A Strongly Shared, Unique Cultural-National Identity Engenders and Strengthens Voice:

Tracing the Effects of Taiwanization

"When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful" (Malala Yousafzai)

Introduction

What drives social actors to voice, i.e., protest, rally, demonstrate, or fight? This question has always fascinated scholars. One popular explanation across the social sciences is identity. Individuals have been rallying under the banner of socially constructed identities for various social and political causes in many settings. Scholars studying social and political movements conclude that collective actions stem from individuals' shared identification with some broader group based on specific trait, such as gender, religion, race, social class, or sexual orientation (Berkowitz 1972; Gurr 1970; Klandermans and De Weerd 2000; Lind and Tyler 1988). While some researchers consider social identity as a significant tool to mobilize individuals for social and political participations (Melucci 1990; Taylor et al. 1992; Tilly 2008), others caution the dangers of such fixed group identity as creating the basis for oppression and political power (Gamson 1995), threatening democracy (Hetherington 2009; Kim et al. 2013), and affectively polarizing society based on an "us" and a "them" mentality (Barber and McCarty 2013; Cristancho and Firat 2017; Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012: Iyengar and Westwood 2015; Lelkes and Westwood 2017; Tajfel and Turner 1979).

In their investigation on interpersonal trust in electoral democracies that shows common threats or goals reduce conflict and promote intergroup cooperation, Carlin and Love (2016) suggest an interesting proposition. They claim that it could be possible for group competition at a

higher, superordinate level to reduce the salience of subordinate identities.[1] In their view, social actors could identify with multiple groups because social identities are fluid.[2] In other words, a superordinate identity could unite individuals to confront a common threat or to achieve a common goal when individuals relegate their respective group identities to a backseat role by adopting the superordinate identity. In a recent study, Levendusky (2017) uses the common in-group identity model from social psychology and finds that participants' sense of American national identity increases during July 4th holiday and the 2008 summer Olympics. As a result, individuals perceive members of the opposing party as Americans rather than as rival partisans (Levendusky 2017).

Levendusky's finding, and Carlin and Love's proposition prompt a fundamental question. What could further reduce polarization, promote intergroup cooperation, and consequently induce individuals to voice when there is no occasion for celebration like sports or national day or when the common threat is gone? In light of this question, this working paper builds upon the common in-group identity model, the ingroup projection model, the notion of national identity, and the concept of loyalty, and theorizes that a strongly shared, unique cultural-national identity engenders and strengthens voice. This paper hopes to demonstrate that one's loyalty toward a superordinate identity would trigger a sense of pride toward that superordinate identity and strong attachment to a place, which in turn motivates one to participate in social or political activities.

To test the theory's observable implications, I use Taiwan as a case study. The data for this study comes from face to face in-depth qualitative interviews with 50 participants that took place over a period of two and a half months. The preliminary findings from this research hopes to contribute to the following theoretical and practical implications. First, this study could inform us whether loyalty to a shared, unique cultural-national identity (i.e., a superordinate identity) could

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[1] Carlin, Ryan E. and Gregory J. Love. 2018. "Political Competition, Partisanship and Interpersonal Trust in Electoral Democracies." *British Journal of Political Science* 48(1): 115-139.
[2] Ibid.

reduce polarization and strengthen intergroup cooperation among all social groups, thereby inducing individuals to participate in social or political activities for the common good. Additionally, this study hopes to provide an alternative explanation as to why rational actors would persistently participate in social or political actions when they face repeated failures, oppressions, punishments, or uncertainties as to the outcome of their actions.

In the next section, I provide a brief review of the theoretical background for this working paper's argument. Thereafter, I discuss the theory that a strongly shared, unique cultural-national identity engenders and strengthens voice. Following a discussion on the theory, I introduce the method and data to test the hypothesis. Next, I discuss the preliminary findings from the interviews. The paper concludes by discussing the implications from this study for a Taiwan that is together.

Theoretical Background

1. Common In-group Identity Model (CIIM)

According to the common in-group identity model (CIIM), a superordinate identity symbolizes a form of higher-order social category that includes all social groups in a society (Gaertner and Dovidio 2000; 2011; 2014; Gaertner et al. 1994). CIIM explains that a superordinate identity increases individuals' acceptance toward members of out-groups in achieving "more harmonious intergroup relations"[3]. This happens through a process of "recategorization", a method of priming positive feelings, beliefs, and behaviors.[4] The effects of recategorization will cause group members to perceive themselves as belonging to a single, superordinate group rather than as members belonging to different separate sub-groups. Consequently, the in-group treatments and

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[3] Gaertner, Samuel L., John F. Dovidio, Phyllis A. Anastasio, Betty A. Bachman, and Mary C. Rust. 2011. "The Common Ingroup Identity Model: Recategorization and the Reduction of Intergroup Bias." *European Review of Social Psychology* 4(1): 1-26, p. 5.
[4] Ibid.

favors will be extended to former members from the out-groups.[5] This subsequently reduces intergroup biases and conflicts when in-group members' positive orientations (cognition, affection, and behavior) have shifted from the self toward members of the out-groups.[6] According to Gaertner and Dovidio (2014), when social group boundaries become expanded to accommodate a single, new superordinate identity, individuals experience a shift in their perceptions and are now motivated to think, feel, and act on the basis of this superordinate identity, favoring the superordinate group as a whole. Accordingly, greater cooperation could be achieved when other sub-groups are now included in the superordinate group, and group members would no longer have the motivation to unjustly benefit their in-group, since by doing so would be detrimental to the superordinate group as a whole.[7] If CIIM is right, we would expect to see individuals rallying around a superordinate identity to participate in social or political causes for the common good.

2.   The Ingroup Projection Model

The ingroup projection model equally claims that a superordinate identity fosters the inclusion of all sub-level in-groups and out-groups, where "positive sentiments, cooperation, empathy, and altruism"[8] will be extended to members of any social groups. According to Wenzel and colleagues, when individuals subscribe to a superordinate identity, they will be able to see themselves as relatively *interchangeable* with other individuals from other groups.[9] As a direct consequence of this "depersonalization" process, individuals will consider themselves as having fluid and interchangeable identities with others they previously perceived as belonging to the out-

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[5] Gaertner, Samuel L., John F. Dovidio, Phyllis A. Anastasio, Betty A. Bachman, and Mary C. Rust. 2011. "The Common Ingroup Identity Model: Recategorization and the Reduction of Intergroup Bias." *European Review of Social Psychology* 4(1): 1-26, pp. 5-10.
[6] Ibid., 9-10.
[7] Ibid., 1-26.
[8] Wenzel, Michael, Amélie Mummendey, and Sven Waldzus. 2007. "Superordinate identities and intergroup conflict: The ingroup projection model." *European Review of Social Psychology* 18(1): 331-372, p. 363.
[9] Ibid., pp. 363-364.

groups. [10] Once individuals from the sub-level groups "recategorized" and "depersonalized" themselves as belonging to this superordinate group that includes in-group and out-groups, subscribing to this shared, single superordinate identity would foster greater group cohesiveness and promote intergroup cooperation.[11] The superordinate identity furnishes a reference frame for evaluating intergroup differences that is subjected to "the social perception from diverging vantage points of in-group and out-group perceivers"[12]. This essentially implies that by accepting that identities are fluid and interchangeable, individuals understand that they do not merely exist within the boundaries of a fixed separate group but rather co-exist in a superordinate group, which then encourages all sub-groups to value and respect each other with and in their differences. [13] Intergroup harmony and cooperation would increase as members of subgroups do not have to deny or give up their sub-group identities.[14] If this model is right, we would also see individuals rallying around a superordinate identity to act for society's welfare because they understand that identities are interchangeable and they can co-exist with out-group members within a superordinate group.

3. National Identity: A Remedy for the "us/them distinction"

In the American context, scholars agree that no other identity is more important that one's partisan identity (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2004; Hetherington 2001). This creates a dichotomous society characterized by in-group (us) and out-groups (them). Consequently, individuals develop a tendency to view their in-group more favorably while seeing the out-groups negatively (Tajfel 1970; 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1979). In light of this Manichean view of "us versus them", researchers attempt to find a remedy that can mitigate polarization among citizens. Several studies demonstrate that the American national identity could lessen partisanship and

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[10] Wenzel, Michael, Amélie Mummendey, and Sven Waldzus. 2007. "Superordinate identities and intergroup conflict: The ingroup projection model." *European Review of Social Psychology* 18(1): 331-372, pp. 363-364.
[11] Ibid., 334-336.
[12] Ibid., 334.
[13] Ibid., 367.
[14] Ibid., 363-366.

reduce affective polarization because a sense of national identity transcends ethnic, racial, or partisan identity (Citrin, Wong, and Duff 2001; Huddy and Khatib 2007; Levendusky 2017; Schildkraut 2011; Theiss-Morse 2009). For instance, Huddy and Khatib (2007) explain that the American national identity reflects individuals' belief of "being or feeling as" an American.

Additionally, Keane (1994) and Smith (1991; 2009) conceptualize national identity as a form of affiliation with a society or community. For Keane (1994), national identity means having an awareness of affiliation with the nation that invariably creates an identity; giving people a sense of who they are in relation to others or imparts upon them a sense of purpose that makes them feel at home and belonging to a place. In Smith's view, "a sense of national identity provides a powerful means of defining and locating individual selves in the world, through a shared, unique culture that we are enabled to know who we are in the contemporary world" (1991, 17). Smith explains that members in a society are constantly reminded of their common heritage and cultural kinship by virtue of their sense of national identity, thereby allowing them to feel strengthened and exalted by their sense of a common identity and belonging to a place.[15]

4. Concept of Loyalty

Social actors are constantly in a "tug of war" choosing between a course of action that maximizes their utility at the expense of public interest and one that does the opposite. This is the foundation of Olson's (1989) collective action problem, which paints a pessimistic picture that individuals will always choose to maximize his own utility instead of pursuing an action for the benefit of the common good. Conversely, some researchers propose that loyalty could mitigate this dilemma (Barry 1974; Hirschman 1970; Laver 1976; Zdaniuk and Levine 2001). Using his "exit, voice, and loyalty model", Hirschman theorizes that when people are facing a declining firm,

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[15] Smith, Anthony D. 1991. *National Identity* (Penguin Books), 16-17.

they have the option to either exit (leave) or voice (fight).[16] If they choose to fight despite having the option to leave, it is due to loyalty.[17] In Hirschman's view, loyalty symbolizes a strong feeling of "special attachment to a firm, and this feeling decreases the likelihood of exit while increasing the possibility of voice, even when the exit option is available"[18]. However, Hirschman cautions that once the "loyalists" recognized that their voice is not capable of effecting any changes, they would give up and leave. For Hirschman, loyalty is a calculated behavior, where one acts according to the rationality principle of rational choice theory and is assumed to make a feasible choice resulting in the highest possible value of his or her utility function (Hirschman 1970; 1978).

Laver (1976) criticizes Hirschman's theory for largely remaining an individualistic concept, driven by personal motivation built from a selfish, cost-benefit calculated idea, which fails to explain instances where individuals willingly sacrifice themselves for the collective good.[19] He introduces his "social concept of loyalty" as an alternative to Hirschman's theory.[20] Laver's "social concept of loyalty" is a representation of the relationship between an individual and the group, organization, or society.[21] He explains that although establishments may threaten to retaliate against the "loyalists" for expressing their grievances, this will not affect their decision to continue fighting for society's welfare, because their sense of loyalty is directed toward the group or society, and this induces them to act for the common good.[22]

Additionally, drawing upon Laver's notion that loyalty stems from relationships established between individuals by virtue of individuals belonging to collectivities, such as religion,

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[16] Hirschman, Albert O. 1970. *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press).
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid., 75-77.
[19] Laver, Michael. 1976. "Cultural aspects of loyalty: on Hirschman and loyalism in Ulster." *Political Studies* 24(4): 469-477.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.

ethnicity, race, or family, the inference here is that loyalty is about having a strong bond that can be found in relationships established between an individual and a group, society, or family. Alternatively in Barry's view, loyalty is a commitment from individuals with the intention to further an organization, a group, or a society's welfare by "working for it, fighting for it, and seeking to change it" when it is declining.[23] In social psychology, Zdaniuk and Levine (2001) describe loyalty as a pro-group behavior that seeks to enhance the group's welfare even when it entails personal loss or sacrifice. If loyalty is a form of relationship or commitment that induces a pro-group behavior causing people to act for society's welfare, arguably we could expect to see one's loyalty to a superordinate identity to influence one's desire to participate for social or political causes in the interest of the common good.

Theoretical Argument

A large body of empirical evidence demonstrates that the more people identify themselves as belonging to a specific group, the more divided a society is, thereby heightening an "us versus them" mentality of the social world. In American politics, polarization has caused Americans to identify themselves as Republicans or Democrats while viewing the opposing partisans negatively (Campbell et al. 1960; Green et al. 2004; Iyengar and Westwood 2015; Kahan 2013). Elsewhere, people also categorize and identify themselves as belonging to a distinct group. In Venezuela, the public is reduced to either pro- or anti-Bolivarian forces (García-Guadilla and Mallen 2017) while in Hungary, the" us versus them" rhetoric is between the people as the in-group and the elites as the out-group (Vegetti 2017). In Thailand, the division is between pro-Thaksin Red Shirt and traditional elites Yellow Shirt (Kongkirati 2016). The story does not deviate much from Taiwan either, where the people are generally split between the green camp (Democratic Progressive Party,

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[23] Barry, Brian. 1974. "Exit, Voice, and Loyalty." *British Journal of Political Science* IV(January): 98.

DPP) and the blue camp (Chinese Nationalist Party or Kuomintang, KMT). In light of the polarization dilemma plaguing society today, I propose that a strongly shared, unique superordinate identity could potentially reduce polarization between individuals and bring about intergroup cooperation, leading to social or political participation in the interest and welfare of the common good.

The common in-group identity model and ingroup projection model theorize that a superordinate identity symbolizes a form of higher-order social category that includes members of all social groups (Alexandre et al. 2016; Gaertner et al. 1994; 2011; Wenzel et al. 2007). Both theories claim that individuals are able to put aside their differences under a superordinate identity because this identity allows the inclusion of all social groups, where members belonging to this superordinate group, by virtue of sharing the superordinate identity, can develop positive sentiments, empathy, and altruism between themselves (Wenzel et al. 2007). Individuals experience a cognitive shift from perceiving themselves as belonging to separate, distinctive groups to perceiving themselves as belonging to a single, common superordinate group (Gaertner et al. 1994; 2011). This cognitive social "recategorization" based on group membership with a superordinate group instead of belonging to separate subgroups could potentially reduce intergroup bias and comparison, because "recategorization" allows in-group members to view out-group members as more similar to them on the basis of the shared superordinate identity.[24] Once out-group members are perceived as belonging to a superordinate group, in-group members would develop positive perceptions of the out-group members.

Furthermore, drawing on existing studies showing that the American national identity could lessen polarization (Citrin, Wong, and Duff 2001; Huddy and Khatib 2007; Levendusky

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[24] Gaertner, Samuel L., John F. Dovidio, Phyllis A. Anastasio, Betty A. Bachman, and Mary C. Rust. 2011. "The Common Ingroup Identity Model: Recategorization and the Reduction of Intergroup Bias." *European Review of Social Psychology* 4(1): 1-26.

2017; Schildkraut 2011; Theiss-Morse 2009), I propose that a shared, unique superordinate identity, that is characteristic of ordinary citizens in a particular society could potentially allow them to develop a strong sense of purpose, commonality, and belonging to a place. This sense of belonging or attachment to a particular place, which stems from having the superordinate identity, would further induce individuals to act for the common good. When people subscribe to a uniquely, shared superordinate identity (such as a cultural-national identity), there is naturally an overlapping of different subgroup identities based on different traits, such as race, ethnicity, social class, culture, religion, partisanship, and educational background. By sharing a common superordinate identity that is unique to the individuals in a particular society, individuals could foster a shared group concern because they are "recategorized"[25] to acknowledge that "*we* are all in this together".

Subsequently, individuals would accept that the *whole* of the superordinate identity is not defined by a single identity based on a shared, specific trait but is made up of many different social identities. By recognizing this fact, individuals would realize that they are not being forced to deny or give up their sub-group identities (Wenzel et al. 2007). This in turn, elicits their affective abilities to empathize and acknowledge the differences inherent in others. As the in-group and out-group division becomes less salient, individuals' cognitions shift from an "us-versus-them-thinking" to a form of "*we*-thinking". This reduces the tendency for social comparison as the in-group no longer considers the out-groups as rivals, since the out-groups are now with the in-group, belonging to a single superordinate group. Individuals would see that they are more alike than different because they share and are united under a single, common superordinate identity. In other words, the "us and them" transforms into "we", because "the us is them and them is us".

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[25] Gaertner, Samuel L., John F. Dovidio, Phyllis A. Anastasio, Betty A. Bachman, and Mary C. Rust. 2011. "The Common Ingroup Identity Model: Recategorization and the Reduction of Intergroup Bias." *European Review of Social Psychology* 4(1): 1-26.

Additionally, if loyalty symbolizes a relationship between an individual and a group or society (Laver 1976), and it triggers a form of "pro-group behavior" that drives rational actors to act for the group's welfare at the expense of personal loss (Zdaniuk and Levine 2001), arguably, loyalty toward a uniquely, shared superordinate identity could equally furnish a pro-superordinate identity behavior that further strengthens an individual's sense of belonging to a particular place, thereby inducing the individual to act for the welfare or common good of that place. When one develops a sense of loyalty toward a shared, unique superordinate identity that transcends other social attributes, one could be expected to act under the banner of the superordinate identity instead of acting collectively based on specific attributes characterized solely by race, ethnicity, religion, or partisanship.

When individuals demonstrate loyalty to a shared, unique superordinate identity, they would not only seek intergroup cooperation under conditions of a common threat or goal (Carlin and Love 2016) or allow their partisan identities to take a backseat role for celebratory purposes (Levendusky 2017) but would also develop a stronger sense of commonality and belonging to a particular place by virtue of that superordinate identity, subsequently giving them a sense of purpose. Moreover, when individuals subscribe to a shared, unique superordinate identity that cuts across all other social identities, this single identification could potentially create a centripetal force that pulls or brings ordinary citizens together, where they would put their differences aside to participate in social or political causes to bring about changes, even if their actions may result in harmful consequences, repeated failures, or personal sacrifices.

I theorize that a strongly shared, unique cultural-national identity engenders and strengthens voice. Accordingly, I hypothesize that the stronger an individual identifies with a superordinate identity, the more likely he or she develops a sense of belonging to a particular place, making the individual more likely to voice for the welfare or common good of that place. The

scope of the argument is not limited to specific time frame, regime, or geography. I propose that the argument could be generalized to multiracial or multicultural societies where ordinary citizens have a shared, unique superordinate identity that transcends other social attributes. The causal argument that loyalty to a shared, unique superordinate identity induces individuals to participate in social or political causes for the common good not only bridges the "us versus them" gap in society but is also particularly important where rational actors' determination to act for society's welfare could potentially be crucial in shaping social and political interests, relations, and structures in a multiracial or multicultural society.

However, the causal argument can be falsified by the following counterfactual arguments. First, if individuals' loyalty toward a superordinate identity is present in a particular society, but they demonstrate political apathy and there is absence of intergroup cooperation, this phenomenon would falsify the causal argument. Secondly, instances of conflict could furnish the condition for social actors to seek a common denominator or a shared attribute that could foster intergroup cooperation and drive social or political participation, instead of loyalty toward a superordinate identity. Finally, despite demonstrating a sense of loyalty toward the superordinate identity, individuals could choose to refrain from voicing or taking actions due to fear of an existential threat.

Research Design

1. <u>Case Selection: Taiwan</u>

Taiwan is an ideal case to investigate the hypothesis due to the following reasons. Taiwan has four distinct ethnic groups, the Hoklo (minnanren 閩南人), the Hakka (kejiaren 客家人), the mainlanders (waishengren 外省人), and the Taiwanese indigenous peoples (taiwan yuanzhu minzu 臺灣原住民族). Scholars contend that the Taiwanese society, particularly since Taiwan's

process of democratization took flight, has often been portrayed as bitterly polarized between the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) (Hu and Chu 1996; Huang 2008, 2011; Liao and Yu 2008; Wang 2010). This polarization is largely predicated on ethnic identification between the "mainlanders", who fled to Taiwan from Mainland China with Chiang Kai-shek in the late 1940s and their descendants, and the "islanders" or "benshengren" (本省人), the Hoklo and Hakka people who migrated to Taiwan before World War II and their descendants (Clark and Tan 2012). Therefore, the partisanships in Taiwan present a suitable background to investigate whether the people in Taiwan would relegate their respective ethnic identities and partisanship to a backseat role by embracing a commonly, shared cultural-national identity (i.e., the superordinate Taiwanese identity), and whether the adoption of the Taiwanese identity would subsequently activate their voice for social or political causes. An investigation into how the people of Taiwan actually perceive themselves would help us to ascertain whether a strong identification with the Taiwanese identity would actually induce them to rally behind this shared, unique cultural-national identity, which in turn triggers their voice for Taiwan's well-being.

The Taiwanese identity has been subjected to ongoing contention due to the island-nation's historical and political ties, and cultural roots with Mainland China (The People's Republic of China, PRC). The commonly held view is that identification with the Taiwanese identity demonstrates a preference for an independent Taiwan because "Taiwanese eventually lose their emotional attachment to the Chinese identity and become less interested in a reunification with Mainland China"[26]. The annual opinion poll conducted by the Election Study Center of the National Chengchi University (NCCU) on Taiwan's identity trends appears to support this view. The NCCU poll results suggest that the Taiwanese identity may be rising, with the percentage of

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[26] Rigger, S. (2006). Taiwan's Rising Rationalism: Generations, Politics, and" Taiwanese Nationalism". *Policy Studies*, (26), I. Taken from http://hdl.handle.net/10125/3494

respondents identifying themselves as Taiwanese increasing from 17.6 percent in 1992 to 55.8 percent in June 2018.[27] However, a study on Taiwanese identity by Academia Sinica research fellow Dr. Wu Nai-teh found that, despite the percentage of people identifying themselves as Taiwanese has increased, they are still confused over their identity and are easily influenced by political, social, and economic circumstances.[28] This study also hopes to shed some light into the confusion and contention surrounding the Taiwanese identity.

An individual could be motivated to voice when they foster a strong sense of belonging or attachment to a place (Taiwan) due to their association with the place (Taiwan); the place they call "home". Arguably, individuals would naturally develop this sense of belonging or attachment to Taiwan and view Taiwan as their "homeland" when they were born and/or have lived in Taiwan most of their lives, making them feel they are a part of Taiwan. This sense of belonging could "recategorize" the people's mindsets into a "*we*-thinking" that "*we* are all in this together", thereby giving rise to a sense of purpose, commonality, and belonging to Taiwan. This could potentially explain why the people of Taiwan have been actively participating in social or political causes to voice for Taiwan's independence and recognition in the international space as seen in instances, such as the petition to use Taiwan's name at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, the case of a group of Taiwanese students in Norway initiating a fundraising campaign asking the Norwegian government to correct the nationality of the people of Taiwan studying or living in Norway from China to Taiwan, the "Keep Taiwan Free" movement which aims to raise awareness about Taiwan's existing situation and to help Taiwanese "achieve full recognition and equal treatment in the international community"[29], and the "Taiwan United Nations Alliance's (TAIUNA) peaceful

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[27] Source: Election Study Center, N.C.C.U., important political attitude trend distribution. Available at https://esc.nccu.edu.tw/course/news.php?Sn=166#
[28] Available at http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2006/03/12/2003296948
[29] Source http://taiwanmatters.com/#/about?_k=o1s5rr

protest at the United Nations (UN) headquarter in New York to voice for Taiwan's UN membership for the 15th consecutive year"[30].

By tracing the effects of "Taiwanization", Taiwan could be said to be born out of a union of all the different colonial rules and systems, and diverse racial and cultural heritages that have impacted, shaped, and influenced the nation in one way or another.[31] How people perceive themselves, therefore, rely on many things, for instance history, social and cultural developments, internal and external events, including education. The process of "Taiwanization" was not just initiated when former President Lee Teng-hui started to reform Taiwan's education by introducing "Knowing Taiwan" in the history textbook, and neither did it just started when Taiwan began to democratize in the 1990s when former President Chiang Ching-kuo recruited and allowed more "benshengren" into the political arena. The inception of "Taiwanization" and the gradual formation of Taiwan and its people mirror the different stages of the process of human development. Like the process of human development, "Taiwanization" started in its initial stage of "infancy" during the time of the Austronesian peoples before the 17th century and later on when it was targeted by Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch colonizers. Following that, Taiwan entered into its "childhood" stage where it experienced a epoch of exploration, learning, and growing from being under Dutch colonial rule (1642-1661) to Zheng Chenggong (Koxinga 國姓爺) during the late years of Ming to being ruled by Qing dynasty from 1684 to 1895. From there, Taiwan entered into its "adolescent" years under Japan in 1895 and eventually coming under the Kuomindang (國民黨) government representing the Republic of China (1945-2000), where it began to develop a sense of self, mainly concerned with understanding and discovering its own identity, adapting to different changes,

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[30] Source http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2018/09/05/2003699825
[31] Binghui Lia, Dewei Wang, and JSTOR Provider. *Taiwan under Japanese Colonial Rule, 1895- 1945 History, Culture, Memory*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006) p.4.

experimenting with different roles, trying to find its place, and defining what Taiwan is. Ultimately, Taiwan reached its "adulthood", where Taiwan and its people continue to face more trials and challenges, and the decisions that an "adult" Taiwan makes will further define and shape Taiwan.

2. Data and Methodology

This is a qualitative research study. The study seeks to gain detailed insights into the opinions, feelings, and thoughts of the target population, where small group discussions and interviews have played a key role in behavioral science (Basch 1987; Mico and Ross 1975; Morgan 1988). This present study, like many qualitative studies, does not seek or attempt to make generalizations of the population at hand. Instead, qualitative researchers' primary goal is to make the facts understandable and often place less emphasis of deriving inferences or predictions from cross-case patterns (Ragin et al. 2004: 10). By using a relatively small number of studies, we are able to glean detailed information about how and why things happen (Berg and Lune 2012; Lofland et al. 2006; Ragin et al. 2004). This allows me to obtain qualitative data on participants' thoughts, feelings, and perceptions that will bring out increased knowledge about their opinions on whether their self-identification with a strongly shared, unique cultural-national identity (the Taiwanese identity) will induce them to act collectively for the common good of their "homeland" Taiwan.

In-depth qualitative interviews provide rich and detailed information instead of "yes or no" or "agree or disagree" responses.[32] In addition, in-depth qualitative interviews allow participants to respond in any way he or she chooses and to provide elaborated and detailed answers.[33] In addition, the responses given might raise new issues that could potentially be useful to the study.[34] Focus group interviews are useful to explore sensitive issues (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott and Davidson 2002; Rice and Ezzy 1999). Focus group interview is suitable for this study because the

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[32] Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. 2011. *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Sage, p. 29.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.

issues of Taiwan's identity, Taiwan as a sovereign and independent nation, and Taiwan's reunification with Mainland China are extremely sensitive and delicate topics. In focus group interviews, participants are recruited based upon certain common traits (like gender, ethnicity, or social background), shared social or cultural experiences, or shared concern with the research study (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott and Davidson 2002). Fossey and colleagues assert that this potentially allows participants to feel more comfortable discussing or talking with others who have similar experiences.[35] Participants who responded and gave consent to participate in this study have a shared concern with the research study, namely the Taiwanese identity and Taiwan's status as an independent and sovereign nation. By analyzing the interview data, I would be able to have a deeper understanding of the participants' beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions about their identity, including how and why they would form such beliefs and perceptions. This is crucial, since the construction of people's perceptions about their identities is an abstract concept that cannot be easily quantified.

The interview

A total of 50 participants responded and were recruited for the interview between August 1, 2018 and October 14, 2018. Before the interview began, participants were given a brief description of the purpose of the study and were asked to fill in a demographic questionnaire form (see Figure 1: Interviewees' Demographic Makeup in the Appendix Section) and to sign an informed consent form agreeing to the interview being audiotaped. During each interview session, participants were given a set of structured interview questions to answer (see Figure 2: Interview Questionnaire in the Appendix Section). Participants were reminded that they are not obligated to answer all of the questions and that they could leave at any time during the interview. All

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[35] Fossey, E., Harvey, C., McDermott, F., & Davidson, L. (2002). "Understanding and evaluating qualitative research." *Australian and New Zealand journal of psychiatry* 36(6): 717-732, p. 727.

interviews were fully transcribed from tape to electronic documents after each interview session.

Participants responded to the study's recruitment flyer posted on the bulletin boards of the National

Taiwan University (NTU) campus and recruitment flyer forwarded to administrative staff of NTU,

and professional and academic contacts of the researcher by directly contacting the researcher

through email. No personal information (for example, home address, identification number, email,

telephone number) from the participants were collected during the study. To protect the anonymity

of the participants, a study number is used when making reference to the participants' opinions

(for example, P1 refers to "Participant 1" since he or she was the first participant for the interview).

3. Operationalization of Variables

In general, loyalty can be understood as a concept that is directly observable due to an

individual's consistent behavior, such as brand loyalty (Shirazi et al. 2013; Sweeney and Soutar

2001) or party loyalty (Andeweg and Thomassen 2011; André et al. 2015; Muirhead 2013).

Loyalty is also a concept that stems from an individual's mental abstraction that is not easily

observable, especially when the act does not advance any personal gain to the individual (Laver

1976). I operationalize the independent variable, "loyalty toward a cultural-national identity", as

individual's strong perception of his or her identity. In political science, the debate on identity

revolves around gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, and culture (Connolly 1991; Kymlicka

1995; Miller 1995; Taylor 1989; Young 1990). In this study, I conceptualize "identity" as;

1. People's concepts of who they are, what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others (Hogg and Abrams 1988),

2. The ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities (Jenkins 1996),

3. Prescriptive representations of political actors themselves and of their relationships to each other (Kowert and Legro 1996), and

4. Relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self (Wendt 1992).

I rely on the interviews with the 50 participants in this study to assess and analyze the construction of people's perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs about their identity.

Political participation ranges from voting, protest, lobbying, rally, demonstration, boycott, contacting politicians, or petition done individually or jointly as an effort to bring about social or political changes (Jenkins and Form 2005; Opp 2009; Rosentone and Hansen 1993; Schlozman 2002; Snow and Oliver 1995; Tarrow 1998; Teorell, Torcal, and Montero 2007;). The question on social or political participation in this study's interview questionnaire includes both conventional and unconventional forms of participation. I do not distinguish between them but apply a broad definition of social and/or political engagement to include both conventional and unconventional forms of social and political participation. To measure the dependent variable "voice", I operationalize it as *individual's participation in social and/or political activities*. During the interview, participants were asked;

1. If they have participated in any social/and or political movements,

2. How many times they have participated in such activities,

3. The reason for their participation,

4. If their participation yielded any results, and

5. Whether they will continue or consider participating in such activities in the future.

4. <u>Research Limitations</u>

While structured interviews help to reduce biases because all participants were asked the same questions, there may be "response bias where respondents give incorrect responses because of the way the questions are worded" (Fink 1995). Furthermore, since focus group interviews are generally scheduled for a fixed period of time and are therefore time constrained,[36] the interviewer

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[36] Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. 2011. *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Sage, p. 30.

may not be able to clarify or explain the questions to each interviewee during the interview. As a result, the interviewees may misinterpret the questions. There is also the possibility of a "Hawthorne effect", i.e., threat to internal validity, where participants could change their behavior or might not be honest in their responses (McDermott 2002), or simply offer socially desirable answers (Paulhus 2002), because the mere presence of other participants in the focus group indicates that their responses will be heard by all. Their responses might also depend on their mood (Shively 2016). Consequently, these instances might interfere with the accuracy and reliability of the results.

Additionally, due to the recruitment method for this study, where participants could be nominated by professional and academic contacts of the researcher to participate in this study (i.e., snowball sampling), and are therefore participants who are "either most accessible or most willing to take part"[37] (i.e., convenient sampling), the sample may not be truly representative of the population and could be biased.

Analysis of the Interview Responses

Demographics of the Participants (See Figure 1: Interviewees' Demographic Makeup in the Appendix Section)

Out of the 50 interviewees who participated in this study, 52 percent identified themselves as belonging to the Hoklo ethnic group. 72 percent of the participants were female and 28 percent were male. Majority of the participants belonged to the 25-35 age group and 58 percent of the participants' current level of education is at the undergraduate level.

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[37] Anderson, C. 2010. Presenting and evaluating qualitative research. *American journal of pharmaceutical education, 74*(8): 141, p. 4.

I am 100% Taiwanese

When participants were asked how they would identify themselves, all 50 participants instinctively answered without hesitation that they are Taiwanese. When asked to explain why they would identify themselves as such, all 50 participants referred to the fact that they were born in Taiwan, grew up in Taiwan, received their education in Taiwan, and have spent most of their lives in Taiwan. The manner in which all 50 participants confidently and spontaneously responded to these two questions by furnishing the same set of reasons, suggest that they were not confused over their identity. By explaining how and why they perceived themselves as Taiwanese based on the reasons that they were born, educated, and have lived and spent most of their lives in Taiwan, further suggests that their identification with the Taiwanese identity is very much connected to the place they associate as their "home", i.e., a place they have fostered a sense of belonging and attachment to and a place where they feel they are a part of. For instance, one of the participants went further to elaborate why he identified himself as a Taiwanese;

> "…because in my mind I think this is a country and it's a real country even though lacking international recognition, but it is not an imagined community. It's a real community with real people and actually a governing structure. So, yeah…so if this is a country, then since I'm born here, then I would consider myself a citizen of this place." (P16)

Hence, to P16 Taiwan is not an imaginary country because it is *real*, with *real* people, *real* community, and a *real* government that governs the nation. In one of the interviews, when one participant (P11) highlighted that she identified herself as Taiwanese because, "*Taiwan has its own writing, language, culture, and way of life*", the other participants automatically nodded in unison, concurring with P11's reasoning.

In one session, a participant (P14) explained that she sees herself as a Taiwanese because she, "*does not know anything about China*". She explained that though she may study Chinese geography and history, she does not think that she is Chinese because she was born and raised and grew up in Taiwan. P14's response suggests that she is aware of her identity as a Taiwanese and despite learning about Chinese history and geography, she has not formed any connection with China and therefore, concludes that she does not really know much about China. Self-consciously recognizing and accepting one's identity (in this case, the Taiwanese identity) does not merely arise from learning about a place's history or geography, but it requires one to develop and form a sense of belonging and attachment to that place by being born in that place, living in that place, spending a substantial amount of time in that place, and receiving education in that place. Similarly, in another session, a participant (P17) stressed the fact that Taiwanese are not the same as Chinese;

> "We are very different from Chinese…I have this mindset since I go to school. I just think we are different countries' people and it's really hard, I think it's very hard to mix these two countries' people together to be one country because even though we are same race maybe my ancestors they are from China, but after a long time, we experienced different history, mixed with other people here, so I can say it's totally different groups of people. So, I never think I'm Chinese. So, if people ask me are you Chinese, I will say no, I'm Taiwanese." (P17)

Based upon how all 50 participants unequivocally explained why and how they identify themselves as Taiwanese, we can deduce that the question of being Taiwanese and the Taiwanese identity are not ambiguous. All 50 participants did not demonstrate any form of confusion as to how they see, consider, perceive, or identify themselves. They share a common understanding of what it means to be Taiwanese – (1) born, raised, live, and educated in Taiwan, (2) Taiwan as a

separate nation from China, and (3) Taiwan having its own writing, language, culture, and way of life.

Despite acknowledging that their ancestors came to Taiwan from China, and Taiwanese and Chinese are of the same race, they do not recognize China as either their country or "homeland", but instead consider Taiwan and China to be two *very* distinct and separate countries. Their responses confirm the general view that Taiwanese lose an emotional attachment to the Chinese identity and therefore Mainland China, because they see themselves as Taiwanese by the very fact that they were born, raised, educated, and have lived in Taiwan most of their lives. Moreover, based on the participants' demographic makeup, regardless of whether they are Hoklo, Hakka, Taiwanese indigenous peoples, or "waishengren" (see Figure 1: Interviewees' Demographic Makeup in the Appendix Section), they unequivocally and affirmatively identify themselves as 100 percent Taiwanese.

Identity's Influence on Political Issues

On the question of whether identity influences one's opinions on political matters, one aspect stood out among all participants which they all share, namely identity matters especially in Taiwan on whether one belongs to the pro-independent camp or the pro-reunification camp. This is because, embracing the Taiwanese identity influences their opinions on how their nation should be, and in particular their concern about Taiwan's global recognition. The majority of the participants agreed that because they consider themselves as Taiwanese and not Chinese, they tend to support politicians who have Taiwan and Taiwanese's best interests at heart and will not support any political party that propagate the idea of a reunification of Taiwan and China. Interestingly, when asked about this question, one participant (P10) went further to share her strong affection toward her Taiwanese identity and how her identity not only influences her opinions on political

matters but also affects the decisions she makes in her daily life; even something as trivial as shopping. According to P10;

> "I see myself as Taiwanese, so when I make decisions or like when I shop online I will pay attention if the products are made in Taiwan. I will buy things that are made in Taiwan…like when I buy things on "Taobao"[38], when I noticed that they do not see Taiwan as an independent country, I decided not to buy things from Taobao anymore although it is cheaper on Taobao." (P10)

P10's remark suggests that her Taiwanese identity has an impact on her choice of products – choosing to buy "Made in Taiwan" products over products that are "Made in China". Moreover, the fact that "Taobao" does not recognize Taiwan as an independent country, further induces her to buy "Made in Taiwan" products. From this, we can gather that Taiwan's recognition as an independent nation matters to P10 because she perceives her Taiwanese identity as associated with an independent Taiwan that is recognized by all.

Seven participants admitted that they have become used to "*not being officially recognized as Taiwanese*" due to the "one China Policy" and Taiwan's isolation in the international space as a result of China's ongoing oppression. To these participants, they feel that even though their Taiwanese identity somehow influences their opinions on political matters, however their concern is that their opinions might not carry much weight at all or have any impact because Taiwan is still not recognized as an independent nation internationally. In particular, whenever they learned of how Mainland China isolates or oppresses Taiwan in the international space, they are inclined to feel sad and angry but helpless, or as these participants aptly phrased it, "我們覺得好無奈".

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[38] Taobao is a Chinese online shopping website.

Overall, from the interviewees' responses, we can gather that identity matters in affecting or influencing their opinions on politics. However, since Taiwan is still not officially recognized by the international community as an independent state and with China's ongoing suppression to isolate Taiwan from the world, they tend to develop a feeling of helplessness or "無奈".

Social and/or Political Participation: Anyone?

On the question of whether the participants have participated in any form of social and/or political movements, the participants' responses were divided. Out of the 50 interviewees, six answered that they have not participated in any form of social and/or political activities while 19 chose not to answer the question. Out of the six that have not participated in any form of social/and or political activities, three expressed that they were not interested, while one mentioned that none of his friends or family members encouraged him to participate but went on to say that if people around him asked him to, he would actually participate. The remaining two explained that they chose not to participate because they tend to question the veracity of the information they received from the news or social media and thus, do not trust what they read or hear. One of the two participants who had doubts about the truth of the information remarked that;

> "…knowing the truth is important for me to decide whether to participate or not. But apparently, we don't know the truth. Maybe we are being manipulated by some people and I really don't like that feeling." (P15)

For the 25 participants who responded yes to this question, each has, at least, participated in one form of social and/or political activity, with the most common ones being the Sunflower Movement and Taiwan's local elections. Eight of the 25 participants stated that they voted in Taiwan's previous general and local elections. Seven of them signed the referendum to petition for using the name "Taiwan" in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics Games, two signed the referendum

supporting same-sex marriage in Taiwan, and one signed the referendum to ban same-sex marriage in Taiwan. Four volunteered in the Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) political campaigns and one volunteered in the Chinese Nationalist Party's (KMT) political campaigns. One of the them joined the protest opposing former Taiwan president Chen Sui-bian, who was embroiled in several corruption scandals and eleven took part in the Sunflower Movement. One of the participants who joined the Sunflower Movement elaborated on his experiences during the Movement;

> "I stand on the street and sleep on the street for one night. I didn't go into the Congress, the building. I didn't go in there because there were too many police. The police already surround the Congress. So, we cannot go in there. And I think the Sunflower Movement, the most important thing is that…to stop the KMT government to keep have more agreements with China. I think it's the most important thing." (P36)

Although the participants' responses were somewhat divided, 12 percent of the participants did not participate in any form of social/and or political movements while 50 percent have participated in at least one form of social and/or political activity. From the interviewees' responses to this question, we learn that although all 50 participants strongly identify themselves as Taiwanese, not all of them would actually participate in any form of social and/or political activity. While some question the truth of the information they received and express fear of being manipulated by a powerful force working in the background, others rely on encouragement from familiar faces around them. As for the 19 interviewees who chose not to respond, the assumption could be that they were afraid that other participants might pass judgements on them based on their responses or that they merely fear that their opinions could potentially jeopardize or endanger them, in light of the ongoing rumors that Mainland China meddles in Taiwan's domestic affairs.

<u>Independence versus Reunification: 我認為台灣已經是一個獨立的國家!</u>

All 50 participants favored an independent Taiwan. For the participants, being independent means being internationally recognized as a sovereign country, with the freedom to use the name "Taiwan" officially and to proudly raise Taiwan's flag. As two participants put it;

"If we are independent, we can join international organizations you know maybe like the WTO. We will have more resources, we will have more relationships with other countries…" (P11)

"To join public, international events or like raising our national flag in the public like if we win we can show that we are Taiwan and not call it "Chinese Taipei" in most of the international games. So, instead of using that name we can use our name "Taiwan" and raising our flag in public and speaking out for our country. I think this is what we call an independent Taiwan!" (P12)

Despite agreeing that being independent is important to Taiwan and the people of Taiwan, two contrasting themes surfaced during the interviews regarding Taiwan's independence. On the one hand, twelve participants expressed concern over China's ongoing oppression and isolation of Taiwan in the international space. They attributed their concern and fear to China's growing economic and military power.

"I agree it [independence] is good but because China is very strong, so I don't think they will agree for us to declare independence. I cannot think of any way to achieve this goal." (P3)

"As for now I see China, they are like a bully, like to bully Taiwan and try to control many ways of decisions of Taiwan but we have our own elections, we have our

own education system, so in my opinion we are different from China. So, I expect independence of Taiwan." (P8)

"I really don't know if we are going to be independent Taiwan because we are related to China somehow in economic because I know our government is fighting for being independent but it somehow makes like China target on our economy so somehow our relationship with other countries is not so well as before." (P20)

"I would really love to see it happen but I'm not sure how much cost I could bear for that to happen because China is militarily strong. But I'm that kind of person who would put Taiwan sticker on my computer to share my perspectives politically." (P33)

On the other hand, 38 participants remarked that Taiwan is practically an independent country because Taiwan has its own government, land, people, and rule of law.

"To me it's an independent country because we have our own government, our own regulation, all of our systems are very different from China or some other countries where people can speak Mandarin." (P22)

"I think we are already an independent country. We don't need to fight for it because we have our own government, we have our own currency, and we have all our systems. I don't think we need to say we are an independent country because we already are." (P23)

"For me actually right now even if nobody recognizes us like we are independent

country, but actually we are. We are already a country. We have government, we

have people, we have land, we have the elements of a country. So, even that people

do not agree that we are a country but actually we are a country." (P29)

Since all the participants either favored an independent Taiwan or viewed Taiwan as

independent, they did not agree with the notion of a reunification of Taiwan and China. As one

participant (P2) remarked, "*As a Taiwanese, it is not a good idea to be with PRC. I am a Taiwanese,*

this is a fact." However, three participants shared a similar view that if China were a democratic

country, they might consider a reunification with China but might not agree to it if they were not

allowed to keep their Taiwanese identity but have to adopt the Chinese identity instead. Many

interviewees pointed out that the idea of a reunification will not work because Taiwan and China

are completely two different nations despite sharing a common language. They explained that even

though both nations share a common language, Mandarin, however, the writing style is different,

with Taiwan using Traditional Chinese and Mainland China using Simplified Chinese. For

instance;

"I don't agree with reunification. Regardless from history, politics, or economics, I

feel that except that we have same language roots, Taiwan and China are actually

two different nations." (P50)

"No, no, no! That is not doable. It's not going to work out! I deny that! It's like the

way of thinking for two groups of people are totally different. Even though the

appearance looks similar, but we are really different. In Taiwan, I really appreciate

our country. Everyone has their freedom of speech, we are more open-minded,

culture is so different. It's really hard to say to be a part of them." (P17)

"I think it is definitely a bad idea! I will say no way! I don't think people here will like this idea because we like the way we are. China can be a place that we can travel, we can see the beautiful scenery, but this is our home. We won't think of China as a home to us even though they claim that we are one country." (P24)

"I don't agree with reunification because I feel we are both different and separate countries." (P32)

"We are so different, so we cannot reunify." (P35)

"Talking about reunification is like talking about combining two countries. That kind of does not make sense. We are so different, so I don't think to combine these two countries could happen smoothly". (P34)

One participant even brought up Hong Kong's situation to explain her rejection of the idea of a reunification of Taiwan and China;

"No way! Even though they say probably not reunification but instead like Hong Kong, "one country, two systems", I would also definitely say no because from some of my friends in Hong Kong, they say the life is totally different from what they had before." (P24)

The manner in which the interviewees' view the notions of independence and reunification indicates that their strong identification with their Taiwanese identity induces them to favor an independent Taiwan over the concept of a reunification of Taiwan and China, because they regard Taiwan as an independent nation with its own government, rule of law, and distinct social and cultural backgrounds from Mainland China. They consider Taiwan as their country, a place they

grew up in, a place they have developed a sense of belonging and attachment to, and above all a place they call home. However, they agreed that China's military and economic strengths are a cause for concern, and thus inhibiting Taiwan from realizing its independent status.

China's Peaceful Rise: Real or Façade?

Although most of the participants did not elaborate much on the question of China's peaceful rise, they agreed that China's peaceful rise is in fact "aggressive rise" and deemed China's use of its military and economic powers as a form of coercion against other nations. Some of their comments were;

"When you use the term peaceful (*the participant did a quotation mark gesture with her fingers*), that means you are trying to hide something (*at this point other participants nodded in agreement with her*) which is not peaceful. So, I don't think they do have the peaceful rise at all, especially their attitude towards Taiwan is never in peaceful ways. They use more threats and they do not listen to any voice from Taiwan." (P24)

"I think the term peaceful, its '表面上的' peaceful, you know just on the surface peaceful." (P22)

"They don't want to rise for real peace like in the South China Sea, they build up a lot of military power there. They just want to challenge the U.S. and all." (P35)

"Peaceful? I don't think it's a peaceful way. No! I think they will never do things in a peaceful way. They are really aggressive." (P17)

"We think it's fake peace, not really peace. Fake peace." (P49)

"China uses economy to pressure and bully weaker nations. It's like my fist is bigger than yours so I can crush you." (P46)

"I think it's very obvious. They are very smart and very strategic. They are using the whole economic power to lure Taiwan. I think they are trying to buy us off." (P16)

"I think it is not peaceful, at least in Taiwan they want to reunify Taiwan. So, a peaceful country doesn't do this kind of thing to dominate other countries." (P14)

"I feel angry about what they did, like force the airplane industry to change the name to Chinese Taipei. I think it's quite rude but you see, the consequence is that almost every aircraft industry they change the name. Even though they think we are not the same country. I think that's the reality we Taiwanese people facing now." (P13)

"I think it's a lie (*laughing*). They say in a beautiful way it is a peaceful rise but as a Taiwanese I don't think it is a peaceful rise as they become stronger, they started to control Taiwan in many ways including our rights to participate in some international conferences or if Taiwan wants to do our own decisions, they will interfere strongly. As a Taiwanese, I think that as they become stronger, they think they have the power to bully Taiwan or do whatever they want." (P8)

Cross-Strait Relations: Spiraling Toward a Highly-Tensed Relation

Nine participants did not respond to this question while 41 participants agreed that the cross-strait relation is increasingly tensed. They agreed that the cross-strait relations were better before 2016 but have since deteriorated as the current administration appears to be sending a message across to Mainland China that Taiwan is seeking independence. This, they said, has provoked China to use its "Yuan diplomacy" and military prowess to retaliate against Taiwan. Nonetheless, they shared a similar sentiment where they hope to see that both sides could continue to establish peaceful communication and dialogue, and that both nations can grow together in the region. A few of the participants shared their concerns about Taiwan and China's cross-strait relations.

"I think the issue depends on who the president is and then the president will decide how the relations would be." (P32)

"I feel that cross-strait relations should be equal and not like…who is more powerful so I will follow you. I feel that China is opening a lot of incentives and if we enter this door (*making hand gestures of a door frame*) we must fulfill their requirements. If not, you cannot enter. If you fulfill and you enter this door, it would show that you 100% like China but actually people don't really like China but they enter this door." (P50)

"I think it's in a very high-tension situation. Years ago, when Taiwan had its presidential election, China threatened to use missiles towards Taiwan so we have to make decision carefully. I think China tries to control Taiwan in all aspects. So,

if Taiwan does something they are not happy with they will do something to harm

Taiwanese businessmen in China." (P9)

"I think our relation was better before 2016. But that was based on the policies at

that moment. Now I know we are more prone to independence. So, in this case, our

president should ask the people if they want to be independent or not because we

really depend on democracy. We really have to let the people decide. If the majority

of the people want to be independent, then we can pay the price. But if the majority

doesn't want, I will respect their wishes." (P5)

Hong Kong's Annual July 1st Protest: Futile or Worthwhile?

Many interviewees expressed that they did not have much knowledge about Hong Kong's

actual situation except that since Hong Kong was returned to Mainland China in 1997, the people

of Hong Kong have been fighting for their rights to free speech and several people have gone

missing for speaking out against the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). While some sympathized

with Hong Kong's predicament, others expressed admiration for the people's courage, spirit, and

unwavering determination, and saw a similar fate between Hong Kong and Taiwan.

"Whenever I see the news about Hong Kong I really admire their bravery. I know

that as they do these actions, they will have to face more difficulties and more

threats but still they fight for their freedom, for their democracy. Whenever I see

that, I ask myself will I be brave as a Taiwanese? Will I be brave enough to do

something or say something for Taiwan?" (P10)

"I don't think what they do is wasting time. It's really brave cause that's what we are also doing now. We are trying to protect our own rights and our democracy." (P11)

"I think what they do will show the world that how China really treats them not as they say peacefully…people from all over the world because of mass media can see what situation is in Hong Kong just like the Sunflower Movement here, also let the world see us and see what we fight for, and seeing that we got the rights to tell others or to tell the government we don't want to accept this policy." (P12)

"I think Hong Kong people and Taiwan people are like brothers and we are the same. We want freedom, Hong Kong people they feel the same too." (P49)

"I hope that they can continue to 堅持, you know be persistent because their situation is more complicated than ours and they are nearer to Mainland China". (P50)

"I think Hong Kong people they are right, they should fight for it. This is the right thing to do!" (P17)

"Brave! I think it is important no matter if it is successful or not." (P28)

"I admire that they do them every year until now. I believe they want their own identity." (P21)

"I think they are brave and they make me think about all the protestors in the good old days in Taiwan. Many politicians or people they fight for democracy, they fight for freedom. I think it's a way they want to tell others that they are totally a country." (P36)

Future Participation in social and/or political movements

Several participants excused themselves from the interviews before they ended. Of all the remaining participants, five responded that they might not consider participating in social and/or political movements in the future because they are not particularly interested in politics. The other 30 participants believed that after the interview, they will continue to participate. Some of their remarks were;

"I feel that we as Taiwanese, you know 我們作為台灣人, we should voice more, express our views. We should for our future and for Taiwan's future, we should participate and be concern. We love Taiwan so much!" (P9)

"Yeah, like voting or like being a part of small activity you know, like Olympics games that kind of request, I think I will do that because it is not only for me but I want my kids or my grandchildren to have freedom, to have their rights and to be Taiwanese." (P12)

"I will still continue to participate in social or political movements because I think all these rights we have today is because someone sacrificed themselves to make us have this. So, if I don't do it what else, I mean who else can do it." (P35)

"I will keep participating and right now I also participate in political movements

because I think that if you don't care about something, then other people won't

think that your opinion is important. So, you still need to say it and do something."

(P36)

Four participants who initially pointed out that they have not participated previously

expressed their willingness to participate in the future. For instance, one participant remarked that;

"Before the interview, I didn't take any actions but after this interview, I will try to

do more than before I did…try to reflect on my opinions as a Taiwanese and try to

care more about issues in Taiwan." (P8)

Discussion: A "Taiwanese Distinction"

The effects of "Taiwanization" not only cemented a "Taiwanese consciousness"[39] but has

also created a "Taiwanese distinction". Throughout the interview sessions, I observed that the

participants consistently and repeatedly subscribed to the words "us", "our", and "we" as a way of

identifying themselves and their fellow citizens as Taiwanese, while referring to the words "them"

and "they" as people from Mainland China, i.e., Chinese. For instance, in responding to the idea

of a reunification of Taiwan and China, P23 drew a clear distinction between Taiwan and China

by subscribing to the words "we" and "our" to indicate herself and other fellow Taiwanese;

"I think *we* are already an independent country. *We* don't need to fight for it because

we have *our* own government, *we* have *our* own currency, and *we* have all our

systems. I don't think *we* need to say *we* are an independent country because *we*

already are". (P23)

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[39] According to Lauren Chung the "Taiwanese consciousness" stems from eradicating civic nationalism for the Republic of China in favor of a Taiwanese national identity.

Likewise, another participant, P29, also repeatedly used the words "we" and "us"

to describe himself and other Taiwan citizens as Taiwanese;

"For me actually right now even if nobody recognizes *us* like *we* are independent

country, but actually *we* are. *We* are already a country. *We* have government, *we*

have people, *we* have land, *we* have the elements of a country. So, even that people

do not agree that *we* are a country but actually *we* are a country." (P29)

Arguably, this could potentially mean that P23 and P29, as well as other 48 participants,

have fostered a clear "concept of *who* they are, *what* sort of people they are, and *how* they relate

to others" (Hogg and Abrams 1988), when they instinctively used the words "we", "us", and "our"

to indicate a distinction between themselves as Taiwanese and people from Mainland China as

Chinese. When interviewees subscribed to words, such as "we", "us", and "our" to refer to

themselves as Taiwanese, they are potentially thinking, feeling, and identifying themselves on the

basis of a superordinate Taiwanese identity. This further suggests that despite having four distinct

ethnic groups in Taiwan, these participants have formed an understanding that they do not exist

within the boundaries of a fixed separate ethnic group but rather co-exist in a superordinate group

represented by a superordinate "Taiwanese" identity, when they used such words like "us", "our",

and "we" to describe themselves and other fellow citizens in Taiwan. Arguably, they view all

ethnic groups in Taiwan as similar to them on the basis of this commonly, shared "Taiwanese"

identity.

Secondly, from the interviewees' responses to the last question about possible future social

and/or political participation, we could infer that participants who have previously participated in

such activities could have induced a "pro-group behavior" among those participants who did not

participate previously toward a "*we*-thinking"; such that as fellow Taiwanese, they have a shared

group concern and an understanding that "*we* are all in this together". This is evidently seen when

P8 remarked that;

> "Before the interview, I didn't take any actions but after this interview, I will try to
>
> do more than before I did…try to reflect on my opinions as a Taiwanese and try to
>
> care more about issues in Taiwan". (P8)

Additionally, the participants' reasonings behind their identification as Taiwanese due to

factors, such as they were born, grew up, raised, received their education, and have lived in Taiwan

most of their lives, suggest that their commonly, shared Taiwanese identity that is uniquely

characteristic of them within the Taiwanese society, have enabled them to foster a sense of purpose,

commonality, and belonging to their "home" Taiwan. This sense of belonging and attachment

could be said to be strong when they gave determined and consistent responses without hesitation.

This further denotes their belief of "being or feeling as a Taiwanese". Their Taiwanese identity

has, thus, become their common and shared identity, which enables them to know who they are in

the contemporary world. This could possibly explain why TAIUNA would persistently voice for

Taiwan's UN membership for fifteen consecutive years, as well as the "Keep Taiwan Free"

movement that has been tirelessly seeking to increase awareness about Taiwan's predicament and

to help Taiwanese realize their recognition and gain equal treatment in the world.[40] These two

instances suggest a form of loyalty toward the Taiwanese identity because these "fighters" neither

cave in to pressure nor give up in the face of adversity, but continue to seek for, work for, and fight

for Taiwan's global recognition.

The global recognition of Taiwan and the Taiwanese identity, therefore, matter a lot to the

people of Taiwan because this is who they are, how they perceive themselves to be, how they want

to be represented globally, and how they want others to eventually recognize them in the

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[40] Source http://taiwanmatters.com/#/about?_k=o1s5rr

contemporary world. This is their shared purpose. However, voicing for this recognition to their nation and identity should not be misconstrued as Taiwanese ignoring their Chinese heritage and roots. As some of the participants have pointed out, although they acknowledged that their ancestors came from Mainland China, they did not consider themselves Chinese as they viewed Taiwan and China to be two distinct and separate countries due to different social, cultural, and political landscapes.

Overall, the preliminary findings from the interviews indicate that when individuals strongly identity with a superordinate identity (i.e., loyalty toward a superordinate identity), they would be more willing to consider participating in any form of social or political causes for the welfare and interest of the place they develop a sense of belonging and attachment to. Possessing a shared, unique superordinate identity, that is characteristic of the people in a particular society, could potentially allow them to foster a strong sense of purpose, commonality, and belonging to that place, because they have naturally become a part of that place and that place belongs to them. As all 50 participants unequivocally identified themselves as Taiwanese by virtue of Taiwan being their place of birth, education, and livelihood, they have *intuitively* established a bond with and created an emotional attachment to Taiwan. By subscribing to this Taiwanese superordinate identity, individuals are elevated to foster a "we-thinking" instead of an "us versus them thinking" based on partisanship, race, ethnicity, or social background. This form of "we-thinking" further stimulates a "pro-group behavior", whereby individuals potentially develop a shared group concern because they are "recategorized" to think and see that "we as Taiwanese are all in this together".

In addition, through interviewing and observing the participants, I found that a form of consciousness or awareness that one is indeed a Taiwanese is equally fundamental to generate a sense of loyalty to the Taiwanese identity. As some of the participants have expressed, even though

Taiwan is currently not internationally recognized, they still see themselves as Taiwanese and consider Taiwan to be an independent and sovereign nation. This suggests that having a "pro-active consciousness" of one's identity is crucial because it informs one who one is in the contemporary world and furnishes a clear understanding about oneself. The participants' strong identification with their Taiwanese identity is also attributable to Taiwan's educational reform, as Taiwanese learn, understand, and try to make sense of their nation Taiwan and of themselves as Taiwanese in the world. The effects of Taiwanization have heightened the participants' awareness of their shared, unique Taiwanese identity and strengthened the way in which they see, acknowledge, and recognize themselves as Taiwanese. This "pro-active awareness or consciousness", belief, and feeling as a Taiwanese could potentially trigger a pro-group behavior, thus inducing individuals to voice for the welfare, interest, and common good of Taiwan.

Concluding Thoughts: A Taiwan that is Together

The Taiwan that we know today has unquestionably weathered, experienced, and journeyed through different historical, social, political, and cultural landscapes that have shaped and reshaped, structured and restructured, defined and redefined the nation. The Taiwanese identity does not subscribe to any one particular form, but rather it is a fusion and synthesis of all of Taiwan's historical, social, and cultural experiences which have given birth to a unique cultural-national identity that is shared by and common to all Taiwanese. The effects of "Taiwanization" has given birth to a unique cultural-national Taiwanese identity (a superordinate identity) that is inclusive of all social groups within the Taiwanese society. Hence, the Taiwanese identity is inclusive of the Hoklo, the Hakka, the "waishengren", and the indigenous peoples of Taiwan. During Taiwan's nine-in-one elections in 2018, we witnessed political parties and politicians ramping up their efforts to shore up electorates' confidence in their respective political platforms

and policies, as well as a surge of rallies and protests staged by the people of Taiwan. Alongside the elections, Taiwanese also voted on ten referendums with wide-ranging issues from food import to energy policy to using the name "Taiwan" in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics to legalizing same-sex marriages. All of these instances characterize the "adulthood" stage of Taiwan's development, where an "adult" Taiwan continues to undergo new trials and challenges in its ongoing process of "Taiwanization", and the choices that the people of Taiwan make will be a form of representation and expression of the nation and its people to the world.

Taiwanese see themselves as Taiwanese because Taiwan is the place where they were born, raised, educated, and have lived most of their lives. Their loyalty toward their Taiwanese identity has established a bond between them and Taiwan, fostering a sense of belonging and attachment to Taiwan, the place they consider home. This in turn engenders and strengthens their voice for social and/or political causes for the interest, welfare, and common good of Taiwan. Though Taiwan was under Japanese rule, this did not cause the people of Taiwan to strongly identify as Japanese. The fact that Japan is an economically advanced nation also does not induce the people of Taiwan to associate themselves with Japan. As such, a strong identification with and recognition of the superordinate Taiwanese identity, suggest that Taiwanese do not wish to belong to nor to be an accessory or appendage to any nation but simply to be themselves. It is crucial that the people of Taiwan must first form a clear and stable understanding of who they are, affirm what their own identity is, and assert how they want the world to acknowledge them, to strive for a Taiwan that is together.

Theory is easy but the real world is messy.[41] Throughout the two months that I conducted the interviews, many interested participants responded but later declined to participate in the study

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[41] Moody, P.R., 2007. The Evolution of China's National Interest: Implications for Taiwan. In *Identity and Change in East Asian Conflicts* (pp. 27-48, p.44). Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

as they were afraid that information shared during the interviews might somehow be leaked out, potentially endangering them. Several interviewees who participated in the study, later requested that the audiotapes for their interviews be destroyed due to similar concern. Although these participants did not elaborate further the reasons for their concerns, these instances suggest that the Taiwanese society believes the ongoing rumors about Mainland China meddling in Taiwan's domestic affairs to be true. This in turn gives rise to their fear of an existential threat, which is Mainland China, Taiwan's Goliath. As Taiwan's Goliath continues to swing its economic and military might toward the small island-nation Taiwan and with most states still refusing to recognize Taiwan's sovereignty due to economic and political reasons, a rational person might ask whether it is worth it for Taiwan to faithfully continue defending its democratic values, own identity, and beliefs over economic and social stability. Will Taiwan eventually cave in to the mighty Goliath or steadfastly rise up to the challenge and let its voice heard? I do not have a crystal ball that has the answer to the question nor can I offer an exact scientific formula that could solve this conundrum. However, if there is one thing that history has taught me is that, with voice comes change. It is through past sacrifices that the present and future society could be better off than it was before. If people in the past were to put economic concerns over values, such as freedom, justice, liberty, rights, and democracy, where would we be today? Even if the world remains silent on Taiwan's status and its people's identity as Taiwanese, all it takes is Taiwan's voice for a Taiwan that is together.

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participate in the interviews and for sharing their valuable opinions.

Appendix

Characteristics	Frequency (N = 50)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	14	28%
Female	36	72%
Age Group (In Years)		
18-24	8	16%
25-35	24	48%
36-45	11	22%
46 or older	7	14%
Ethnic Group		
1. Main		
Aborigines	1	2%
Hakka	7	14%
Hoklo	26	52%
Waisheng	3	6%
2. Others		
Aborigines/Hakka	1	2%
Aborigines/Hoklo	1	2%
Hakka/Hoklo	4	8%
Hakka/Waisheng	1	2%
Hoklo/Waisheng	6	12%
Current Level of Education		
Undergraduate	29	58%
Postgraduate (Master or PhD)	21	42%

Figure 1: Interviewees' Demographic Makeup

1. How do you identify yourself? (Taiwanese, Chinese, Taiwanese-Chinese, or Chinese Mainlander)
2. Explain why you self-identify as such.
3. Do you think that your identity somehow influences your opinions on political matters?
4. Have you participated in any social and/or political movements?
5. If yes;
   a) What forms of social and/or political participation have you participated in? (examples include but not limited to voting, volunteering for a political campaign, protesting, petitioning, writing letters to your representatives, joining an interest group, and/or donating money)
   b) How many times did you participate?
   c) State the reason(s) for your participation
   d) Did your participation yield any promising results?
6. If not, what were your reasons for not participating?
7. In your opinion, what motivates or drives people to act collectively for the common good (especially when it does not benefit the individuals directly)?
8. Will you act collectively for the common good, even when it does not benefit you directly?
9. What are your views for an independent and democratic Taiwan?
10. What are your views for a reunification of Taiwan and China?
11. What are your views on China's peaceful rise?
12. What are your views on Taiwan-China cross-strait relations?
13. What are your views on the Umbrella Revolution in Hong Kong that protested Mainland China's intervention in Hong Kong's political and legal systems?
14. What are your views on the annual July 1st peaceful protest in Hong Kong where the people of Hong Kong (Hong Kongers) fight for democracy, universal suffrage, and freedom of speech from Mainland China?
15. After this focus group interview, will you continue to participate or consider participating in any social and/or political movements for the common and collective good, even when your participation may not yield promising results or there may be uncertainty as to the outcome?

Figure 2: Interview Questionnaire

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