held great power during the first years of Hu’s government. Jiang refused to step down as chairman of the influential Central Military Commission (*Zhongguo gongchandang Zhongyang junshi weiyuanhui* 中国共产党中央军事委员会) until 2004.

<sup>235</sup> Liu Jianfei (2011: 61-68). Liu Jianfei described some democratic experiments that occurred between the 1990s and 2010s in his work. These have gradually disappeared under Xi Jinping’s leadership. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that even during the more “liberal” period under Xi’s predecessors, the elections could only take place under the grace of the CCP, or when local CCP cadres were lacking.

<sup>236</sup> Li Qiangbin (2014: 81). Original text: “如何确保“人民的同意”和提高“人民同意的质量”始终是民主理论研究者与实践者共同关注的核心所在。”

Under the above pseudo-democratic premises, it should be no surprise that the democratization of Taiwan is often put in a negative light among contemporary PRC academics. This view seems to have only increased after the DPP's electoral victory in 2000, when the deep politicization of Taiwanese politics and society became even more apparent.<sup>237</sup> PRC researcher Zhang Weiwei stated that, since the current democratic system in Taiwan is copied from the US, it is bound to fail in the long term, as it does not take the particular cultural circumstances of Taiwan into account. Zhang viewed the rise of the PRC's "Beijing consensus" (*Zhongguo moshi* 中国模式) as unstoppable, which according to him, is also democratically superior. He lamented the fact that Taiwan did not adopt a form of "consultative democracy" (*zixunxing minzhu* 咨询性民主) suited for its people and instead opted for "confrontational American democracy" (*duikangxing meishi minzhu* 对抗性美式民主), which is bound to bring it only ruin. Interestingly, Zhang saw the politicization and populism in Taiwanese politics as a sign its citizens lacked the required "civic culture" (*gongmin wenhua* 公民文化) to properly engage in liberal democracy and stated: "Civic culture in the Chinese mainland's society is even more lacking...so if the Chinese mainland would engage in Western democracy, it will be China's ruin."<sup>238</sup> Zhang's statement raises the question whether he insinuated that a more open form of democracy is possible after said "high civic culture" has taken shape, despite his overall anti-liberal and anti-Western stance.

Despite the confident nature of the rebukes of Taiwan's democracy by scholars like Zhang Weiwei, the democratization of the island are not as easy to ignore as such views might suggest. Deng Xiaodong, for example, compared the political status quo on both sides of the Taiwan Strait and, while generally asserting that the PRC is superior in most aspects, did admit that, in comparison to Taiwan, the PRC still lacks a clear separation of party and state.<sup>239</sup> Indeed, since the PRC asserts Taiwan to be Chinese territory to the extent it is lawfully obliged to protect its sovereignty over the island through its anti-secession law (*fan fenlie guojiafa* 反分裂国家法),<sup>240</sup> it cannot lightly ignore the fact that a successful liberal democracy with

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<sup>237</sup> Li Cheng (2008: 318). Taken from a chapter by Chu Yun-han.

<sup>238</sup> Zhang Weiwei (2012: 54). Original text: "大陆社会的"公民文化"更加缺乏...所以大陆如果搞西方民主,那将是中国的灾难。"

<sup>239</sup> Deng Xiaodong (2014: 62). "In the political work of the mainland, there still persist the phenomena of no separation of party and government, unclarity of power and responsibility, and party leadership over everything." Original Text: "在大陆政治运作中还存在着党政不分、权责不明、党领导一切的现象".

<sup>240</sup> On March 14, 2005, the PRC adopted the highly controversial "anti-secession law". The law's eight article stipulated the right for the PRC to take Taiwan by force to protect China's territorial integrity if the probability of peaceful reunification with Taiwan is lost. Original text: "...和平统一的可能性完全丧失, 国家得采取非和平

separation of powers exists within its de jure territory. While originally the existence of a “de facto second Chinese state” within the PRC’s claimed borders already infringed on the legitimacy of the CCP as sole claimant to China, the reputational damage has arguably increased ever since the 1990s, as a “de facto *liberal democratic* second Chinese state” manages to survive within its realm. The observation that the KMT as *party* swiftly managed to separate itself from the *state* during the democratization process despite also having engaged in Leninist party-state diffusion, is sure to be an unwelcome observation for CCP members wary of plural democracy.

As the CCP cannot lightly revoke its “one-China policy” (*yi ge Zhongguo yuanze* 一个中国原则) or “anti-secession law” without losing legitimacy domestically and is equally unable to annex the island by force due to a potential international fallout, the Taiwan problem is here to stay for the near future. As Christopher R. Hughes has aptly stated:

It thus seems likely that Taiwan will continue to be a serious problem for Beijing’s policy makers, whatever strategy they adopt: unless, that is, the CCP questions the version of the ‘one-China’ principle upon which its Taiwan policy is premised.... Such flexibility, however, can only arise if there is a movement away from the nationalism that the CCP has come to cultivate so assiduously as the central pillar of its own legitimacy to rule.<sup>241</sup>

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方式及其他必要措施，捍卫国家主权和领土完整。” Retrieved from [http://www.npc.gov.cn/wxzl/gongbao/2005-05/08/content\\_5341734.htm](http://www.npc.gov.cn/wxzl/gongbao/2005-05/08/content_5341734.htm) (last accessed August 8, 2020)

<sup>241</sup> Tsang and Tien Hung-mao (1999: 144). Taken from a chapter by Christopher Hughes.

## Conclusion

This dissertation has compared the many different factors influencing the success and failure of democratization in, respectively, the ROC (Taiwan) and the PRC. A completely conclusive answer to this thesis' main research question “why the KMT succeeded in its democratic reforms, while the CCP, to this day, has held on to its monopoly on political power,” cannot be fully provided within its limited scope. Be that as it may, researching the influence of Leninism on the democratic reforms in both the PRC and ROC has delivered multiple interesting clues to the varying circumstances and conceptual interpretations that most certainly influenced the respective outcomes in both states.

Despite the observation that both parties share a common Leninist past, the current status quo on democracy in the two states is highly divergent. While Taiwan is presently a multi-party democracy—albeit with stark politicization due to its Leninist heritage—the CCP still maintains a one-party communist dictatorship in the PRC despite engaging in economic reforms aimed at wealth creation. By listing the chief inputs that have contributed to the success of democratization in the ROC, this paper demonstrated how many factors that contributed to the process in the ROC were interpreted differently or lacking altogether in the PRC.

First, both parties' understanding of Leninism is highly divergent. The CCP, like most communist parties, united the concept of Leninism with the concept's ideological precursor of Marxism and later further infused Marxism-Leninism with the theories of the different generations of the PRC's paramount leaders. The KMT, however, singularly implemented the concept of Leninism through its founder Sun Yat-sen and snubbed any communist connotation of the ideology. Except for the chaotic revolutionary years under Chairman Mao Zedong, Leninist principles such as party-state diffusion have consistently remained the bedrock of the CCP's control over the PRC—arguably even more so under Xi Jinping's present governance—while parts of Marxism have been pragmatically “Sinicized” to not infringe on the legitimacy of the ongoing economic reforms. The KMT meanwhile swiftly abandoned most of its Leninist structures and democratized on the basis of the party's existing—formerly diffuse—political system in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. It could pragmatically cite most of its (pre-temporary provisions) constitution to legitimize this. However, visible through the politicized state of its parliament and society, Taiwan retains a legacy of Leninism.

Both parties originally adhered to the Leninist concept of democratic centralism, and by the early 1950s, the manner in which both parties governed their people indeed showed great

similarities, as both parties attempted to pacify their respective societies by increasing Leninist penetration in every sector of society. However, certain interpretational differences of the Leninist concept of democratic centralism between the KMT and CCP were visible from the outset. The CCP combined democratic centralism with the requirement of Marxist “orthodoxy,” while maintaining disdain for intraparty revisionism. Power struggles were often extrapolated to deadly mass campaigns under Mao Zedong, and even under the leadership of Mao’s successors—at least nominally—“being red” remained a requirement for joining the CCP. By contrast, the KMT of Sun Yat-sen and the two Chiangs maintained a pragmatic “big-tent” approach toward factionalism: anyone displaying loyalty to the party’s leadership and having nominal belief in Sun’s Three Principles of the People was deemed adequate as a prospective KMT member. Within this broad framework, factionalism was often tolerated within the KMT.

The divergent prerequisites under which the two parties adopted the concept of democratic centralism is probably emblematic of the differing degrees of rigidity embedded in its later implementation. Whereas the early CCP adopted the principle under the premises of joining the Comintern and contributing to a (nominally worldwide) Marxist-Leninist revolution, Sun Yat-sen’s KMT was primarily searching for an effective way to swiftly regain power in China. As this thesis has shown, the ideology of Leninism was an especially suitable choice for an ambitious statesman like Sun Yat-sen, who had been faced with declining fortunes. While the CCP to an extent also saw Leninism as a political philosophy that could pragmatically be used to claim power in China, the ideology was also suited to rule the high proportion of peasants amongst its ranks, and legitimize their vanguard position in society—which had been absent in Marxist philosophy.

While Sun Yat-sen is still revered on both sides of the Taiwanese strait—with a visible upward reverence trend in the PRC and a downward trend in the ROC—his impact on governmental principles in the ROC was considerably larger than his influence on developments in the PRC. Sun’s ideology of the Three Principles of the People has been the prime (constitutional) guideline in the ROC ever since Sun’s tenure as leader of the KMT. His status as party-founder made his ideology—no matter how ambiguous—impossible to neglect for later generations in the party. This included Sun’s three-step “path to constitutional democratization,” which was never repudiated by Sun’s successors. While vague, many in the ROC choose to narrate Sun’s democratic ideology as meaning eventual democratization, thereby putting pressure on the KMT’s leadership to eventually reform. The KMT subsequently had no choice but to allow semi-competitive democratic elections locally. The CCP, however, has used Sun more selectively, which it is able to do because of its relative distance to the

historical figure, to promote national unity. Sun's democratic ideas in the PRC have either been neglected, rewritten to fit a revolutionary narrative, or censored. The CCP never experienced the same kind of "internal pressure" to allow more democratic experiments.

The divergent approach to attracting new party members by the CCP and KMT in the 1920s was extrapolated to different types of recruitment drives in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The KMT kept opting to attract people for their skills and intellect and, during the 1970s and 1980s, elected for a "Taiwanization" approach to absorb all local intellectuals that might otherwise have bolstered the opposition's ranks. While the CCP also attempted to absorb intellectuals to decrease the high share of peasants in its party, the recruitment process of intellectuals was hampered by Mao Zedong's mass campaigns. Even after Mao's demise, the party remained selective in the recruitment of new members and remained highly wary of the entrance of potential dissidents and revisionists.

This paper has also attempted to demonstrate the importance of the democratic theories of Randall Peerenboom (East Asian model) and Samuel Huntington (the stability for democracy tradeoff and the third democratic wave). Employing the two scholars' respective theories, the ROC can be said to have just reached the wealth threshold for democratization when the third wave reached Asia in the 1980s, and the KMT could count on backward legitimacy through Sun Yat-sen to ensure its survival as an electoral party after democratization. The PRC, however, had not progressed to a similar level of wealth when the third wave arrived nor could it count on backward legitimacy for any move toward democratization. To ensure its survival, abandoning political reform seemed the easiest way to prevent a collapse in the short term. Whereas the KMT moved beyond the "stability for democracy tradeoff" as it could be relatively certain that intraparty stability was guaranteed during its reforms—thereby showing "high adaptability", the CCP still puts stability first and refuses to take any chances with democracy—thereby showing "low adaptability".

In sum, this paper has demonstrated that the ten following main factors were imperative in Taiwan's successful democratization in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century: (I) high tolerance for factionalism in the KMT, revisionism largely accepted by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century; (II) relatively low ideological requirements of (new) members; (III) a continued nominal adherence to Sun Yat-sen's *minquan* ("democratic") ideology, even in authoritarian periods; (IV) the unescapable necessity (domestically and internationally) of organizing semi-competitive local elections, thereby further popularizing Sun's democratic promise; (V) Chiang Ching-kuo's pragmatic U-turn on allowing democracy in the wake of the third democratic wave's arrival in Asia; (VI) the need for "Taiwanization" of the KMT's membership as the party only represented a small

minority of local society, subsequent collapse of Leninist vanguardism after diversifying its membership; (VII) sufficient wealth to embark on the East Asian model's sixth step of democratization during the high tide of the third democratic wave; (VIII) adequate "backward legitimacy" to ensure the KMT's survival as a competitive electoral party; (IX) Leninist democratic centralism becoming largely irrelevant before democratization took place; and (X) relatively small changes to institutions and laws required to achieve democratization and the separation of party and state.

These observations stands in contrast to the following parallel observations in the PRC: (I) low tolerance for factionalism in the CCP, a continuing disdain for revisionism; (II) strict(er) ideological Marxist requirements of (new) members; (III) pragmatic usage of Sun Yat-sen as symbol of national unity. Neglect, revolutionary re-narration, and censorship of Sun's *minquan* ("democratic") ideology; (IV) little or no necessity to experiment with competitive local elections; (V) an adverse reaction to the arrival of the third democratic wave and the termination of political reforms to ensure the CPP's survival in the short term ("opting for stability over democracy"); (VI) no need for a broad recruitment drive as ethnic divisions similar to Taiwan are absent. The CCP can still claim to represent "the masses" through its (nominal) Marxist principles, and its members remain an ideological vanguard; (VII) insufficient wealth creation to engage in democratization during the high tide of the third democratic wave; (VIII) no sufficient "backward legitimacy" to ensure the CPP's survival as a competitive electoral party; (IX) resurgence of Leninist democratic centralism under Deng Xiaoping; and (X) deep Leninist diffusion of party and state which would require thorough reforms to reverse, possible instability during such hypothetical reforms.

This ten-point list is by no means exhaustive. While it provides a useful overview of the most important modifiers that promoted democratization in late 20<sup>th</sup> century Taiwan, this thesis did not move outside the narrow temporal and spatial scope of the specific variables present during the democratization process on the island. Modifiers that hampered democratization specifically in the PRC, or were relevant during different eras, have been largely glossed over for the sake of focus. Other worthwhile angles to research in the context of democratization in the PRC and ROC include, but are not limited to, elite politics, societal transition theories, and identity politics. Hopefully, this treatise has also contributed helpful starting points for deeper research on these subjects. As cross-strait relations have become increasingly hostile, and understanding of the PRC and Taiwan's political systems is more than often still lacking, further research on related subjects is ever more vital.

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