

From Monoplist to Heteroglossia -The Changing of the Position of Church-State Relations of the Christian Denominations in Taiwan in Sunflower Student Movement

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Abstract

Throughout the modern church-state relations in Taiwan, this has transformed from a traditional government-regulated society into a free and equal society. As the regimes changed, the tension between Church and State also kept changing. The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan began its mission in 1865. In its history of 150 years in Taiwan, it has experienced four ruling regimes. The oldest missionary - Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT) has always played an important role through the period. The highest of tension was in Chiang Kai-shek's regime. In the time, PCT fought with the government for many issues. In addition, Chiang's regime also had their countermove. With the 1980's political reform, the tension has been conceded. However, PCT still retains its concerns for political events. In the Sunflowers Student Movement in Taiwan in the 2014, PCT also played an important role. However, most of the pastors participated for no more than "It's what we should do", and without ownership of dedicated mission. Meanwhile, in other denominations which firmly stood for "separation of church and state", their pastors began to have some reminder about the right attitude for the Christian students who joined the movement. In view of the religious economic theory, we can have following explanation: (1) in the past, PCT's political involvement made many organizations friendly to them. It became an oligopolistic Christian denomination. (2) After the tension between PCT and government was eased, the political concern of PCT became just slogans. (3) The atmosphere of the whole society supporting the student movement makes the sects which were dissenting of political concern switch to support the movement.

Keywords: Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT), religious economic theory, church-state relations, Sunflower Student Movement.

After the two books, "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order" and "The Third Wave of Democratization" of S. P. Huntington has published, they make the reach of the interaction between religion, politics, and society a big issue. In Taiwan, most noticed is the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT), Since it's played an important role in the democratization of Taiwan, there are countless articles, book discussion about PCT. now, in many social issues and political issues demonstration, The flag of PCT is still not absent. In the Sunflower student, movement in Taiwan PCT played a role of backup force. Reviewing the Sunflower student movement in Taiwan, many civil groups played an important role in it. Besides The Black Island Nation Youth Front, there are environment caring organization such as Citizen of the Earth, Taiwan (地球公民基金會), Green Citizens' Action Alliance (綠色公民行動聯盟), and Green Party (綠黨). In addition, even though, the woman right organizations - Awakening Foundation (婦女新知基金會) and the educational organization -The association of parent participating education in Taiwan (台灣親子共學教育促進會). We can say it is a huge blooming of civil groups' movement, and it moved our society! However, as usual, except the PCT, there are no any religion organizations participating in, which demonstrated the delicate relationship between religion and politics in Taiwan.

A. History of interaction of religions and politic in Taiwan

Taiwan is a very complex multi-religious society today, with a total population of about 23 million, of whom the largest proportion believe in Buddhist beliefs, about 35% of people consider themselves Buddhists, and Taoists for about 33%.

About 4% of all consider themselves Christians, approximately 300,000 Catholics; Protestants about 590,000 and the largest Protestant church is PCT, about 230,000 believers. Throughout the modern church-state relations in Taiwan which has turned from a traditional government-regulated society into a free and equal society.

However, such a change is not made overnight. The author briefly reviews the history description:

Ancient Chinese regimes were almost secularized, during the imperial times they used to use Confucian ethics as the ruling ideology, and were relatively tolerant to Buddhism, Taoism and other renounced religions. Since the KMT government came to Taiwan, the KMT have followed the tradition of Chinese domination and legal systems in mainland China in the religion affairs. Taiwan residents generally have the freedom of religion, which is guaranteed by the Constitution. All types of religions are flourishing, or at least may not be subjected to severe persecution. But, the most direct impact on church-state relations is the martial law and the authoritarian regime. "Martial law" provides that: "If citizens' / people religious activities affect security, they may be restricted or prohibited." It clarifies the government control of religion.

Under the Long-term martial law regime, the party and government forces use "control the religion" as the main strategy. For example, the KMT use the Party Branch to establish "religious affiliation counseling groups." They also maintain their rule by incorporating the religion that is obedient and loyal to the government. Early Chinese Buddhist Association or Buddhist Association of Taiwan Province has their KMT caucus, the Directors, supervisors which are also the secretaries of caucus. They must hold a caucus meeting before each time of the Supervisory Board or The Council especially when before the elections. (Lin Rong-Zhi, 2002) If the religious has manifestly contrary to the policy of the government, KMT will actively suppress them through the district system, or banned it. And to the religions with Strong independence thinking, the KMT government will have strengthened control with them.

B. Church-state relations of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

Presbyterian Church in Taiwan as the oldest missionary in Taiwan, since Dr. Mackay, Canada, the United Kingdom's doctor Maxwell come to Taiwan, over 150 years. In each of the regime changed, the Presbyterian Church played important roles. The distance and tension between Church and State constantly changed with the times.

Presbyterian Church in Taiwan has entered Taiwan since 1865, after four ruling regime, it's been one hundred and fifty years of history. The past studies of its interaction with the regime can be summarized into six modes The results of research found that its relationship of interactions with the regimes can be divided into four models:

1. Seemingly harmony relationship: the period of ending years of Ching Dynasty (1865-1895)
2. Relationship of non-volunteer obedience: Japanese colonial period (1895-1945)
3. Relationship of conflicts: the period of authoritarian rule by KMT government (1945-1987)
4. Relationship of confronts: the period of construction of democracy-from the scrap of martial law to the change of ruling party (1987-2000).
5. Relationship of critical supports: the period of consolidation of democracy - DPP in power times (2000-2003)
6. Philosophy oriented supervision: After the second time change of ruling party (2008 -)

The highest point of tension was in the aforesaid third period, the KMT government of Taiwan during the regime of Chiang Kai-shek. After 1977 Presbyterian Church in Taiwan release three of the Declaration, the Chiang regime confiscated the Bible, arrested preacher and sent spies to the church to monitor and continuously check the PCT. With the political reforms in the late 1980s, period of the democracy construction is coming. Strained relations between the PCT and politics began to reduce. However, the PCT still retains its concern of political events because of its faith interpretations. Until the ruling party rotated, the PCT and the ruling party have similar viewpoint, which makes the tension inevitably decline. However, the PCT still supervised the Government. In the end of May 2006, when President Chen Shui-Bian(陳水扁) has been the emergence of rumors of corruption, Sixth National Prayer Breakfast held in Mackay Memorial Hospital, President Chen Shui-Bian was invited to attend. Rev. Gao Jun-Ming(高俊明) in the sermon with a very serious tone, cited Bible verse "the love of money is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10)" in front of the president. He denounced that Taiwan society is facing the crisis of greedy, greedy, corrupt, selfish, compliments. It shows that the PCT was still maintaining certain strength of supervised.

However, we can still see the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan play an important role in Sunflower Student Movement in Taiwan in the early 2014's. The majority of the pastors participated only as it's "should" participated but without ownership of dedicated mission.

C. Church-state relations of other denominations

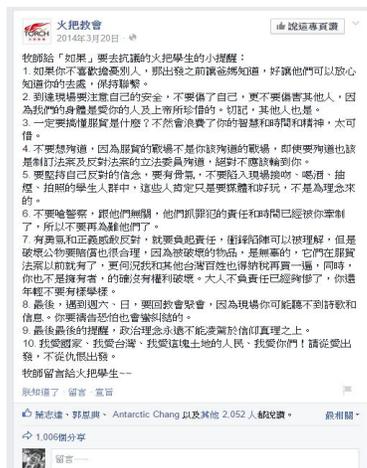
Christianity (including the Catholic) denominations have different political positions. This discrepancy is due to the various in Bible interpretation. In other words, they have significant differences in theologies. In Taiwan's church-state, relations of Christianity have three categories, basically.

The first, they does not care about politics, they only pursue personal spiritual and church growth. For example: The local churches and True Jesus Church.

The second category is obviously holding Paul's position¹, Take a completely submissive attitude towards the ruling authorities. Such as Catholics, Mormons, Baptists and some other minor sects, they (except Mormons) often publicly expressed their full support of the government's determination, and do savage attack to the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan.

The third churches tend to use what the "Bible" said to criticize the government, ask for the social and political reform. These requirements are often emphasized on Jesus is the righteous judge, a savior. The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan is the representative of kind of these churches.

However, as long as to the diverse ethnic groups, missionary niche and other factors, many of the church in Taiwan began to move closer to the first category with historical development. And maintain detached neutrality to "political agenda". It's in order to achieve maintained each members who has different with political stance can united in one church. It generating the situation of obey "secularism", and did not refer to political issues. But in this time, other than the PCT's pastor began to reminding the students, what is the right attitude they (Christians students) should have in the Student Movement. This is a major changing of the Christian church-state relations in Taiwan. Director pastor of the Torch Covenant Church, Rev. Yang Yong-Min(楊永民) posted a post in the church community website(Facebook's fans group) on the first Saturday evening after the student movement called "Little reminder for the student in the church who "may" wants to join protest."²



Picture I : Little reminder for the student in the church who "may" wants to join protest.



Picture II : 5" BLESS "Love exhort

¹ In the first generation of Christian churches, the two disciples of Jesus, Peter and Paul have different views on the relationship between church and state. Peter said: "We ought to obey God rather than men." ("Acts" 5:29) But Paul has diverse views, he said: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." ("Romans" 13: 1) There is significant contrast, Paul favor that Christians should obey the existing regime, but Peter ask Christians treat politics with sense of "God's will is higher than human. "

² https://www.facebook.com/torchfans/posts/625993614123204?stream_ref=1

The content is still emphasizing the political affairs can never prevail over the truth of faith that the concept of theocracy is higher than secular regime. However, the content has not seen the rejection of political affairs which is usually be seen in the other denomination except for PCT in the past. It encourages students to learn about the service and trade disputes, and bear the cost of civil disobedience action after the exposure. The director pastor of another emerging church, New Life Church (新生命小組教會), Rev. Gu Qi-Yun (顧其芸) was interviewed by Christianity Today News after the Sunflower Student Movement has begun for eight days, in 2014/3/26. He pointed out: My church has a lot of young people go to the Legislative Yuan to participate in sit-ins. For students to participate in the discussion of national major policy and social issues, he holds optimistic attitude.³ And published "Five" BLESS "Love exhort" (see picture II) through the church internet method. Just like the Torch Covenant Church, it not only mentioned that emphasizing the sovereignty of God, and told the students that they should understand the issues which are related to the Cross-Strait Agreement on Trade in Services, but also less indifferent to political issues of the past, or the emphasizing "secularism."

Compare to the front, the two churches show that they are not object to the student movement, and even remind students to participate in the student movement in the proper attitude with a friendly attitude. However, Taipei's Lutheran church seems more conservative in this issue. One Christian newspaper reports after 318 anti- Cross-Strait Agreement on Trade in Services student movement,⁴ Taipei Truth Lutheran Church(台北真理堂) youth missionary pastoral's Pastor Rev. Lin Cheng-Xui(林呈旭) immediately held a provisional forum talk meeting to talk with the young in church from motives, circumstances and criteria three ways. Although it also he emphasized on the sovereignty of God, he also mentioned that "Obedience to the authority on earth which is God's representatives that established by him. According to this report, he said that everyone should play their role in depend on God's calling and influence others properly." Such concepts are usually are classified into supporting of secularism.

D. Reviewed by Religion Economic Theory

The traditional theory model regards the religion as a rigid body. With the advent of rationalism, humanism and the Industrial Revolution, it's impact on the human world leads to the change of human need (demand) for religion. The need of religion will be gradually reduced, and religion will die with the path of modernization. But this theory model is very different from the human life in the twentieth century; it cannot explain the development of the contemporary world religions such as the American evangelical revival in 20th century. The religious economic theory provides another way to explain the role of religion in contemporary society from the view of religious organizations (supplier).

Under the system of religious freedom competition, the theoretical model considers that religious practitioners based on the existence and development needs will continue to create and provide with new religious products to attract or even inspire the popular demand. Thus, it will contribute to the prosperity of religion. At this time we are able to examine the changing of political concern of Christian in Taiwan after the Sunflower Student Movement by the religious market theory. We can make the following explanation:

1. Because of the PCT's political participation in the past, many people's organizations are quite friendly to the PCT. It becomes an independently oligopoly market from the other Christian denominations.

Before the lifting of martial law, the majority of "social movement" is not going to endanger the authoritarian regime, such as the assembly of temple and so on. After the lifting of martial law, the social movements gathered in the 80s, many movement groups are the people who were excluded from the party (KMT)-state in the past. It's also the beginning of "organization", including the organization of right of farmers or labors, social movement studio, the environment caring organization and so on. At this time, Taiwan Presbyterian Church's Urban Rural Mission begins to hold "social movement workers' workshop. The PCT believes that the society needs the social movements and the social workers. Therefore, the PCT starts to organize training workshops for training professional social movement worker. After this, the PCT has a lot of interaction with social movement organizations and plays important roles in many issue initiatives.

³ <http://news.dhf.org.tw/News.aspx?cate=14&key=4396>

⁴ <http://www.krtnews.com.tw/church/item/8628-%E5%BE%9E%E7%A5%9E%E7%9C%BC%E5%85%89-%E8%B6%85%E8%B6%8A%E6%94%BF%E6%B2%BB%E7%AB%8B%E5%A0%B4>

Yi-Kong (Gi-kong, 義光, God's righteous Light) church is an example of this era. On February 28, 1980, at the site of Church where was originally the Lawyer Mr. Lin Yi-Hsiung's (林義雄) residence occurred the Daughter murder. The original site of the church was the residence of the Lawyer Mr. Lin Yi-Hsiung. His daughter was murder in that house on February 28, 1980. At that time, Mr. Lin was the Members of Taiwan Province. Under the suggestion guide of the pastors who were advocated to concerning help political victims' families, wife of Lawyer Lin, Miss Fang Su-min (方素敏) sold this house to the church building committee, to "witness God's righteousness, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ and the gospel of salvation land". At that time, the cost of acquisition is dedicated by the believers around the world (The churches and the public in Taiwan, the Churches in Canada, Britain, Germany, Japan, the United States and so on). The Yi-Kong (God's righteous Light) church was formally established on April 11, Easter in 1982. Since then, it becomes the Church of Taiwan dissidents Christian.

Before social movements were booming in 80s, the PCT has been the part of the social initiatives. After the 80s, it also continently played the role of proponents. Therefore, it has attracted a number of special groups to join in the church such as the mother of Ms. Tian Qiu-Jin (田秋堇) joined in the past, Ms. Huang Yue-Sui (黃月綏) joined in recently. And there are many organizations and individuals who show good intentions to the PCT becoming the oligopoly market from other Christian denominations.

2. After the tension between the PCT and political is reduced, the political concern becomes a slogan.

Author is participated in an organization of the PCT which is responsible for college youth missionary that is the first person to contact with college youth. In the evening on March 18, when the first group of students rushed into the Conclave, had been tackled by the police for three times. At that time, the author's colleague Rev. Chen Pei-Yi (陳佩儀) entered to the Conclave to accompany these students.⁵In the early morning on March 19, the Taipei college student center's pastors and college students went to the legislature at the first time to show their concerns, and immediately set point stationed in Taipei college student center and Jinan church.

However, many students who were involved told the author that they felt disgusted with some local church pastors. Some of the pastors would take the tour bus to the Legislative Yuan in order to take pictures. Some would participate in movement shortly to get the chance to make speech on the stage so they could sing poetry before they left. Only the pastors of general affair, student, and pastor in seminary and college student center around Taiwan are the main members to participate in the political caring student movement.

However, this kind of phenomenon may not constitute the title of this section "The political concern became a slogan." After all, there are still a lot of churches listed the student movement into the pray list of church as an important thing during the Sunflowers Student Movement period. And local church seemed too busy to focus on the movement. However, students who participate in the student movement have poorly perception to the local church pastors. PCT students found that the local church pastor come to Taipei, just want to take photographs, ask for speech and prayer as the primary activity. The students did feel the political concern become a "slogan", and become only "it's what they have to do."

3. The overall social atmosphere is behind the student movement so the denominations which were dissenting in the past also were turning to support.

We observed the phenomenon in the previous section and the declaration; Most of the people of the PCT who were involved in the movement are students, college student center students and pastors, teachers and students of the seminary, and the pastors in administrative organ of churches. This conclusion fits the core concepts that the students are the main part of the student movement.

However; overall the PCT include administrative organ, indeed play a role of supporters in the student movement. This is consistent with the PCT's routes, which support and participate in social and political issues. But, why the others denomination which were hold opposing views in the past also tend to support? We can use religion market theory as an explanation basis. Overall social atmosphere during the student movement support the sunflowers student movement, According to several media polls show that more than half, even over 70%, mass were support those issue and the occupation.

⁵ http://www.pct.org.tw/news_pct.aspx?strBlockID=B00006&strContentID=C2014033000001&strDesc=Y

According to the religious economic theory, the premise is all religions have free to compete. In order to get more believers, the church would try it best to provide the religious products which the society need. Therefore, under the social atmosphere, the church will change their position in order to ensure that they won't lost the heart of believers.

In the previous chapter, Author mentioned two different reactions of the conservative church: one is tend to open mind to support. Another is to be conservative as usual. If we analysis of the believers' age in Church, we can find out there are more support of religious economic theory: Taipei New Life Group consists of different age groups: 7.2% are children, 21.6% are high school students, 24.1% are college students, 32.1% are young adult and 15% adult. Student and youth account for half strong in the church. Those people are the main body of the student movement, and this group is also main communities who agree with the activity. If the church disagreed with the student movement or even said something negative, it might lose members from church. Another example is Taipei Truth Church. The age distribution of believers of the church is not as extreme as Taipei New Life. It's still a family-believers church. Therefore, a more conservative statement has less impact on the church.

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