

Chou, C.P. (2017). Foreword. In Kwok, K. [When Education Meets Politics in Taiwan: A Game Theory Perspective \(1994–2016\)](#). Singapore: Springer. pp. vii-viii..

Foreword

In 2014, two university student-led movements of momentous importance took place: the Sunflower Movement in Taiwan which protested against a possible trade service agreement with China in March and the protest movement in Hong Kong demanding that China institute free elections in the territory (Dou & Hsu, 2014). University students from both societies impressed the world with their organized actions against their own political establishments and that of China, and observers have since made comparisons of the two events.

Although cross-strait economic ties and cultural exchanges improved drastically between 2008 and 2016, both sides still remain deeply suspicious of each other politically. The Taiwanese general public continues to resist any proposals for Taiwan's adoption of a "one country, two systems" framework like the one that was established between China and Hong Kong in 1997. Why do Taiwanese people, especially the younger generation, remain so suspicious of China? What kind of perception most Taiwanese people have about China despite their identity conflicts over the years? The constant dilemma in Taiwan over national identity continues today and has become heavily influenced by new forces: globalization, localization, and shifting cross-strait relations (Chou, 2014). As a result, education has been vulnerable to political change over the last two decades and yet has also become even more crucial in shaping students' self-concept and national identity in Taiwan.

This book fills the gap about how politics, not only in Taiwan but also in many parts of the world, have influenced educational change and how such political interactions impact educational policies and practices. Like many other countries,

Taiwan's education reform has interwoven with its process of political democratization over the last two decades. In this book, Kwok skillfully applies game theory in developing a new framework that regards education reform as the outcome of players' strategic interactions rather than top-down or bottom-up approaches. The interplay among different political players is characterized by the continual adjustment of one's preferences and strategies in response to other players' moves and changes in voter preferences. Nevertheless, these players' actions are also conditioned by the dual salient ideological cleavages regarding national identity conflict: democratization and Taiwanization. The author's insight helps explain how and why Taiwan's education reform was embraced by most players in the late 1990s but eventually became a battlefield between different political parties and social interest groups. Although game theory is a common approach in certain academic fields, it remains under-utilized in analyzing education policy. Its use in this book is a refreshing take on interpreting how political intervention in Taiwan has affected educational change in many ways.

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