

Disciplining Taiwan: The Kuomintang's Methods of Control during the White Terror Era (1947-1987)

Ketty W. Chen

Ph. D. Candidate, Department of Political Science

University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, USA

Abstract

During the White Terror Era in Taiwan, there were only two significant public uprisings that can be considered as disturbances to the reign of the Kuomintang. This article scrutinizes the much neglected theoretical question on Taiwan: how does the Kuomintang dominate the Taiwanese society for more than 50 years without any major coup or revolution attempts? What are the mechanisms of control exercised by the KMT after its retreat from China? This article argues that the theories of discipline, punishment and domination in Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* and Timothy Mitchell's *Colonizing Egypt* serve as good elucidation to this important theoretical question and concludes that the success of the KMT domination in Taiwan was due to the party's capabilities to achieve the kinds of changes in society through coercion, education, restructuring the society and creating of a new "identity" and character for the Taiwanese.

Keywords: Taiwan, Kuomintang (KMT), Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), White Terror, democratization, Michel Foucault