

Is Taiwan Still Structurally Politicized?

Mikael Mattlin

Department of Political Science,
University of Turku, Finland

In my book *Politicized Society: The Long Shadow of Taiwan's One-Party Legacy*, published by NIAS Press in 2011, I argued that Taiwan's society had become structurally politicized due to a confluence of several structural factors related to the legacy of the Kuomintang party's long one-party rule on the island. This structural origin of Taiwan's intense politicization was particularly evident during the eight years of DPP rule from 2000 to 2008. However, between the end of my main field research and the time that the book finally was published, voters had decisively returned to power the long-time ruling party. Towards the end of the book, I therefore raised the question of whether Taiwan would be able to break free from this predicament and what might be needed to gradually transform the structural circumstances. In this paper, I return to the issues of Taiwan's structural politicization and depoliticization. With the benefit of several years of hindsight after Taiwan's second power transition, we are now in a better position to assess whether Taiwan still is structurally politicized, as I claimed.