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MASTER'S THESIS

**A DICHOTOMY DISMANTLED**

Reflections on National Identity among Supporters of Third Force  
Political Parties in Taiwan

Centre for East Asian Studies

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PITKÄNEN, ARI-JOONAS: A Dichotomy Dismantled – Reflections on National Identity among Supporters of Third Force Political Parties in Taiwan

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This thesis explores Taiwanese national identity among supporters of so-called “Third Force” political parties that have emerged as an alternative to Taiwan’s two “old” parties, the KMT and the DPP. The Third Force parties are taken as a manifestation of a stronger Taiwanese identity in a society long characterised by competing Taiwanese and Chinese identities. Taiwanese identity has strengthened in surveys simultaneously with Taiwan’s deepening economic and political integration with China in 2008–2016, and the establishment of the Third Force parties can be seen as a counter-reaction to increasing Chinese influence over Taiwan. This thesis analyses these developments by examining how supporters of Third Force parties define and understand their Taiwanese identity and how this identity relates to Taiwan’s history and the recent socio-political developments, particularly the deepening integration with China.

Based on a theoretical background of social constructionism and interdependence in international relations, this thesis uses secondary research to explore the history and contemporary developments of Taiwanese identity and primary research through qualitative semi-structured interviews with Third Force supporters, complemented by an interview with a Third Force politician. The national identity of the interviewees is examined through qualitative content analysis. Additionally, the study includes the author’s personal field observations from Taiwan in 2016–17.

The results indicate that Third Force supporters construct their identity through democratic civic values. Thus, their rejection of Chinese identity arises from the lack of similar values in China. This sense of identity has evolved dynamically through societal functions such as education and life experiences within the context of contested official and popular nationalisms. Owing to this identity, the Third Force supporters wish that Taiwan could become a “normal” country whose existence is not defined in relation to China. A similarly broader focus is desired in domestic politics to break the old dichotomy of the KMT and the DPP.

Through comparisons with earlier research, this study proposes a model of national identity among Third Force supporters. It depicts a civic community that governs a multitude of ethnicities, political actors, and international networks grounded in shared civic values. Adherents to this model reject ethno-nationalism and the dichotomous struggle between Taiwanese and Chinese identities by asserting an inclusive and flexible yet overtly Taiwanese civic identity. Further research should be conducted to establish the validity of this model and its relation to Taiwanese society in general.

Keywords: national identity, nationalism, social movements, political parties, international relations, interdependence, Taiwan, China.

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## Abbreviations

ARATS	Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (China)
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CSSTA	Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
ECFA	Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement
ESC NCCU	Election Study Center, National Chengchi University
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign direct investment
GPT	Green Party Taiwan
IM	Instant messaging
KMT	Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party)
NCCU	National Chengchi University
NPP	New Power Party
NTU	National Taiwan University
PRC	People's Republic of China
QCA	Qualitative content analysis
ROC	Republic of China
SDP	Social Democratic Party (Taiwan)
SEF	Straits Exchange Foundation (Taiwan)
TBT	Taiwan Brain Trust
TCU	Taiwan Citizen Union
TPOF	Taiwanese Public Opinion Foundation
UN	United Nations
US	United States
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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## **Note on Chinese characters and romanisation**

For relevant Mandarin Chinese terminology, this thesis gives the Mandarin word both in traditional Chinese characters (officially used in Taiwan) and hanyu pinyin romanisation (officially used in Taiwan and mainland China). For Taiwanese place names, proper names and personal names, this paper uses the most commonly used romanisation since there is considerable variation and inconsistency in the romanisation systems used in Taiwan. For example, the name 馬英九 is written as Ma Ying-jeou, while the pinyin equivalent would be Ma Yingjiu.

“My thinking is neither red nor black. I simply try to accept what is natural as natural and see reality as reality.”

Hu Taiming  
in Wu Zhuoliu, *The Orphan of Asia*

“Zilu said, ‘The ruler of Wei has been waiting for you, in order with you to administer the government. What will you consider the first thing to be done?’

The Master replied, ‘What is necessary is to rectify names.’”

Confucius  
*Analects*, Book XIII, Chapter 3

## 1 Introduction

The question of Taiwan, an island of 23 million inhabitants some 160 kilometres off the eastern coast of China, remains one of the pressing socio-political issues in contemporary East Asia. Over the years, Taiwan has repeatedly been labelled a dangerous “flashpoint” (e.g. Chase 2005: 162; Kastner 2015: 54) that could lead to an “immensely destructive war” (Tucker 2009: 1) if handled improperly. The danger lies in Taiwan’s relationship with China, which considers the island one of its provinces and a “core interest” (核心利益, *héxīn lìyì*), and thus seeks to unify Taiwan with the mainland as “one family with blood that is thicker than water” (Ramzy 2015). By contrast, decades of sustained separation have made Taiwan itself increasingly averse to unification, and today most of its population no longer consider themselves Chinese.

This situation stems from Taiwan’s troubled history. While Taiwan was part of China for over two centuries during the Qing dynasty (1644–1912), the island has since been outside mainland rule for the past 120 years, save for a brief reunion in the 1940s. In 1895–1945, Taiwan was a Japanese colony, and in 1949 it became a base for the exiled Kuomintang (KMT; 國民黨, *Guómíndǎng*) party after it lost the Chinese civil war against the Chinese Communist Party (CCP; 中國共產黨, *Zhōngguó gòngchǎndǎng*). The KMT moved the government of the Republic of China (ROC) to Taiwan, while the CCP established the People’s Republic of China (PRC) on the mainland. As a result, the world was left with a conundrum of two competing Chinas on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Entangled in Cold War geopolitics, neither side was able to eliminate the other to claim final victory, and the volatile division persisted. The ROC initially retained international legitimacy, but geopolitical realities gradually eroded its status. In 1971, China’s seat in the United Nations (UN) was taken from the ROC and given to the PRC, and in 1979, the United States (US) recognised the PRC. This pushed the ROC and Taiwan to increasing international isolation.

The unresolved civil war left the two sides operating ideologically opposing authoritarian party-states. The one thing both governments shared was the desire for unification – it was merely a question of who would rule the unified China. But both sides were transformed in the twilight years of the Cold War. In the 1980s, the PRC abandoned strict communist ideology in favour of market reforms and a wider notion of Chinese nationalism, while the ROC loosened its grip on power and initiated a process of democratisation in Taiwan. These developments diminished the immediate threat of military conflict, but they also recalibrated cross-Strait relations so that division persisted.

While the PRC kept its party-state structure and strong desire for unification<sup>1</sup>, Taiwan's democratisation created a society fundamentally at odds with the authoritarianism of the mainland. For the first time in Taiwan's history, the people of the island gained the ability to advocate their vision for its future. This vision was increasingly built upon the sense of a distinct Taiwanese identity, and support for independence started growing. Today, most Taiwanese no longer consider themselves Chinese nor desire unification with the mainland.<sup>2</sup>

Owing to the above development, the issue of national identity has become one of the focal points in contemporary social science research on Taiwan. A number of volumes has been published on the issue itself (e.g. Wachman 1994; Hughes 1997, 2000; Ching 2001; Brown 2004), and the identity question has also featured in studies on ethnicity (Chen et al. 1994), domestic politics (Mattlin 2011), and international relations (e.g. Tanner 2007; Tucker 2009; Cole 2017). Much of this research has been characterised by two dominant dichotomies: the cross-Strait duality of the ROC and the PRC, and Taiwan's domestic duality of Chinese and Taiwanese identities. Common to these dichotomies is their focus on China: they examine Taiwan not in itself, but through its relationship with the mainland. This focus is understandable because it reflects Taiwan's domestic politics after democratisation: the political scene has become dominated by the agendas of two main parties: the KMT, traditionally pro-unification, and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP; 民主進步黨, *Mínzhǔ jìnbù dǎng*), traditionally pro-independence. Thus, the KMT and the DPP operate as political manifestations of the competing Chinese and Taiwanese identities.

The KMT/DPP domination persists to this day, but a new political phenomenon has emerged in the past few years that seeks to present a new alternative to this duality. The genesis of this development was the 2014 Sunflower Student Movement (太陽花學運, *Tàiyánghuā xuéyùn*) that protested the KMT government's opaque attempts to sign a free trade agreement with China. Many saw the trade agreement as a textbook example of dangerous economic integration that would render Taiwan vulnerable to Chinese influence, and the government's dubious actions in its preparation drew widespread

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<sup>1</sup> The PRC government's 1993 white paper on Taiwan describes it as an "inalienable part of China" that has "belonged to China since ancient times" (Taiwan Affairs Office & Information Office of the State Council 1993).

<sup>2</sup> In the latest survey of the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University, 56% of Taiwanese identified as "Taiwanese", 36.6% as "Both Taiwanese and Chinese", and 3.8% as "Chinese". 58% favour maintaining the current cross-Strait status quo, 23.6% lean towards independence, and 11.6% lean towards unification. (ESC NCCU 2017).

criticism. The Sunflower Movement channelled the dissatisfaction of Taiwan's younger generation into new activist-led political parties collectively known as the "Third Force" (第三勢力, *Dì sān shìlì*). Two parties, the New Power Party (NPP; 時代力量, *Shídài lìliàng*) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP; 社會民主黨, *Shèhuì mǐnzhǔ dǎng*) emerged as the spearhead of this movement, and in the 2016 general election, the NPP won five seats and became the third largest party in the Legislative Yuan.<sup>3</sup> The NPP's popularity appears to have grown since the election, and in a December 2016 poll, it had become the most popular party among people in the 20–29 age bracket (Yeh & Hou 2016). The Third Force parties share the fundamental notion of Taiwan as a sovereign country in its own right, and this is reflected in their policies that focus on Taiwan itself rather than the omnipresent China-Taiwan/unification-independence debate that characterises the KMT and the DPP. This notion attracts the younger generation that, having been born and raised in Taiwan with no direct connection to the mainland, could be characterised as "naturally" Taiwanese. Thus, the Third Force could be seen as a political manifestation of contemporary Taiwanese identity.

With the above phenomenon in mind, this study explores Taiwanese national identity by focusing on the Third Force. It will contrast the historical development of Taiwanese identity with the current situation of the Third Force, exploring how the latter has been produced by the former. By focusing on the Third Force parties and their supporters, this study attempts to illuminate how the current generation understands national identity and how these modern notions relate to the complex history of identity construction in Taiwan. As such, this study is grounded in social construction as the underlying process of national identity formation: I will look at national identity as a dynamic construction shaped over time by the contestation of multiple influencing forces, both official and popular. As political actors, the Third Force parties represent one of the myriad forces engaged in this contest. The official/popular dimension is complemented by another contest between domestic and the foreign agents, complicated by the growing interdependence between states in the age of globalisation. I will look at the significance of this international environment as demonstrated by the cross-Strait relations between Taiwan and China. My aim is thus to locate the Third Force and the national identity it represents in the juncture of these official, popular, domestic and foreign forces. In doing so, I will attempt to explain how national identity is shaped by and reflected in the

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<sup>3</sup> The Legislative Yuan (立法院, *Lìfǎyuàn*) is the legislative branch of the ROC's five-branch government modelled according to ROC founder Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People (三民主義, *Sānmín zhǔyì*).

personal and socio-political dimensions of the lives of Third Force supporters.

## 1.1 Research questions

Much of the existing research on identity issues in Taiwan has focused on quantitative (e.g. Chu 2004; Chen 2012; Liao et al. 2013; Zhong 2016) or historiographical (e.g. Wachman 1994; Ching 2001; Brown 2004) analysis of the general trends of identity formation. As such, studies have often dealt with macro-level temporal variations in labels such as “Taiwanese” and “Chinese”, but less so with the meanings of these labels and the nature of their interrelatedness. Hence, I strive for a more qualitative focus that stems from the observation that national identity is a dynamically evolving social construct that can mean different things to different people at different times. Therefore, to better understand the significance of the recent rise in Taiwanese identity, it is necessary to study the meaning of that identity to the people who subscribe to it. Based on this focus, I will employ semi-structured interviews with supporters of the NPP and the SDP to explore how contemporary Taiwanese identity operates on the micro-level, what it practically means for the people themselves, and how this is reflected in more general terms in the policies of the parties. The interviews will be complemented by an e-mail interview with NPP legislator and activist Freddy Lim, as well as a historical review, national level survey data on identity questions, and personal observations from Taiwan during an exchange semester in 2016–17. The above combination is intended to provide answers to the following twofold research question: 1) what is the meaning and significance of Taiwanese identity to the supporters of Third Force parties, and 2) how is the formation of this identity connected to the historical background and the recent social, political and economic developments in Taiwan.

Based on the answers to these questions, I attempt to formulate a preliminary model of national identity among Third Force supporters. By including an insider’s political perspective through the interview with Freddy Lim, and by placing the overall interview results in the context of existing survey data and other secondary sources, I will expand this model so that it examines the Third Force as an entity comprising its underlying social movements, the political parties, and their supporters. My use of the term “Third Force” will henceforth refer to this collective entity. As noted, the qualitative focus is intended to complement existing quantitative research on Taiwanese identity; by design, this study cannot provide an exhaustive or generally applicable definition of national identity in Taiwan. The results of the qualitative data will thus constitute a

snapshot of identity formation within a temporally and demographically limited section of society. However, the Sunflower Movement and the emergence of the Third Force are among the most prominent new socio-political developments in Taiwan in the past few years. Thus, this phenomenon has a wider significance to the Taiwanese society in general, and a deep focus on this topic can provide valuable insight on the situation of the society at large.

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The structure of this paper is as follows. Chapter 2 will present the theoretical background of the study, focusing on the social construction of national identity and the contemporary reality of interdependence between states. Chapter 3 will then explain the methodology of this study in more detail and describe the practical fieldwork process. Chapter 4 explores the history and contemporary developments of national identity in Taiwan through secondary sources, connecting the Taiwanese situation to the theoretical framework of social constructionism presented earlier. The results and analysis of primary data are presented in chapter 5, and finally, the concluding chapter 6 will describe a preliminary model of national identity among Third Force supporters and examine the significance of this identity.

## 2 Theoretical framework and definitions

This study leans toward modern interpretations in both social science and international relations, the two fields that it primarily deals with. This means that the question of Taiwanese identity will be examined through theories that have emerged in response to previously dominant realist perspectives; namely, social constructionism in social science and interdependence in international relations. In a general sense, this theoretical framework arises from the observation that Taiwan as a society and concept is fluid and ambiguous, and therefore invites non-essentialist conceptualisations. Taiwan's relatively short recorded history and lack of naturally dominant national mythology mean that the social construction of its national identity is perhaps more readily observable than in more established societies. And in the age of globalisation, with the transformative processes of China opening up and Taiwan democratising from the 1980s onwards, economic interdependence across the Taiwan Strait has arguably replaced the Cold War balance of power as the key element in cross-Strait relations between China and Taiwan. Thus, the dynamic status of Taiwan as a region corresponds well to the premises of the aforementioned theories. This chapter will introduce these theories and define the related key concepts.

### 2.1 Social constructionism

*Social constructionism* in its modern form was introduced in 1966 by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann in their book *The Social Construction of Reality*. As the title implies, the book argues that reality is socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 13). Grounded in the sociology of knowledge, the book charts the social construction of reality through processes of objectivation, institutionalisation and legitimation. In a more recent study, Elder-Vass (2012: 4) summarises the basic argument of social constructionism as the notion that “the ways in which we collectively think and communicate about the world affect the way that the world is.” In essence, social constructionism holds that reality, or certain elements of it, do not exist independently from human conceptualisation. The opposite view is that of *realism*, which holds that “the world exists independent of our representations of it” (Searle 1996: 153).

In total contrast to realism, a radical interpretation of social constructionism is that reality is entirely a human construction. A moderate perspective, on the other hand, accepts that an independent reality exists, but argues that some aspects of it are socially

constructed. Both Elder-Vass (2012: 7) and Searle (1996: 2) support the moderate interpretation, thereby suggesting that the most accurate description of reality is some form of fusion between realism and constructionism. In this context, Searle (ibid.: 1–2) suggests the concept of “institutional facts”: parts of the real world that are facts only by human agreement. In other words, while an independent reality exists, certain facts can only exist within human institutions that depend on systems of “constitutive rules” (ibid.: 27). Searle presents both citizenship and nationhood as examples of such institutional facts (ibid.: 114, 118). Thus, the idea of nationality<sup>4</sup> in this study can also be considered an institutional fact dependent on the human institution of nationhood. The national identity that arises from this institution is therefore based on a socially constructed human community: the nation.

A noteworthy point relevant to this study is Searle’s notion that institutional facts rely on continued existence. He notes that the status of institutional facts depends on members of the relevant community continuously recognising and accepting their existence. (Ibid.: 117–9.) Therefore, as soon as the collective acceptance of institutional facts breaks down, so do the institutions. Nation-states are obvious examples of institutions that are created and dismantled in this manner, and this point will be elaborated later when the social construction of nations is examined further. Before that, I will briefly introduce the general concept of identity.

### **2.1.1 Identity as a dynamic experience of sameness and otherness**

The focus of this paper is on *identity*. Thus, before going into the characteristics of modern national identities, it is useful to make a few general remarks about the term. The Oxford English Dictionary defines identity broadly as follows:

The quality or condition of being the same in substance, composition, nature, properties, or in particular qualities under consideration; absolute or essential sameness; oneness (OED Online 2017).

Identity is thus based on the experience of *sameness*. In a system where people identify with others based on sameness, this self-identification is necessarily juxtaposed with, and

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<sup>4</sup> “Nationality” as a term can be somewhat ambiguous. Seton-Watson (1977: 4) notes that in the English language, it can be used in the meaning of “state citizenship”, but also more generally to simply mean the quality of belonging to a nation. This study adheres to the latter, general meaning.

measured against, its opposite: *otherness*. Examples of this are manifold. In the age of enlightenment, Europeans constructed their notion of Western civilisation not only by examining their own achievements, but by comparing them to the supposed backwardness of the East. Otherness thus manifests as the negative version of a positive experience of sameness. As Said (2003: 54) explains, a “fifth-century Athenian was very likely to feel himself to be nonbarbarian as much as he positively felt himself to be Athenian.” The focus on civility and barbarianism is significant, because it reappears throughout East Asian history as well. Imperial China regarded everything outside its realm as barbarian, and the West was perhaps the pinnacle of otherness: in London in 1876, as part of the first Chinese mission to the West, diplomat Liu Xihong described his impression: “Everything in England is opposite to China” (Tiedemann 2006). Imperial Japan, despite owing much of its civilisation to Chinese heritage, would in turn come to view the Chinese as barbaric. With his country modernising in the wake of the Meiji restoration of 1868, historian Takekoshi Yosaburō (1907: 317) declared: “We, Japanese, usually look down on the Chinese and despise them on account of their dirty habits.” A notion of difference also characterised post-war Japan, where the concept of Japaneseness likewise relied on being diametrically opposed to the West. This was specifically centred on the United States, which was imagined as being everything that Japan was not (Martinez 2007: 9). This difference was based on a sense of uniqueness rather than superiority. It also suggests that, in addition to affirming a pre-existing notion of superiority or uniqueness, the experience of otherness can help define the national element of a thus-far vague identity: Martinez (*ibid.*: 10) notes how the ambiguous concept of Japaneseness becomes clear to the Japanese when they encounter foreigners. The consolidation of identity can thereby arise from the first-hand experience of otherness.

Another key point about identity is that it is dynamic. Berger & Luckmann (1966: 194) note that identities are not only produced by “the interplay of organism, individual consciousness and social structure”, but they also react upon the social structure. As will be noted in the next section, social constructionism holds that nations are not primordial, perennial or ahistorical. This means that they are subject to dynamic evolution, and this likewise moulds the identities that are based on these elements. Indeed, as Berger & Luckmann (*ibid.*: 195) put it, identity “emerges from the dialectic between individual and society.” As such, identity resembles concepts such as ethnicity: Huang et al. (1994: 7, 12) point out that ethnicity changes in tandem with sociocultural conditions, and indeed in the case of Taiwan, it is a “continuously evolving historical process”. One example of this dynamism of identity is the way Taiwan’s development has been conceptualised.

Taiwanese history can be seen as a series of “becomings”, as illustrated by the titles of notable works describing it: consider Tonio Andrade’s *How Taiwan Became Chinese* (2007) and Leo Ching’s *Becoming “Japanese”* (2001). Accordingly, one can find several recent theses on the contemporary period bearing the title *Becoming Taiwanese* (e.g. Turley 2015; Chen 2013; Wu 2007). These becomings are practical examples of the dynamism of identity formation. Using Searle’s conceptualisation, they represent points in time when the collective acceptance of the community’s institutional facts breaks down and a new version arises. Identities are thereby shaped by the constructions of reality.

For the purposes of this study, identity can thus be defined as the *dynamic experience of sameness and otherness*. Consequently, *national identity* is simply such an experience when it is grounded in the idea of nationhood. This concept is explored further in the following sections.

### 2.1.2 The social construction of nationhood

Searle (1996: 117) paints a bleak picture of moments when institutional facts are rejected and institutions break down: he describes the national identity crises of the 1990s in places such as Bosnia, Canada, the former Czechoslovakia and Turkey, where national unity seemingly collapsed into ethnic tribalism. By contrast, he then describes other examples where national unity was, more or less artificially, maintained during times of crisis: for example, Charles de Gaulle’s rhetoric of honour and his insistence that an independent French government continued to exist during World War II (ibid.: 118). Another example, one of invention rather than artificial retention, is the drafting of the American Declaration of Independence in 1776:

There was no institutional structure [...] whereby a group of the King’s subjects in a British Crown Colony could create their independence by a performative speech act. But the Founding Fathers acted as if their meeting in Philadelphia was a context C such that by performing a certain declarative speech act X they created an institutional fact of independence Y. They got away with this, that is, they created and sustained acceptance of the institutional fact because of local community support and military force, culminating in Cornwallis’s surrender at Yorktown. (Ibid.: 118–9.)

And so, a nation was born through social construction. In the beginning of this chapter, Taiwan was characterised as a particularly suitable subject for constructionist analysis due to its relatively short recorded history and lack of a naturally dominant, age-old mythology. The same could then be said about the United States, another frontier region

where indigenous populations were superseded by new, institutionalised foreign governance.<sup>5</sup>

In Searle's analysis, one of the fundamental building blocks of institutional facts is language. He argues that in order to have institutional facts, a society must have language that constitutes "linguistic elements of the facts within that very institution." (Ibid.: 59–60.) This was evident in the example of the United States, where independence was constructed through a speech act. It is perhaps no coincidence, then, that language is also front and centre in one of the most influential treatises on the origin of nations, namely Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983). Anderson suggests that modern nationalism emerged in Europe after the socioeconomic changes and scientific discoveries of the industrial revolution led to the decline of the old world order of dynastic kingdoms. Languages had a key role in this process, as the rise of vernacular literacy and print-capitalism created "unified fields of communication" where people could understand others who shared their language and conversely could not communicate with those who did not. Thus, "imagined communities", i.e. nations, were formed around these vernacular languages, first unconsciously and later deliberately as the process became established. (Anderson, 1983: 44–6.) Combining Anderson's premise to Searle's, language becomes not only the mode but also the frame of national identity construction: it is the tool by which national consciousness is communicated to a group of people who share that tool.

In line with the above conceptualisation, Anderson (ibid.: 6) defines *nation* itself as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign." In an earlier study, Seton-Watson (1977: 1) gives a somewhat similar definition: "A nation is a community of people, whose members are bound together by a sense of solidarity, a common culture, a national consciousness." The relevant distinction between these definitions is Anderson's emphasis on the constructionist idea that nations are "imagined". The commonalities described by Seton-Watson would thus not be inherent categories with clear borders; their classification depends on imagined boundaries.

The concept of imagined communities is relevant here not only because of the notion of nations emerging as social constructs based on industrial progress, but also since it extends to the field of imperialism. Since the Middle Ages, much of the world had been organised into empires that ruled over extensive heterogeneous areas inhabited by various

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<sup>5</sup> Taiwan's equivalent to the Native Americans are its Austronesian indigenous people that inhabited the island before the arrival of European colonisers and Chinese settlers in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

different peoples. As these peoples began to foster their own national identities, constructed around their vernacular lexicons, the empires became understandably anxious. The natural product of nationalism was the demand for autonomy for the imagined community, and this risked the collapse of the imperial order. According to Anderson (1983: 86), the imperial response was “official nationalism”, an attempt to construct a notion that all imperial subjects belonged to the realm of a single unifying national identity as defined by the metropole. Anderson borrows this concept from Seton-Watson (1977: 148), who describes it as a doctrine that replaced the old idea of “dynastic loyalty as the basis of legitimacy of government.” Anderson (1983: 86) describes this as “stretching the short, tight, skin of the nation over the gigantic body of the empire” and gives Czarist Russification as the most obvious example. More concretely, he presents official nationalism as “an anticipatory strategy adopted by dominant groups which are threatened with marginalization or exclusion from an emerging nationally imagined community” (ibid.: 101). In Searle’s terms, what Anderson describes here is the fading acceptance of the institutional order of the empire, and the subsequent attempt to regain that acceptance through the imposition of official nationalism.

Based on the above, it could be said that nations are constructed through the contestation of popular and official forces. In Europe, the official version was a reaction to the popular. In Asia, however, this process was reversed: it was the spread of official nationalism through imperialism that prompted a popular reaction. As Anderson (ibid.: 139) explains, the “last wave” of nationalisms in colonial Asia and Africa originated as a response to global imperialism, which was the result of industrial capitalism. Other scholars have noted not only the impetus provided by unjust colonial rule, but the paradoxical manner in which imperialism itself supported the rise of nationalism in the colonies. Hobsbawm (1987: 78) points out that empires themselves provided the platform for anti-imperialism, as it was the Western-educated colonial elites who first began to form resistance after acquiring national awareness through education and experiences in the West. It was the colonial motherland itself that acted as “a catalyst in nurturing nationalist movements amongst its colonised elites” (Heylen 2005: 502). Indeed, as noted by Komagome (2006: 142), “even Gandhi, before he took to his spinning wheel in simple, traditional clothes, had walked around the city of London in Western dress.”

Asia’s own example of imperialism and official nationalism was Japan. Anderson (1983: 95) suggests that Japan’s version of official nationalism, first employed to assist the consolidation of the Meiji government in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, was “rather consciously” modelled after that of Prussia-Germany. This is no surprise, since the

success of the Meiji Restoration rested on the assimilation of Western concepts to shield Japan from imperialist aggression. When Japan itself then followed the Western example by launching imperialist expansion, its official nationalism became most apparent with the Japanification policies pursued in its colonies not only in Korea, Taiwan and Manchuria, but also in Burma, Indonesia and the Philippines. (Ibid.: 98–9.) This strategy bears obvious resemblance to the assimilation policies of Czarist Russia mentioned earlier, suggesting that the basic processes of imperialism and official nationalism have operated similarly across the globe.<sup>6</sup> Hence, the Japanification of Taiwan is a historical period of obvious importance to this study, and it will be discussed further in chapter 3.

The above passages constitute a brief account of the social construction of nationhood. It was mentioned earlier that the constructionist perspective finds its opposite in realism, which holds that reality exists independently. In terms of nations, the realist perspective manifests in primordialism and perennialism: the idea that nations are grounded in primordial conditions and arise from time immemorial. (Smith 2000: 2.) Significantly, the PRC's claim for Taiwan mentioned in the introduction is more or less a textbook case of primordialist nationalism: it rests on the notion that Taiwan has been part of the Chinese nation since ancient times. Correspondingly, the ROC's claim of the mainland is a mirror image of this notion. However, as Smith (ibid.: 3) notes, modernist theories have become the mainstream, and while they consist of different perspectives, they all share the core idea that nations, nationalism, and the international system of nation-states are relatively modern phenomena and products of modern conditions. Smith's (ibid.: 4, 15–16) examples of these modern conditions include those mentioned by Anderson: capitalism, industrialism, imperialism and vernacular mobilisation. On a more general level, this leads to the same observation about nations that was made about identity in the previous section: nations are dynamically evolving entities shaped by the structure of the society around them. Consequently, as Smith (ibid.: 13) puts it, "nationalism does not cease after the attainment of independence, but is continually renewed as men and women seek to achieve their visions of nationhood."

In summary, and in the context of this study, modern nations could thus be called *dynamic, socially constructed political communities* that are continuously redefined in

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<sup>6</sup> The concept of official nationalism and Anderson's notion of "stretching the skin of the nation over the body of the empire" could also be used to describe modern China: the PRC has retained most of the frontier regions that were annexed to China through the conquests of the Qing empire. To legitimate its claim for this ethno-culturally heterogeneous area that includes for example Tibet and Xinjiang, the PRC has promoted a definition of China as a "united multi-ethnic nation" (e.g. People's Daily 2017). Officially, the ROC also maintains a similar or even wider claim to frontier regions, even counting Mongolia into Chinese territory.

the crossfire of popular, official, domestic and foreign forces. This section has hereby answered the question of how nations are made; the next and final section of this chapter will go on to look at what they are made of.

### 2.1.3 The ingredients of a nation: Ethnic and civic dimensions

Seton-Watson (1977: 6–7) makes a distinction between “old” and “new” nations. Old nations are those that had a historically acquired national identity even before the emergence of nationalism, whereas new nations acquired the two simultaneously. In Smith’s (2000: 12) conceptualisation, the old nations do not possess a “national” quality, but they are instead a form of historical precursor communities, or *ethnies*: named human populations with “a common myth of descent, shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with an historic territory, and a measure of solidarity, at least among the elites.” Thus, the distinction between old, “original” nations and new, “invented” nations disappears. This view suggests, in line with the overall constructionist view set out in the previous section, that “nation” is a modern construct arising from modern social structure. However, it also contends that many, if not most, nations are based on pre-existing ethnic ties (ibid.: 13).

Since the idea of old and new nations obfuscates the modern origins of the concept of a nation, a more relevant categorisation is perhaps one of ethnic and civic nations. Smith (ibid.: 16) notes that most people today live in “civic-territorial” or “ethnic-genealogical” nations. The former assigns nationhood through birth and residence, territorial citizenship, and a unified legal system and public culture, while the latter emphasises origin myths, vernacular languages and customs, religion and native history. Crucially, however, these categories are not mutually exclusive: many nations are some form of mix between the two. Thus, these categories can be seen as two ends on a spectrum, and nations can move between them over time. (Ibid.: 17.) This suggests the same inherent dynamism that in previous sections was identified as a key attribute of social constructs. Seton-Watson (1977: 4) mentions a somewhat similar categorisation in the form of “cultural nations” united by cultural bonds such as language, religion or mythology, and “political nations” that also have a legal state structure.

The above perspectives put a great deal of emphasis on *ethnicity* as the raw material of nation-building. However, the constructionist viewpoint suggests that ethnicity itself is also a social construct. Huang et al. (1994: 7) define ethnicity as “a sociocultural construction used to categorize people who interact within the same

sociopolitical arena into different groups.” Thus, ethnicity is also subject to change in tandem with changes in the surrounding sociocultural conditions. In a similar manner, Pieterse (1997: 366) describes ethnicity as an “empty container” that is “fluid, protean and hydraheaded”. Indeed, just as in the study of nations, primordialist/essentialist perspectives have drawn criticism and given way to a constructionist view on ethnicity. This leads Pieterse (*ibid.*: 369) to criticise Smith’s idea of the ethnic origins of nations, because such a view does not take into account the changing nature of ethnicity itself. Furthermore, Pieterse (*ibid.*) asserts that nation-formation often precedes ethnic identification. He points to postcolonial and multi-national states where state-led national integration provokes ethnic mobilisation. This corresponds to Seton-Watson’s and Anderson’s notion of official nationalism: a top-down effort in social construction. Pieterse (*ibid.*: 371) also points out that the top-down imposition of ethnicity rests on a process of “othering”, whereby the dominant group determines the borders of ethnic groups. This, in essence, is the basic function of identity formation mentioned earlier: a delineation based on sameness and otherness. From a constructionist perspective, ethnicity and nationhood are thus structurally somewhat similar.

As mentioned, the alternative to an ethnic nation is a civic or political nation that rests on markers such as birth, residence, citizenship, law, and public culture. Schubert (2004: 535) talks about “state identity” that is rooted in peoples’ identification with the sovereign state. This type of identification is therefore grounded in the attributes of the state as manifested in its political and legal systems. The nation is thus constructed through the currently existing character of the governing system. Needless to say, such systems are likewise subject to change: in the case of Taiwan, this is readily observable in the process of democratisation that fundamentally transformed the civic and political structures and indeed the character of the state itself.

**Table 1:** Dimensions of nationhood and national identity.

Ethnic/cultural dimension	Civic/political/state dimension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Myths of origin</li> <li>• Vernacular language</li> <li>• Customs and traditions</li> <li>• Religion</li> <li>• Native history</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birth and residence</li> <li>• Citizenship</li> <li>• Sovereignty</li> <li>• Legal system</li> <li>• Political system</li> <li>• Public culture</li> </ul>

Based on the points above, the building blocks of nationhood and national identity can be broadly divided into the ethnic/cultural and the civic/political/state dimensions. These dimensions and their respective elements are presented in table 1 (previous page). This classification and list of attributes is not intended to be categorical or exhaustive, but rather to provide a general overview based on the scholarship reviewed in this section. Further, the two main dimensions need not be mutually exclusive or static. For the purposes of this study, I will subsequently condense these two dimensions into the concepts of *ethnic identity* and *civic identity*, where ethnic identity includes the cultural dimension and civic identity includes the political and state dimensions.

## **2.2 Interdependence in international relations**

While the previous sections have dealt with the nature and construction of nations, I will now look at how they function together in the international system. As noted, nations can be viewed as social constructs that evolve dynamically according to prevailing social structures. However, the character of nations is not moulded only by the interactions of their internal attributes. Indeed, it is often the interaction with other nations that produces more readily visible changes, and this is particularly true as we proceed from the early modern period toward the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond. In the case of Taiwan, this is immediately evident in the existential threat and the economic perks posed by China. As noted in the introduction, cross-Strait relations between Taiwan and China were first characterised by the threat of military conflict during the Cold War era, but have since become increasingly centred on socioeconomic integration within the context of a global market economy. This is a worldwide development that suggests a new “post-nationalist” world order in which the borders of clearly delineated national communities again become fluid. Just as nationalism was enabled by regionally unified fields of communication, modern internationalisation builds upon the rise of instant global communication. In order to analyse this situation, this chapter will introduce the concept of interdependence in international relations.

### **2.2.1 Complex interdependence**

The concept of interdependence was popularised by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye in their 1977 book *Power and Interdependence*. The authors present interdependence as an

alternative for the previously dominant realist perspective. According to the authors, realism assumes a world where states act as coherent units with issues organised in clear hierarchies and military power relations taking a central role. By contrast, they argue for a perspective in which societies interact through various different channels and the communicated issues are not organised in a neat hierarchy. This multifaceted interconnectedness also discourages the use of military force as the various interests of societies have become so intertwined. The authors call this *complex interdependence*: the complexity arises from the presence of multiple actors and contact channels that complicate international relations beyond mere state-to-state action. This emphasises the role of bureaucrats, non-governmental and international actors, and multinational companies. (Keohane & Nye 2012: 20–25.)

Under complex interdependence, military power and the use of force thus become less useful for the advancement of state interests. Consequently, states may shift to using economic power to try and secure their goals (ibid.: 26). As Tanner (2007: 11) points out, economic pressure is usually used by large countries against smaller ones as an alternative to other measures considered too harsh, dangerous or otherwise inappropriate. The prevailing view is that this is what happened in China: with the launch of Deng Xiaoping's reforms in the 1980s and the decline of ideological communism after the death of Mao Zedong, China's economic power assumed a more central role as a method of influence. According to Kastner (2014: 981), the conventional wisdom is that China's economic rise has increased its global political influence and made other Asian countries reluctant to balance against it for fear of losing the economic advantage. Ravindran (2012: 125) suggests that China's use of this economic leverage has increased in recent years, as demonstrated by Southeast Asian examples such as Vietnam and The Philippines. With China assuming an ever more central role in the global arena, this influence is also increasingly transcending the regional level and becoming global. Recently, China's use of economic leverage for political purposes was suggested in Greece, which blocked a joint European Union (EU) statement on China's human rights violations after securing significant Chinese trade and investment (Cumming-Bruce & Sengupta 2017). Such reports point to China's rising economic clout as a source of political power in the global web of economic interdependence. However, this type of economic statecraft may run into various problems under complex interdependence. A potential key problem is *politicisation*, defined by Keohane & Nye (2012: 28) as "agitation and controversy over an issue that tend to raise it to the top of the agenda". This can happen through state initiative, but it can also be a bottom-up process when unsatisfied, domestic non-state

groups politicise issues and thus force the state to take them into consideration (ibid.).

Complex interdependence thus emphasises the multiplicity of channels of influence, highlighting the significance of non-state actors. This interplay of state and non-state actors echoes the way nationalism was conceptualised as a contestation between official and popular forces, suggesting a globalised version of this contest in the modern age. The concept of complex interdependence was originally formulated before the information age and globalisation, and Keohane & Nye (ibid.: 218) note that these new processes have since had a profound impact on the function of the channels of influence. Transnational flows of contact and information have been expanded by the internet age, so that the institutional control of NGOs and international organisations has given way to an even more diffuse constellation of non-state actors. The most recent example is social media, which has been noted as an important channel in the organisation, coordination and transnational cooperation of social movements such as Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement in 2014 and the Arab Spring in 2011 (e.g. Lin 2016; Lee et al. 2015; Hänska Ahy 2014; AlSayyad & Guvenc 2015). This focus on the interconnectedness of the global community reflects Anderson's theory of the origins of nationalism: communicative media have a key role in both processes. Today's social media and digital instant messaging are the 21<sup>st</sup> century equivalent of the print publications that served as the original platform for nationalism. Thus, while complex interdependence can be a powerful tool of state influence, it can also spark a counterreaction by fostering the regional, transnational, and global networking of opposition. In a way, the contemporary world thus replicates the old power struggle of official and popular forces on a global level.

### **2.2.2 Asymmetric interdependence across the Taiwan Strait**

When states and societies are connected through an interdependent relationship, a key factor in their power relations is the level of *asymmetry* in their interdependence. Asymmetric interdependence means that one party is significantly more dependent on the other, giving the other party more leverage and influence. This has been repeatedly noted in the case of China and Taiwan as their economies have become intertwined and China becoming the dominant party (Tanner 2007: 97; Wong 2005: 55). Consequently, there have been fears of China using the asymmetric economic relationship to influence Taiwan and draw it closer to reunification. Indeed, China itself has openly stated that it uses the economic relationship precisely in this manner (Chu 2004: 257).

The roots of cross-Strait economic integration go back to the early 1990s: the United States had long been the main destination for Taiwan's exports, but its share declined considerably from the late 1980s onwards while an increasing amount of exports went to Hong Kong. A similar shift could be observed in tourism during the same period. (Wei 1997: 9-10.) This was due to the absence of direct trade links with rising China: Hong Kong was used as gateway to the mainland for Taiwanese goods and people (Ibid.; Rosen & Wang 2011: 9). The increasing economic interaction reflected the recalibration of China's Taiwan policy after the onset of the reform era in the 1980s. As noted earlier, economic growth had become China's main objective, and this dictated the maintaining of peaceful relations in the region to foster economic development (Chu 2004: 247). The shift in economic relations continued throughout the 1990s, so that in 2004, China had become Taiwan's biggest export market. In 2005, China overtook Japan as Taiwan's largest overall trading partner. (Chiu & Sun 2009: 414.)

China's increasing importance as Taiwan's trading partner has been enabled by the relaxation of trade restrictions. Before 1997, Taiwan had a total ban of direct trade links with China, necessitating the trade routing through Hong Kong mentioned earlier. Gradual relaxations made between 1997 and 2004 made direct shipping of goods possible, with normalised air transport of cargo and passengers agreed in 2008–9. (Rosen & Wang 2011: 17.) 2008 was a significant year as it saw the opening of the "three links" between Taiwan and China: direct flights, shipping and postal relations. Another important catalyst for closer economic ties was the accession of both China and Taiwan to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001–2002. Table 2 (next page) shows the development of cross-Strait trade relations in the 2000s, with a notable asymmetry emerging by 2015 when Taiwan's exports to China were almost 26% and imports 19% of its total amounts. Simultaneously, China's corresponding figures have not grown, with imports from Taiwan at 8.53% and exports below 2% of its total figures in 2015.

Another key trend has been the development of Taiwan's foreign direct investment (FDI). As Taiwan's economy has matured, outbound investment has exceeded inbound investment since 1997, and China has consistently and overwhelmingly been the largest recipient of Taiwan's FDI: at its peak in 2010, 84% of Taiwan's foreign investment went to China. (Wilson 2014.) The opening of the three links also boosted Chinese tourism to Taiwan: the number of Chinese tourists in Taiwan went from 300,000 in 2008 to over 4 million in 2015 (table 3, next page).

**Table 2:** Taiwan-China trade imbalance, 2001–2015.

Year	Exports (% of total exports)		Imports (% of total imports)	
	Taiwan to China	China to Taiwan	Taiwan from China	China from Taiwan
2015	25.73	1.97	19.08	8.53
2014	26.47	1.98	17.48	7.76
2013	27.01	1.84	15.59	8.02
2012	26.98	1.8	14.94	7.27
2011	27.24	1.85	15.31	7.16
2010	28.04	1.88	14.15	8.29
2009	26.67	1.71	13.83	8.52
2008	26.16	1.81	12.92	9.12
2007	25.29	1.92	12.65	10.57
2006	23.19	2.14	12.07	11.00
2005	22.05	2.17	10.87	11.32
2004	20.00	2.28	9.85	11.54
2003	15.34	2.05	8.52	11.96
2002	7.87	2.02	6.99	12.89
2001	3.97	1.88	5.45	11.23

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China; Ministry of Finance of the Republic of China.

**Table 3:** Mainland Chinese tourists in Taiwan, 2008–2016\*

Year	Tourist arrivals to Taiwan from mainland China	
	Number	Share of all tourists (%)
2016	3,511,734	33
2015	4,184,102	40
2014	3,987,152	40
2013	2,874,702	36
2012	2,586,428	35
2011	1,784,185	29
2010	1,630,735	29
2009	972,123	22
2008	329,204	9

\* Data on mainland Chinese tourists begins from 2008.

Source: Tourism Statistics Database, Tourism Bureau, Ministry of Transportation and Communications, ROC (<http://stat.taiwan.net.tw/system/index.html>).

The significant recent relaxations in cross-Strait ties have been the fruits of KMT president Ma Ying-jeou's administration (2008–2016). Owing to the KMT's pro-China and pro-unification stances, the Ma administration brought unprecedented political rapprochement to complement the economic integration that had been well underway since the 1990s. The rapprochement owes to the fact that the KMT, unlike the DPP, accepts and advocates the so-called 1992 Consensus (九二共識, *Jiǔ'èr gòngshì*) as the basis of Cross-Strait Relations, a stance that China requires for any meaningful dialogue to take place. The 1992 Consensus refers to a supposed understanding between the two sides of the Strait that both are part of a "One China" but disagree on its meaning.<sup>7</sup>

Ma wasted no time in initiating rapprochement on the basis of the consensus: the three links were opened almost immediately after he had assumed office, and shortly thereafter, Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) and China's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) resumed formal negotiations that had been frozen for ten years (Zhao & Liu 2010: 191). The new diplomacy brought results, as the Ma administration made a landmark move with the signing of the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) in 2010, paving the way for a comprehensive free trade agreement between Taiwan and China. According to Rosen & Wang (2011: 1), the framework agreement had more than just economic implications, particularly for China, who saw it as "drawing Taiwan closer in sociological terms, [and thus had] a logic independent of commercial considerations". Zhao & Liu (2010: 197) further point out Beijing's increasing reliance on economic means, rather than political or military pressure, to promote integration with Taiwan. Beijing's cultivation of business opportunities for Taiwanese companies has led Taiwanese businessmen to put pressure on Taiwan's government to allow deeper cross-Strait integration. As Wei (2015: 89) notes, "cross-Strait economic exchanges have produced a powerful alliance of KMT politicians and Taiwanese businesspeople, especially since the signing of the ECFA". Critics have raised concerns over this phenomenon, labelling it as a "Trojan horse" that serves Beijing's interests (*ibid.*). Since it was noted that China has openly stated its intentions to use economic statecraft as a political tool, such concerns seem justified.

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<sup>7</sup> According to Wei (2015: 78), the term "1992 Consensus" was coined by Su Chi, KMT politician and chairman of Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council, in 2000. It refers to a supposed tacit understanding between China and Taiwan about the notion of "One China" that emerged from talks held between the two parties in 1992. The actual results of the 1992 talks had been ambiguous and unclear, and Su argued that the term is useful because it enables the PRC, the KMT and the DPP to all adhere to a supposed consensus while leaving room for different interpretations. However, the DPP rejected the term, opining that no consensus had been reached, while the KMT and the PRC adopted it. The 1992 Consensus has subsequently been used as a basis of cross-Strait diplomacy between the PRC and the KMT, while the DPP's rejection of the term has led to difficulties in its dealings with the mainland. (*ibid.*: 77–82.)

The emergence of this asymmetrically interdependent relationship has led to significant socio-political reactions that will be examined in chapter 4 in relation to Taiwanese national identity. Before that, the next chapter will introduce the research design and fieldwork process of this study in more detail.

## **3 Research design and fieldwork**

This chapter presents the qualitative research design built upon the theoretical background introduced in the previous chapter. It is divided into two parts: section 3.1 introduces the methodological approach of the study, and section 3.2 contains an overview of the actual fieldwork process. The results of the research on secondary and primary sources are then presented in chapters 4 and 5.

### **3.1 Methodology**

As mentioned in the introduction, Taiwanese national identity is one of the key issues in contemporary Taiwanese society, and as such, it has already been studied extensively. However, a considerable amount of the existing research deals with historiography or quantitative analysis. The prominence of survey research is apparent not only in academia, but also in the number of different national polls that measure the interconnected aspects of national identity, party support and opinions on independence and unification. Hence, there is an abundance of nationally representative statistical data analysis available. However, this means that much of the research focuses on measuring variables with labels such as “Taiwanese” and “Chinese” without necessarily examining their meanings. In light of all the data available, it is now easy to say that most Taiwanese have adopted a localist identity and therefore also resist unification with China. However, it is not as easy to determine why and how this has happened and what it practically means to be “Taiwanese”. This study argues that the latter perspectives are necessary for a comprehensive understanding of the national identity question. For that purpose, a qualitative focus is needed to complement the broader but more superficial quantitative data. According to Rubin & Rubin (2004: 3), qualitative interviewing is particularly suitable for “describing social and political processes, that is, how and why things change”. Combined with the observation that national identity is a dynamically evolving process, this suggests that a qualitative interviewing strategy is well suited to this topic. However, adopting a qualitative strategy means that the results and conclusions do not yield generalisable or nationally representative results. Therefore, the results should be examined in their wider context to see how they correspond to macro-level tendencies. In the case of Taiwan, there are ample resources for contextualisation due to the volume of historiography and national-level survey data on the identity question. Thus, this study aims to create a “snapshot” of national identity formation in contemporary Taiwan by

looking in detail at a small sample of informants from a narrow focus group, locating that group within the wider framework of the Taiwanese community, and examining how the group compares to national-level developments. In practise, this means that this study will include an analysis of existing research on the history and contemporary developments of national identity in Taiwan (chapter 4) and a subsequent analysis of primary interview data (chapter 5).

As the review of literature and survey data in chapter 4 rests on secondary sources, the contents of this chapter will instead focus mostly on the methodological aspects of primary data collection used for the analysis in chapter 5: qualitative interviewing and data analysis via coding and qualitative content analysis.

### **3.1.1 Qualitative interviews with Third Force supporters**

For the selected method to be successful, the sampling frame for the interviewees in this study should ideally be relevant to the question of national identity and the recent socio-political developments in Taiwan. As noted in the previous chapter, one of the most visible processes related to national identity and cross-Strait relations in recent years has been the succession of social movements culminating in the Sunflower Movement and the emergence of new Third Force political parties. The Third Force parties are a contemporary political reflection of the social undercurrents that have moulded Taiwanese society in the 2000s. As a group, they are also relatively small and clearly defined. For these reasons, supporters of Third Force parties were identified as a suitable focus. The original focus only included the NPP, but for practical reasons this was later expanded to also include the SDP (see section 3.2.1). Due to this narrowly defined sampling frame, the interview results can be taken as indicative (but not properly representative) of general characteristics among Third Force supporters. To complement this, it was also decided that the data should include a representative from within the Third Force parties themselves. This way, the supporters' perspective could be compared to that of an "insider". This combination allows the creation of a rough model of national identity among Third Force supporters, and the subsequent comparison of this model to the existing general conceptualisations of Taiwanese and Chinese identities presented earlier.

For the selection of the interview sample, this study employed purposive sampling and snowballing. The sampling is purposive in that it relies on a subjective personal assessment of the suitability of the sample. In practice, this amounts to selecting interviewees based on their party support or voting behaviour: people who support Third

Force parties and/or have voted for them in the 2016 election. The qualitative focus means that the representativeness of the sample is not the main focus, but the suitability of the interviewees will be judged on a case-by-case basis in order to include “typical” representatives of Third Force supporters. A key strategy in locating interviews was snowballing: widening the pool of contacts through existing contacts and colleagues. May (2011: 101) notes that snowball sampling is suited for elusive or widely distributed populations, which makes it suitable for finding supporters of minor political parties. There will admittedly be an element of “convenience sampling” in this process. Rapley (2014: 55) describes convenience sampling as the “least analytically strong option”. In its purest form, it means selecting a sample in the easiest possible manner and prioritising convenience over validity. Due to limited time and resources and the somewhat elusive nature of the sampling frame, there will necessarily be an element of “taking what one can find” in this study. However, I have attempted to mitigate the negative effects of this by the careful evaluation of each interviewee and an overall analysis of the final sample (see chapters 3.2 and 5).

For the formulation of the actual interviewing strategy, the starting point was grounded in the general observations about national identity presented in chapter 2.1 and the specific features of Taiwanese national identity explored further in chapter 4. National identity was defined as a dynamically evolving social construct, both generally and with regard to the constant changes observed throughout Taiwan’s history. Moreover, dynamism, fluidity and subjectivity characterise not only national identity, but also the ethnic and civic attributes that form its basis. Thus, the selection of the interview strategy was based on its suitability for the above features. This led to a model that takes its main inspiration from Rubin & Rubin’s (2004) concept of “responsive interviewing”. As the authors state, the term suggests that “qualitative interviewing is a dynamic and iterative process, not a set of tools to be applied mechanically” (ibid.: 15). Hence, a dynamic model designed for a dynamic target.

Rubin & Rubin (ibid.: 20–23) make a comparison between *positivist* and *interpretive constructionist* research approaches. The positivist approach imitates natural sciences by employing surveys and statistical methods that ask and quantify a standard set of questions. The interpretive constructionist approach, by contrast, employs observation and in-depth interviewing. It focuses on “how people view an object or event and the meaning that they attribute to it” (ibid.: 27). Thus, constructionists attempt to find out how the interviewees view the world and what the shared meanings are within a group. The authors argue that for many research problems, this approach is better than a

rigid positivist model, and thus it also guides their model of responsive interviewing. This emphasis on subjective perceptions, understanding, and shared meanings corresponds to the attributes of national identity mentioned earlier, making this model well suited for this study. Conversely, Rubin & Rubin's description of the positivist approach resembles my earlier critique of a dominant quantitative focus in studies on national identity: such paradigms usually operate on a surface level, unable to capture meanings and interpretations.

Based on the above, Rubin & Rubin (ibid.: 36) construct their model of responsive interviewing by emphasising subjectivity and self-reflection for both interviewee and interviewer and the overall importance of deep rather than broad information. Since the model and the target are dynamic, so are the research questions: they can evolve based on the results of the interview, and the researcher must thus be ready to modify them when appropriate. Significantly, the authors note that individual members of a group are able to describe its common practices, beliefs and values, and thus, by locating "encultured informants", the researcher can obtain general knowledge about the group through key individuals (ibid.: 66). In this study, the inclusion of a Third Force politician could be seen as representing an encultured informant. Similarly, the deep focus on people with a strong Taiwanese identity means that the interviewees could be expected to be particularly "encultured" about the meaning of identifying as Taiwanese. Emphasis on encultured informants is also one way of reducing the problems of convenience sampling.

In terms of structure, the interview design was influenced by the ethnic/civic categorisation of national identity. A particular source of influence was Chen Rou-lan's (2012) categorisation of Taiwanese identity into primordial and political aspects. In the interview plan, this conceptualisation was approached from a slightly different angle, so that the two main elements are the *personal* and *socio-political* dimensions. Thus, the interview outline (see appendix 1) was designed to roughly have two parts where the first part focuses on personal self-reflection and the second part on social, political and economic aspects. This classification also served as the basis for the subsequent construction of the coding frame. In general, the first part of the interview outline takes cues from the theoretical background presented in chapter 2.1 while the second part includes the notion of complex interdependence discussed in chapter 2.2.

Qualitative interviewing is frequently divided into categories based on the structural rigidity of the interviews. The three main categories in this division are the structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Rugg and Petre 2007: 138). May (2011: 132) adds the group interview as a fourth main category. Similar categorisations

exist with different names, for example Gall, Gall & Borg's threefold model of informal conversational interview, interview guide approach and standardised open-ended interview (Turner 2010: 754). This study took the semi-structured "midway" model where the interview had a structure and outline (see appendix 1), but this could be modified and deviated from as necessary. This was deemed appropriate since the conceptual mapping benefited from the freedom to ask in-depth follow-ups and move around in the structural frame, but the underlying theoretical approach necessitated a corresponding structure and it was also expected that a guiding structure would be helpful in the analysis phase and in keeping the interview on track.

### **3.1.2 Instant messaging in qualitative research**

Research interviews are traditionally conducted face-to-face, and this was the primary method in this study as well. However, it was anticipated that the elusiveness of the target group might lead to situations where meeting face-to-face would be impractical or impossible. In such cases, e-mail and instant messaging (IM) via social media platforms (e.g. Facebook Messenger or LINE) were deemed as potential alternatives. A key benefit of IM over e-mail is that it would preserve the interactive real-time component and thus the dynamic nature of face-to-face interviews. In anticipation for this, it was necessary to review some research dealing with the use of IM in qualitative research to establish its potential benefits and limitations.

Dimond et al. (2012) have compared the use of IM to other interviewing methods. They use an illustrative example of an instructor taking a phone interview transcript and an IM interview transcript and spreading both out in the classroom. As one would assume, the phone transcript was notably longer than the IM transcript, the implication being that the phone interview contained more data. (Ibid.: 277.) However, the authors note that length does not necessarily equal more or better data: their research compared phone and IM interviews and while phone transcripts were indeed longer, it was also clear that they contained more repetition. By coding the transcripts, the authors determined that the phone transcripts did not contain substantially more unique data than the IM transcripts. (Ibid.: 280.) In terms of pros and cons, they concluded that a key benefit of IM interviewing is that it eliminates the time-consuming transcription phase, but it may be problematic if the IM software is not familiar for the interviewees (ibid.). For this study, the benefit of skipping the transcription phase was particularly significant due to language challenges when interviewing Taiwanese people in Mandarin. Furthermore, IM

applications are ubiquitous in today's society, particularly with young people in East Asian countries. Since it was expected that most of the interviewees would be young and very familiar with IM software, there were no significant concerns over the use of IM in interviewing. Kazmer & Xie (2008: 273–5) also find IM a valid method in qualitative research, stressing that the important thing is not necessarily the medium itself, but the interviewee's comfort with, or preference for, the medium. Since IM is often the preferred communication method for the current generation, and with smartphone use being prevalent in East Asian societies, there were no obstacles for the use of IM in the research interviews if necessary.

### 3.1.3 Content analysis and coding

As the research questions of this study deal with the meaning, characteristics and formation of Taiwanese national identity, they require a method of analysis that facilitates answers to those questions. For this purpose, I will employ a loosely defined content analysis. Schreier (2012: 1) defines qualitative content analysis (QCA) as “a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative material [...] by classifying material as instances of the categories of a coding frame.” Thus, content analysis is suitable when the researcher is required to *interpret* the data and *construct* meaning (ibid.: 2). This is in line with the interpretive constructionist interviewing approach described in the previous section, and it also resembles Flick's (2014: 5) more general definition of qualitative data analysis:

“Qualitative data analysis is the classification and interpretation of linguistic (or visual) material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making in the material and what is represented in it.”

Both Schreier (2012: 3–4) and Flick (2014: 5) note that qualitative analysis is inherently descriptive: as Flick (ibid.) notes, its aim is “to *describe* a phenomenon in some or greater detail.” This emphasis on description, interpretation and meaning makes QCA suitable for analysing national identity; as mentioned in the previous section, the aim of this study is to discover the deeper meanings and characteristics behind superficial labels. An important distinction between qualitative and quantitative content analysis is that in the latter, the coding frame is usually standardised and static. However, in qualitative research, it must be flexible and adaptable to fit the non-uniform qualitative material

(Schreier 2012.: 7). This points to a data-driven approach, and thus, the final coding frame of this study was not clearly formulated before the coding phase itself.

It should be noted that qualitative content analysis is not well known as a distinct method because of the dominance of its quantitative alternative. According to Schreier (ibid.: 14), this has led to content analysis being equated with other methods such as discourse analysis or conversation analysis, or to other methods being developed that more or less correspond to content analysis such as thematic coding or qualitative media analysis. This study will not concern itself with nomenclature; regardless of the name of the method, what matters is that it is used to *describe, interpret and construct meanings* from data obtained by qualitative interviews.

The practical procedure for content analysis involves the coding of the data into content categories, thereby condensing it and reducing its complexity (Flick 2014: 11). For this, I will use the NVivo qualitative data analysis software.<sup>8</sup> The NVivo software is designed for organising and analysing qualitative data; it provides an interactive software tool to help the coding process. Thus, after the recorded interview material has been transcribed, the transcripts are uploaded into NVivo, and a coding frame will be constructed in the software. Schreier (2014: 174) describes the coding frame as the “heart” of qualitative content analysis. It consists of arranging the data into categories and subcategories that form the basis of the analysis. The actual coding process and the construction of the coding frame for this study will be presented in more detail in section 3.2.3, and the finished coding frame is presented in appendix 3.

### **3.1.4 Pilot study**

An opportunity to conduct a pilot study for this thesis presented itself through the Textual Analysis and Interviewing course organised at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Turku in spring 2016. The pilot study was realised as part of a course project on interview methodology in collaboration with another course participant. This was deemed a suitable way of testing the intended approach of qualitative semi-structured interviews with Taiwanese interviewees, and it also provided valuable background data on Taiwanese peoples’ views on national identity. Thus, while the pilot study interviews are not directly comparable to the primary research data of the interviews carried out with

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<sup>8</sup> Details of the NVivo software are available on the homepage of QSR International: <http://www.qsrinternational.com/what-is-nvivo>.

Third Force supporters, they are nevertheless usable data that will be referred to in relevant occasions.

Since the pilot study was to be carried out in Finland, the sampling frame for the interviewees was formulated around Taiwanese people living in Finland. Within this frame, interviewees were selected by purposive sampling and snowballing. As noted earlier, snowballing is suitable for elusive populations, which was useful in the pilot study as well, since the number of Taiwanese people in Finland is rather small and hard to approach without some “inside” contacts. With the selected sampling methods, finding interviewees proved rather easy. Social network applications and the Internet played a key role in the process, since all interviewees were approached through Facebook or WhatsApp, the most intuitive modes of communication among today’s young generation. All scheduling and preparation with the interviewees was then carried out via these online channels. The interview procedure itself was remarkably smooth in all three cases. The Taiwanese interviewees were highly motivated and interested in the topic, so they were eager to provide a large amount of data. There were no cancellations or need for rescheduling, and all three interviewees arrived promptly a few minutes before the designated time. After the interviews had been conducted, they were transcribed in preparation for content and discourse analysis. The transcription was one of the most laborious parts of the project: transcribing one interview took a full working day. Once the transcripts were ready, they were analysed in order to identify content categories that were then combined to form dominant discourses in identity formation. The coding of the categories and the formation of the discourses was done in an “old-school” manner with pen and paper, without the assistance of computer software such as NVivo.

In terms of results, the limited analysis of the pilot study produced two findings of particular interest: the diversity of people identifying as Taiwanese and the dynamic nature of identity formation. The three interviewees all had different ethnic backgrounds, and they reflected on their national identity in different ways, but all emphasised an overarching sense of being Taiwanese. This pointed to a Taiwanese identity that was not grounded in ethnic aspects. However, this identity was not static: all three described their identity as having changed over time, particularly as they began travelling and spending time abroad and/or coming to contact with Chinese people. These core findings were taken into account in the planning of the actual study, and they are also reflected in the final results (see chapter 5), which hopefully makes the conclusions of this study more robust.

## **3.2 Fieldwork process**

This section is a description of the actual qualitative research process that was carried out based on the research design presented in the previous chapter and the results and experiences of the pilot study. The bulk of the research took place during an exchange semester in Taiwan, after which the coding and analysis were done in Finland. I spent the fall semester of 2016 as an exchange student at National Chengchi University (NCCU) in Taipei and conducted the interviews towards the end of the semester. Prior to that, I studied at NCCU and prepared for the interviews by carrying out some supplementary research and observation. This was done to familiarise myself with the Taiwanese society through first-hand experience and to gain insight into current social issues in Taiwan. Gaining as much background information as possible during the semester was an important preparatory measure that contributed to the final formulation of the interview framework. This schedule was consciously selected with the understanding that the later the interviews were begun, the less time there would be for them. Rather than begin interviewing with an incomplete design, I wanted to ensure I was adequately familiar with the subject matter and Taiwanese society. Another reason for delaying the start of the interviews was to develop my language skills by studying Mandarin at NCCU. In retrospect, this was an extremely important decision because the semester provided a considerable amount of vocabulary related to Taiwan's social and political life that proved crucial in the interview situations.

### **3.2.1 Supplementary research and observation in Taiwan**

While the main primary data for this study consists of the qualitative interviews, I gathered background data by other, deliberate but less systematic methods while in Taiwan. These aspects are not included in the actual coding process, but they are taken into account in the final analysis phase. These were in addition to the research on secondary sources, done mostly in Finland, that forms the basis of chapter 4.

To complement the review of secondary sources, I made extensive use of the NCCU libraries, as they naturally have a much more comprehensive collection of literature on Taiwan than what is available in Finland. In addition to reviewing literature, I consulted Taiwan's two main English-language newspapers, Taipei Times and China Post, to keep up to date on current issues. This was particularly helpful in following the activities of the NPP in Taiwan's legislature. Most significantly, I was able to attend the

2016 International Conference on Taiwan's Election and Democratization Study held at the Election Study Center of NCCU on 30 October 2016.<sup>9</sup> It provided the opportunity to hear the observations of Taiwanese researchers themselves on many of the issues this study touches upon. Conference papers and presentations by Ho et al. (2016) and Huang (2016) were among the most significant, and they are cited in relevant parts of this thesis.

I gathered background data by non-systematic observation whenever an opportunity presented itself. I photographed scenes extensively, but did not take fieldnotes. Much of this was related to various forms of protest activities: for example, a demonstration at NCCU against the KMT's legacy of White Terror, and pro-independence street demonstrations in Taipei and Taichung. A visit to Taiwan's Presidential Office and its exhibitions provided valuable information on the government's perspective on social movements. The most prominent movement during my stay in Taiwan consisted of the pro- and anti-marriage equality protests that began with Taipei's LGBT Pride event in October and continued throughout the fall. These culminated in a marriage equality protest on the International Human Rights Day on 10 December 2016 when a large crowd gathered in front of the Presidential Office to demand legalisation of same-sex marriage. The general observation from the above was that demonstrations and protests are very frequent in contemporary Taiwan, and they are able to amass a significant number of participants.

A key takeaway from the experience of staying in Taiwan was the importance of informal contacts. This is something that is often emphasised particularly in relation to fieldwork in China: in East Asian societies, the cultivation of personal ties can often open doors that would otherwise stay shut. This was already observed with the snowballing strategy in the pilot study, and it became an important tool in the search for interviewees in Taiwan as well. Thus, the time spent in Taiwan before starting the interviews also enabled the development of relationships and rapport.

### **3.2.1 Interviewing in Taiwan**

Active preparation for interviews began in December 2016 after I had spent three months in Taiwan. As per the research design, I started with snowballing, i.e. asking for local contacts if they knew people who were supporters of Third Force parties. As mentioned earlier, my original focus was only on the NPP, since it was the most popular and most

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<sup>9</sup> Conference details and agenda are available online at <http://teds.nccu.edu.tw/app/news.php?Sn=39>.

successful of the Third Force parties. However, as I was looking for interviewees and having conversations about the focus of my research, I encountered people who supported the SDP. At the time, I was not very familiar with the background of the SDP, but I quickly learned that both parties originated from the same organisation but had split due to differing opinions (see section 4.1.4). Since both parties emerged from the same organisation and were established following the Sunflower Movement, I decided to include also supporters of the SDP in my sample. This shift in focus could arguably be considered an example of convenience sampling, since a partial reason was the fear that I would run out of time before finding enough NPP supporters. However, I also felt that since the focus of my research was not the NPP itself, but rather the political manifestation of Taiwanese identity in the wake of the Sunflower Movement, the inclusion of the SDP did not fundamentally alter the nature of the research or compromise the validity of the sample. This notion was supported by reports suggesting that the split was based on disagreements over practical matters, not on fundamental policy differences (see section 4.1.4).

After this expansion of focus, I began finding more SDP supporters. This was initially surprising, because the NPP was nationally much more popular and had fared much better in the 2016 election. I determined that the reason for SDP overrepresentation in my interview contacts was probably due to geographical bias. I was a university student in Taipei, and therefore many of my initial contacts were likewise university students in Taipei. The SDP's party list popularity was highest in Taipei, and over half of its district votes came from Taipei (see table 7 on page 76). Out of the SDP's total district votes in Taipei, 43% went to party founder Fan Yun, an associate professor of sociology at NTU who was particularly popular among students. This meant that I was likely to encounter more SDP supporters due to my location. I would have thus been able to increase my total sample by interviewing more SDP supporters, but I decided to prioritise the search for NPP supporters so that the much smaller and less popular party would not become dominant in the sample. This was a purposive strategy as described earlier: I relied on my personal judgement in compiling the sample. The final sample included five NPP supporters, five SDP supporters, and one person whose party support was split between the two (see interviewee details in appendix 2).

The practical process of contacting interviewees and scheduling interviews happened very similarly to the pilot study: communication was done exclusively via two

IM applications, LINE<sup>10</sup> and Facebook Messenger. The use of IM was found to be the fastest, most efficient, and most natural form of communication with the interviewees. The interviewees were provided with the details about the research beforehand via these IM applications; they were informed about the anonymous nature of the interviews and asked for permission to record the interviews. This part of the process was virtually identical to the pilot study.

As I began conducting interviews, it became apparent that the pilot study had represented a kind of “laboratory environment” where I had been able to control the process much more than “in the field”. This manifested particularly in the selection of interview locations: in Finland, my familiarity with the surroundings and the available options had made it easier to select ideal interview locations, such as library meeting rooms. In Taiwan, with a tighter schedule and a foreign environment, I had to settle with less ideal locations (see table 4). Towards the end of my stay in Taiwan, I also had to work increasingly according to the interviewees’ preferences and availability, as people were busy in the days before the Lunar New Year holiday in late January 2017.

**Table 4:** Interview locations.

Method	Location	No. of interviews
Face-to-face	Café	6
	Friend's apartment	3
	Author's apartment	1
Online	Instant messaging	1
	E-mail	1

As shown in table 4, most of the interviews were done in cafés, as they were usually the most convenient option available. The downside of this was the background noise that had a negative effect on the quality of recordings. By contrast, a few interviews were done in a friend’s apartment where the silent environment noticeably improved recording quality. Since the location was a friend’s private apartment, the friend (who had helped find the interviewees) was present for the setup of each interview so that the interviewees did not have to meet an unknown interviewer for the first time in a private

<sup>10</sup> LINE, developed by a Japanese subsidiary of the Korean Naver Corporation, is the most popular IM application in Taiwan. Based on my personal observations, young Taiwanese conduct their instant messaging almost exclusively via LINE. The use of WeChat, the most popular IM application in China, appears virtually non-existent in Taiwan.

location. One interview was conducted in my own apartment in central Taipei without an intermediary person. In this occasion, I had met with the interviewee beforehand in a public place, and the interviewee was comfortable with doing the interview in my apartment.

As noted earlier in the methodology chapter, I anticipated that I might conduct some interviews over instant messaging. I ended up planning two such interviews: one with an NPP supporter living in Kaohsiung in southern Taiwan and one with an SDP supporter living in Hsinchu on the western coast between Taipei and Taichung. I had to cancel the Hsinchu interview since I was ultimately unable to contact the interviewee through social media. I was thus left with one interview over instant messaging. This was done in Facebook Messenger over the course of several days, as the interviewee suggested such flexible approach due to her busy schedule. This may have led to more superficial answers due to the fragmentation of the process, but I found that I was able to ask the prepared questions and necessary follow-ups much like in the face-to-face interviews, the main difference being the longer timespan. The experience made me confident that if something went wrong with the scheduled face-to-face interviews, or if I was unable to gather enough data while in Taiwan, I could increase the sample with IM interviews even after returning to Finland.

The pilot study interviews had all been done in English, but for the interviews in Taiwan, I had prepared to use mostly Mandarin. In the end, nine interviews (including the e-mail interview with Freddy Lim) were done in Mandarin and three in English. For the English interviews, the choice of language was partly to mitigate the effects of background noise in the café and partly because the interviewees' English skill was good enough to make the interview significantly easier in English. Since the aim of the interviews was not specifically to study rhetoric or discourse, and the analysis was to have a descriptive focus, the use of different languages was deemed acceptable. I had considered the extensive use of Mandarin in the interviews the most challenging aspect of the research design in light of my skill level. Thus, one of the most rewarding aspects of the project as a whole was that I was ultimately able to conduct the interviews in Mandarin without significant problems. A key factor in this, as noted in the previous section, was that I had the opportunity to develop my language skills and learn relevant vocabulary while studying in Taipei. Nevertheless, the coding of the data later presented some problems and suggested that the Mandarin interviews contained less data than the English ones.

The final element in the interview process was the interview with an NPP

legislator. I had initially hoped to interview either founding member Freddy Lim or current chairman Huang Kuo-chang, as these two had become the most prominent representatives of the Third Force. Towards the end of my stay in Taiwan, the opportunity to conduct an interview with Freddy Lim presented itself through a local friend who had work-related contacts to Taiwanese politicians. However, at that time, Lim was visiting the US as part of a Taiwanese delegation attending President Donald Trump's inauguration. This meant that there was no time to conduct the interview in person while I was in Taiwan. It was therefore agreed that I would send the questions by e-mail, and Lim would record the answers that would then be sent back to me. Due to the one-off nature of the e-mail interview, I asked a Taiwanese person to translate the questions from English to Chinese to ensure there were no errors or ambiguities in the language. The same person also reviewed the language of the initial e-mail due to the more official nature of the correspondence. I received the answers promptly after sending the questions in March 2017.

I gained 11 interviewees relying solely on the snowballing strategy. Together with the planned legislator interview, this gave me a total of 12 interviewees, which was within the originally planned 10–15 bracket. Thus, I decided not to pursue other channels for more interviewees, as my time in Taiwan was coming to an end. My experience with the IM interview suggested that if any of the interviews was subsequently deemed unusable, I could conduct replacement interviews via IM while in Finland. This was ultimately not necessary, and I was able to use all interviewees conducted in Taiwan.

### **3.2.3 Building a coding frame with NVivo**

After all data had been gathered in March 2017, I began transcribing the interviews in preparation of the coding phase. One significant departure from the pilot study design was the decision to use the NVivo software for the coding of the data. This was done in order to make the analysis phase more systematic. With only three interviews, the pilot study data had been relatively easy to handle without any external tools. However, with a larger sample and especially with the majority of it transcribed in Chinese characters, the use of NVivo made the process easier. For example, if I encountered problems reading some characters, I could copy and paste them to a dictionary application straight from the transcript that was uploaded in NVivo.

The transcription of the Mandarin language recordings was the most challenging and time-consuming phase of the entire research. In the interview situations, there had

occasionally been Mandarin words and expressions that I did not fully understand, but I had understood the general message. However, some of these instances became problematic in the transcription phase as they required a lot of time and sometimes dictionary work to decipher. This problem was exacerbated by the unavoidable background noise in many of the interviews. There were instances where it was not possible to make out everything that was said in the recording. However, none of these amounted to entire questions or sections of the interview, so I was able to get the necessary data without having to discard any main elements of the interviews. I could have recruited a native Mandarin speaker to do some or all of the transcription, but I chose to do it by myself, both to reacquaint myself with the data and to practice my Mandarin. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that some data is inevitably lost due to the language barrier. This was reflected in the NVivo coding frame itself, as the Mandarin language interviews ended up having a slightly smaller number of nodes than the English ones. On average, the English language interviews had 39 nodes, and Mandarin interviews had 34. The single IM interview also had 34 nodes, suggesting that the different interview method yielded a comparable amount of data to the face-to-face Mandarin interviews.

As noted earlier, the coding frame was not pre-prepared before the coding process itself. However, it was designed to follow the two main dimensions of the interview outline: the personal and the socio-political. These two dimensions were thus taken as the main content categories in the coding frame. The primary content analysis phase then involved the creation of sub-categories within these two main categories to see what elements featured in the construction of national identity among the interviewees. These sub-categories were built upon the specific answers and themes of the interviews. The resulting coding frame had a four-level structure in which levels 2–4 were created based on the interview data (see coding frame in appendix 3).

The results of the qualitative primary research described above are presented later in chapter 5. Before that, chapter 4 will employ secondary research to examine the historical and socio-political background of the development of Taiwanese identity.

## **4 The national identity question in Taiwan**

This chapter examines the national identity question in Taiwan from the perspectives of the theories presented in chapter 2. Section 4.1 reviews literature on the history and development of national identity in Taiwan, focusing on the interplay of popular, official, domestic and foreign forces. Section 4.2 then looks at the contemporary socio-political order as a result of this development. The historical starting point may seem distant, but that distance is merely temporal; this history is frequently invoked by both Taiwan and China when debating the current status of Taiwan and its people, and as subsequent sections will demonstrate, the recurring themes of foreign domination and self-determination remain at the forefront of the current debates.

### **4.1 The origins of Taiwanese national identity**

Taiwanese history is often organised into periods according to the various regime changes on the island. This categorisation produces five distinct periods: the Dutch colonial period (1624–1662), the Ming loyalist Koxinga period (1662–1683), the Qing period (1683–1895), the Japanese colonial period (1895–1945), and the ROC period (1945–). The Dutch colonisers were the first to bring organised governance to Taiwan, but the island had a significant indigenous population of Austronesian people estimated to have inhabited the island for several thousand years. Today, these indigenous people constitute approximately 2% of Taiwan's population. This study will make occasional reference to the significance of the indigenous people to contemporary Taiwanese identity, but the historical overview in this section will mainly focus on the Sinification and Japanification of Taiwan in the early modern and modern periods.

As mentioned earlier, the PRC justifies its demands for unification by stating that Taiwan has been an inalienable part of China since time immemorial. Similar historical arguments are routinely employed by the PRC to legitimise other territorial claims as well, the most prominent recent example being the South China Sea. Officially, the ROC maintains similar or even greater territorial claims on the basis that it is the legitimate government of China. These notions of primordial unity are squarely rooted in the idea of the perennial nation discussed and critiqued in chapter 2. It is no surprise, then, that a constructionist perspective entails an inherently sceptical approach to such claims. Accordingly, the following sections may appear to emphasise disunity between China and Taiwan. In connection to this, the reader may also notice the prevalence of Western

and modern Taiwanese sources and a certain amount of references to the work of Japanese scholars in the following sections. The corresponding lack of mainland Chinese sources is a result of two factors: firstly, serious mainland Chinese scholarship in the English language on this topic appears comparatively scarce, and secondly, the contentious nature of the Taiwan issue and the challenges of impartial scholarship in the political environment of the PRC discourage reliance on such sources.<sup>11</sup> In short, the constructionist perspective necessarily gravitates toward sources that eschew primordialism. Nevertheless, this chapter is not intended to rebuke the very real historical relationship between Taiwan and China – it is instead designed as an overview of how the nature and development of that connection have played into the emergence of a distinct Taiwanese identity.

#### **4.1.1 Ball of mud: Taiwan as an imperial periphery**

Scholars have frequently pondered where to locate the roots of a distinct Taiwanese identity. Most agree that the correct place is in the Japanese colonial period (Wachman 1994: 93–4; Dawley 2009: 445–6; Chang 2003: 27), which makes sense given the various facets of modernity it enabled (see next section). However, Taiwan may have already possessed conditions for a psychological sense of separation at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While Taiwan has historically fallen under the Chinese sphere of influence, studies on the island’s early modern history have noted how loosely it was integrated into the Chinese mainland. According to Willis Jr. (1999: 85), Taiwan during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) was “on the outer edge of Chinese consciousness and activity”. This is hardly surprising, because as Anderson (1983: 19–20) points out, old dynastic kingdoms such as China operated through a centre-periphery relation rather than as

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<sup>11</sup> Politically loaded scholarship may be particularly problematic in relation to the history of China’s frontier regions, which include Taiwan. According to Millward (1996: 119), the primary aims of frontier historiography in the PRC, as defined by its Frontier Research Center, include “protecting sovereignty over national territory, handling relations with neighboring countries and strengthening the unity of domestic nationalities”. An article cited by Millward defines this agenda more concretely: “to make widely known the traditional patriotism of the Chinese (Zhonghua) nationalities”, “to strengthen the spirit of Chinese nationalities to save the nation from subjugation”, and to “protect the integrity of our territory”, among other things (ibid.). Based on an analysis of such sources, Millward (ibid.) concludes that the above guidelines are generally accepted in Chinese frontier scholarship. A practical example is how scholarly materials must uniformly call the conquest of frontier regions such as Tibet and Xinjiang “unification” rather than “conquest”, because the latter would imply that these regions were not always part of China (ibid.: 120). Most recently, academic integrity in the PRC has been called into question by reports about the government’s manipulation of historical archives (Bland 2017) and censorship on contentious topics (including Taiwan) that extends increasingly to foreign academic publishers (Hernández 2017).

countries with clear borders. Nation-states in the modern sense did not exist, and accordingly, the concept of “nation” (民族, *mínzú*) would not appear in the Chinese lexicon before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Hughes 1997: 3). In the place of a Chinese nation there existed a fluid sense of Sinocentrism that fluctuated in a constellation of tribute and vassalage around an imperial core. Heaven was high and the emperor far away. Moreover, among the vague borderlands of Ming China, Taiwan was also marginalised by the geographical reality of being an island. In the early modern period, it held significance mostly as a waypoint for East Asian commerce. However, the Ming dynasty was famously averse to private overseas trade, and thus actively discouraged it through sea ban policies (海禁, *hǎijìn*) from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards (Finlay 2008: 334–5).<sup>12</sup> It makes sense, then, that the Ming dynasty itself agreed to the Dutch colonisation of Taiwan in 1624, as the island was low on the emperor’s list of priorities (Willis Jr. 1999: 88). Consequently, it was the Dutch, not the Chinese, that established the first administrative body on the island, thereby acting as a catalyst for Taiwan’s Sinification as they began importing workforce from the mainland to plough their fields (Andrade 2007: 188).

The island factor can work as a separating feature not only from the mainland perspective but also from that of the island itself. Wachman (1994: 92) notes that geographical separation may have contributed to a sense of distinct identity in Taiwan already before the Japanese colonial period. Lowenthal (1994: 22) gives a similar example from Britain, which has famously imagined itself as an Atlantic island rather than a natural part of the European community. The Taiwan Strait is five times wider than the meagre 33 kilometres of the Dover Strait between England and France, so it is not surprising that it should contribute to a sense of isolation. The significance of geography has also been discussed with regard to Japan: Takeuchi (1994: 105) argues that physical isolation produced certain features of Japanese nationalism already before its formal introduction through the Meiji Restoration. These examples suggest that before the age of imagined communities, identities were often demarcated by physical boundaries that

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<sup>12</sup> In Fujian, the province from which most of Taiwan’s Chinese population would later arrive, the Yongle Emperor (r. 1402–1424) even ordered the people to modify their ocean-going vessels so that they could only be used in rivers (Finlay 2008: 335). Though the Ming was particularly famous for the great maritime expeditions of admiral Zheng He, Andrade (2007: 3) notes that they were “an anomaly in a dynasty that in other ways closed itself off from the seas.”

required no imagination.<sup>13</sup>

Within this early non-national context, Taiwan became an explicit part of China after the Manchu conquest on the mainland had overthrown the Ming Dynasty in 1644 and quelled the resistance of Ming loyalist Zheng Chenggong (Koxinga) in Taiwan in 1683. Zheng's forces had expelled the Dutch in 1662 and briefly held Taiwan as their base, trying to mount resistance to the emergent Qing dynasty. After the resistance was defeated and Taiwan was incorporated into the Qing empire, there were few signs of increased interest for the island among the new dynasty. Taiwan was described as a "ball of mud" (Shih & Jones 2014: 3), and the emperor himself wanted to abandon the island and evacuate the Chinese population to the mainland. He was ultimately persuaded to keep the island to prevent it from again becoming a pirate-infested base for insurgency. (Andrade 2007: 260; Shepherd 1999: 108–9.)<sup>14</sup> This seemingly reluctant incorporation of Taiwan into China as a prefecture of Fujian province led to a passive approach to governance: for fear of renewed rebellions, the Qing issued quarantine policies, travel restrictions and harsh immigration rules that discouraged Chinese migration to Taiwan. Moreover, for financial reasons, the Qing never strived to bring the entire island under its control, and large parts remained indigenous territory (Eskildsen 2005: 286). John D. Clark (1896: 5, 13) wrote shortly after Japan's acquisition of Taiwan that "China had never expanded its power to the mountains where the aborigines dwelled" and the Chinese themselves had "marked out on a map" the limit to which their sovereignty on the island extended. Thus, Qing policy in Taiwan was generally characterised by weak state power and has been described accordingly as "negative and minimalist" (Willis Jr. 1999: 102). The Japanese, after eventually gaining control over Taiwan, would in turn describe Qing governance as "supine" (Takekoshi 1907: 75). It was not only the style of government that led to weak integration, but also the lateness of Taiwan's incorporation into China. According to Phillips (1999: 304), this meant that Taiwan's ties to the central government and Confucian culture were comparatively weak. Martin (1994: 43) notes that Qing-era Taiwan was "uniquely isolated from metropolitan authorities by both distance and water",

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<sup>13</sup> Further evidence of the role of geographical isolation is provided by Kinmen and Matsu, two small island groups that remain under ROC control but are located only a few miles from the Chinese coast. Due to their geographical proximity to the mainland, these islands have retained much more contact with China. The mainland is visible from Kinmen, and there have been cross-Strait swimming competitions between the islands and Fujian province. Even at the height of Cold War tensions, fishermen from Kinmen would row their boats to the mainland side, where they blended in with the locals. (Keim 2016b.) Accordingly, the people on the islands overwhelmingly support the KMT, and pan-Green parties have had difficulties establishing a presence there. This suggests that closer links to the mainland have enabled the islands to preserve a sense of Chinese identity.

<sup>14</sup> The Kangxi Emperor's (r. 1661–1722) original stance on Taiwan was that "taking it is no gain; not taking it is no loss" (Shih & Jones 2014: 3).

again emphasising the island factor and the peripheral location. Eskildsen (2005: 286) suggests that the weakness of Qing integration meant that by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the Chinese in Taiwan had come to identify more with the island than with their mainland places of origin.

The above points do not denote the existence of a *national* identity in Taiwan prior to the Japanese colonial period. This is simply because no concept of nationalism had yet entered the collective consciousness in the region. What can be said, however, is that Taiwan was rather loosely connected to the mainland and that this may have made it comparatively susceptible to the dual process of top-down Japanisation and bottom-up Taiwanisation in the subsequent colonial period. In terms of national identity, then, Taiwan was a *tabula rasa*: the community of the nation was as yet unimagined and unnamed. Again, this does not mean Taiwan was not Chinese; it was an unquestionable part of the Qing empire and its population had become predominantly Chinese. But as this study argues, identities are dynamic and thus subject to change. Nationalism would become the foremost ideology driving such a change in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **4.1.2 The Japanese colonial period and the dawn of nations**

The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw both China and Japan facing the threat of alien rule as the doctrine of imperialism drove Western powers to acquire colonies around the world. By the latter half of the century, both countries were seeking ways to resist Western imperialism through reform and modernisation. China launched the Tongzhi Restoration in 1862 and Japan had its Meiji Restoration in 1868. These reform programmes were similar in content but different in outcome – China failed while Japan succeeded. Dreyer (2015: 50–53) catalogues the shortcomings of the Tongzhi Restoration: from railroads, steamships and telegraphs to Western-style education reform, the project rejected or undermined its own efforts whenever they seemed to conflict with the state ideology of Confucianism. Precious time was wasted in the Qing court trying to concoct a functional synthesis of Confucian tradition and Western modernity. Conversely, Japan was able to recalibrate its society by borrowing from the West as necessary. Thus, while China weakened and became a victim of colonisation, Japan became a coloniser itself. That Japan embraced colonialism with modernisation is no surprise, because colonialism at the time was “part and parcel with modernity itself” (Ching 2001: 11). For Japan, the acquisition of colonies was thus a test for achieving great power status, and it was considered not only acceptable but indeed desirable. This is evident in the words of historian Takekoshi Yosaburō, who

chronicled Japan's colonial project in Taiwan in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century: "I cannot but rejoice that we, Japanese, have passed our first examination as a colonizing nation so creditably." (Takekoshi 1907: 11.)

The ultimate demonstration of Japan's success was thus the acquisition of Taiwan as its first colony after the victorious Sino-Japanese War of 1894–5. In retrospect, the timing of this transition holds great significance. As suggested earlier, Taiwan was a *tabula rasa* in terms of national identity. It moved under Japanese rule just as new Western concepts were being transported to the East by capitalist and imperialist expansion. Among the most significant of these concepts was, of course, nationalism. Like colonialism, nationalism was an integral part of modernity. As illustrated in chapter 2, the idea of nationhood rose from the onslaught of industrial capitalism in Europe and moved to Asia through imperialism. Since both nationalism and imperialism were products of modernity, the former was spread around the world by the latter. In East Asia, the proxy for this modernisation was often Japan. Accordingly, it was not only the Taiwanese that were exposed to modernity through Japan; the intellectuals of mainland China were also soaking up new Western theories through their eastern neighbour. It was in Tokyo that Sun Yat-sen, the quintessential Chinese nationalist, set the base for his revolutionary alliance (同盟會, *Tóngménghuì*) that would eventually spearhead the overthrowing of the Qing Dynasty in 1911. Sun appropriated the modern vocabulary that was spreading in East Asia: he used the Chinese term for "nationalism" (民族主義, *mínzú zhǔyì*) for the first time in 1904, after the term itself had been introduced in the Chinese language in 1901 (Yahuda 2000: 27).<sup>15</sup> These elements would be distilled into the formation of the KMT that was founded in 1911 as the successor of the Tongmenghui. It is no surprise, then, that the KMT became known as the Chinese Nationalist Party in English.

From the early 1900s onwards, increasing amounts of Taiwanese went to Japan to pursue higher education as opportunities in the colony itself were non-existent. It was there, in the universities of the imperial metropole, that a new Taiwanese intelligentsia began to form around the imported concepts of Western modernity. This led to the establishment of new associations and print publications to advocate new ideas of liberalism. (Lamley 1999: 230–231.) This, in turn, gave rise to the Taiwanese New

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<sup>15</sup> The word *mínzú* for "nation" is a Chinese translation of the Japanese *minzoku*. Victor H. Mair, professor of Chinese language and literature at the University of Pennsylvania, has assembled "a large amount of material concerning the absence of *mínzú* / *minzoku* 民族 as a lexical item corresponding to 'nation' in China before it was introduced from Meiji [1868-1912] Japan." (Mair 2015.) This further supports the constructionist theory of the modern origin of nations.

Culture Movement (新文化運動, *Xīn wénhuà yùndòng*) that focused on promoting new democratic values. It had its counterpart in the mainland where the May Fourth Movement (五四運動, *Wǔsì yùndòng*) was paving the way for nationalism in the ROC that had been established in 1912. (Chang 1999: 269.) The developments in colonised Taiwan correspond to the general paradox of imperialism noted earlier: in overseas colonies, it was the official nationalism of the empire that prompted the rise of its popular alternative. By simultaneously subjugating native populations and providing them with access to modern learning and concepts, the empires gave their colonial subjects both the motive and the means to seek self-determination.

In Taiwan, this development built upon and spread through an emergent public sphere. This process was very similar to the one described by Anderson in Europe: it manifested in the proliferation of print publications distributed to a vernacularly literate audience. According to Fujii (2006: 70–71), a proper public sphere emerged in Taiwan during the 1930s as Japan's assimilation policies expanded vernacular Japanese literacy. In 1941, 57% of Taiwanese were literate in Japanese, compared with a literacy rate (in Chinese) of less than 10% at the end of the Qing dynasty (*ibid.*: 67). Moreover, the development of a public sphere was complemented by the physical framework of communications and infrastructure: a postal system, telegraph, telephones, roads and railroads. These features were in their infancy at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and it was only with their aggressive expansion during the Japanese colonial period that a physical framework for a public sphere began to evolve. As mentioned earlier, similar developments were taking place in China at the same time: channels and networks were being created through which nationalism could be spread to the newly imagined nation. Emergent modernity provided the East Asian societies with the ideas, terminology, channels, and physical structures required for the construction of national communities. Thus, in terms of the formation of a Taiwanese identity, the significance of the Japanese colonial period was in that it separated Taiwan from China before its modernisation. The important observation therefore seems to be this: despite having belonged to the Qing empire, Taiwan was no longer part of China during the influential period of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when concepts such as nationalism, liberalism and democracy first entered public discourse in the region.

None of this suggests that a clear Taiwanese identity formed during the colonial period. What these developments entail is rather the emergence of a proto-nationalist modern consciousness that would only later lend itself to the creation of a clearly articulated national identity. Yet, there are practical examples from the colonial period

suggesting a form of national awareness. Consider, for example, the explicit demands for self-determination: from the 1920s onwards, the Movement for the Establishment of a Taiwanese Parliament submitted several petitions to the colonial authorities demanding the establishment of a parliament in Taiwan (Lai et al. 1991: 24). Tellingly, the Japanese saw it as a nationalist uprising potentially even seeking independence through secession (Ching 2001: 57–58). According to Hughes (2000: 65), such movements sowed the “seeds of democracy” in Taiwan already during the colonial period. Lai et al. (1991: 19) make a noteworthy point regarding the colonial period and national identity, using the story of young Taiwanese intellectual Peng Ming-min as an example. The authors suggest that Peng was inspired by the philosophy of Joseph Ernest Renan, who concluded that “modern nationhood is based not on a shared language, culture, or ethnic origin but a ‘shared sense of destiny’” (ibid.: 20). This points to a nationalism that looks to the future instead of the past, and to the modern community instead of ethnic nativity. Accordingly, the new worldview adopted by Taiwanese intellectuals was one of individualism and liberalism, but significantly, they did not call for the abandoning of Chinese culture (ibid.: 23). This suggests that the intellectuals of the colonial period separated the goals of their nationalism from their ethnic Chinese heritage.

Above, we thus have the first concrete articulations of the ideas of “self-determination” and “democracy”, the two concepts around which the notion of a distinct Taiwanese identity would later be constructed. Following John R. Searle’s terminology presented in chapter 2, these could be the precursors of the “constitutive rules” required for a commonly accepted social construction. The contestation between self-determination and Japanese dominance represents the crossfire of popular, official, domestic and foreign forces in which national identities rise according to the definition laid out in chapter 2. Consequently, it would be the continued denial of self-determination under the ROC that finally ignited this new national identity in Taiwan.

### **4.1.3 Re-Sinification and ethnic dichotomisation under KMT rule**

The previous sections described the conditions for the formation of Taiwanese identity that emerged during the Qing and Japanese periods. When Japan lost World War II in 1945, Taiwan moved under ROC control, and it was this period that concretised the emergence of Taiwanese identity and saw a shift from calls of self-determination to overt demands of independence. Existing scholarship agrees that the pivotal event in this

process was the February 28 Incident (二二八事件, *Èr'èrbā Shìjiàn*)<sup>16</sup> in 1947 (Dawley 2009: 448–9; Chang 2003: 42–3). The incident itself involved a scuffle between an illegal cigarette vendor and the police, during which a bystander was shot and killed by the police. This led to violent protests and an anti-government uprising that was quelled by the KMT in a brutal crackdown in March that year. The incident was followed by a contentious period of “White Terror” (白色恐怖, *Báisè kǒngbù*) and martial law that would only be lifted in 1987.

The February 28 Incident built upon the volatile situation that had evolved in Taiwan after its return to China following Japan’s defeat in World War II. The situation in mainland China had been chaotic after the ROC was established, as the KMT, headed by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek since 1928, first battled rival warlords and then the emergent Communists and the invading Japanese. The civil war against Mao Zedong’s CCP intensified when Japan was defeated, and this provided the troublesome context for Taiwan’s cession to the ROC in 1945. The Taiwanese initially welcomed the mainlanders as liberators, but the KMT was preoccupied with the civil war on the mainland and could only spare marginal attention to Taiwan (Wachman 1994: 98; Chang 1994: 106). Having enjoyed the status of a “model colony” under Japanese rule, Taiwan again fell towards the bottom of the central government’s list of priorities. During the Qing era, peripheral status had made Taiwan a restive society characterised by unrest: sub-ethnic conflict<sup>17</sup> and anti-government insurrections had been frequent throughout that period (Shepherd 1999: 113–128; Takekoshi 1907: 69–70). The early ROC period saw echoes of this history; one concrete problem in this regard was the lack of sufficient police and military forces in Taiwan to maintain social harmony (Lai et al. 1991: 89). Further trouble was created by the gap between the realities of KMT and Japanese rule: Taiwan’s living standards, including education, sanitation, economic and industrial conditions, and infrastructure, had all exceeded those of mainland China during the colonial period (Phillips 1999: 280; Lai et al. 1991: 26).<sup>18</sup> In this regard, despite the notion of liberation,

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<sup>16</sup> Both sides have preferred to use the word “incident” (事件, *shìjiàn*) to minimise negative connotations. Lai et al. (1991: 8) argue that this veils the true nature of the event, and they favour the word “uprising” instead. They point out that the government and police forces lost control of Taiwan’s urban areas, and the nine largest cities were taken over by rebels. This paper recognises that the events constituted an uprising, but I have chosen to use the commonly used term for the sake of clarity.

<sup>17</sup> Although the pre-1945 Taiwanese would later become an ethnic group in themselves (*benshengren*), they consisted of various ethnic subgroups. The three major groups were the Quanzhou and Zhangzhou from Fujian and the Hakka from Guangdong province. There was substantial armed struggle between these groups in Taiwan during the Qing dynasty. The conflict subsided from the 1860s onwards as a wider sense of common identity began to prevail. (Jacobs, 2014: 54–6.)

<sup>18</sup> Lai et al. (1991: 26) suggest that by the late 1930s, Taiwan’s per capita income may have been nearly twice that of China.

the arrival of the KMT was a step backward for Taiwan. Moreover, according to Phillips (ibid.: 282), the Taiwanese came to notice that KMT rule lacked “honesty, competence, predictability and efficiency”. Compared to the Japanese, the Chinese mainlanders were seen as lawless, barbaric, corrupt, feudal and disorganised (Wachman 1994: 94–5; Chang 1994: 106). These observations were similar to those made by the Japanese when they gained control over Taiwan: Takekoshi (1907: 293–4) described a culture of bribery and corruption and the ensuing barbarism and lack of moral fibre in Qing-era Taiwan. This was one of the ways in which the colonial period drove a wedge between Taiwan and the mainland: it seemingly elevated Taiwan to a position where its inhabitants came to see the Chinese as the Japanese had seen them half a century earlier. Prejudice and xenophobia may have factored in this sense of otherness, but it was also a logical reaction stemming from decades of socio-cultural separation. The result was a substantial first-hand experience of otherness. Many Taiwanese had undoubtedly fostered their Chinese roots while awaiting to be reunified with the mainland, but the arrival of the mainlanders showed how the nostalgic longing was at odds with contemporary reality. As noted in chapter 2, the negative experience of otherness is a significant factor in the consolidation of identities.

The above factors contaminated the tense relationship between the Japanised Taiwanese and the mainlanders who were, in turn, understandably wary of lingering collaborationism. As a result, the Taiwanese and the mainlanders became divided into two opposing groups based on their time of arrival to the island: the Taiwanese who had arrived prior to 1945 (本省人, *běnsǎngrén*, lit. “people from the province”) and those who arrived from the mainland in 1945–1951 (外省人, *wàishǎngrén*, lit. “people from outside the province”) (Chang 1994: 93–4). In the prevailing social context of mutual animosity, these categories came to be regarded as ethnic groups in Taiwan despite significant differences in ethnic, cultural, or provincial origins within the groups themselves. Ironically, Taiwan’s indigenous people were not included in the *běnsǎngrén* category despite being the original inhabitants of the island. (Ibid.: 104–5.)

Aside from the perceived ethnic differences between these groups, the main frustration among the *běnsǎngrén* was the emerging *wàishǎngrén* domination. Unhappy with this, the *běnsǎngrén* continued their demands for wider self-government in 1946, citing the different situations between Taiwan and other provinces. In 1947, these demands were further combined with the grievances arising from the February 28 Incident, and the KMT government interpreted this much like the Japanese had done with similar demands in the colonial period: as a separatist and revolutionary movement. The

result was turmoil and the imposition of martial law and a forced decolonisation project. (Phillips 1999: 292–5.) The KMT government then proceeded to implement forceful re-Sinification efforts to eradicate Japanese influences and language. Schools began teaching Chinese history and geography based on the idea that the mainland was still ruled by the ROC (Li 2016: 2). Mandarin was made the new national language (國語, *guóyǔ*), which presented similar problems as the earlier Japanese assimilationist language policies. The original native language of most Taiwanese was not Mandarin, but Hokkien.<sup>19</sup> Thus, replacing Japanese with Mandarin did not represent a “return” to the precolonial Chinese reality; instead, it was yet another campaign of top-down assimilation, inherently connected to the nationalist project of the KMT.

The above suggests that the KMT’s version of “official nationalism” closely resembles that of the Japanese and the Russian empires described by Seton-Watson and Anderson (chapter 2). These policies shared the same objective: to extinguish the nascent grassroots nationalisms that threatened the unity of the empire. All of this happened in the context of KMT and *wàishěngrén* domination that excluded the Taiwanese from virtually all decision-making. The number of *běnsěngrén* in the KMT’s Central Committee never exceeded 10% until 1976 (Wu 1994: 155). In society itself, the *wàishěngrén* were a clear elite minority, as over 80% of the population were *běnsěngrén* (Chang 1994: 94). It is thus not surprising that many in Taiwan now consider the period of KMT rule as yet another case of colonisation and the ROC as an illegitimate colonial government. Indeed, some scholars have also argued that the KMT party-state was simply another colonial government (see for example Jacobs 2014: 48).

The peculiarity of Taiwan’s re-Sinification under KMT rule was that it built upon an obsolete version of Chineseness. The ROC’s loss of the mainland meant that “the ‘mainland’ culture that was introduced to the island was frozen in time” (Li 2016: 2). As time passed, this version of China became increasingly distant from the reality of the mainland. Since 1949, the PRC “had moved the national capital, redrawn and renamed provinces and cities, signed new border treaties with some seventeen countries, and built new motorways and railway lines, none of which made their way into the maps and geography textbooks used in Taiwan” (ibid.). This inconsistency of reality and narrative

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<sup>19</sup> Most Taiwanese speak natively the Taiwanese variant of Hokkien (臺灣閩南語, *Táiwān Mǐnnányǔ*), a branch of the Southern Min dialect. In Taiwan, this language is usually referred to as simply “Taiwanese” (臺語, *Táiyǔ* or 臺灣話, *Táiwānhuà*). A linguistic debate exists around the relationships between Sinitic languages, much of it concentrated on whether the many Chinese “dialects” are, in fact, separate languages. This is due to the dialects being mutually unintelligible, which is true also for Hokkien and Mandarin. (See for example Mair 2003.) In Taiwan, the Hokkien/Mandarin debate is understandably an important aspect of the Taiwanese/Chinese identity issue.

was exacerbated by the KMT's efforts to control information by e.g. banning mainland books in Taiwan. The result, according to Li (*ibid.*: 3), was the top-down creation of an "imaginary homeland". As such, the KMT's Sinification effort corresponds closely to the notion of official nationalism described in chapter 2.

The above points suggest that, just like the Japanese colonial administration, the KMT represented assimilationist minority rule by a group of foreign elites. Furthermore, the KMT government rivalled its predecessors in terms of the scale of oppression; the martial law imposed in 1949 would go on to last for 38 years, a world record at the time. Taiwanese reactions to KMT rule were also similar to the Japanese colonial period: under both regimes, the people had called for self-determination to have a voice in the development and administration of their home island. It seems that these demands were not secessionist in nature, but both the Japanese and the KMT dismissed them as such. For the KMT, such demands represented a particularly dire existential threat after it had lost the mainland and Taiwan was all it was left with. Consequently, official nationalism cracked down on its popular alternative, and the foreign trumped the domestic. However, the Taiwanese consciousness continued to simmer under the surface.

## **4.2 Identity and politics in contemporary Taiwan**

By the 1970s, the complexities of the Japanese and KMT regimes had produced a rather peculiar ethnic dichotomy. A binary classification was constructed for Taiwan's population based not on actual differences in ethnic heritage, but on a single dividing line in the time of arrival to the island. As such, this categorisation lends support for the constructionist premise. This notion is further complemented by the later developments in Taiwan's history presented in the following sections. As soon as the political environment in Taiwan was liberalised, the ethnic dichotomy became the basic cleavage dividing the Taiwanese party system. This suggests that at its core, the dispute between the *wàishěngrén* and *běnsěngrén* may have always been more political than ethnic.

### **4.2.1 Democratisation and political dichotomisation**

After 1949, the KMT initially managed to hold onto its dream of the mainland as it was internationally considered the legitimate government of China. However, the goal of retaking the mainland began to crumble in the early 1970s with the Sino-US rapprochement of the Nixon administration and the ROC's expulsion from the United

Nations in favour of the PRC. This meant a loss of international legitimacy that marginalised the ROC and forced the KMT to begin focusing on Taiwan itself. Premier Chiang Ching-kuo, son of Chiang Kai-shek, began allowing more Taiwanese people to the administration from 1973 onwards and prepared for political change. Tucker (2009: 63) suggests this was a strategy to earn more public and foreign support for the ROC while emphasising the illiberal nature of the PRC. Chang (1994: 99) presents this change as the beginning of the policy of “Taiwanisation” (本土化, *běntǔhuà*), although Chiang himself denied the existence of such a policy at the time because it would have implied the existence of a distinct Taiwanese identity.

The social cleavage between the *wàishěngrén* and *běnsěngrén* had emerged in the years following Taiwan’s cession to the ROC, but the KMT’s one-party rule and the martial law had prevented it from entering the political stage. However, just as the ROC’s loss of legitimacy led to increasing Taiwanisation within the KMT, it also provided an impetus for a Taiwanese opposition movement outside the party. Since the KMT was still an inherently *wàishěngrén* entity, the opposition naturally built upon the *běnsěngrén* population. According to Wachman (1994: 135–136), the opposition took advantage of the KMT’s diminishing legitimacy and began to take a more constructive, restrained approach to politics in the 1970s. This led to a crucial juncture in Taiwan’s democratisation: the establishment of the Tangwai (黨外, *Dǎngwài*, lit. “outside the party”) movement in 1977 (*ibid.*). Although the KMT had kept national politics to itself, it allowed others to compete in local elections, and the Tangwai won impressive grassroots victories in the liberalising political climate of the late 1970s (Rubinstein 1999: 440).

The rise of the opposition movement in the 1970s built upon a similar process as the self-determination movement during the Japanese colonial period. Hughes (2000: 68) notes the articulation of a distinct Taiwanese identity in the 1970s through nativist literature similar to that of colonial Taiwan. This literary trend was complemented by opposition magazines set up by exiled dissidents around the same time (*ibid.*). Thus, just like earlier in the colonial period, nationalist ideas spread through a public sphere built around communicative media. In the colonial period, this was facilitated by a vernacular literacy in Japanese, but by the late 1970s this had been replaced by a Chinese literacy rate that exceeded 90%, meaning that the activists could publish in Chinese for an almost fully literate audience (Chang 2003: 50). Tsai (2003: 67) views this process through the theories of both Benedict Anderson and Jürgen Habermas: for Anderson, it was print-capitalism that gave rise to nations, whereas Habermas views a literature sphere as a precondition for a political public sphere. In both accounts, communicative media is the

key element of social transformation. In the case of Taiwan, the nativist elements thus filtered from the literary scene to politics.

In a very concrete example of the public sphere facilitating political mobilisation, the Tangwai established the Formosa Magazine (美麗島雜誌, *Měilidǎo zázhi*) in 1979 and opened a “service office” for the magazine. In reality, the office served as the headquarters of the Tangwai, since the formal organisation of opposition parties was still banned by the KMT. From this office, the Tangwai activists began organising opposition activities, culminating in a rally held on 10 December 1979 to mark the International Human Rights Day. The event turned into a violent confrontation where many policemen were injured, and a substantial number of opposition leaders and supporters of the Formosa Magazine were jailed. (Ibid.: 73–4.) According to Wachman (1994: 140), it has been speculated that the authorities used the event as a trap for the opposition to gain a pretext for arresting their leaders. Now known as the Kaohsiung Incident (美麗島事件, *Měilidǎo shìjiàn*), the event halted the opposition movement, but it arguably strengthened the opposition in the long run as supporters of the movement were elected into office in the 1980 and 1981 elections (Ibid.: 141; Tsai 2003: 76).

Tsai (ibid.: 76–7) notes that the Kaohsiung Incident galvanised the opposition public sphere, with political magazines and young writers communicating the ideals of democracy to the people. Taiwanese people’s right to self-determination again became the most prominent mobilising theme due to international and social support for the concept (ibid.: 77). Underlying the notion of self-determination were the vivid debates in the public sphere about the nature of a Taiwanese consciousness and Taiwan’s relation to China. In Tsai’s (ibid.: 80–1) analysis, the common denominator in these debates was the notion of a land-based identity built upon self-determination and social democracy. Again, this conceptualisation echoes the notion mentioned with regard to the intellectuals of the Japanese colonial period, whereby it was aspects other than ethnicity that were driving Taiwanese nationalism.

The rising tide of opposition forced Chiang Ching-kuo to initiate political reforms. Wachman (1994: 141–3) suggests that this was a strategy born out of necessity rather than will: had Chiang seen a possibility to continue suppression, he probably would have. Concessions to the opposition were thus intended to support the KMT’s feeble legitimacy. This led the KMT to begin the process of democratisation in 1986: civil liberties were introduced and the longstanding martial law was lifted in 1987. Opposition parties would soon be allowed, and the Tangwai reorganised itself into the Democratic Progressive Party in the fall of 1986, marking the first step from one-party rule towards a political

dichotomy. (Ibid.: 143–6.)

A significant consequence of the 1980s liberalisation was that it exposed the fictitious nature of the KMT's official version of Chinese identity. With the lifting of the martial law, Taiwanese were again able to travel to the mainland, and they began noticing that the China they had learned about was not the one that actually existed (Li 2016: 5). This was yet another case of coming to first-hand contact with otherness that conflicted with the prevalent notion of Chineseness. In the 1940s, the Taiwanese had noted the otherness of the mainlanders who took over the island, and the KMT had responded by attempting to erase the difference through heavy-handed assimilation. Now, with the freedom to visit the mainland, the Taiwanese were again allowed to experience that otherness, and this fractured the official version of Chinese identity: “Once the longed-for home is within reach, imagined worlds collapse, and the vitality and creativity born of the nostalgia and hunger of a generation of exiles is suddenly doused, reduced to little more than a distant memory.” (Li 2016: 11.)

Within this context, and in line with the themes of the literary debates that had laid ground for the emergence of political opposition, the party platform of the newly established DPP emphasised self-determination. According to Chang (1994: 96), the demand for self-determination referred implicitly to the *běnsǎngrén* while portraying the KMT as “outsiders”. This was reflected in the support base of the KMT and the DPP: a clear majority of DPP supporters were of Taiwanese descent, while virtually all those of mainland origin supported the KMT (ibid.: 95; Wu 1994: 151). Thus, the stage was set for the politicisation of the identity question and the corresponding ethno-political dichotomisation. By the mid-90s, the *běnsǎngrén/wàishǎngrén* dichotomy had become “the main social cleavage upon which differences in political support and national identity are based” (Wu 1994: 151). Consequently, a key question in the democratising Taiwan of the 1990s was how democratisation would eventually affect this ethnic tension. Wu (ibid.: 167) notes that liberalisation overall seemed to exacerbate ethnic polarisation as it was now the *wàishǎngrén* that began feeling threatened by the increasing Taiwanisation. However, Wu (ibid.: 152) also points out that many observers and some opposition leaders at the time suggested that the ethnic tension would diminish when the unjust *wàishǎngrén* domination was replaced by more representative politics.

The quest for self-determination was concretised in the DPP's stated goal of formal Taiwanese independence, which was their main agenda up until the 1996 elections. However, according to Hughes (2000: 72–3), this hard-line pro-independence stance did not resonate with the general public, leading to poor election results for the DPP.

**Table 5:** Power relations in Taiwanese politics after democratisation.

Legislature			President	
Term	Largest party (seats)	Majority (seats)	Term	Party (president)
1992–1995*	KMT (95/161)	KMT (95/161)	1996– 2000**	KMT (Lee Teng-hui)
1995–1998	KMT (85/164)	KMT (85/164)		
1998–2001	KMT (123/225)	KMT (123/225)		
2001–2004	DPP (87/225)	Pan-Blue (115/225)	2000–2004	DPP (Chen Shui-bian)
2004–2008	DPP (89/225)	Pan-Blue (114/225)	2004–2008	DPP (Chen Shui-bian)
2008–2012	KMT (81/113)	Pan-Blue (85/113)	2008–2012	KMT (Ma Ying-jeou)
2012–2016	KMT (64/113)	Pan-Blue (69/113)	2012–2016	KMT (Ma Ying-jeou)
2016–	DPP (68/113)	DPP (68/113)	2016–	DPP (Tsai Ing-wen)

\* First direct legislative election in 1992.

\*\* First direct presidential election in 1996.

Meanwhile, the KMT fared better due to its Taiwanisation and a more moderate policy of maintaining the status quo instead of campaigning actively for unification with China (ibid.: 73). The power relations of the two parties after democratisation are presented in table 5, showing that KMT managed to hold onto its legislative majority for a decade after democratisation, and even after that through a Pan-Blue coalition.<sup>20</sup> These points suggest that the ethnic cleavage does not correspond directly to independence/unification stances, and indeed, Hughes (ibid.: 74) suggests that democratisation in the 1990s has moved Taiwan towards becoming a post-nationalist community that favours the ambiguous status quo. Consequently, by the turn of the millennium, Taiwan was also exhibiting a “post-nationalist” identity which represented an intermediate stance between the two extremes of Chinese and Taiwanese (ibid.: 77). Chang (2003: 53–4) presents a similar viewpoint, arguing that a pragmatic belief in economic prosperity and development has become the most agreed-upon aspect in Taiwan since the late 1990s. Thus, rather than subscribing to Chinese or Taiwanese nationalism, the Taiwanese, by and large, began to support a stable but ambiguous middle ground that promised continued development. Thus, the DPP started becoming competitive in elections once it adopted a more moderate stance on the independence issue. Similarly, the KMT was able to maintain its popularity after democratisation by moderating its stance on unification and increasing its efforts in Taiwanisation. The KMT’s Taiwanisation policy was personified in Lee Teng-hui, an

<sup>20</sup> The KMT/DPP dichotomy has meant that Taiwanese politics is often organised into two opposing camps, the Pan-Blue (the KMT and its allies) and Pan-Green (the DPP and its allies). The blue and green colours come from the insignia of the KMT and the DPP, respectively. Despite its name, the Pan-Green camp should not be confused with the global green movement of environmentalist parties.

ethnic *běnsǎngrén* KMT member who became president after Chiang Ching-kuo's death in 1988 and won Taiwan's first direct presidential elections in 1996 (see table 5).

The above suggests that instead of a clear drive for Taiwanese nationalism and independence, democratisation produced some sort of a hybrid community balancing between Chinese heritage and contemporary Taiwanese reality. Several studies on the early 2000s situation (e.g. Huang et al. 2004; Chu 2004; Schubert 2004; Chen 2012) have noted this trend and suggest that the mainstream national identity was characterised by both Taiwanese and Chinese elements. As Chu (2004: 502) points out, the decline of the KMT's notion of a Chinese identity did not appear to translate to a rise in a distinct Taiwanese identity, but rather a dual Taiwanese/Chinese identity. Chen (2012: 848) notes how much of the scholarship has treated this through the ethnic/civic categorisation presented in chapter 2: the Chinese side of identity stems from ethnic and cultural heritage, while the Taiwanese side is defined through politics and citizenship. This suggests that the ethnic dichotomy of *wàishǎngrén/běnsǎngrén* was indeed rather arbitrary, and has therefore given way to another duality: that of ethnic Chinese and civic Taiwanese identities.

#### 4.2.2 Taiwanese identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

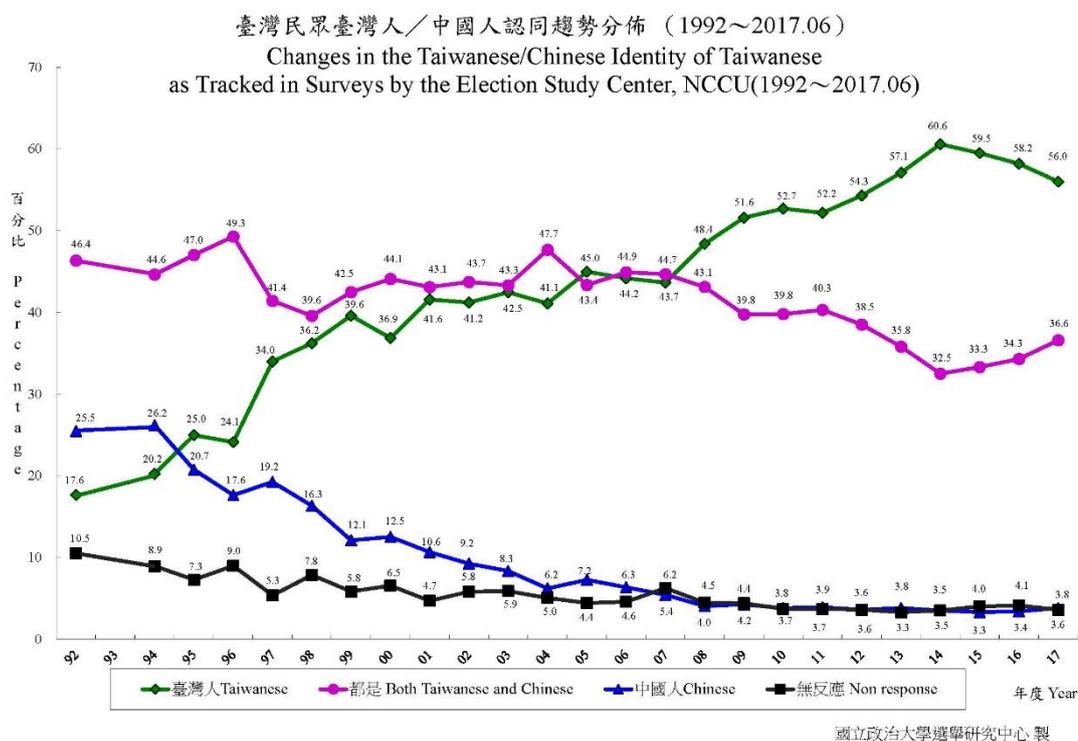
One sign of the Taiwanese identity question gaining prominence after democratisation is that developments in national identity and independence/unification opinions have been surveyed periodically since the early 1990s. The most substantial ongoing cross-sectional data is provided by the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University (ESC NCCU)<sup>21</sup>, which has surveyed national identity since 1992 and independence/unification stances since 1994. The dominant dual identity of the 1990s and early 2000s, suggested by the studies cited in the previous section, is also visible in the ESC NCCU data (figure 1, next page). Between 1992 and 2005, the most popular option for national identity was "Both Taiwanese and Chinese". However, the clearest trend throughout the survey data is the rise of Taiwanese identity from 17.6% in 1992 to 60.6% in 2014, and the simultaneous decline of Chinese identity from 25.5% to less than 4%. This means that while the percentage of people with a dual identity was relatively stable through the 1990s and early 2000s, the overall development was clearly towards a more distinct Taiwanese

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<sup>21</sup> The ESC NCCU survey data is considered authoritative and has been cited in numerous studies (e.g. Chen 2015, Fell 2014, Liao et al. 2013, Wu 2005). This study relies mainly on the ESC NCCU data when looking at the development of Taiwanese identity.

identity. This data supports the point mentioned in the previous section about the artificial nature of the Chinese identity constructed during the KMT's one-party rule: that identity has declined in tandem with the dismantling of the KMT's party-state hegemony.

**Figure 1:** Taiwanese/Chinese identity in Taiwan, 1992–2017.



Source: ESC NCCU 2017.

The longstanding prominence of the dual identity has prompted studies that analyse the situation through the ethnic/civic categorisation. Chen (2012: 851–6) uses a duality of “primordial” and “political” dimensions, where the former includes factors such as ethnic identity, ethnic difference, ethnic pride, and shared fate, and the latter includes national status, self-determination, national survival, and shared experience. Schubert (2004: 537) notes that the Chinese identity in Taiwan is more connected to the ethnic (or primordial) aspects, while the Taiwanese identity stems from historical and political factors. According to Chen (2014: 541), KMT and DPP support in the 2010s still correlate respectively with Chinese and Taiwanese identities. The political dichotomy of the KMT and the DPP could thus be said to reflect the ethnic/civic duality: the KMT emphasises the Chinese ethnic heritage and thus advocates for political unification, while the DPP downplays the Chinese ethnic heritage and thus advocates for political self-determination. Similarly, as noted in the previous section, the KMT usually commands

*wàishěngrén* support, while the *běnsěngrén* tend to support the DPP. However, these tendencies have become more subtle in the 2000s, and the peoples' ambiguous dual identity and support of cross-Strait status quo have been reflected by the main parties' moderate stances. Thus, in light of survey data and previous research, it could be said that a political convergence of sorts emerged around a hybrid identity in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

However, another key takeaway from the ESC NCCU data in figure 1 is the surge in Taiwanese identity that began in 2008 and was accompanied by a corresponding drop in the “Both” identity: Between 2007 and 2014, Taiwanese identity went from 43.7% to 60.6% while the dual identity fell from 44.7% to 32.5%. Significantly, this happened simultaneously with the economic and political cross-Strait integration under a KMT government as discussed in chapter 2. The strengthening of Taiwanese identity peaked in 2014 and has since reversed slightly, but Taiwanese identity remains clearly dominant. Table 6 shows a comparison of the latest ESC NCCU figures and two other recent surveys by the Taiwan Brain Trust (TBT) and the Taiwanese Public Opinion Foundation (TPOF), both of which show a similarly dominant Taiwanese identity.

**Table 6:** Taiwanese/Chinese identity in recent surveys.

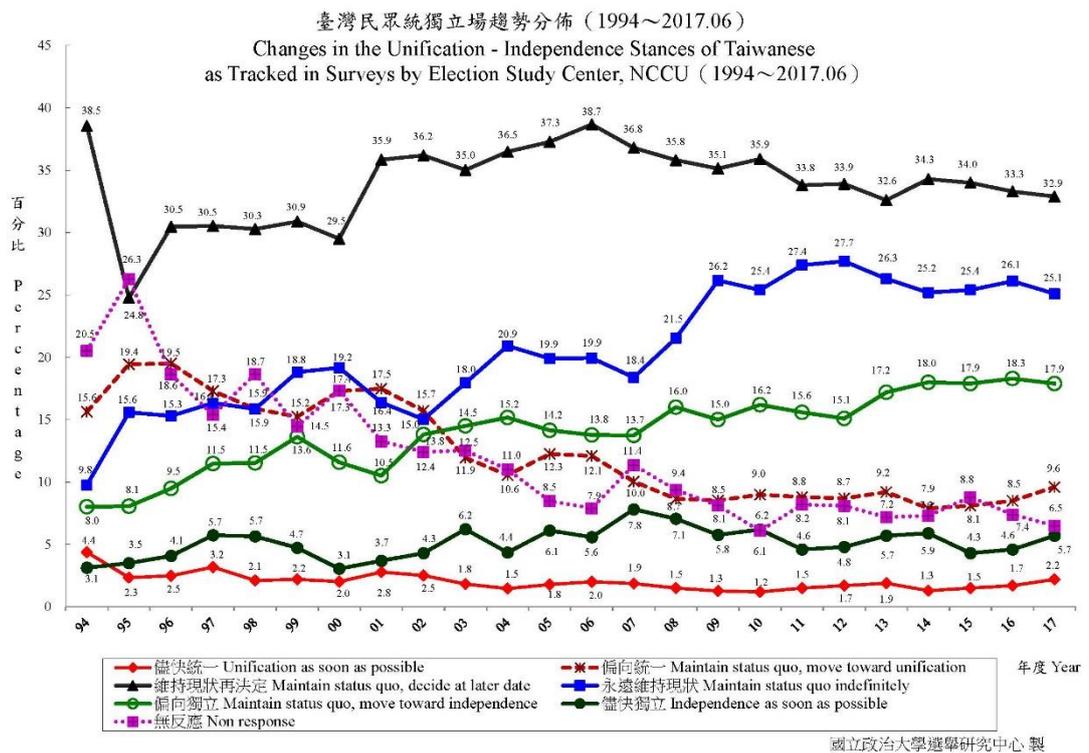
Survey	Identity, %			
	Taiwanese	Both Taiwanese and Chinese	Chinese	No response
<b>ESC NCCU 2017</b>	56.0	36.6	3.8	3.6
<b>TBT 2016</b>	60.4	33.5	4.1	2.0
<b>TPOF 2016</b>	80.8	7.6	8.1	3.5

Source: ESC NCCU 2017; TBT 2016; Yu & Wu 2016.

The ESC NCCU survey has also measured stances toward unification and independence since 1994 (figure 2, next page). This data continues to show a clearer pragmatic ambiguity than the identity surveys, as the clear majority of Taiwanese still seem to favour the status quo without moving towards unification or independence. Yet, even in this data, the tables have clearly turned between 1994 and 2017. As figure 2 shows, a combined 20% had a pro-unification opinion in 1994 while a combined 11.1% were pro-independence, but today, the figures are 11,8% and 23,6% respectively. Notably, the number of respondents with no response has declined from over 20% to less than 10% during the same period. Interestingly, today's pro-independence leaning becomes even more pronounced in surveys that omit the status quo option altogether and only present

unification and independence as options. The TBT included such a survey question in 2016, and as a result, 60.5% of the respondents supported independence while 22.4% supported unification and 17.1% had no clear opinion (TBT 2016). This suggests that the broad support for status quo may actually mask a dominant pro-independence stance due to pragmatic concerns about the threat of conflict with China.

**Figure 2:** Unification/independence stances in Taiwan, 1994–2017.



Source: ESC NCCU 2017.

As demonstrated above, the recent figures suggest a clear consolidation of Taiwanese identity over Chinese and a pro-independence opinion over unification, and this has been observed in the most recent studies as well. As Dawley (2009: 450) asserts based on a review of recent scholarship, “an independence-oriented national identity” has become hegemonic “largely through literary and political movements in the last decades of the 20th century”. In addition to suggesting a dominant pro-independence identity, this notion supports the analyses cited in the previous section about the importance of the nativist literary movement and its influence on Taiwanese politics. Generational changes have also been noted as an important factor behind the identity shift and increasing support for independence. With the passing of the first generation of *wàishěngrén* and a new generation of Taiwanese youth taking its place, identity and political opinions naturally begin reflecting the Taiwanese perspective. (Liao et al. 2013; Huang 2016.) Liao

et al.'s (2013: 285–6) survey data analysis points to the importance of political events in identity change: periods of decline in Chinese identity have coincided with PRC actions that are viewed unfavourably in Taiwan, and such events have the strongest effect on younger and highly educated generations. Huang (2016) also notes the importance of education, as his results point to the influence of the new Taiwan-centric school curriculum implemented in 1999.

Despite the notable increase in Taiwanese identity, some recent studies still emphasise ambiguity. Yang (2016) suggests that Taiwanese attitudes toward cross-Strait relations are becoming “more and more ambivalent” because the rise in Taiwanese identity is counterbalanced by increasing economic and political integration. This results in a “tug of war” between identity and economic interest, where the latter keeps unification-oriented identities alive. Zhong’s (2016) survey analysis suggests that the dominant Taiwanese identity still contains a duality in which the Taiwanese have a separate state identity from the PRC but view themselves as part of the “Chinese nation” (中華民族, *Zhōnghuá mínzú*) due to common “blood and culture” (ibid.: 341). Common to the above studies is the notion that the Chinese side of the identity issue is represented by the PRC and the mainland. Thus, as the ethnic Chinese focus on the *wàishěngrén* has faded domestically in Taiwan, the mainland itself has become the anchor of Chinese identity. To this effect, Zhong (ibid.) concludes that there is still no consensus on national identity in Taiwan since close to one third of Taiwanese do not object to being called “Chinese”.

The above notion of an overarching ethnic Chinese nation is similar to what Wei (1997) has suggested already two decades earlier. In this view, Taiwan and China should be viewed not as “divided states” but as a “multi-system nation”. Instead of a division into two political systems based on culture or ethnicity, they represent the coexistence of two political systems within a single nation: “one nation, two systems” (ibid.: 3). This conceptualisation bears obvious resemblance to China’s model of “One country, two systems” (一國兩制, *Yīguó liǎngzhì*) under which Hong Kong moved back to Chinese rule in 1997 and which China has offered to Taiwan as well. Indeed, the very discourse of “blood ties” uniting the Chinese and the Taiwanese is something the PRC has used as a basis for its demands for unification. In the 2015 meeting between the leaders of China and Taiwan, Chinese president Xi Jinping remarked that “no force can pull apart” the Chinese and the Taiwanese because “blood is thicker than water” (Connor 2015). In accordance with this view, Chinese official rhetoric frequently describes the Taiwanese as “compatriots” (同胞, *tóngbāo*). Link (2015) notes that the original Chinese term

actually comes closer to the meaning of “born of the same parents”. The PRC rhetoric thus puts significant emphasis on ethnicity as the basis of unification.

An important point regarding the studies of Zhong and Wei is that they employ the concept of “nation” in describing the link between China and Taiwan. Thus, the nation functions as an umbrella entity that can contain multiple states. This implies a hierarchy in which the Chinese nation is the topmost framework, and it is thus not surprising that such notions have been used to advocate for unification. However, as discussed, the concept of a nation is a modern Western import that only appeared in China at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, nations need not be based on ethnic communities; they can also be grounded in civic communities or form a combination of the two. The “Chinese nation” described by Zhong and Wei is thus a socially constructed community grounded in shared ethno-cultural heritage, but the connotation in the discourse seems to be that “ethnicity” and “nation” are synonymous. This is likely because the Chinese word for nation (*mínzú*) has also been used in the meaning of “ethnic group” or “ethnicity”. As Huang et al. (1994: 14–15) point out, one of the problems of discussing ethnicity in the Chinese context is that there is no direct equivalent for the term in Chinese, and the word *mínzú* has thus been used for this purpose. However, this blends the two concepts together and easily leads to a primordialist notion of an ethnic Chinese nation that serves as the basis of political claims. Rather than talk about a Chinese nation united by blood, it might thus be better to describe the Taiwanese simply as “ethnic Chinese”.

In addition to the ethnic/civic duality of national identity in contemporary Taiwan, recent research has also noted the curious parallel processes of increasing cross-Strait integration and strengthening Taiwanese identity (e.g. Lin 2007; Wu 2005; Chu 2004; Chu 1997). Deepening economic interdependence, as discussed in chapter 2, has occurred in tandem with the rejection of Chinese identity. This is significant because it goes against some of the earlier hypotheses of economic integration facilitating unification. For example, Wei (1997: 7) suggests that increasing trade and tourism form “linkage communities”: groups of people who have contacts with the other side and thus develop deeper mutual understanding. Consequently, as cross-Strait integration increases, such linkage communities would grow, “paving the way for a gradual and peaceful integration of the two Chinese societies on either side of the Taiwan Strait” (ibid.: 15). Chen (2014: 543) gives a similar description of the situation in the 1990s, finding that economic integration “helped neutralise Taiwanese radical identity politics and encouraged the acceptance of a Chinese national identity”. However, this trend ended under DPP rule in the early 2000s, which Chen describes as “surprising”. Chen explains this with domestic

party politics, noting the DPP government's emphasis on Taiwanese consciousness and Taiwan's national status. (Ibid.)

The party politics explanation appears problematic in light of subsequent events. Following the DPP's Chen Shui-bian as president in 2008, the KMT's Ma Ying-jeou initiated a surge in politico-economic rapprochement that created unprecedented trade and tourism opportunities while also bringing Taiwan closer to China politically. The logic employed by Wei and Chen would suggest that economic integration with a pro-China KMT president would steer the Taiwanese toward a Chinese identity. This seems to have been president Ma's intention as well, as he stated in the beginning of his term that he expected the rapprochement to foster cooperation across the Strait:

When you have more trade, more investment, more contact – cultural, educational – particularly among the young people, when they make friends with their contemporaries on the other side of the Taiwan Strait, I'm sure friendship, you know, cooperation instead of hostility, will grow. I'm sure that the perception, you know, of the other side will change dramatically as a result. And this, exactly, is our purpose. (The New York Times 2008.)

Yet, in many ways, the opposite happened. As can be seen in the survey data presented earlier, the distinct Taiwanese identity started becoming dominant immediately after Ma Ying-jeou became president. By the end of Ma's presidency in 2016, almost 60% of Taiwanese identified simply as "Taiwanese", compared with 44% in the last year of Chen Shui-bian's administration. Many factors are undoubtedly at play in this development, but it appears clear that deeper integration has failed to produce a more pro-China atmosphere. Instead, the dual processes of economic integration and rising Taiwanese identity collided to form a social movement that was squarely against Ma Ying-jeou, the KMT, and the notion of unification under a Chinese nation. It would go on to bring a transformation in the Taiwanese political landscape.

### **4.1.3 The Sunflower Movement**

As noted earlier, the period of 2008–2016 was marked by Ma Ying-jeou's administration seeking a significant increase in cross-Strait integration. Major steps were taken to this direction with the opening of the "three links" and the introduction of the ECFA and CSSTA trade agreements. Concerns over economic dependency jeopardising Taiwan's sovereignty were voiced by the DPP and activists already in early 2010 when the ECFA was being drafted. The DPP called for a referendum on the trade agreement and accused

Ma's administration of ignoring public opinion by proceeding without one (Mo & Chao 2010). The ECFA was signed in June 2010 with Taiwanese NGOs criticising the lack of transparency in the government's negotiations with China (Chao 2010). One of the first protests to directly target increasing economic integration with China was the 2012 Anti-Media Monopoly Movement (反媒體壟斷運動, *Fǎn méitǐ lǒngduàn yùndòng*) that protested against increasing Chinese control over Taiwan's media businesses. According to Kaeding (2015: 211), it was a direct continuation of the 2008 Wild Strawberries Movement (野草莓運動, *Yě cǎoméi yùndòng*) that arose from protests during the first visit of a Chinese envoy to Taiwan after Ma Ying-jeou's rapprochement policies began. The timing of these two movements suggests that concern over China's economic leverage over Taiwan began mounting almost as soon as Ma Ying-jeou took office. It could thus be said that three parallel and interconnected processes began in 2008: politico-economic rapprochement in cross-Strait relations, public concern over increasing Chinese influence, and a notable surge in a distinct Taiwanese identity.

Further resistance rose on a larger scale with the signing of the CSSTA in July 2013. Civic organisations once again staged protests over the lack of transparency and the perceived disadvantage to Taiwanese industries and national security (Chang 2013). A group of influential labour, gender, environmental, welfare, and human rights NGOs formed a coalition called the Democratic Front Against Cross-Strait Trade in Services Agreement (反黑箱服貿民主陣線, *Fǎn hēixiāng fú mào mínzhǔ zhènxiàn*) in July 2013. The group raised public awareness of the lack of transparency in the drafting of the CSSTA, calling the process a "black box" (黑箱, *hēixiāng*).<sup>22</sup> Joining the resistance in September, a group of student activists established the Black Island Nation Youth Front (黑色島國青年陣線, *Hēisè dǎoguo qīngnián zhènxiàn*). The movement was able to build upon the surge of student activism in Taiwan that had been initiated by the Wild Strawberries Movement (Ho 2015: 78.) According to Kaeding (2015: 211), the most important legacy of the Wild Strawberries Movement had been that it reintroduced questions of democracy and civil liberties in public debate and created a network of young activists that formed the basis for subsequent protest movements.

The Democratic Front and the Black Island Nation Youth Front put pressure on the government, and there were 20 public hearings on the CSSTA between July 2013 and March 2014. After that, the KMT resorted to questionable tactics by cutting corners in

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<sup>22</sup> The "black box" concept is often used in Taiwan to describe opaque legislative procedures. Such activities were widely criticised in the SDP's 2016 election platform: "Under the rule of the two big parties, Taiwanese politics is full of black box activities." (SDP 2016.)

the review of the agreement and hastily declaring the CSSTA finished in the so-called “30-second incident” on 17 March 2014 (Ho 2015: 79). Surveys at the time showed widespread scepticism and anxiety about the impact of closer economic integration among the general public, and Ho (*ibid.*: 80) suggests that in addition to galvanising the DPP’s anti-CSSTA stance, the 30-second incident provided a singular event that drew public support for anti-CSSTA protests.

The activists were taken by surprise by the turn of events with the 30-second incident and quickly organised what Ho (*ibid.*: 81) calls a “guerrilla-style protest” that involved storming the Legislative Yuan in the evening of 18 March. Protesters climbed over the wall of the legislature compound and broke into the plenary chamber, mounting barricades and establishing a leadership structure for the group. A supporting crowd gathered outside, and the police were unable to remove the activists from the building. As the next day dawned, Taiwan’s legislature had been occupied by the protesters. (*Ibid.*: 82.) Outside, the activist-led protests were now expanding into a wider social movement that would later get its name from the sunflowers used by the protesters as a symbol of hope.

The activists occupied the legislative chamber for 24 days between 18 March and 10 April. Their specific goal was to pressure the KMT government to scrap the CSSTA altogether and enact a bill on the supervision of cross-Strait trade agreements. The occupation resulted in a stalemate that quickly began wearing out the activists and presenting logistical challenges. Ultimately, the occupation ended with muddled results when the activists agreed to leave the chamber after KMT’s Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-pyng promised that supervision laws for trade agreements would be passed before the CSSTA. (*Ibid.*: 89–92.) This created a rift within the KMT, as Wang had ostensibly acted without approval from party leadership. Thus, the most tangible successes of the movement were perhaps elsewhere than in direct political achievements. Kaeding (2015: 211–2) suggests that the key to the success of the Sunflower Movement was that it learned from the experiences of the previous movements and thus managed to express the protesters’ concerns convincingly, gaining widespread public support. Ho (2015: 92) points out the movement’s more concrete achievements: despite indecisive results, it pushed the DPP from ambiguity to a clear anti-CSSTA stance and generated a split within the KMT. Ma Ying-jeou’s popularity plummeted during the remainder of his term, laying the ground for the eventual DPP landslide two years after the Sunflower Movement. However, perhaps the most notable success of the movement, and one that has thus far received comparatively little academic attention, was its evolution into a political force

that culminated in the emergence of new political parties challenging the KMT/DPP duality.

#### 4.1.4 From activism to politics: The Third Force

The end of the Sunflower Movement was not the end of the wider activist movement. The succession of social movements had produced a group of experienced activist leaders who now began to look for new means of driving their agenda forward. One of the most significant outcomes of this was the establishment of the Taiwan Citizen Union (TCU; 公民組合, *Gōngmín zǔhé*) in 2014 “to create a better and fairer society through political participation and reform”. Former DPP chairman Lin I-hsiung was a driving force behind the organisation but did not participate in its operations. The group also included prominent activists such as legal scholar Huang Kuo-chang and NTU associate professor Fan Yun. (Loa 2014; Lee & Hsu 2014.)

Although the former DPP chairman had a role in the founding of the TCU, the group would later make a point of distancing itself from the DPP. In August 2014, representatives of the group went to the US on a two-week trip to raise awareness and secure support for the movement. During the trip, they stressed that they were not affiliated with or backed by the DPP. The new group was thus positioned not only against the KMT, but also as an alternative to the DPP. Lin Fei-fan, a student activist and member of the TCU, said that the Sunflower Movement had grown out of disappointment with both large parties. The new group thus sought to break the entrenched KMT/DPP duality of Taiwanese politics. This was echoed by Huang Kuo-chang, who stated that “a third political force was emerging” in Taiwan. According to another student activist, Chen Wei-ting, this “third force” was needed because the DPP, as the traditional force of opposition, was losing ground and becoming too elitist. (Lowther 2014.)

The TCU’s original intention, stated in the summer of 2014, was to register as a political party to compete in the 2016 legislative election. Fan Yun noted that both the KMT and the DPP were incapable of internal reform, stating that “the only way to move Taiwan forward is to replace parties that are incapable of reforms”. (Lee & Hsu 2014.) Thus, while the TCU was obviously politically closer to the DPP than to the KMT, it nevertheless wanted to form a clearly separate political party that was not aligned with the traditional dichotomy. However, as often happens with emerging opposition forces, the TCU splintered due to political differences in early 2015. Rather than major differences in policies or ideology, the split was reportedly due to “irreconcilable

differences about inviting public participation” (Wen 2015c) and “differences over legislative nomination mechanisms” (Wen 2015b). This suggests that ideologically, and in terms of political goals, the two parties remained relatively similar.

The result of the TCU’s split was the formation of two new pro-independence parties: the New Power Party in January 2015 and the Social Democratic Party shortly after in February 2015. The NPP was founded by popular heavy metal musician and activist Freddy Lim and lawyer Lin Feng-jeng, while the SDP’s founding was led by Fan Yun. Huang Kuo-chang would later become the chairman of the NPP. Echoing the TCU’s notion of a “third force”, both parties presented themselves as an alternative to the two major political camps built around the KMT and the DPP. The NPP’s main goals included the normalisation of Taiwan’s status as a country, constitutional reform, improvement of civic and minority rights and equality, tax and pension reform, and environmental protection (Thinking Taiwan 2015). The SDP’s focus was on labour and employment issues and social equality, equality and minority rights, while also emphasising constitutional reform to better reflect Taiwan’s sovereign status (SDP 2016). SDP member Urda Yen noted that the two parties had “similar ideals” and thus welcomed the emergence of such parties in general. (Wen 2015a.)

By the spring and summer of 2015, both domestic and international media were referring to the “third force” that was emerging with the establishment of the NPP, the SDP, and other smaller new parties (e.g. The Economist 2015; Low 2015). The NPP and SDP began emerging as the two most prominent alternative parties. Nevertheless, there were doubts about the electoral fortunes of the new parties, and the possibility was raised that they would merge with the DPP. Notably, this type of merger was presented as a potential way for the DPP to broaden its appeal beyond the traditional ethnic *běnsǎngrén* emphasis upon which the party was founded. (The Economist 2015.) This is one indication that the new parties represent a shift in national identity: one of the reasons for their rejection of the KMT/DPP dichotomy could be a declining support for the corresponding duality in national identity. Thus, if the Third Force positions itself as a critique of both old parties, one could logically assume that this alternative is also based on a new “third version” of national identity.

The establishment of the Third Force parties represented a notable shift in Taiwanese politics, because it was the first time that major electoral campaigns were initiated by alternative parties that were not splinters from the KMT or the DPP. According to Fell (2016: 43), previous alternative parties had relied on defectors from the two major parties and shared their main ideological stances. This means that they fell

within the Pan-Green/Pan-Blue dichotomy. Another difference in the leadup to the 2016 election was that Third Force parties campaigned also in single member districts, whereas previously alternative parties had concentrated on the party list votes (*ibid.*: 42).<sup>23</sup> This became a problem as the NPP's Freddy Lim and the SDP's Fan Yun initially ended up running in the same district in Taipei. In March 2015, almost immediately after Fan Yun had announced her campaign, Lim withdrew from the district and announced he would be running in another district instead. According to Lim, he wanted to avoid the possibility of other political forces benefitting from the disunity among the new parties arising from the lead figures of the NPP and the SDP going against each other in the same district. (Wen 2015b.) This points to a degree of political and strategic unity among the two parties despite their earlier split.

The election was held in January 2016, and the NPP gained 2.89% of the district votes and 6.11% of the party list votes, amounting to five legislative seats and making it the third largest party in the legislature. For the election, the SDP formed an alliance with Green Party Taiwan (GPT; 台灣綠黨, *Táiwān lǜ dǎng*)<sup>24</sup>, and their share was 1.7% of the district votes and 2.53% of the party list votes, which was not enough for any legislative seats (for a breakdown of the election results for the NPP and the GPT-SDP Alliance, see table 7 on page 76). The election results thus solidified the NPP's position as the most visible torchbearer of the Third Force. While the impact of the Sunflower Movement had been noted before, the election result prompted more international post-election analyses about the significance of the Third Force and the youth vote in Taiwan (e.g. Hsu 2016; Keim 2016a). The NPP's visibility grew both domestically and internationally after the election, and in a December 2016 poll by Taiwan Think Tank, it had become the most popular party among young and highly educated Taiwanese (Yeh & Hou 2016, the results of this poll are discussed more in chapter 5).

With its background in student activism and its support base firmly grounded in the young generation, the Third Force has thus become a torchbearer of the youth. This is significant, because Taiwanese youth have previously been characterised as politically apathetic. Rigger (2011: 117) cites several studies from the mid-2000s showing that the

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<sup>23</sup> Taiwan has a hybrid electoral system. Out of a total 113 seats in the Legislative Yuan, 73 represent geographical single-member districts and 34 are filled through proportional representation. This means that voters cast two ballots: one for a single legislator in their own district and one national vote for the party of their choosing. The proportional seats are filled from a nationwide list of candidates based on the party vote. Additionally, 6 seats are reserved for indigenous candidates and filled separately.

<sup>24</sup> Taiwan's Green Party was established already in 1996, but it is also considered a Third Force party in the sense that it's separate from the Pan-Blue and Pan-Green coalitions, and its agenda is more aligned with the global green movement. The party has never won legislative seats.

majority of Taiwanese youth felt powerless to influence the state of Taiwan's politics and saw politics as one of the issues that least concerned them. Further, in 2005, the Taiwanese in their twenties were more likely to reject all political parties than to support any of them (ibid.). This disengaged young generation has been colloquially referred to as the "Strawberry Tribe" as a sort of insult by older generations: a strawberry is beautiful to look at, but easily damaged and quick to rot (ibid.: 120). Rigger's own research suggests that this disengagement is not due to the youth being "weak" or "rotten", but because they are extremely frustrated with Taiwan's dichotomous political landscape in which everything revolves around cross-Strait relations. The politicisation of the China/Taiwan struggle permeates the entire society so that other, more relevant issues are side-lined in politics. As a result, the youth had become "stunningly cynical" about the state of Taiwan's politics in the 2000s and had no confidence in Taiwan's political leaders. (Rigger 2011: 125–133.) With the above in mind, the Sunflower Movement and the Third Force appear to have been exactly what the youth were calling for: a new political force to break the stagnant dichotomy.

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The preceding sections have presented historical and socio-political frameworks upon which the following primary research builds. Certain recurring themes run through these sections. Firstly, nationalism appears as an interplay of official and popular forces, both in Europe and in Asia. Imperialism and colonialism bring another element to this contest by pitting the domestic against the foreign. The Japanese colonial period and the ROC martial law period lodged Taiwan in the middle of this struggle, and it was from the complexities of this process that Taiwanese national identity emerged. The key objective driving the formation of this identity was self-determination, and the persistent denial of this goal exacerbated the ensuing tensions between the ruling regime and the populace. The result was a society characterised by an ethno-political dichotomy of the official/foreign *wàishěngrén*/KMT and the popular/domestic *běnsěngrén*/DPP. The subsequent decades of bipolar antagonism alienated the new generation from politics, sparking a demand for a third political force that operates outside this dichotomy. The following chapter presents the results of the primary research of this study, aiming to illuminate the characteristics of national identity amidst this new political phenomenon.

## 5 Results and analysis

This chapter presents the results of the primary research in two sections, each of which has two subsections. This structure reflects the levels of the coding frame (see appendix 3) so that sections 5.1 and 5.2 correspond to level 1 and their respective subsections correspond to level 2. The relevant topics included in levels 3 and 4 of the coding frame are then discussed in these sections. Thus, in the coding frame, levels 0 and 1 present the “empty label” of Taiwanese identity, and levels 2 to 4 are thus the “content” of that label as indicated by the interview results. Based on the combined results presented in this chapter, a basic model of national identity among Third Force supporters is presented in the concluding chapter 6.

Details of the interviewees and interview data are presented in appendix 2. Before going into the thematic categories of identity formation, a few general remarks on the data are in order. Most of the interviewees lived in Taipei at the time of interviewing, which means there is very little geographic variation. By looking at the hometowns of the interviewees, the sample becomes more geographically diverse: interviewees come from Taipei, New Taipei City, Taoyuan, Taichung, and Tainan. Most had moved to Taipei for work or higher education. No major conclusions can be drawn from this geographical distribution, but it should be noted that all interviewees come from big cities or urban centres in Taiwan’s western coast. In 2016, these regions generally voted for the DPP candidate Tsai Ing-wen in the presidential election and for Pan-Green or Third Force parties in the legislative election. In general, the urban western parts of Taiwan lean towards liberal and Pan-Green politics, whereas the less urban eastern parts lean towards conservative and Pan-Blue politics. The interviewees could thus be described as more or less typical educated young urban liberals from western Taiwan. Furthermore, when comparing the interviewees’ hometowns to the regional distribution of votes for the NPP and the DPT-SDP Alliance (table 7, next page), it appears the interviewees come from regions where support for Third Force parties was strongest. For example, almost all the parties’ regional candidates competed in the big western cities, and these regions were also generally near the top in the proportional party list votes.<sup>25</sup>

Another noteworthy point is the age of the interviewees. Everyone was under 40 years old, and all except two were in the 20–29 age bracket. This point was brought up

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<sup>25</sup> The one planned interview that had to be cancelled would have been with an interviewee living in Hsinchu. Table 7 (next page) shows that relative support for the NPP and the GPT-SDP Alliance was also high in Hsinchu City.

**Table 7:** Votes for the NPP and the GPT-SDP Alliance in the 2016 legislative election by region.

Region	NPP votes				GPT-SDP Alliance votes			
	Regional	%	Party list	%	Regional	%	Party list	%
<b>Total</b>	351,244	2.94	744,315	6.11	203,658	1.7	308,106	2.53
<b>Taipei City</b>	94,896	6.59	89,291	6.12	129,581	9.01	48,852	3.35
<b>New Taipei City</b>	85,638	4.13	131,052	6.18	31,096	1.49	52,957	2.49
<b>Taoyuan City</b>	8,062	0.78	58,369	5.47	23,176	2.23	34,639	3.25
<b>Taichung City</b>	93,451	6.58	104,865	7.32	N/A	N/A	33,466	2.33
<b>Tainan City</b>	6,754	0.69	63,172	6.39	9,075	0.93	24,709	0.25
<b>Kaohsiung City</b>	15,664	1.06	92,323	6.15	N/A	N/A	37,604	0.25
<b>Hsinchu County</b>	N/A	N/A	15,547	5.87	N/A	N/A	6,796	2.56
<b>Miaoli County</b>	N/A	N/A	14,653	5.18	N/A	N/A	5,253	1.85
<b>Changhua County</b>	3,229	0.49	41,762	6.33	N/A	N/A	13,034	1.97
<b>Nantou County</b>	N/A	N/A	13,759	5.39	N/A	N/A	5,237	2.05
<b>Yunlin County</b>	7,241	2.13	18,132	5.33	N/A	N/A	5,279	1.55
<b>Chiayi County</b>	N/A	N/A	14,212	5.17	N/A	N/A	4,206	1.53
<b>Pingtung County</b>	N/A	N/A	20,635	4.65	N/A	N/A	8,404	1.89
<b>Yilan County</b>	N/A	N/A	13,960	6.05	10,730	4.78	6,002	0.26
<b>Hualien County</b>	N/A	N/A	6,277	4.12	N/A	N/A	3,338	2.19
<b>Taitung County</b>	N/A	N/A	3,518	3.69	N/A	N/A	1,956	2.05
<b>Penghu County</b>	N/A	N/A	1,361	3.24	N/A	N/A	614	1.46
<b>Keelung City</b>	N/A	N/A	11,652	6.05	N/A	N/A	4,454	2.31
<b>Hsinchu City</b>	36,309	16.56	19,170	8.69	N/A	N/A	6,574	2.98
<b>Chiayi City</b>	N/A	N/A	9,484	6.86	N/A	N/A	3,459	0.25
<b>Kinmen County</b>	N/A	N/A	1,008	2.78	N/A	N/A	1,142	3.15
<b>Lienchiang County</b>	N/A	N/A	113	2.55	N/A	N/A	131	2.95

Source: Central Election Commission, Taiwan.

by one interviewee who asked about the age distribution and expressed concern that the sample was not representative since everyone was young. However, since the sample is not meant to reflect the general population, this is not an issue; more relevant is how it compares to the general profile of Third Force supporters. These parties are generally most popular among young people, and according to a poll by Taiwan Think Tank conducted in December 2016, the NPP had become the most popular party among the 20–29 age group (Yeh & Hou 2016). This suggests that the interviewees' age reflects a general trend among Third Force supporters.

As a final general note on the profile of the interviewees, the sample seems to reflect a typical Third Force supporter also in terms of educational background. According to the Taiwan Think Tank poll, the NPP was the most popular party among people with a bachelor's degree or higher (*ibid.*). Seven out of eleven interviewees fall

into this category, and among the remaining four, all but one were currently studying for a bachelor's degree in university. Based on this and the other general observations above, the batch of interviewees appears to be a fairly accurate representation of typical Third Force voters: young, urban, and highly educated. Thus, while this study is qualitative by design, the conclusions can be taken as indicative of typical characteristics of identity construction among Third Force voters.

It should be stressed that the categorisation in the coding frame and in the following sections is not exclusive; a different focus would likely highlight different aspects. Similarly, the resulting model of national identity in the concluding chapter is not exhaustive, and does not attempt to describe the totality of national identity formation among Third Force supporters. What it aims to highlight are the broad commonalities that, based on the analysis in the sections below, serve as major building blocks for this identity.

## **5.1 Reflections on Taiwanese identity in personal life**

The following two sections present the results of the interview data regarding national identity in the interviewees' personal life. Section 5.1.1 focuses on the interviewees' notions of their own background and the elements that influence the construction of their personal identity. A key focus is on the interplay of ethnic and civic dimensions, as these were earlier identified as the two main frameworks upon which national identities are constructed. Section 5.1.2 then builds upon the notion of identity as a dynamic experience by looking at how the interviewees' Taiwanese identity has changed and evolved over time and what factors are behind this change.

### **5.1.1 Unambiguously diverse: Identity and ethnic background**

As discussed in previous chapters, ethnicity has traditionally been one of the most prominent aspects informing national identity construction in Taiwan. The identity struggle has been characterised by the diametrically opposed groups of *wàishěngrén* and *běnsěngrén*, and a similar duality of civic/political identity versus ethnic/cultural identity. In this regard, the foremost finding of the interview analysis was that such a struggle does not seem to exist among Third Force supporters. The very first indication of this is that when asked if they identified as Taiwanese, Chinese or both, all interviewees answered "Taiwanese" without any hesitation. Certain studies cited in chapter 4

suggested that there is still notable ambiguity in how Taiwanese people identify, but among these Third Force supporters, there is no sign of such ambiguity. This was also the case with NPP legislator Freddy Lim, who stated: “Of course, I see myself as Taiwanese and not Chinese.” All three pilot study interviewees had also affirmed their Taiwanese identity in a similarly unambiguous manner despite not being Third Force supporters.

The reason for the interviewees’ unambiguous affirmation of Taiwanese identity relates to the way they understand national identity in general. In terms of what makes Taiwan different from China, all interviewees clearly emphasised civic and political values: Taiwan’s democratic institutions, personal and political freedoms, and human rights emerged as the main elements setting Taiwan apart from China. Conversely, China’s lack of these features meant that the interviewees were reluctant to be associated with it. This reflects the importance of the notion of otherness in identity construction, as it is the negation of the other that fortifies the identity built on sameness. However, this civic emphasis does not lead to a rejection of common ethno-cultural heritage. When asked about similarities between Taiwan and China, the interviewees mentioned almost exclusively aspects related to ethnic or cultural background: same language, same religions, same Confucian cultural values. Thus, despite their assertive Taiwanese identity, the interviewees fully acknowledged their Chinese heritage. This notably resembles the views of Taiwanese intellectuals during the Japanese colonial period discussed earlier: while they did not reject their Chinese culture and ethnicity, these were not the features upon which they built their sense of national identity. Hence, while the Third Force supporters noted their ethno-cultural Chinese roots, they usually had much more to say about differences than similarities, and the shared ethno-cultural heritage was not seen as a justification for a unified national unit:

**Author:** What sort of things make Taiwanese people different from Chinese people? In any terms?

**Interviewee #9:** Your thoughts towards your rights and your freedom. Like, I remember at the time of the Sunflower Movement, some of my Chinese classmates, they might say things that I thought were totally nonsense. They might say like ‘you Taiwanese just want to fight for your own rights every day, but you just give up your country’s economy’. Like, they are always fighting for money [laughs] and following success, but we always fight for something really abstract like rights and freedoms. But they don’t see that as really valuable. They just think it’s useless, you don’t have to be free, you don’t have to have so many rights, you just have to be rich, then you are successful.

[...]

**Author:** What about similarities, do you think that there are some parts where Taiwan and China are similar?

**Interviewee #9:** I think our attitude towards family, I think it’s pretty much the same, we

all think that family is important. We have to take good care of our parents. Something like that, it's like a very old Mandarin culture. I think it's not only in China and Taiwan, many Asian countries have the same, like Singapore, Hong Kong.

This group of people thus appears to have moved away from a sense of identity where ethnicity plays an important part. Instead, they understand national identity first and foremost through shared civic values. The fact that China does not share Taiwan's civic values therefore results in a clear distinction between Taiwanese and Chinese identities and a reluctance to associate with the latter. This notion is supported by the way some interviewees pointed out Taiwan's multi-ethnic character. In this view, the Taiwanese community does not only consist of the *wàishěngrén/běnsěngrén* dichotomy, but also includes indigenous and immigrant ethnicities as equal parts of the community. This point was also made by Freddy Lim when he described the meaning of being Taiwanese:

**Lim:** The significance of identifying as Taiwanese, I think this is quite a simple identity. Taiwan has a population of 23 million, so it is the identity of this community. It's the feeling of identifying with this community of 23 million people. [...] Of course, among these 23 million, there are many different kinds of people: some identify as Chinese, some are from Vietnam, some are from Thailand, or from all around the world. So, while they are Taiwanese, at the same time they also feel they are Vietnamese or Chinese or from some other place. I think this is normal. The main point is that they are all part of this community of 23 million people.

The Taiwanese identity of this group can thus be understood as a type of overarching civic identity grounded in the characteristics of the community that has formed in Taiwan. It is therefore important to differentiate this Taiwanese civic identity from an ethnic *běnsěngrén* identity. Ethno-cultural identity is best understood as a sub-feature inside this Taiwanese umbrella identity, and it can comprise an unlimited plurality of ethnicities and cultures so long as they fall under the main civic identity that is Taiwanese. This is also perhaps one way in which this sense of identity distinguishes the Third Force from the DPP, since the latter has traditionally advocated *běnsěngrén* interests and served as one of two sides in the dichotomous ethnic identity struggle.

Ethnic diversity is also evident in some of the interviewees' backgrounds: while most are *běnsěngrén*, Interviewee #10 is a third generation *wàishěngrén* whose grandparents emigrated from mainland China with the KMT in the 1940s. The maternal grandmother of Interviewee #3 is also *wàishěngrén*. Interviewee #6, on the other hand, has a boyfriend who is indigenous, and this has influenced her notions of identity and her

voting behaviour. She gave her party vote to the NPP despite being politically more inclined towards the GPT, because her favourite candidate Kawlo Iyun Pacidal, who is a member of the indigenous Amis group, was on the NPP party list. Interviewee #11 has a mixed background: his family from the father's side is *běnsǎngrén*, while his maternal grandfather is a *wàishǎngrén* from Beijing and his maternal grandmother is a member of the indigenous Kavalan group. These examples illustrate how the Taiwanese identity of Third Force supporters allows for ethno-cultural heterogeneity, and insofar as this national identity is understood as a form of modern Taiwanese nationalism, it is not the type of antagonistic ethno-nationalism that has traditionally characterised the conflict between *wàishǎngrén* and *běnsǎngrén*. A similar heterogeneity in ethnic background characterised the pilot study interviewees who also all identified as Taiwanese: out of three interviewees, one was *běnsǎngrén*, one was *wàishǎngrén*, and one was half-indigenous (Atayal). In many ways, this is entirely natural: a long history of coexistence and intermarriage has blurred the lines of ethnic identities, making them less significant to the current generation. People with different ethno-cultural backgrounds are thus united by their shared civic experience in the Taiwanese community.

In relation to the above observations, the civic character of this Taiwanese identity is also apparent in the way it relates to the notion of Chinese identity. For previous generations in Taiwan, Chinese identity has traditionally been associated with the *wàishǎngrén* that came from the mainland with the KMT. This connection enabled the ethnic conflict that arose after the February 28 Incident, but it also enabled the perpetuation of a Chinese identity in Taiwan, since this Chineseness was grounded in the pre-1949 reality of the mainland instead of the new Chinese reality of the PRC. As noted earlier in this study, the hegemonic Chinese political identity in Taiwan began to fall apart with the ROC's loss of legitimacy from the 1970s onwards, as the surrounding world accepted that the PRC, not the ROC, was the new China. Hence, for the current generation in Taiwan, the pre-1949 Chinese reality holds virtually no significance. The China they observe across the Taiwan Strait is not the China that the *wàishǎngrén* left behind. Significantly, the PRC is not only different in name from the old China and the ROC; it has developed upon a fundamentally different civic and political framework. Thus, for these Third Force supporters, China equals the PRC, and from this perspective, it is easy for them to identify unambiguously as Taiwanese. This is evident in the way Freddy Lim explains his Taiwanese identity: "The reason is very simple: I am not a citizen of the People's Republic of China, therefore I am not Chinese."

In summary, the foundation of the national identity of these Third Force

supporters is best described as a Taiwanese civic identity that can contain a variety of ethno-cultural sub-identities. For these people, civic and political values are more important than ethno-cultural elements as a basis of national identity construction. This identity bears resemblance to that of the colonial era intellectuals. As noted earlier, their nationalism seemed to have a civic character in that it was grounded in the modern liberal theories of democratic self-determination rather than Chinese ethnicity and culture. Looking at these parallels, the bipolar struggle of the *wàishěngrén* and *běnsěngrén* seems little more than a detour into ethnic tribalism in the overall pursuit of civic nationalism. In this civic focus, the PRC now functions as the primary contrast to Taiwan: it is the significant other against which Taiwanese-ness is measured. The following section deals with the notions of this otherness and the dynamic nature of identity formation.

### 5.1.2 Becoming Taiwanese: Dynamic identity construction

The constructivist premise of this study is that national identities are dynamic, and therefore subject to continuous renegotiation and recalibration. In Taiwan's case, much of this dynamism is rooted in how China and the Chinese are perceived. As mentioned in previous chapters, the social construction of identities can happen through top-down or bottom-up processes, and the resulting identity is often a combination of these. This is also the case with the national identity of Third Force supporters: the interviewees are millennials who grew up with vague notions about Taiwan and China based more on textbooks and official dogma than experienced reality. However, globalisation and cross-Strait integration through the emergence of interdependence have enabled the juxtaposition of this earlier official version with bottom-up personal experience.

The interviewees were asked whether their sense of identity discussed in the previous section has changed over time. They were also asked about their perceptions of China and the Chinese, and whether these had changed over time. Regarding identity change, all interviewees have always had at least some sense of being Taiwanese, but their descriptions of their earlier notions of identity reveal a sense of ambiguous hybridity: a Chinese ethno-cultural heritage mixed with the practical experience of a Taiwanese community within the political framework of the ROC:

**Author:** Has [your Taiwanese identity] always been like this or has it changed over time?

**Interviewee #5:** I feel like it has changed, because before I didn't really understand what the word Chinese means in Taiwan. When I was little, I felt like maybe we are culturally Chinese, but then after learning about the history, about ROC and PRC and Taiwan, that's

when I started to feel like maybe we are ethnically Chinese or culturally related, but then it's still different. So, that's when I started to feel like 'no, I'm only Taiwanese'.

These descriptions of earlier notions closely resemble the “both Taiwanese and Chinese” version of national identity: a competing mixture of ethno-cultural Chineseness and Taiwanese civic identity. This contributed to a sense of confusion that made national identity hard to define unambiguously. In addition to the Chinese heritage, confusion was created by the complicated political entity of the exiled ROC upholding the notion that the people were actually living in China. A key contributing factor in this, as mentioned by several interviewees, was education. The Chinese background and the ROC were elements that their early education emphasised:

**Interviewee #2:** Of course, in the past, the textbooks talked about the history of the Republic of China and so on, so I identified as a citizen of the ROC. But afterwards, when I read more about the history, I realised the citizens of the ROC were actually the people who had come from the mainland. The Taiwanese people were brainwashed by the ROC, and there was the White Terror. We had to resist the communist mainland, so we had to be ROC citizens. But actually, before the Mainlanders came, there were a lot of people that had come to Taiwan earlier, during the Qing and Ming dynasties.

This notion of brainwash echoes the idea of an artificially constructed “imaginary homeland” discussed earlier. As one would expect, the ROC perspective and the sense of being Chinese had been even stronger for Interviewee #10 due to her *wàishēngrén* background. She describes clearly how her self-identification has changed from predominantly Chinese to Taiwanese:

**Interviewee #10:** It's been shifting. Because we are educated like we are all Chinese, like 華人 (*huárén*). So, based on our background and education, we are considered part of China, because of everything we study – we study like ancient poems and stuff like that. And especially since my parents are both from China, I actually have some kind of grave that I can go to [in China]. And the professors are from China. So, I'm educated like I'm proud of being Chinese. But I would say it's for political reasons, because Taiwan is called the Republic of China, so it's like we are the puppets of China, like they forced the whole world to choose between ROC and China, the legal China. So, this kind of identity makes people confused whether you are Chinese or Taiwanese.

As noted earlier, the percentage of people identifying as Chinese began falling with democratisation and the policy of Taiwanisation in the 1990s. However, in the decade after Taiwan's first democratic presidential election in 1996, Chinese identity continued

to manifest strongly in the form of dual Chinese/Taiwanese self-identification. Based on the interviewees' reflections, it would seem that education was a key factor in this: the notion of Chineseness lingered due in part to earlier education emphasis. This notion is indirectly supported by findings about the role of education in the evolution of support for Taiwan's independence: according to Huang (2016), the new Taiwan-centric high-school curriculum adopted in 1999 has played a part in the rising support for independence. This suggests that it has also contributed to the strengthening Taiwanese identity. All of this suggests that education is one of the fundamental tools for the construction and maintenance of official nationalism.

Another factor influencing the interviewees' evolving identity construction is the experience of Chinese otherness. In the previous section, it was noted that the interviewees clearly observed the difference between China and Taiwan in civic and political aspects. Some of this perception of otherness comes from actual encounters with Chinese people. This was apparent in the comments of Interviewee #9 in the previous section: for her, conversations with Chinese classmates demonstrated the differences in values. The Chinese seemed to only care about money while the Taiwanese care about rights and freedoms. Since democratisation, the Taiwanese have had increasing opportunities for such encounters, particularly after the expansion of cross-Strait exchanges during Ma Ying-jeou's presidency. This puts the textbook version of Chineseness to the test: if the Taiwanese do not identify with the Chinese people they encounter, they are likely to reject the notion of themselves as Chinese. Yet, for Ma Ying-jeou, the reasoning behind cross-Strait integration seems to have been that it would bring the two sides closer and, in a way, heal a divide. As noted earlier, Ma was expecting the perception of the other side to change dramatically with deeper integration: it seems he was hoping for a sense of unity. However, in many ways, the opposite has happened: the singular Taiwanese identity and support for independence have grown since 2008, and disappointment with Ma's tenure led to the Sunflower Movement, the emergence of the Third Force, and the landslide victory of Tsai Ing-wen and the DPP. Reflecting this, some of the interviewees' comments stand in stark contrast with what Ma was trying to achieve. Interviewee #2 took a long pause when asked to describe his overall perception of Chinese people:

**Interviewee #2:** Hmm... [long pause]

**Author:** You can say whatever.

**Interviewee #2:** Can I say bad things?

**Author:** Yes, if that's what comes to your mind.

**Interviewee #2:** I feel 厭惡的 (*yànwùde*).

**Author:** 厭惡的 means?

**Interviewee #2:** Disgusted [laughs]. Because when they come to Taiwan, they are so noisy and messy. They have no standards. It makes me feel bad.

Such comments bring echoes of the past. As discussed earlier in chapter 4, after the Japanese colonial period, the Taiwanese noted the “backwardness” of the *wàishěngrén* compared to the society and customs that had developed in Taiwan. The differences in manners, customs and behaviour contributed to the subsequent conflict between the *běnsěngrén* and *wàishěngrén*. For today’s generation, this conflict has faded as the *wàishěngrén* have integrated into Taiwanese society. However, the sense of otherness was recalibrated and replicated in the 1980s when Taiwanese were again allowed to travel to the mainland and see its reality first-hand. The Chinese people of the PRC thus occupied the position held earlier by the *wàishěngrén*: the significant other. Now, just as in the 1980s, the further relaxation of travel restrictions contributes to the sense of otherness between the Taiwanese and the Chinese. The opening of the “three links” in 2008 has brought a notable surge in Chinese tourists to Taiwan, making it ever easier for the Taiwanese to come into contact with the otherness of the Chinese.

Despite the above observation, it is important to point out that in general, the interviewees were not hostile towards the Chinese as a group of people. Many stressed that the PRC and the Chinese government are not the same as the Chinese people, and negative feelings towards the state do not equal hatred for its people. Indeed, many interviewees have Chinese friends. There is no reason why friendship and cooperation cannot exist between people with different world views from different sociocultural settings. Nevertheless, observing such differences appears to have played a part in how the interviewees’ Taiwanese identity has strengthened in tandem with closer cross-Strait relations.

In summary, the Taiwanese identity of these Third Force supporters is indeed a dynamic one, changing and becoming clearer over time. Based on the interviewees’ answers, key reasons for this change include education, political changes and personal experiences of otherness. This implies that the interplay of official and popular elements has been significant in identity formation. Thus, while it is clear that the current generation feel in many ways “naturally” Taiwanese from early age, it also seems that certain specific events and developments during their lifetime have been influential in the construction of a more Taiwan-centric national identity. Some of these developments are examined further in the next section.

## 5.2 Reflections on Taiwanese identity in politics and society

The following two sections move from personal attributes to socio-political attitudes and describe how the interviewees' opinions on Taiwanese society and politics are informed by their Taiwanese identity. Section 5.2.1 deals with notions of Taiwan's place and status in the modern world that is characterised by interdependence and globalisation. Section 5.2.2 then looks at how the Third Force fits into Taiwan's domestic political scene and how the interviewees' Taiwanese identity is reflected in the policies of the Third Force parties.

### 5.2.1 Expanding the horizon: The internationalisation of interdependence

One of the most prominent recurring themes in the interviews was Taiwan's position in the international community. This is not only or even primarily limited to diplomatic status or official international recognition for the state; it deals with the wider notion of Taiwan's place in the world as a society and community. Here, as with the aspects discussed in the previous sections, the Third Force represents a diversification of foci that attempts to move away from a status defined by relations with China.

A concrete indication of this focus is the desire for the normalisation of Taiwan's international status, most obviously reflected in the advocacy of Taiwan's independence. Unsurprisingly, all interviewees supported the notion that Taiwan should become an independent country. However, they had concerns about the feasibility of this goal. Their answers to the question of independence could be summarised as "I want Taiwan to be independent, *but...*" The reason for hesitation was the pragmatic acknowledgement of the threat of China: military conflict was seen as a likely result of a declaration of independence. These views are in line with the attitudes of the general public. As noted earlier, most Taiwanese want to maintain the status quo with neither independence nor unification. However, in surveys that omit the status quo option and force to choose between independence or unification, a clear majority favours independence. This suggests that the views of the Third Force supporters reflect the overall pragmatism among the Taiwanese: independence is desirable, but unfeasible under current conditions.

Another reason for the reluctance to advocate formal independence seems to be that the Taiwanese themselves already consider Taiwan a *de facto* independent country. This is evident in the statements of both the NPP and the SDP: in his interview answers,

Freddy Lim described Taiwan as a “practically independent country”, while the SDP’s 2016 election platform states that “Taiwan is already a sovereign, independent country” (SDP 2016). From this pragmatic perspective, a formal declaration of independence is not that necessary since Taiwan is already independent, and a declaration would only increase the threat of conflict with China.

A major reason behind the desire for independence among the interviewees was the dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the ROC, already mentioned in the previous section. Thus, in practice, independence would mean abolishing the ROC in favour of a new state with a new name. This would sever the link to China by discarding the notion of a still-existing Republic of China, ideally opening the way for international recognition:

**Interviewee #3:** I think a lot of problems arise from the four words, 中華民國 (*Zhōnghuá Mínguó*, Republic of China). So ideally, we would not be called Republic of China. It wouldn’t matter whether we are called “Taiwan” or something else as long as it’s not Republic of China, since that’s the root of the problem. The best option would of course be to have a new country that others can then recognise, but I think this is very difficult.

**Author:** So it would be best to have a new independent country, but it’s not possible?

**Interviewee #3:** We can’t do it, so for now we should maintain status quo.

Similar views are also evident in the society at large. During my time in Taiwan, I witnessed pro-independence demonstrations in prominent locations such as Taipei’s Ximending district and the Taichung train station. Significantly, these campaigns did not target China, but were instead squarely aimed at the ROC. The protesters’ banners included slogans such as “Taiwan is not ROC!” and “Repeal the ROC Colonial Regime. Terminate four centuries of Alien Domination.” (figure 3, next page).<sup>26</sup> This rhetoric echoes the demands for self-determination that have been a recurring theme in Taiwan since the Japanese colonial period. In this view, the ROC is simply another colonial apparatus that continues to suppress the agency of the Taiwanese people.

A practical manifestation of the desire to redefine Taiwan’s international status is the way in which supporters of independence have begun to customise their ROC passports. In 2015, a pro-independence activist designed a set of stickers that Taiwanese people can attach to their passports. The stickers replace the text “中華民國 Republic of China” with “台灣國 Republic of Taiwan” and the ROC emblem with one of six alternative figures. Passport modifications were initially penalised by the Taiwanese

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<sup>26</sup> Demonstrations in Ximending, Taipei, 11.9.2016 and Taichung train station, Taichung, 4.12.2016.

**Figure 3:** Pro-independence campaigner in Taichung (photo by author).



government, but the punishments were withdrawn in April 2016. (Allen 2016.) When asked about her reason for supporting the NPP, one of the interviewees presented the passport sticker issue as an example of the NPP's commitment to Taiwanese identity:

**Interviewee #5:** I feel like this party really cares about national identity, more so than the DPP. Because we have these Republic of Taiwan stickers for passports [...] I feel like NPP is the one that really pushed the Foreign Ministry because they used to warn people with that kind of sticker on their passports, they kind of threatened them to take it off, but then the NPP really pushed really hard...

**Author:** So that people could keep those stickers in their passports?

**Interviewee #5:** Yeah, but then Freddy [Lim] reminded that you might encounter problems if you enter another country.

**Author:** So this was something that – much of it was the NPP's influence?

**Interviewee #5:** Yeah, maybe some DPP, but I don't feel like in general DPP cares about this matter that much.

The passport stickers appear to have become an important symbol of Taiwanese identity for the younger generation. At the NCCU's student club fair in October 2016, I talked to

a representative of the university's political club<sup>27</sup> and was given a set of these stickers. Later, I met a student who proudly showcased the stickers on his passport. He had not experienced problems travelling with the stickers in Europe, but when travelling to Japan, he was stopped at the Kansai International Airport and taken to a room where an airport official asked him to remove the stickers. He was only allowed to enter the country once the stickers were removed. A movement has now grown around the stickers and the experiences of their use in travel – they have a dedicated website with the title 台灣國護照貼紙運動, (*Táiwān hùzhào tiēzhǐ yùndòng*, Taiwan Passport Sticker Movement), and the website's Facebook page had almost 40,000 followers at the time of writing.<sup>28</sup>

Since the primary function of a passport is to serve as a travel document, the sticker issue is more than just a symbolic affirmation of Taiwanese identity. It can be viewed as a practical response to the practical problems Taiwanese people face when they travel abroad and need to explain that the Republic of China is not “China”. Several interviewees described having this problem:

**Interviewee #7:** People will think that I am – in customs, they will think that I am Chinese, and because of that they think I need a visa. This is in countries where Taiwanese can travel visa-free, but because the passport says “Republic of China”, they think I’m Chinese and ask why I don’t have a visa.

**Author:** So do you think there are a lot of people in foreign countries who don’t know this difference between China and Taiwan?

**Interviewee #7:** Yes, definitely.

Interviewees #3, #5, #9 and #10 all described similar practical issues when travelling abroad. Some also mentioned problems when filling their home country in official documentation that do not include Taiwan as an option or list it as “Taiwan, Province of China”.<sup>29</sup> These experiences correspond to the overall results of the pilot study interviews that were conducted with Taiwanese studying abroad: the problematic nature of Taiwanese identity and international status is highlighted by experiences of living or

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<sup>27</sup> NCCU's Wild Fire student club (政大野火陣線, *Zhèngdà yěhuǒ zhènxiàn*) is an active and influential political actor in the university's community. NCCU was originally established by the KMT, and Chiang Kai-shek served as its first principal. The Wild Fire club has actively campaigned for the removal of symbols of the university's past links with the KMT, such as the university's anthem and statues of Chiang Kai-shek. In 2017, these goals were realised as NCCU decided to modify its anthem and passed a motion to remove the statues. Representatives of the Wild Fire club were present at the university staff meeting regarding these issues and communicated the deliberations through their Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/NCCUWildFire/>).

<sup>28</sup> <http://tps-taiwanpassportsticker.com>; <https://www.facebook.com/TaiwanPassportSticker>.

<sup>29</sup> In official documentation, Taiwan is frequently listed as “Taiwan, Province of China” because the United Nations uses this designation, and thus it is also used in the ISO 3166 standard for country codes (<https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:code:3166:TW>).

travelling in other countries. The notion of living in a “Republic of China” is easier to maintain inside Taiwan, but when people travel abroad, they unavoidably encounter the troubled reality. Domestically, the Taiwanese can often brush aside the dilemma by maintaining a vague notion of a dual identity, but the international system of nation-states does not accommodate such ambiguity. When forced to choose, the Taiwanese are increasingly assertive about their Taiwanese identity, and the passport stickers are one way of signalling this. This practical action can be seen as the real-world equivalent of the survey data discussed earlier: while the Taiwanese overwhelmingly support the status quo in unification/independence surveys, the majority will choose independence if there is no status quo option.

**Table 8:** Interviewees’ international mobility

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Studied or lived abroad</b>	<b>Visited China</b>	<b>Travelled elsewhere</b>
<b>1</b>	United States, Europe	–	Yes
<b>2</b>	–	Yes	Yes
<b>3</b>	United States	–	Yes
<b>4</b>	–	Yes	Yes
<b>5</b>	United Kingdom	Yes	Yes
<b>6</b>	United States	Yes	Yes
<b>7</b>	–	Yes	Yes
<b>8</b>	United States	Yes	Yes
<b>9</b>	United States, Sweden	Yes	Yes
<b>10</b>	Finland	–	Yes
<b>11</b>	–	Yes	Yes

The above observations become significant when considered together with the fact that the current generation is more internationally mobile than ever. This is evident in the travel profile of the interviewees (table 8): all of them have travelled abroad, almost all of them have visited China, and over half of them have studied or lived abroad. This means they have all personally experienced Taiwan’s international status, and most of them have also personally experienced the reality of the PRC. This travel experience corresponds to the general profile of the interviewees, since urban, well-educated liberals can also be expected to be “world citizens”. It also reflects the increasingly interdependent character of the modern world in which multiple actors interact across state borders. Interestingly, all but one of the interviewees who studied abroad had done so in the United States. This is perhaps not surprising given the historical alliance between the US and Taiwan, but it might also make these people’s world views more susceptible to the

American notions of democracy and civil liberties.

The US connection is also apparent in the activities of Third Force activists and politicians. As noted earlier, the activists toured the US in 2014 to promote the Sunflower Movement. Incidentally, my interview with Freddy Lim in 2017 was also affected by the focus on the US; Lim was part of the Taiwanese delegation attending President Donald Trump's inauguration in January 2017, making it impossible to conduct the interview in person while I was in Taiwan. Lim is arguably the most internationally visible promoter of the Third Force. In May 2017, prominent US newspaper The New York Times (Qin 2017) published an extensive profile on Lim in which NPP chairman Huang Kuo-chang emphasised Lim's charismatic appeal and role as a messenger of the party.

Global mobility such as described above is a result of the processes of complex interdependence and globalisation that have enabled the international flow of capital, goods and people. However, as discussed earlier, this has also led to asymmetric economic interdependence between Taiwan and China. Since the fear of overdependence on China was a key factor in the Sunflower Movement and the emergence of the Third Force, the interviewees were also asked about their opinion on economic integration. Again, as with other issues, they emphasised a diverse and international focus. They did not reject economic integration per se, but advocated a more balanced economic policy that would not over-emphasise potentially harmful cross-Strait trade and investment:

**Author:** In general, what do you think about these closer economic relations?

**Interviewee #11:** I think it's good, but you should not put all the eggs in the same basket. So I think Ma Ying-jeou didn't really look to other countries, he put too much emphasis on China. So that means we were more controlled by China during this time, and that's more dangerous.

**Author:** What about now, with Tsai Ing-wen?

**Interviewee #11:** I think she has a different approach, she is focusing more on ASEAN countries, she has this New Southbound Policy [...] but it doesn't mean we shouldn't have relations with China, it just means there should be a balance in the development of these relations.

All interviewees expressed some degree of dissatisfaction towards Ma Ying-jeou's cross-Strait policies, but many also noted that cross-Strait relations during Ma's period were peaceful. Many pointed out that economic integration in itself was not bad, but overreliance should be avoided: interviewees #2, #10 and #11 even used the same metaphor, warning of the dangers of "putting all eggs in the same basket" (把雞蛋放在同一個籃子裡, *bǎ jīdàn fàng zài tóng yīgè lánzi lǐ*). As noted by interviewee #11, President Tsai Ing-wen has initiated a new policy that corresponds to the desire for more balanced

economic relations. At the time of writing, it is difficult to estimate whether the New Southbound Policy (新南向政策, *Xīn nán xiàng zhèngcè*)<sup>30</sup> will succeed in balancing Taiwan's economic relations, but it does suggest that the Tsai administration acknowledges the potential perils of asymmetric interdependence and the resulting public discontent. Freddy Lim also cautioned against the problems of economic integration with China, presenting an example of what has already happened as a result of closer ties:

**Lim:** I think cross-Strait economic integration has affected political freedom. As the economic integration between Taiwan and China becomes closer, for example in the entertainment industry, whether it's music or films, we get self-censorship of opinions. There is no suppression in Taiwan itself, but because the economic integration with China is so close, you must self-censor to be able to access the Chinese market. This affects Taiwan because our most important core value is democracy. I think it goes without saying that one has to be very careful and cautious with economic integration.

Lim also emphasised a point that the other interviewees did not raise, namely the importance of proper regulation to protect vulnerable local industries when opening free trade not just with China, but with any trading partner.

The Sunflower Movement and resistance to increasing Chinese influence in Taiwan resemble another timely case: Hong Kong. Like Taiwan, Hong Kong has recently seen a succession of protest movements aimed against seemingly increasing mainland control that compromises Hong Kong's autonomy and political freedom. Consequently, the current generation of activists and pro-democracy legislators in Hong Kong and Taiwan have begun to forge closer ties and cooperation. During my time in Taiwan, there were two high-profile visits of Hong Kong localist legislators to Taipei. In October 2016, two pro-independence legislators, Baggio Leung and Yau Wai-ching, visited a seminar organised by the Graduate Student Association of the NTU. In January 2017, a group of Hong Kong activists and legislators, including leading pro-democracy activists Joshua Wong and Nathan Law, visited a seminar held by the NPP.<sup>31</sup> Such exchanges reflect the focus on internationalisation as the Third Force seeks to establish cooperative transnational networks to further its cause. This was also the interpretation of Chinese

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<sup>30</sup> The policy "calls for the development of comprehensive relations with ASEAN, South Asia, and Australia and New Zealand, while promoting regional exchanges and collaborations" (New Southbound Policy Portal, <http://nspp.mofa.gov.tw/nsppe/index.php>).

<sup>31</sup> Video recordings of the NPP seminar with Hong Kong activists and legislators are available on the NPP's Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/newpowerparty/videos/1457943990943619/>;

<https://www.facebook.com/newpowerparty/videos/1459616977442987/>.

state media, as the People's Daily condemned the visit of Leung and Yau as collusion between Hong Kong and Taiwanese separatists (Lau, 2016).<sup>32</sup> According to Freddy Lim, both Hong Kong and Taiwan can indeed learn from mutual exchanges, but the NPP's international focus extends beyond just Hong Kong:

**Lim:** [...] over the past year or so, the NPP has also been in touch with lawmakers from many other countries such as Germany, Sweden, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, the United States, and Canada. It's not just Hong Kong. From the NPP's point of view, Hong Kong is very important, but I think Taiwan can gain insight from the politics of all other countries. So we are continuously welcoming exchanges with others.

The interviewees' opinions on Hong Kong were somewhat different. While they all acknowledged that both Taiwan and Hong Kong face a similar threat of growing mainland hegemony, many were quick to note the difference between the two cases: Hong Kong is already under Chinese control, while Taiwan is *de facto* sovereign and independent. Thus, for these Third Force supporters, the most pertinent function of Hong Kong is that of a cautionary example. Interviewee #3 mentioned an ominous local saying that "today's Hong Kong is tomorrow's Taiwan" (今日香港, 明日台灣, *jīnrì Xiānggǎng, míngrì Táiwān*), while interviewee #10 said that "Hong Kong is the best example of what happens if you accept China's policy of One Country, Two Systems."

The overriding theme of internationalisation observed in this section is similar to the notion of civic identity discussed earlier. In both themes, the dominant focus is a desire to replace dichotomous relationships with diversity and pluralism. In foreign relations, this is evident in the attempts to diversify Taiwan's regional economic relations and move away from asymmetric cross-Strait interdependence. With regard to transnational political networks, it is apparent in the NPP's active campaigning not just with Hong Kong, but with the US and several other countries. Finally, it can be seen in the actual global mobility of the Third Force supporters who have travelled and lived around the world. Thus, for these Third Force supporters, a strong sense of Taiwanese national identity does not denote nationalist isolationism or economic protectionism, but rather the opposite: balanced and multipolar global integration. In the next and final section of this analysis, I will look at how the multipolar focus manifests in Taiwan's domestic politics.

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<sup>32</sup> The People's Daily called the Hong Kong legislators "malignant tumours" and accused them of "jumping around like crazy clowns" (Lau, 2016).

### 5.2.2 Tactics of loyalty: The Third Force in domestic politics

As noted earlier, the very name “Third Force” signals an attempt to introduce a political alternative to the Pan-Blue and Pan-Green camps. However, it was also noted that the NPP in particular has been collaborating with the DPP in certain areas. I therefore sought to clarify the position of the Third Force in Taiwanese politics by asking the supporters why they support the NPP and SDP and whether they see these parties as a distinct third political camp.

The foremost conclusion from this part of the interviews was that party support in Taiwan is difficult to measure. This observation is in line with previous research that has found Taiwanese politics to be characterised by weak party loyalty. For example, Mattlin (2011: 80) notes that party loyalty in Taiwan is often “dependent on incumbency or the prospect of gaining power”. When it seems that a party will not do well in an election, it often begins losing members and supporters to others. Thus, classifying people as “supporters” of a certain party can be imprecise. This issue is aggravated by the hybrid electoral system where voters cast two ballots, one for a district candidate and one for a party. The above factors became evident when the interviewees were asked about their reasons for supporting Third Force parties (table 9, next page). Because of the qualitative focus of this study, interviewees were sought based on a loose definition of party support. In this case, “supporters” were defined as people who had given either a district vote or a party vote to the NPP or SDP, or people who currently identified themselves as supporters of these parties. This produced a rather heterogeneous sample that would be problematic in a quantitative study. For example, interviewees #10 and #11 gave their district vote to the NPP due to a lack of other suitable candidates rather than based on active support. Their party votes went to the SDP and DPP, although interviewee #11 was indecisive about his NPP/DPP support at the time of the interview.

The above suggests that the party list vote would be more indicative of actual support, but a similar problem appeared there as well: despite otherwise supporting the GPT, interviewee #6 voted for the NPP because her favourite candidate was on the NPP party list. This highlights another aspect of weak party loyalty also identified in previous research: within Taiwanese political parties, loyalty often depends on vertical personal relations rather than commitment to party ideology, which leads to opportunistic behaviour (*ibid.*). This might also apply to voters in that they may gravitate more towards individual politicians than a party platform. This is evident in how several NPP supporters based their support on a specific person. For interviewee #6, it was Kawlo Iyun Pacidal,

**Table 9:** Interviewees' reasons for supporting Third Force parties.

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Party support</b>	<b>Reasons for support</b>
<b>1</b>	NPP	Sunflower Movement, connection with youth
<b>2</b>	SDP	Social policies
<b>3</b>	SDP	Minority rights, new alternative
<b>4</b>	SDP	New alternative
<b>5</b>	NPP	New alternative, individual politician
<b>6</b>	NPP	Individual politician, indigenous rights
<b>7</b>	SDP	Social policies
<b>8</b>	SDP	New alternative, labour policies
<b>9</b>	NPP	Sunflower Movement, individual politician
<b>10</b>	NPP/SDP	District vote
<b>11</b>	NPP	District vote, individual politician

whereas interviewee #9 mentioned Huang Kuo-chang and interviewees #5 and #11 mentioned Freddy Lim (table 9).

Interestingly, as shown in table 9, the SDP supporters did not mention individual politicians and seemed more supportive of the party platform itself. The reasons they mentioned included more concrete political factors such as the SDP's focus on social and labour policies and minority rights. The small sample size means that no general conclusions can be made about this difference between NPP and SDP supporters. However, since the NPP supporters appeared more vague and indecisive, sometimes being torn between the NPP and DPP, this supports the notion that the NPP is closer to the pan-Green camp while the SDP represents a clearer "third force". More importantly, two of the NPP supporters said that in their opinion the NPP belonged to the pan-Green camp, whereas one SDP supporter said that the SDP was "totally" separate from the pan-Blue/pan-Green dichotomy. Others generally felt the NPP and SDP were a distinct third camp but some noted that they shared some broad political stances with the pan-Green camp. Together, the above results support the notion that the NPP is somewhat closer to the DPP. Freddy Lim was also asked about the NPP's pan-Green connection. He acknowledged that the NPP and DPP share the overall desire for Taiwan to become a normal country, but noted that they have different ideas about specific policies. Regarding the pan-Blue/pan-Green dichotomy, he said the following:

**Lim:** Taiwan's pan-Green/pan-Blue division is different from the rightist/leftist spectrum of other countries, and it has been like this for a very long time. I think the pan-Blue/pan-Green division in Taiwan is somewhat arbitrary. For example, we might think of the pan-Blue camp as one united faction, but if you look at the KMT, there are a lot of legislators from local factions who strongly oppose the current party leader's statements about unification with China. Similarly, one might say the pan-Green camp is pro-independence, but that is not necessarily the case. If you look at the DPP now, there are people who would like to give up the notion of independence and wouldn't want to deal with the issue of national identity [...] For the NPP, I personally don't like to describe it according to this traditional division. Our own main colours are yellow and black.

Lim thus seems dismissive about the whole concept of two diametrically opposed blocks and emphasises the NPP's role on its own terms. The party's own colours are a good example, since they can be an effective symbol in distancing it from the dichotomy. This is reflected in the comments of interviewee #1:

**Author:** How is the NPP different from the KMT and DPP?

**Interviewee #1:** They are not really political figures.

**Author:** So are they ordinary people who became politicians?

**Interviewee #1:** They were elected because of the Sunflower Movement, not because they originally wanted to be elected as politicians, but because they wanted a change. So they ran in the legislative elections.

**Author:** In Taiwan, there are these green and blue political camps. What about the NPP?

**Interviewee #1:** It's yellow.

Another aspect supporting the notion of a distinct political camp is how several interviewees explicitly emphasised the Third Force as a new alternative and/or a result of the Sunflower Movement (table 9). These interviewees talked about their frustration with the two "old" parties and their inability to address the younger generation:

**Author:** Why do you support the SDP?

**Interviewee #4:** Because it's new. Our generation is bored with the blue and green camps, the two big parties. [...] We don't really have confidence in the blue and green camps, we don't like them, so we are naturally looking for small new parties. So if there is a new party that seems good, it will definitely get our support.

Similarly, interviewee #5 noted that even before the Sunflower Movement, there was "a widespread idea that both parties suck", but people could only choose the "less awful" alternative. According to interviewee #10, the dominant dichotomy represented "two rotten apples" and people had been forced to choose the "less rotten" one. This disillusionment with the Pan-Blue/Pan-Green dichotomy is in line with previous research

on the apathetic “Strawberry Tribe” of Taiwanese youth discussed earlier. However, the Sunflower Movement and the Third Force seem to have provided these people with a new option that emphasises their perspective. This also corresponds to the comments made by the Sunflower Movement activists about providing a new alternative to the old dichotomy. The Sunflower activists’ frequent emphasis on the young generation was also reflected in the interviewees’ comments, confirming the notion of the Third Force as a political camp being particularly attractive to the youth.

The notion of the old pan-Blue/pan-Green dichotomy as “boring” and “rotten” reflects another key point behind Third Force support. As noted throughout this study, the defining features of the old dichotomy are the existential battles of ethnicity and identity and the resulting independence/unification debate. However, as shown in table 9, these aspects do not appear among the primary reasons for Third Force support among the interviewees. This is particularly evident among the SDP supporters, most of whom emphasised “normal” domestic policy issues such as environmental issues, sustainability, pacifism, women’s rights, workers’ rights, social justice, and marriage equality. Although these issues did not feature as directly in the NPP supporters’ answers, Freddy Lim mentioned a very similar list when asked why it was necessary to establish a new party in 2015:

**Lim:** If you look at the context of the recent social movements in Taiwan, the DPP cannot always keep up with the voice of the people. Even though the NPP is somewhat close to the DPP in issues like national identity and democratic reform, there are currently many other issues such as marriage equality, labour rights, indigenous people’s rights, environmental protection, and many others where we have different opinions. In these issues, I think many young people and opinion leaders in recent social movements do not directly support the DPP. The NPP was basically founded for this reason.

The NPP has actively fostered its connection with the youth when these issues enter public discourse. During my stay in Taiwan in the autumn and winter 2016–17, the most prominent and visible social movement was the campaign to legalise same-sex marriage. This timing might also explain why several interviewees and Freddy Lim himself listed marriage equality as one of the main social issues. The movement started gaining traction before the annual Taipei Pride parade in October when a same-sex marriage bill was introduced in the Legislative Yuan. A succession of pro- and anti-demonstrations followed throughout the fall, culminating in a large demonstration in front of Taipei’s Presidential Office on 10 December with over 100,000 people demanding the legalisation of same-sex marriage. This issue was particularly important to the youth: I personally

witnessed young people protesting over the autumn in various locations such as the NCCU and NTU campuses and central Taichung. The NPP was notably present in both the Taipei Pride parade and the December demonstration (figure 4). In the latter, all political parties with legislative seats had representatives addressing the crowd, but the NPP had all five of their legislators take the stage to voice their support for same-sex marriage.<sup>33</sup>

**Figure 4:** NPP Chairman Huang Kuo-chang speaks at the marriage equality protest in Taipei (photo by author).



The focus on “normal” political issues instead of the ubiquitous Taiwan/China question supports the notion that the current generation in Taiwan consider themselves “naturally” Taiwanese and are thus alienated from the historical conflict of the “old” parties. Just as the ethnic conflict between the *běnsǎngrén* and *wàishǎngrén* became redundant after democratisation, the persistent KMT/DPP dichotomy revolves around

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<sup>33</sup> Personal observations at the Taipei Pride on 29 October 2016 and the marriage equality protest on 10 December 2016. The latter was held on the International Human Rights Day, which was also the date of the 1979 rally by the Tangwai opposition movement that led to the Kaohsiung Incident (see section 4.2.1). This suggests that the concept of human rights holds particular significance to the Taiwanese opposition. The debate over same-sex marriage continued throughout the spring, and in May 2017, Taiwan’s Constitutional Court ruled that the ban on same-sex marriage was unconstitutional, advising the Legislative Yuan to amend laws accordingly. The ruling was considered a step toward Taiwan becoming the first country in Asia to legalise same-sex marriage. (e.g. Horton, 2017a.)

issues that many among today's generation consider obsolete. This leaves a vacuum that new parties can exploit if their platforms correspond to the desires of the current generation. The supporters' perspectives correspond to the agendas of the NPP and the SDP and to the comments of Freddy Lim, suggesting that the Third Force forms a socio-political entity grounded in the aforementioned aspects. Nevertheless, the interviewees' party loyalty does not seem particularly strong, and their voting behaviour seems rather flexible.

## 6 Conclusion: A dichotomy dismantled

The results presented in the preceding chapters reveal a recurrent theme in the various dimensions of national identity among Third Force supporters: *diversity*. It appears as an emphasis on the plurality of ethnic identities in a Taiwanese community built upon shared civic values. Similarly, it can be found in the desire for balanced and multipolar global interaction in the spheres of international relations and economic interdependence. Finally, it is evident in the attempt to diversify Taiwan's domestic politics through the introduction of new alternative parties. In each case, this focus on diversity functions as an antidote to prevailing *dichotomies*: it seeks to dismantle and replace the interconnected dualities of *běnsǎngrén/wàishǎngrén*, Taiwan/China, independence/unification, and DPP/KMT.

The motivation behind this drive for diversity is the age-old desire for self-determination. It stems from the cyclical history of foreign domination that has prevented the Taiwanese from assuming agency in the development of their society. Even after democratisation, Taiwan continues to be bound by its relationship with China, and this relationship permeates every action of those who wield power. Furthermore, the PRC's increasing attempts to draw Taiwan closer by economic and political stratagems create alarming echoes of history. The scenario of unification under the PRC would reprise the reality of the Japanese and KMT regimes, heralding the top-down imposition of an official nationalism that yet again halts the Taiwanese quest for self-determination. In such a scenario, Taiwan would be forced into the mould of a "Chinese nation" constructed and maintained by the PRC (and the KMT). Recent political developments in Hong Kong give the Taiwanese a particularly strong cautionary example of what might be at stake if such a unification was to occur.

For many, in the face of this challenge, the only logical counterreaction is the affirmation of a distinct Taiwanese identity. This identity is built around the community that has developed in Taiwan, and it sees otherness in the community across the Strait. However, the otherness of the "China" rejected by this Taiwanese identity is not that of the ethno-historical homeland, but rather what it has become under the PRC. Just as these people view civic values as the bedrock of the Taiwanese national community, they evaluate China according to its civic character. For them, it is not the "Chinese nation" but the PRC state that functions as the face of China. This also means that unification with today's China would not be a historical "reunification", since Taiwan has never been a part of the PRC. As noted in the introduction and subsequent chapters, the last time

Taiwan was under sustained mainland control was over 120 years ago, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There was no PRC, and from a constructionist perspective, there was no Chinese nation either. Taiwan was a distant frontier island ruled loosely and with marked indifference by the conquest empire of the Qing dynasty. For the Third Force, the ancient Chineseness of that empire may be duly noted, but it is a century and two revolutions away from the China of today.

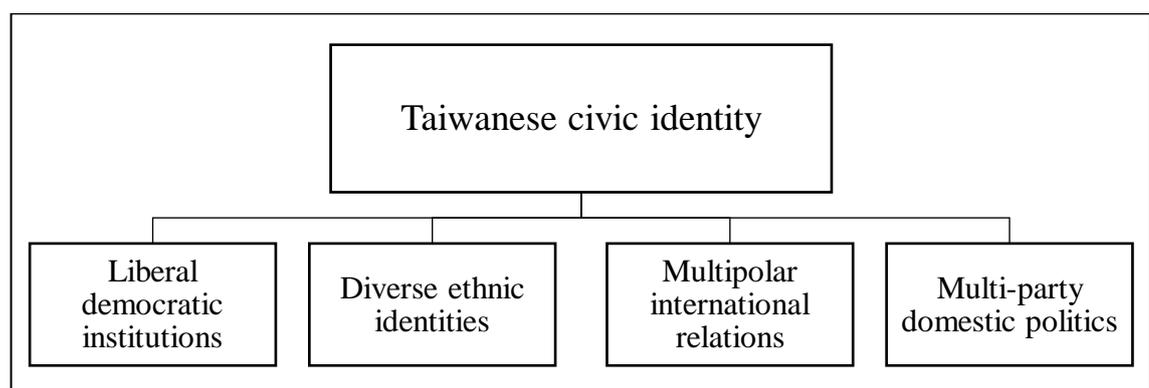
Thus, the Third Force looks to the civic nature of the PRC for a definition of modern China. That society is met with aversion, for it represents everything Taiwan fought for decades to leave behind. The aversion is strengthened by the fact that most Third Force supporters are young people born during or shortly after the process of democratisation. They have grown up in a democratic country, but not one where liberty is old enough to be taken for granted. It is the loss of that liberty that they fear and resist. This resistance results in antipathy that might sometimes verge on xenophobia. There have been some reports about xenophobic and racist attitudes towards mainland Chinese in both Taiwan and Hong Kong. Some interviewees in this study admitted with some embarrassment to feelings such as “disgust” when confronted with the recent influx of Chinese tourists. Such reactions resemble those of the Taiwanese that observed the arrival of the *wàishěngrén* after 1945: disdain for the “backward barbarians” pillaging their island. But hateful rejection appears to be a marginal element in the overall contemporary phenomenon. The accounts of the interviewees centred mainly on China as a country and the PRC as a state, not on negative characteristics of the Chinese people. Furthermore, as noted earlier, the Third Force operates through a Taiwan-centric lens that de-emphasises China’s role by default. This means that most of the discontent of these parties and their supporters is aimed at Taiwan’s domestic politics: they view Taiwan as a sovereign entity, and the primary culprits for its predicament are found from within.

In this domestic focus, just as internationally, the Third Force emphasises civic aspects. Thus, the subject of criticism is not the arcane ethnic group of *wàishěngrén*, but the political relic of the ROC state. For the generation casting their ballots for the Third Force, the ROC has never existed outside the propaganda fantasies of 1990s schoolbooks. Therefore, even more preposterous than the PRC claiming Taiwan is the existence of a Republic of China that claims the mainland. From this perspective, it is the administrative phantom of the ROC that stands in the way of the ultimate goal of Taiwan becoming a normal country. Indeed, looking at the various international problems between Taiwan and China, the ROC often seems no less responsible than the PRC. It has been suggested that it was the ROC’s own inflexibility that cost its UN seat in the 1970s. Similarly, the

humiliating name of “Chinese Taipei” that Taiwan is forced to use in international sports competitions was originally the result of the KMT government refusing to compete simply as “Taiwan” (Horton 2017b). As noted earlier, the concept of the 1992 Consensus that affirms the One-China Policy was also originally coined by the KMT, not by the PRC. Today, it is the awkward name “Republic of China” in passport covers that draws the ire of young Taiwanese. Accordingly, the pro-independence demonstrations on the streets of Taiwan do not usually target the PRC or the Chinese – instead, their slogans are aimed directly against the ROC.

For the Third Force and its supporters, the ethnically based dichotomies of the *běnnshěngrén/wàishěngrén* and Taiwanese/Chinese identities have thus faded into irrelevance, giving way to an inclusive Taiwanese civic identity. In terms of their lived personal experience, Taiwan has become Taiwanese. Thus, what remains to be dismantled is the obsolete and artificial political, legal and administrative framework that constrains this community. Earlier, two prominent conceptualisations for Taiwanese national identity were presented: the ambiguous dual Taiwanese/Chinese identity and the notion of an overarching Chinese nation. The former describes the struggle between Taiwanese and Chinese identities and their ethnic and civic dimensions, while the latter assumes a dominant Chinese identity by placing Taiwan within the context of an ethnic Chinese nation. Based on the results and conclusions of this study, I have formulated a third model to describe the contemporary national identity of the Third Force and its supporters (figure 5).

**Figure 5:** The “civic identity” model of Taiwanese identity among Third Force supporters.



The contrast with the previous conceptualisations is obvious. The “Chinese nation” locates the civic communities of the ROC and the PRC under an overarching ethnic identity, while the notion of a dual identity rests on a confused duality of ethnic and civic dimensions. In the “civic identity” model in figure 3, the order is reversed, and the role

of ethnicity is reduced to one of the sub-categories. Thus, the Chinese nation is not a valid basis for unification, because it is not the topmost framework for the construction of national identity. Instead, the confusion and hesitation of the dual identity give way to an unambiguous Taiwanese-ness grounded in civic values. Moreover, the demoted ethnic dimension now rests on inclusive diversity rather than antagonistic Taiwanese/Chinese identities, and the emphasis on diversity characterises the other sub-categories as well: dichotomous cross-Strait relations are replaced by a constellation of multipolar international relations, and the KMT/DPP duality transforms into multi-party domestic politics. With democracy consolidated, its liberal institutions replace the last remnants of the KMT party-state and the ROC.

The main elements of this model are supported by data from both secondary and primary sources used in this study. The broad lines of the model are in line with national level surveys regarding Taiwanese identity and support for independence and the Third Force. The model also has similarities with the conclusions of certain other studies. Most recently, Cole (2017) has examined Taiwanese identity as civic nationalism, which bears obvious resemblance to the conclusions of this study. Moreover, as noted in chapter 3, existing scholarship suggests that modern civic values outweighed Chinese ethnicity already among the intellectuals of the Japanese colonial period and the ROC martial law era. These facts suggest that the “civic identity” model might be more broadly applicable to the current generation in Taiwan, not just the Third Force and its supporters. Polls showing the NPP as the most popular party among young people support this notion. These results apparently contradict some of the previous assertions about the broader Taiwanese identity: Hughes (2000) suggested an emergent “post-nationalist” Taiwan where national identity would be lodged in an intermediate state between civic and ethnic dimensions. Dawley (2009) interpreted the rise in independence-oriented identity as the emergence of an ethnic Taiwanese community. Zhong (2016) saw evidence of the Taiwanese still considering themselves part of the “Chinese nation”. Neither the ambiguity nor the ethnic focus of such interpretations are present in my analysis.

Despite the above, I must again emphasise that while they are somewhat congruent with survey data and certain other studies, the results of this study are based on a relatively limited qualitative analysis. Moreover, while this model might be accurate now, the phenomena it depicts are relatively recent, and there are significant uncertainties about their future. The noticeable rise in Taiwanese identity seems to have plateaued at around 60% in 2015, and it has declined slightly after that. The Third Force parties are only a few years old and have only participated in one election. Small parties have come

and gone in Taiwanese politics before, so there is no certainty about their longevity now. Therefore, the local election due in 2018 will be an important indication of the level of sustained political support for this version of Taiwanese identity. It should also be noted that after the DPP's landslide victory in 2016, Tsai Ing-wen's popularity has fallen significantly during her first year as president. An effective way to measure the political independence of the Third Force would be to observe its popularity as the DPP falters – if the NPP is indeed more than a support party of the DPP, it might stand to gain from the DPP's losses and could thus increase its popularity in the next election. However, it should also be kept in mind that political support need not directly reflect national identity. As demonstrated by the ESC NCCU data, Taiwanese identity strengthened throughout the KMT's eight-year pro-China reign in 2008–2016. Moreover, previous research and the results of this study suggest that party support and voting behaviour in Taiwan are often incoherent, fluid, and therefore unreliable as indicators of actual allegiance. Thus, emphasis should be on a comprehensive analysis of social developments in the upcoming years.

The above points suggest a fertile ground for further research. The Third Force as a phenomenon is new and therefore not widely studied. However, its social impact already warrants more attention. As the qualitative data for this study was limited in scope, the validity of the “civic identity” model would greatly benefit from broader quantitative research focusing on the civic aspects of Taiwanese identity. The results of this study suggest that a key aspect in the construction of this civic identity are the interviewees' international experiences. Research into the role of international mobility in the construction of national identity would thus be useful. Further, while this study included a historical overview, attitudes towards history were not specifically covered in the interviews. A particularly interesting focal point would be the Japanese colonial period and how the current generation perceive that era, since it is widely seen as the genesis of Taiwanese national identity. Another recurring element throughout this study was the role of Taiwan's indigenous people: there were interviewees with indigenous backgrounds and one of the five NPP legislators is indigenous. The process of Taiwanisation seems to have brought more focus on indigenous issues, and many young Taiwanese are embracing their indigenous heritage. Further research on national identity among Taiwan's indigenous people would thus be valuable. Finally, this study revealed interesting patterns in party loyalty and voting behaviour in Taiwan that would also be suitable for further research from a political science perspective. Specifically, the NPP seems to have successfully exploited a populist approach, while the SDP seems to attract more issues-

based support.

The “civic identity” model is not primarily a description of the characteristics of Taiwanese society. Rather, it describes concepts, ideals and objectives. Each of its subcategories manifests in Taiwanese society, but they are not static. The interplay of popular, domestic, official and foreign forces described throughout this study continues, and so does the dynamic evolution of identities. But at this particular point in time, the results of this study indicate that the domestic and popular elements have gained traction in Taiwanese society. The Third Force is an amalgamation of grassroots objectives all stemming from the basic notion that the Taiwanese should be allowed to decide their own fate. Its existence is a manifestation of the democratic principles first imagined over a century ago, and its success among the current generation demonstrates the significance of those principles in contemporary Taiwanese society.

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This study was conducted for a master’s thesis, and as such, it has certain limitations in scope and methodology. This also means that despite the earlier pilot study, the research itself has been a learning process with significant instances of trial and error. Experience and hindsight have revealed a multitude of things that could have been carried out differently: different interview locations, different questions, a wider sample, more precise sampling, longer interviews, better language skills, and so on. However, I believe one of the fundamental purposes of this or any other study is to expose its own faults to its author. Once exposed, they can be ironed out in subsequent studies to make research ever more robust. Any such faults or other potential errors in this study are solely my own.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Interview frame and questions for Third Force supporters

(Used for personal reference, not distributed to interviewees.)

INTERVIEW NO. 採訪號		DATE 日期	年	月	日	LOCATION 地点	
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#### 1. INTERVIEWEE DETAILS

##### 被採訪者資料

AGE 年齡	0–19	
	20–29	
	30–39	
	40+	
GENDER 性別	M 男	F 女
HOMETOWN 家鄉		
OCCUPATION 職業		
HIGHEST DEGREE 最高學歷		

#### 2. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

##### 採訪問題

1. Describe your family background: where are your parents / grandparents from?  
(Taiwanese / Mainlander)  
When did they come to Taiwan?  
關於你家人的背景: 你的父母和祖父母是從什麼地方來的? (本省人 / 外省人)  
他們什麼時候來的台灣?
2. Do you consider your identity to be Taiwanese, Chinese, or Both Taiwanese and Chinese?  
Is your identity the same as it has always been? (Has it changed over time / was it different before?)  
你觉得你自己的认同是台湾人, 中国人, 还是都是?  
你的认同现在跟以前一样吗? (你的认同有没有改变 / 以前不一样吗?)
3. What makes Taiwanese people different from Chinese people?  
What makes Taiwan different from China? What about similarities?  
台灣人和中國人有什麼不一樣?  
台灣和中國有什麼不一樣? 有什麼一樣呢?

4. Have you lived or studied abroad?  
Have you encountered any problems abroad because you are Taiwanese?  
你有沒有在國外居住或者唸書？  
你在國外有沒有遇到哪些問題因為你是台灣人？
  
5. What is your perception of mainland China?  
How about mainland Chinese people?  
Has your perception changed over time? (Why has it changed?)  
對中國大陸你有什麼看法？  
你覺得大陸人怎麼樣？  
你的看法現在跟以前一樣嗎，有沒有改變？(為什麼改變？)
  
6. Considering cross-strait relations, do you prefer the status quo or do you want Taiwan to be independent?  
In your opinion, what does the status quo mean? (Is Taiwan already independent?)  
關於兩岸關係：你想維持現狀還是你想台灣獨立？  
對你來說，現狀的意思是什麼？(台灣已經獨立了嗎？)
  
7. Are you aware of the current political situation in Hong Kong?  
Do you think the situations in Hong Kong and Taiwan are similar?  
你知道香港的政治情況現在怎麼樣？  
你覺得台灣和香港的情況有什麼共同點？
  
8. What do you think of the cross-strait relations during the term of President Ma Ying-jeou?  
How about now, with President Tsai Ing-wen?  
關於兩岸關係：你覺得兩岸關係在馬英九總統的任期內怎麼樣？  
現在呢，跟蔡英文總統相比？
  
9. During President Ma-Ying jeou's presidency, the economic relations between China and Taiwan became closer. What do you think of closer economic relations with China?  
在馬英九總統的任期內，中國和台灣有更多經濟關係。對這樣的經濟關係你有什麼看法？
  
10. Why do you support the New Power Party / Social Democratic Party?  
What makes this party different from the KMT and the DPP?  
你為什麼支持時代力量黨？  
這個政黨跟國民黨和民進黨有什麼不一樣？
  
11. The New Power Party / Social Democratic Party was established in 2015. Why do you think it was established at that time?  
時代力量黨是在 2015 年建立的。你覺得，為什麼這個政黨是那時候建立的？

## Appendix 2: Interviewee details

No.	Location	Date	Duration	Language	Age	Gender	Hometown	Employment	Education	Party support	Identity
1	Taipei	25/12/2016	27:05	Chinese	20-29	M	New Taipei City	Employed	Bachelor	NPP	Taiwanese
2	Taipei	29/12/2016	36:13	Chinese	20-29	M	Taichung	Student	High school	SDP	Taiwanese
3	Taipei	29/12/2016	50:42	Chinese	20-29	M	Taichung	Student	High school	SDP	Taiwanese
4	Taipei	14/12/2017	35:37	Chinese	20-29	F	Taoyuan	Employed	High school	SDP	Taiwanese
5	Taipei	20/01/2017	42:01	English	20-29	F	Taoyuan	Employed/ student	Bachelor	NPP	Taiwanese
6	Online	12/2017	N/A	Chinese	20-29	F	Tainan	Student	High school	NPP	Taiwanese
7	Taipei	24/01/2017	30:29	Chinese	30-39	F	Taipei	Employed	Master	SDP	Taiwanese
8	Taipei	24/01/2017	21:13	Chinese	30-39	M	Taichung	Student	Master	SDP	Taiwanese
9	Taipei	24/01/2017	38:22	English	20-29	F	Taoyuan	Employed	Master	NPP	Taiwanese
10	Taipei	25/01/2017	30:39	English	20-29	F	Taipei	Employed	Master	NPP/SDP	Taiwanese
11	New Taipei City	27/01/2017	24:29	Chinese	20-29	M	Taipei	Employed	Bachelor	NPP	Taiwanese

### Appendix 3: Coding frame

(Based on coding and node structure created in the NVivo software.)

Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
National identity	Personal dimension	Ethnic and civic aspects	Family origin	<i>Běnsǎngrén</i>
				<i>Wàishǎngrén</i>
				Indigenous
			Self-identification	Taiwanese
				Chinese
		Sameness and otherness	Ethnicity/culture	
			State / political system	
			Values	
		Identity formation	Identity change	Education
				Family background
				Age
	Experience abroad		Travel	
			Studies	
			Difficulties as Taiwanese	
	Socio-political dimension	International perspective	Taiwan's international status	Independence/unification
				Status quo
				ROC
			International relations	Cross-Strait relations
				Relations with other countries
				Similarities with Hong Kong
		Interdependence	Trade agreements	
			Chinese influence	
Domestic politics and society		Social movements	Sunflower Movement	
			Activism in general	
		Third Force / Pan-Blue & Green	NPP	
	SDP			
	Relations with DPP/KMT			
	Party support	Electoral system		
Party loyalty				
Reasons for support				

## Appendix 4: Questions for NPP legislator Freddy Lim

(Sent by e-mail and answered in audio recording.)

1. 台灣許多民調會詢問受訪者認為自己是台灣人、中國人、亦或兩者皆是，而你的答案很明顯的應該會是「台灣人」。請問作為「台灣人」對你來說的意義是什麼？你覺得做為「台灣人」有些什麼要素？

In Taiwan, surveys often ask people whether they consider themselves Taiwanese, Chinese, or both. It seems clear that you would answer “Taiwanese”. What does being “Taiwanese” mean to you? What are the things that make you “Taiwanese”?

2. 近期有個民調發現，時代力量在 20 至 29 歲的年輕族群中是最受歡迎的政黨。請問你認為原因為何？年輕人是否是時代力量主要針對的族群？

In a recent survey, the NPP was found to be the most popular party in Taiwan among people aged 20–29. Why do you think the NPP is so popular particularly among the younger generation? Does the NPP specifically target young people in its politics?

3. 雖然時代力量在 2016 總統大選中選擇支持蔡英文，但貴黨多次聲明自己與民進黨並無直接關聯。對你而言，時代力量是泛屬於泛綠陣營、泛藍陣營、還是獨立於這兩個傳統政治陣營之外？

The NPP endorsed Tsai Ing-wen in the 2016 presidential election, but it has also stated that it is not connected to the DPP. How do you see the NPP with regard to the pan-Blue / pan-Green camps in Taiwan’s politics? Is the NPP linked to the pan-Green camp or is it more outside both of these traditional camps?

4. 一直以來，民進黨被視為一個以台灣為核心並支持台獨、民主的政黨。有鑒於貴黨與民進黨在這些方面有許多相似之處，請問當初成立一個新的政黨(時代力量)的重要或必要性為何？而你認為時代力量與民進黨有何不同地方？

In Taiwan, the DPP has traditionally been the pro-independence, pro-democracy, pro-Taiwanese party. Why was it important to establish a new party that seemingly shares many features with the DPP? What makes the NPP different from the DPP?

5. 身為時代力量的創黨成員之一，當初是什麼原因促使你在台灣成立一個新的政黨？為何選擇在 2015 成立？而太陽花運動對於時代力量的成立又有什麼意義？

You are a founding member of the NPP and its first leader. What made you decide to establish a new political party in Taiwan, and why was 2015 the right time for this? What was the significance of the Sunflower Movement to the establishment of the NPP?

6. 太陽花運動的起因，是馬英九政府試圖在立院闖關通過受爭議的兩岸服貿協議。整體來說，你對兩岸經濟整合的看法是什麼？

The Sunflower Movement was a response to the Ma Ying-jeou administration’s attempt to push through a controversial trade agreement with China. In general, what is your opinion on Taiwan’s economic integration with China?

7. 今年一月時，時代力量邀請幾位香港立法委員來台北參加論壇。請問你覺得香港與台灣的政治環境有何相似或差異之處？建立香港及台灣泛民主派/支持獨立團體的交流又有何重要性？

In January 2017, the NPP invited localist lawmakers from Hong Kong to attend a forum in Taipei. How would you compare the current political situation in Hong Kong to the situation in Taiwan, and why do you think it's important to build contacts between the pro-democracy / pro-independence groups of Hong Kong and Taiwan?

8. 時代力量和社會民主黨的成員原本同屬社團法人「公民組合」，請問當初分裂的原因？為何沒有選擇只成立單一個政黨？

The NPP was originally part of the Taiwan Citizen Union 公民組合, but this organisation later split into the NPP and the SDP. What was the reason for this division, and why did the organisation not establish a single new party instead?