

Terminating Taiwan's Fourth Nuclear Power Plant under the Chen Shui-bian Administration

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Abstract

This article integrates the termination literature with the Punctuated-Equilibrium (P-E) model of policy change into a broader framework of policy termination to examine the Chen Shui-bian administration's abrupt decision to terminate Taiwan's fourth nuclear power plant (FNPP) as well as to explore the evolution of agenda-setting for the FNPP's termination over a decade. The termination of the FNPP may be viewed as a result of interactions among the nuclear policy image, the institutional venue, and the political or policy strategy over time, as indicated in the integrated framework. Nevertheless, changing nuclear policy image is not sufficient to automatically change the institutional venue in the process of Taiwan's transition from an authoritarian regime to a pluralist political system. Before venue shopping for policy termination, antinuclear activists had to ally with the Democratic Progressive Party to struggle for opening up Taiwan's political institutions along with Taiwan's democratization. On the other hand, as a consequence of Taiwan's recent democratization, antinuclear activists were unsuccessful in terminating the FNPP in the absence of sufficient political resources, notwithstanding a major venue change from the Kuomintang (KMT) government to the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government under President Chen's leadership. Furthermore, besides domestic venues, international institutions also appear to be important to the creation and maintenance of the nuclear policy system, as well as to the dramatic reversal of the Chen administration's termination decision in this case.

Terminating Taiwan's Fourth Nuclear Power Plant under the Chen Shui-Bian Administration

On October 27, 2000, five months after the first peaceful transfer of political power from the once mighty Kuomintang (KMT) to the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), the Taiwanese government under the Chen Shui-bian administration abruptly announced cancellation of the ongoing construction of Taiwan's Fourth Nuclear Power Plant (FNPP). At that moment, the termination decision was a victory for antinuclear activists who have fought to stop the project over a decade. The construction of the FNPP, however, was resumed by the Chen administration on February 14, 2001.

What factors account for the Chen administration's rush decision to terminate Taiwan's fourth nuclear power plant in just five months after President Chen's inauguration on May 20, 2000? Why the administration dramatically restarted the FNPP in less than four months after the termination decision was made? What termination rationales and strategies were adopted by the antinuclear activists and the Chen administration to terminate the FNPP? And what accounts for their failure in terminating the FNPP?

This article integrates Baumgartner and Jones's (1993) Punctuated-Equilibrium (P-E) model of policy change with the termination literature, especially with Robert D. Behn's (1978) dozen hints for policy termination, to examine the Chen Shui-bian administration's rationales and strategies for terminating the FNPP as well as to explore the evolution of agenda-setting for the FNPP's termination over a decade. It illustrates the feasibility of applying the P-E model of policy change to

study policy termination in this case. Agenda-setting for terminating the FNPP, indeed, could be viewed as a result of the interactions between the changing nuclear policy images and the changing institutional venues over time. Nevertheless, changing nuclear policy image is not sufficient to stimulate venue changes for policymaking in an authoritarian political system or a political system in democratic transition, such as in Taiwan's transition to democracy. Before going venue shopping, antinuclear activists have to ally with democratic movements to fight for the expanding and the opening of political institutions for policy termination as indicated in this case. On the other hand, as a newly democratized country in Taiwan, antinuclear activists could not succeed to terminate the FNPP without the support of sufficient political resources even with a major venue change from the KMT government to the DPP government under President Chen's leadership. Furthermore, in the case of nuclear power, the international institutions may also be relevant to the creation and maintenance of the nuclear policy system as well as to the dramatic overrule of the Chen administration's termination decision over the FNPP. Thus, besides domestic venues, the international venue may also play a role in the process of policymaking and policy termination in countries, such as Taiwan, that are highly dependent on the international community strategically and economically.

Incorporating Termination Perspectives with the P-E Model

The literature on policy change, such as the P-E model, has largely ignored studies of policy termination, as Best and his colleagues noticed (Best, Teske, & Mintrom, 1997). Nevertheless, models of policy change can be applied to study policy termination because the process of policy change is similar to the process of policy termination. Bardach (1976) argues that policy termination is a special case of policy adoption in which adopting a policy B may require the elimination of policy A. Following this argument, policy termination conforms to the idea of policy change, a process of adopting new policy B to replace the old policy A. Commenting on Best and his colleagues' (1997) argument that there is a need to integrate the termination literature with the emerging literature of policy change, Peter deLeon (1997) also indicates, policy termination as "a simultaneous end and beginning" of the policy process fits readily into the concept of policy change. Thus, the perspectives derived from termination literatures may provide the "missing link" for the policy change frameworks, such as the P-E model, to study the cases of policy termination.

Baumgartner and Jones's (1991, 1993) punctuated-equilibrium model seeks not only to explain the long periods of policy stability in policymaking but also to encompass the element of short periods of dramatic change in a single model of the policy process. According to the model, in a pluralist political system, policymaking in a given policy subsystem often remains stable for a long time and is fairly dominated by a few most important policy actors and special interests in most of the time. Such a "policy monopoly" is generally maintained by a positive supporting "policy image" and an institutional structure responsible for policymaking in a given policy system. Policy monopoly, however, could break down and a major policy change could occur as a result of its "policy image" being questioned and

tarnished. Furthermore, policy monopolies may also break down as the once disadvantaged political actors successfully go “institutional venue” shopping to achieve policy change.

Policy images are “public understandings of policy problems” (1993, p. 25). They are often a blend of “empirical information and emotive appeals” (1993, p. 26). Institutional venues are the set of political institutions for policymaking. Besides each of their independent impact on policy change, the P-E model emphasizes the interaction of policy images and institutional venues in the process of policymaking. “As venues change, images may change as well; as the image of a policy changes, venue changes become more likely” (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991, p. 1047). Thus, the model emphasizes that policy change comes from the interaction of the policy image with the institutional venues over time.

Policy termination is defined as “the deliberate conclusion or cessation of specific government functions, programs, policies, or organizations” (deLeon, 1978, p. 280). It occurs mostly with “a bang” by “one decisive stroke” after a lengthy political struggle. But, sometimes, it also occurs with “a very long whimper” from a long-term decline in its resources (Bardach, 1976). Some termination perspectives, in fact, are related to the P-E model’s concepts of policy image and institutional venue. In Bardach’s (1976) five conditions facilitating policy termination, two of them are related to the P-E model. First, “a change in administrations” can be viewed as venue change. Second, the proposition of delegitimation of the policy’s ideological matrix is related to the model’s redefining policy image argument. In addition, among the six reasons identified by Peter deLeon (1978) explaining why policy termination has been particularly difficult to achieve, the institutional and legal obstacles are related to the P-E’s “institutional venues.” While these termination perspectives are related to the policy image and institutional venue concepts in the P-E model, both termination literatures and the P-E model also emphasize the important role of policy actors in adopting strategies to redefine policy issues and to utilize policy image and venue to mobilize supports to pursue policy results. The termination literature, however, identifies more termination strategies as its contribution to an understanding of policy termination.

Regarding the difficulty of executing policy termination, Behn (1978) provides a dozen hints for better chances of achieving successful termination. They can be synthesized into six termination strategies: (1) Don’t float trial balloons; (2) Focus attention on the policy’s harm and enlarge the set of termination supporters; (3) Assert political leadership and never compromise; (4) Do not encroach upon legislative prerogatives but avoid legislative votes; (5) Accept short-term cost increases and buy off the beneficiaries; (6) Treat termination as an adoption of alternative policy. These strategies have been applied and found useful by some termination studies (Daniels, 1997; Sato, 2002). Besides these strategies, termination research also points out that political motivations and politics are more relevant to the process of policy termination and more influential than economic considerations in the termination decision (Bardach, 1976; Daniels, 1997; deLeon, 1983; Frantz, 2002). Therefore, as Frantz (2002) argues that successful policy termination requires sufficient political resources.

From the above discussion, the termination literature’s perspectives on strategies for policy termination lead themselves to integration with the P-E model for a

broader framework of termination studies. This integrated P-E model of policy termination includes the three key concepts of image, institution, and strategy in the process of policymaking. The process of policy termination within this framework may be seen as a result of interactions among policy image, institutional venue, and political or policy strategy. The interaction process for policy termination could be a “bang,” a “long whimper,” or both. The Chen Shui-bian administration’s termination decision and its overturn in this case were like dramatic bangs. The process of agenda-setting for its termination, however, has been a “long whimper” over a decade of political struggle since Taiwan’s transition to democracy in the mid-1980s.

The Nuclear Policy Monopoly before the Mid-1980s

In 1955, under the United States government’s assistance of transferring nuclear technologies for peaceful use, Taiwan established an Atomic Energy Council (AEC) under the Executive Yuan to promote the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy. Taiwan also founded an Institute of Nuclear Science at the National Tsing Hua University, and arranged for engineers from Taiwan Power Corporation (Taipower), the only electric utility and owned by the government, to be trained in the United States. In 1961, with the assistance of the United States government, a research nuclear reactor was commissioned at the Institute of Nuclear Science (Surrey, 1988). Since then, the United States-based multinational corporations and the United States Export-Import bank have provided assistance to Taipower in nuclear power plant planning and site selection as well as financial supports.

In 1970, the state-owned Taipower, under the leadership of the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA), began to build Taiwan’s first nuclear power plant. In 1973, the Executive Yuan approved and promulgated “The Principle of Energy Development in the Taiwan Area,” emphasizing nuclear power, along with thermal power, should be the essential pillars of power generation in Taiwan (Hsu, 1995). In 1979, the government also established the Energy Commission (EC) under the MOEA to formulate and implement the national energy policy, “the Energy Management Law,” “Electricity Law,” and other energy related regulations. The Energy Management Law, promulgated by the president in August 1980, also defines nuclear power as one of Taiwan’s major energy resources. Besides energy policy formulation and implementation, the EC also guides the operations of energy enterprises in Taiwan (Energy Commission, 2003). By the mid-1980s, Taiwan had completed three nuclear power plants with six reactors in operation. In 1985, the share of nuclear power generation peaked at 52.42% of Taiwan’s total electricity generation. In that year, nuclear power also accounted for 18.1% of Taiwan’s total energy supply (Energy Commission, 2001).

In retrospect, before the mid-1980s, the nuclear proponents’ policy monopoly in Taiwan was promoted with a policy system of institutional venues including the Executive Yuan, the MOEA, the AEC, the EC, the Taipower, and the related regulations. In addition, the nuclear policy monopoly was also sustained by powerful policy images in favor of adopting nuclear power to reduce dependence on imported oil, to make economic development less vulnerable to oil price increase, as well as to increase energy security and independence in Taiwan. Thus, besides

the assistance of the United States government and the international nuclear industry, the interaction of these domestic positive policy images and supportive institutional venues had created and maintained the nuclear power proponents' policy monopoly in the nuclear policy system in Taiwan for almost thirty years.

Images, Venues, Strategies, and Agenda-Setting for Terminating the FNPP

The nuclear proponents' policy monopoly in Taiwan was not immediately affected after the Three Mile Island nuclear incident occurred in the United States in 1979. At the time, public knowledge about nuclear power was still very limited. According to a nationwide survey in 1983, 46.2% of the people interviewed were unaware of existence of nuclear power plants in Taiwan and the majority of Taiwanese (73.8%) knew very little or nothing about nuclear power facilities. In addition, only about 30% of the people interviewed considered nuclear power plant and nuclear waste are dangerous or very dangerous (Schafferer, 2001). According to the same survey, public support for nuclear power plants was still high in 1983. While 65.6% of the people interviewed felt that nuclear power plants are absolutely necessary or necessary to supply Taiwan's electricity needs, only 4.8% of the respondents believed that they were not necessary or absolutely not necessary. However, from the mid-1980s, the nuclear proponents' monopoly in the nuclear policy system began to be challenged by the declining of positive nuclear images, by opening and expanding political institutions, and by antinuclear activists' political strategies, as well as by their interactions over nuclear issues under the impact of Taiwan's incipient democratization.

In the summer of 1985, the controversy over nuclear power and the FNPP became public the first time in Taiwan. The FNPP's feasibility, in terms of safety and economic considerations, was heatedly debated and questioned by concerned scholars during a public forum sponsored by the Consumers' Foundation, one of the earliest social movement organizations established in 1980 in Taiwan. In late 1985, a fire accident at the third nuclear power plant in southern Taiwan resulting in local residents' rallies to demand compensation. These events not only attracted intensive media coverage but also provided the public with ample opportunities to learn more about nuclear issues (Hsiao, 1999). By 1986, 80.7% of the people interviewed were aware of nuclear power plants' existence in Taiwan. The number of the people regarding nuclear power plants and nuclear waste dangerous or very dangerous also rose above 60% of the people interviewed. While 57.3% of the people still believed nuclear power plants were necessary for satisfying Taiwan's electricity demands, the percentage of those thinking them unnecessary increased to 16.9% (Schafferer, 2001). The Chernobyl disaster in 1986 further increased public concern and damaged the nuclear power policy images. Thus, since 1985, not only has public knowledge about nuclear power plants increased, the nuclear policy image has further deteriorated. The changing nuclear policy image, however, did not alter existing institutional venues as Taiwan was then ruled by an authoritarian regime.

Benefiting from a powerful positive policy image, the nuclear proponents' policy monopoly was also buttressed by an authoritarian political system under the KMT party dominance before the mid-1980s. Despite the deteriorating image of nuclear

policy, there were almost no institutional venues for changing nuclear policy and terminating the FNPP except the gradually opening legislature. After retreating from Mainland China, the seats of Taiwan's Legislative Yuan were not opened for direct election until the late 1960s. However, only a few seats were opened for election in 1970s. Since the late 1970s, new members of the legislature have been added through supplementary elections. In the early 1980s, most elected legislators in the Legislative Yuan were members of the KMT. In 1984, a few non-KMT members of the Legislative Yuan began to question the feasibility of nuclear power plants. But they were too few to influence nuclear policymaking. In 1985, more than 60 members of the Legislative Yuan, mostly KMT-members, also questioned the appropriateness of the project in terms of economic costs and environmental impacts (Hsu, 2001). Not long after, in 1987, public concern over the Chernobyl disaster resulted in the disapproval of the budget for the FNPP's construction by the Legislative Yuan (Schafferer, 2001). Nevertheless, it was the lifting of martial law in 1987, initiating the democratic transition in Taiwan, that provided the opponents of nuclear power more venue opportunities to end the FNPP and to redirect Taiwan's nuclear policy.

Since the lifting of martial law, antinuclear activists have not only begun to organize nationally, for instance, the Taiwan Environmental Protection Union (TEPU), and locally at the site of the nuclear plant, to fight the construction of the FNPP, but have also strategically allied with emerging environmental movements, democratic movements, and the newly established opposition party, the DPP, to fight for opening political institutions in order to terminate the FNPP. At the end of 1989, more DPP legislators were elected and the Taipei County Government mayoralship was for the first time won by a DPP member. Thus, by the end of the 1980s, anti-nuclear activists could not only stage demonstrations in the streets but could also fight the nuclear policy monopoly inside the policymaking system under the DPP's leadership. Nevertheless, lacking either a majority in the Legislative Yuan or control of the executive branch of the government, the DPP and antinuclear activists could not overturn the KMT government's decision to carry out the FNPP.

Facing increasing opposition to the FNPP's construction, the KMT government delayed implementing the FNPP in the mid-1980s. However, in 1989, a new KMT executive team, including the economic minister, premier, and President Lee Teng-hui, all announced that obstacles would be cleared for the FNPP. In September 1991, after the AEC moved swiftly to pass the project's EIA report without the consent of the AEC review committee members, the MOEA and the Executive Yuan, under a powerful former four-star general turned premier Hau, Pao-tsu's leadership moved quickly to approve the project. To prevent the antinuclear coalition from halting the project, the KMT government, on July 13 1994, over the DPP's protest, mobilized its legislators to pass (84–0) a special eight-year budget package sufficient to secure the construction of the FNPP (Hsu, 2001). On the other hand, public support in favor of the FNPP had increased from 43% in 1987 to 58% in 1994 (Schafferer, 2001). The reason for the increasing public support for the FNPP may be attributed to massive propaganda and educational campaigns by Taipower and government agencies, such as AEC, over these years (Schafferer, 2001).

After losing the battle in the legislature and lacking majority public support, anti-nuclear activists turned to other political strategies for policy termination by escalating demonstrations, calling for a referendum on the issue of the FNPP, and mobilizing the public to recall KMT legislators who voted for the FNPP's special budget. To strengthen public opposition, the TEPU also compiled a series of articles criticizing Taiwan's nuclear policy in a book titled "Nuclear Power Nightmares" (TEPU, 1994). On the other hand, antinuclear activists sized a new opportunity to argue against the FNPP when Taipower and AEC changed the capacity of the nuclear reactor from 1000mw to 1300mw without conducting a new EIA. They claimed that such a change has been considered as inappropriate by the Control Yuan, in charge of exercising the power of impeachment, censure, and audit (Schafferer, 2001). In addition, the legislative elections at the end of 1995 gave the DPP delegation a few more members, leading to renewed effort to overrule the special budget in 1996. They surprised the KMT government by a vote of 74 to 42 in overruling the special budget in May 1996 when most KMT legislators were absent from the session. The FNPP's special budget, however, was easily restored by KMT legislators with a vote of 114 to 0 in October 1996 (Hsu, 2001).

Without the support of national political institutions, antinuclear activists turned to the Taipei County Government, under a DPP member's control, to stop the FNPP by refusing to issue the construction license for the project. The KMT government, however, overruled local authority and issued a license permit for the FNPP's construction through the AEC on March 17, 1999 (Tseng, 1999). Up to that point, antinuclear policy activists' venue shopping to stop the construction of the FNPP appeared to reach an end. They had no other options at hand but once again, on March 28, 1999, the twentieth anniversary of the Three Mile Island nuclear incident, mobilized several thousand people to demonstrate in front of the presidential office to remind the government and the public of the risk of nuclear power plants (Wei & Wang, 1999).

In the wake of the devastating earthquake of September 21, 1999, in Taiwan, anti-nuclear activists seized the opportunity of another natural disaster to urge the KMT government to review the safety of Taiwan's three nuclear power plants and to halt construction of the FNPP (Chiu, 1999). Furthermore, in the wake of Japan's worst-ever nuclear accident on September 30, 1999, public media also urged the KMT government to reconsider and halt the FNPP's construction. The KMT government and Taipower, however, simply reassured the public that Taiwan's nuclear facilities were safe ("Nuclear Facilities Safe," 1999). They repeated the argument that the FNPP was essential to strengthen northern Taiwan's self-sufficiency, reducing its reliance on electricity generated in southern Taiwan. Nevertheless, the government's agenda-setting dominance on the FNPP was finally challenged when the DPP's presidential candidate, Chen Shui-bian, surprisingly won the presidential election on March 18, 2000. Chen's victory particularly welcomed by antinuclear activists, because he promised to terminate the FNPP during the presidential campaign if he won.

The Chen Administration's Termination Decision and Its Failure

Before President-elect Chen's inauguration on May 20, 2000, antinuclear activists had begun to mobilize domestic and international supporters. They organized an

antinuclear demonstration in Taipei on May 13 to escalate pressure on the DPP to honor the party's antinuclear platform and President-elect Chen's campaign pledge to terminate the FNPP's construction (Chiu, 2000b). In addition, they also urged the incoming head of the EPA, Lin Yun-yi,¹ known as the "Father of antinuclear activists," to conduct a new EIA for the plant (Chiu, 2000a). Although they were eager to cash in President-elect Chen's campaign pledge, public opinion, above 40%, according to a poll conducted by the Environmental Quality Foundation, favored the FNPP (Wei, 2000). In addition, most of business community and the KMT, which still controlled the majority of seats in the Legislative Yuan, were also in favor of continuing the FNPP, now 30% constructed. Under these circumstances, the difficulty of terminating the FNPP was considerable. This section discusses the case of the FNPP's termination and the failure to sustaining the decision, drawing on Robert D. Behn's (1978) six strategies for policy termination.

Strategy 1: Don't Float Trial Balloons

Instead of terminating the FNPP immediately after his inauguration with a complete and thorough rationale for it, President Chen directed the MOEA to set up a review committee to reconsider the FNPP's feasibility. The MOEA appointed a committee to review the FNPP in June 2000. It was comprised of twenty members, including (1) The minister and the vice minister of the MOEA and four other government departments' head from the CEPD, the EPA, the AEC, and the Taipei County Government; (2) Four political representatives from the DPP, the KMT, the New Party, and the People First Party (PFP); and (3) Ten specialists from academics and industries (Chiu, 2000d). Among the six academic experts, only one professor specialized in nuclear science, the other five specialized in other academic fields and were well known for their strong antinuclear stance. Among the six government representatives, all had expressed their opposition to the FNPP publicly, except the head of the AEC. The KMT and the PFP declined to send representatives to join the committee. The two pro-nuclear energy policymakers in the nuclear policy system, Taipower and the Energy Commission, were excluded from the membership of the review committee.

After prolonged policy debate² by members of the review committee and their delegates over a period of more than three months, the committee failed to reach a consensus on the FNPP's fate as expected. From the composition of the review committee, it was quiet predictable that the majority of the committee members (9–6) would favor the FNPP's termination. But in the absence of delegating decision powers to the committee, the opening policy debates on TV and the Internet by the committee may only be viewed as a trial balloon to test support and opposition among policy actors and the public for the FNPP's termination. As Behn points out, a termination trail balloon could not produce positive results but only mobilize the opposition against the termination decision. This is also true in this case. Some political observers even ridiculed President Chen's termination actions as only serving to unite the three rival parties, the KMT, the New Party, and the PFP, into an opposition alliance capable of blocking the termination of the FNPP (Huang, 2000c).

Strategy 2: Focus on the Policy's Harm and Enlarge the Supporters

The open policy debate conducted by the review committee may also serve to attract the public's attention to the danger of nuclear power in order to mobilize more supporters for the termination cause. Among the ten major subjects of Taiwan's nuclear policy debate, three of them are related to the nuclear safety and risk, the problem of nuclear waste, and the environmental impact of nuclear power plants (S. Lin, 2000). On the other hand, antinuclear activists also invited victims of nuclear accidents from the international community to Taipei to demonstrate the nuclear power's harm to the people and the environment. Nevertheless, these strategies did not help much to enlarge the termination constituency. According to a poll conducted by the DPP after the announcement of the FNPP's termination decision, 47.5% of respondents disagree with the decision while only 33.2% of respondents agree with it ("Nearly Half Do Not Support," 2000).

Strategy 3: Termination as an Adoption of Alternative Policy

Behn indicates "the termination of Policy A may be best realized through the adoption of Policy B, when the selection of B necessitates the elimination of A." According to the DPP's poll after the termination decision, indeed, 58.4% of respondents would agree to the termination decision if the power shortage could be solved with alternative energy resources ("Nearly Half Do Not Support," 2000). In this case, the Chen administration has tried to promote renewable energy and to facilitate the liberalization of the power supply sector as alternatives to nuclear power. From September 25 to 26, 2000, in a two-day international conference on renewable energy development in Taiwan, Chen announced that he would set an example to promote alternative energy by having the presidential office run on solar power (Chiu, 2000e). On September 30, 2000, the minister of MOEA, Lin Hsin-yi, recommended that the Executive Yuan abandon the FNPP with three policy alternatives to replace nuclear power supply. They include the liberalization of the power supply sector and permitting more private LNG-fueled power plants (Lai, 2000).

The alternative power plan made by the economic minister soon criticized by a senior Taipower executive. He argued that the alternative power plan, begun under the KMT government in the late 1980s, could not be effectively implemented because of the insurmountable problems of acquiring lands and local residents' opposition to independent power plants, even LNG-fueled plants. In addition, the proposed Electricity Law to further liberalize the power industry has thus far failed to pass the legislature (Dobson, 2000a). Besides the uncertainty of delivering these policy alternatives in time, the Chen administration also lacked the political credibility to carry out the alternatives faithfully. As an opposition legislator pointed out, that Vice President Annette Lu and Secretary-general to the President Yu His-Kun within the Chen administration had all been staunch opponents of constructing private power plants when they served as county commissioners ("Power Back-up Plan," 2000). Facing the criticism of its policy alternatives, the Chen administration argued that Taiwan could avoid electricity shortages for the

next seven years even without adoption of the proposed alternatives (“Fourth Nuclear Power Plant,” 2000).

Strategy 4: Accept Short-Term Cost Increases and Buy Off the Beneficiaries

The short-term economic cost of terminating the FNPP has never been a concern of the Chen administration and it was even considered a benefit compared with the cost of completing the FNPP. As premier Chang Chun-hsiung points out, the costs of terminating the FNPP would come in at between NT\$75 billion and NT\$90 billion mostly for compensation of contract violation. To finish the FNPP, however, would cost at least another NT\$120 billion (“Fourth Nuclear Power Plant,” 2000). Proponents of nuclear power rebut this argument asserting that the cost of terminating the FNPP would be difficult to calculate and its economic impact on Taiwan would be incalculable. They indicate that the termination decision not only ignored the negative economic impact on the nation’s production but has also damaged long-term overseas investments due to its negative impact on Taiwan’s international business credibility. In addition, they argue that the decision also failed to calculate its immediate adverse impact on the Taiwan Stock Exchange (“Stock Exchange Plunges,” 2000). Besides proving unable to prevent the immediate economic cost to stock investors, it was also impossible for the Chen administration to buy off the beneficiaries. The power generated by the FNPP is supposed to benefit the whole public and the business community. To win the support of the public, the DPP government reiterated that power rates would not be raised after project cancellation (Dobson, 2000b). Nonetheless, it did not succeed in calming the public’s and the business community’s fear of power shortage or generate greater support for the administration’s termination decision.

Strategy 5: Do Not Encroach upon Legislative Prerogatives While Avoiding Its Votes

Transition premier Tang Fei resigned on October 3, 2000, after the minister of MOEA’s recommendation to terminate the FNPP, though publicly he claimed it was for health reasons (Huang & Lin, 2000a). After Tang’s resignation, the remaining questions in terminating the FNPP for President Chen, then, were how and when. The question of how entailed finding a way to abandon the FNPP without obtaining the Legislative Yuan’s approval. New premier Chang Chun-hsiung argued that the decision to terminate the FNPP’s implementation budget was an administrative prerogative (Huang, 2000b). Opposition legislators, however, argued that could not be made by the Executive Yuan unilaterally without being approved by the legislature (Low, 2000b). In fact, the legal basis for terminating the FNPP by executive power alone was even questioned by a cabinet member within the Chen administration. As Lin chuan, head of the Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, points out the Budget Law provides that the administration can only cancel the FNPP’s budget in the case of a national emergency. He also warned that canceling the budget administratively could provoke a conflict with opposition legislators (Low, 2000a).

Disregarding his own cabinet members’ and opposition legislators’ warnings, Premier Chang announced the Chen administration’s decision to terminate the

FNPP without consulting or seeking the legislature's approval on October 27, 2000. The decision was based on six rationales: (1) Taiwan still has seven years to prepare for power shortage. Thus, canceling the FNPP will not result in a shortage of electricity; (2) Alternatives to the nuclear plant are under development; (3) The problems of nuclear disposal are too difficult to overcome; (4) Any nuclear accident would be a huge disaster for Taiwan because of the island's small size; (5) The cost of abandonment is lower than the cost of completing the project; and (6) Canceling the plant would be a significant step toward a nuclear-free country and advance sustainable development (Huang, 2000b). Without the legislature's approval, the abrupt decision was soon counteracted by a united coalition of opposition parties demanding resumption of the FNPP's construction. The Chen administration was forced to solve the controversial termination decision by appealing to the authority of Taiwan's Council of Grand Justices to interpret the decision's constitutionality (Low, 2000c).

On January 15, 2000, the Council of Grand Justices, by a 12 to 3 vote, declared that the Executive Yuan's termination decision was "procedurally flawed" through Interpretation No. 520 (I. Lin, 2001). Interpretation No. 520 states that the Executive Yuan's decision to scrap the project was a major policy decision that required the Legislative Yuan's approval. It goes on to stipulate that the Executive Yuan should either continue to implement the project or negotiate with the opposition parties to seek a resolution. The Interpretation even goes further to suggest that if the negotiation path is chosen and fails, three options could be considered: the enactment of a new energy law, a vote of no confidence against the Cabinet, or the premier's resignation.

The Council of Grand Justices appeared to provide an institutional venue to resolve the controversy on the decision to terminate the FNPP. Interpretation No. 520, however, failed to provide a clear solution. Without a definitive judgment interpreting the decision as illegal or unconstitutional, the Executive Yuan was only willing to report its decision to the Legislative Yuan but refused to restart the FNPP's construction. Thus, despite the Legislative Yuan passing (135–70) a resolution demanding immediate resumption of the FNPP's construction on January 31, 2001 (M. Lin, 2001), the Executive Yuan was not willing to accept the legislature's resolution until President Chen was ready to reach a compromise.

Strategy 6: The Need for Political Leadership and Never Compromise

As Bardach (1978) notes, termination is a political process. Frantz (2002) also argues that sufficient political resources are required for policy terminators. Furthermore, Behn indicates that political leadership is needed for the termination coalition to win the battle of the political struggle for policy termination. Behn also suggests that an outsider is more suitable to pull the trigger without making any compromise in an all-or-nothing termination game. Whether or not it was for the purpose of terminating the FNPP is unknown, but President Chen did recruit a KMT member, Tang Fei, the former minister of Defense under the KMT government, to be the premier of the Executive Yuan to make the termination decision on behalf of President Chen. Tang, however, announced that he favored continuing construction and indicated that a new committee might be formed to pursue the

evaluation before reaching a final decision (Huang, 2000a). President Chen, in response, indicated he would respect the original evaluation committee's decision. He stressed that terminating the FNPP was not only an energy issue but also a matter of environmental protection and morality (C. Lin, 2000). Subsequently, transitional premier Tang resigned over the issue, as mentioned.

After Tang's resignation, President Chen appointed an insider, a senior DPP member, as the new premier to make sure the Executive Yuan would follow his direction to terminate the FNPP. On the other hand, President Chen also began to ease mounting political tensions with opposition parties by conducting a series of reconciliation meetings with each one of opposition parties' heads. Nevertheless, lacking patience and experience, the Chen administration pulled the trigger to end the FNPP on October 27, 2000, 30 minutes after President Chen's televised meeting with the KMT Chairman, Lien Chan. Without the legislature's approval and with politically confrontational timing in terminating FNPP's construction, a united coalition of opposition parties soon adopted a political strategy to unseat President Chen through a presidential recall (Huang, 2000c). Confronting this political storm, President Chen invoked Article 44 of the Constitution on dispute resolution and called a meeting of the heads of the four branches of the government including the Executive Yuan, the Legislative Yuan, the Judicial Yuan, and the Control Yuan (Huang & Lin, 2000b). However, under the pressure from his colleagues, the head of the Legislative Yuan declined to attend the meeting, arguing that Article 44 was designed to resolve disputes among the different branches of the government by designating the president as a neutral broker to make peace. But termination of the FNPP was President Chen's decision. Thus, his gambit to solve the controversy through this particular constitutional venue was not accepted by opposition legislators.

After President Chen apologized on TV for the inappropriate timing of the termination decision and in view of the fact that public opinion was not in favor of recalling President Chen, the opposition's recall campaign was not carried out. The Chen administration, however, was forced to take the case to the Council of Grand Justices to interpret the termination decision's constitutionality as mentioned above. While the DPP and the opposition parties continued to fight over the FNPP through their respective institutional venues, the Executive Yuan and the Legislative Yuan, after the Council of Grand Justices' interpretation, President Chen, the real policy terminator, asked Legislative Yuan speaker Wang Jing-pyng to act as a mediator to reach compromise to resume the plant's construction on certain conditions.

On the night of February 13, 2001, Premier Chang signed an agreement with Legislative Yuan speaker Wang to end the political gridlock and to resume the FNPP's construction immediately with a condition to achieve the ultimate goal of a nuclear-free Taiwan in the future. According to the agreement, the reasons for compromise included political stability, economic development, the well-being of the people, and demonstrating respect for the constitutional and legal system (Huang, 2001a). In addition, President Chen's compromise decision to resume the FNPP, according to a political analyst, may have been influenced by former President Lee Teng-hui, who was expelled by the KMT and turned to support the DPP and Chen's presidency after the 2000 election. The decision may also have been

influenced by consideration of Taiwan's international business credibility and pressure from the United States government and the international nuclear industry, though both the Chen administration and the United States government denied this speculation ("US Is Watching," 2000). Whatever the reasons that forced President Chen to reach a political compromise over the termination decision, the failure to sustain the decision for more than four months was attributed to Chen's leadership problems by former DPP chairman Lin ("DPP Rebuffs Opposition," 2001).

Conclusion

While the termination literature reveals the administration's termination rationales and strategies in this case, and its termination actions fit the "big bang" description as in most cases of termination studies, it offers little guidance on the process of agenda-setting for terminating the FNPP. In this case, the FNPP's termination could also be viewed as a "long whimper" agenda-setting process unfolding over a decade since the issue emerged in the mid-1980s. The termination literature, in fact, also develops no framework to show how termination rationales and strategies interact to lead to termination actions. Thus, as Best, Teske, and Mintrom (1997, p. 2069) argue, there is a need to integrate termination perspectives with the policy change literature to incorporate policy extinction and evolution into a broader framework that provides a better explanation of the dynamics of policy termination. Accordingly, this article integrates termination perspectives with the P-E model of policy change into a broader framework of policy termination.

The integrated P-E model of policy termination perceives the process of policy termination as a result of interactions among image, venue, and strategy. The interaction process of image, venue, and strategy for policy termination could be a "bang," a "long whimper," or both. Within the integrated P-E model of policy termination, policy stability is sustained by favorable policy image and institutional venue maintenance. Policy change may occur as a result of policy image being challenged and new venues being created by strategic intervention and formation of new winning coalitions. Changing policy image and venue, however, do not guarantee that policy termination will occur within any particular policy area. The integrated P-E model of policy termination indicates that a policy could be abolished when particular strategic actions are taken that couple with the challenged policy image and create new venues by means of strategic intervention and coalition formation.

The integrated P-E model of policy termination is quite useful for studying the evolution and extinction of policy termination in the case of the FNPP in Taiwan. The interaction among the nuclear policy image, institutional venues, and political or policy strategies account rather well for the weakening of the nuclear power policy monopoly and the extinction of the FNPP, at least for a short period of time. As seen above, these interactions arose from Taiwan's transition from an authoritarian political system to a pluralist one. Without allying with democratic movements and the DPP to open up Taiwan's political institutions, antinuclear activists could not get the FNPP's termination issue to the governmental agenda for policymaking. The abrupt decision to terminate the FNPP is also the result of a strong

incentive for the Chen administration to dissociate itself from its immediate predecessors' policy under an authoritarian political system—some antinuclear activists argue that antinuclear power was a way of challenging totalitarianism. Nevertheless, when examined against Behn's termination strategies, most of the Chen administration's strategies not only are not in accordance with Behn's suggestions, but also demonstrate a lack of consistent political leadership and sufficient political support as the majority seats of the Legislative Yuan were controlled by the opposition parties and the majority of the public did not favor the administration's decision.

After the termination decision was overruled, the hope that the EPA could start a new EIA to halt the FNPP also vanished with the resignation of the EPA's head, Lin, over the alleged mismanagement of a recent oil spill over the ocean around the Kenting National Park in southern Taiwan (Chiu, 2001a). On March 14, 2001, the newly appointed head of the EPA, Hau Lung-bin, the New Party convener, said that a second EIA for the FNPP was unnecessary (Chiu, 2001b). In response to antinuclear activists' criticism of the FNPP's resumption, the DPP government promised to consider a referendum over the project at the year-end legislative election in 2001. The promise was declined by the Chen administration on August 10, 2001, due to considerations of societal stability and economic recession (Huang, 2001b). Nevertheless, President Chen, under the antinuclear activists' pressure in the upcoming presidential campaign, promised on June 27, 2003, to hold a national referendum on the FNPP on or before the March 2004 presidential election (Chiu, 2003). But, this initiation depends on the legislatures passing a new referendum law. Governmental agenda-setting to terminate the FNPP may be reopened if the new referendum law is passed or should a severe accident involving nuclear power occur in Taiwan before completion of the FNPP's construction. But in the absence of providing better alternative energy resources, the vision of a nuclear-free Taiwan is not likely to be realized anytime soon. Nonetheless, the twin spectra of nuclear safety and nuclear waste are sure to create an unstable nuclear policy system in Taiwan as the interaction of policy image, institution venue, and political or policy strategies continues to evolve over time.

Notes

- 1 He was once called the "Father of antinuclear activists" because he was the first academic questioning the KMT government's nuclear energy policy back to the 1970s. But after assuming the EPA head, his stance on the nuclear issue was vague. He denied that he would resign from his post, even if the DPP government continued the FNPP's construction. He argued that his "opposition to nuclear energy was a way of opposing totalitarianism. Since totalitarianism rule has disappeared," he could no longer be counted on as an antinuclear activist (Chiu, 2000c).
- 2 They include ten major subjects: 1) The analysis of both domestic and international energy situations; 2) The nuclear safety and risk as well as emergency plans; 3) Nuclear waste; 4) Decommission of nuclear plants; 5) Environmental impact; 6) Alternatives; 7) Internal costs of generating electricity; 8) Total costs of the society; 9) Industries, energy, and environmental policies; and 10) Costs and benefits of constructing or halting the Fourth Nuclear Power Plant (S. Lin, 2000).

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