



# **Taiwanese Identity and Cross-Strait Conflict Resolution**

## **A Social Constructivist Analysis**

By  
Jasmine C. Lee

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Professor Colette Mazzucelli

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Professor Muserref Yetim

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## **Abstract**

Peaceful Cross-Strait Relations have great implications for global security. As US-China relations sour, concerns about the stability of the Taiwan Strait increased. This research analysis uses social constructivism as a bridge lens between international relations theory and the conflict resolution literature to propose a peacebuilding strategy for Cross-Strait Relations. This thesis argues that the consolidation of Taiwanese identity is the major factor to resist the unification from China. Through the lens of social constructivism, the research dives into the history and sociopolitical context of Taiwan to answer the research question: what are the principal variables in the construction of Taiwanese identity? The research also conducts qualitative analysis on public narratives on Cross-Strait Relations and Taiwanese identity. The findings allow the research to shape a Cross-Strait peacebuilding strategy that recognizes the apperception of a distinct Taiwanese identity.

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## Introduction

In 1949, in the defeat of the Chinese Civil War, the Kuomintang party (KMT) ruled Republic of China regime (the ROC) fled to the Taiwan Island, which is 1,307 miles from the Mainland China and have around 1.2–2 million local citizens. The evacuation brought two million of the remaining army, businessmen, and other KMT supporters to Taiwan. With the determination of the KMT to reconquering the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) on the Mainland and with the military aid from the United States, the KMT withstand the attack from the CCP and continue to operate on the island of Taiwan as the ROC.

During the past seventy years, Taiwan is governed independently from Mainland China, and numerous political and social transition undertake on the island. The CCP ruled People's Republic of China (PRC) also goes through a series of historical events and undergoes an economic transition, turning the countries into the second largest economy in the world. Yet, one thing does not change, is CCP's continued pursuit of unification. The CCP also labels Taiwan as a province of China. However, not only the war legacy prevents the people on the Taiwan to accept unification; the rise and consolidation of Taiwanese identity play a great force to resist the unifying pressure-both through economy and military-from the Mainland. The term "Cross-Strait Conflict" and "Cross-Strait Relations" is referring to the series of struggle on unification between the Mainland and the Taiwan during the past seventy years.

With the geopolitical significance of Taiwan, the U.S. continues to play a crucial role in Cross-Strait Relations. Based on the "Taiwan Relations Act" signed in 1979, the United States is allowed to maintain an unofficial relationship with Taiwan. The island is a crucial economic and security partner of the U.S. and shares democratic values in the Indo-Pacific. The U.S. also show a bipartisan support to backup Taiwan. With the presence of the U.S.,

the confrontation between the Mainland and Taiwan has become a part of the U.S-Sino competition.

Currently, the world two superpowers, U.S. and China, enter into an all-round race from technology development, economic power, military capacity, to ideological confrontation. Both People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the U.S. Navy increase the frequency to conduct military drill and sailing warship through Taiwan Strait to demonstrate their power in the region. As studies show that China's invasion to Taiwan may lead to a war between China and the U.S., despite with the tiny size of Taiwan, Cross-Strait Relations has a great implication to the global stability. This research, which focus on Cross-Strait Conflict Resolution, is therefore, not only important for the regional security, but crucial for a global one. Stable Cross-Strait Relations decrease the chance for two largest economy and nuclear-armed states to go into war.

This research argues that the Taiwanese identity is the major factor to resist the unification from China. Thus, to propose a Cross-Strait Conflict Resolution suggestion, this study uses social constructivism as a lens to look into the history of Taiwan and identifies the principle variable that form and consolidate the Taiwanese identity. The categorization of the following literature section, reflects the road map of the research. It expands from the existing analysis on Taiwanese identity, and analyzes the variables based on the theories of identity formation. Ultimately and most importantly, the study attempts to proposes suggestions for Cross-Strait Conflict Resolution. In this section, the research first examines the previous Cross-Strait Conflict Resolution proposals, using the theory of conflict resolution to point out their weakness, and then introduce suggestions according to the identity analysis. To strengthen this research and to make it relevant to the current international political climate, the last section

revisits the Taiwanese identity formation in the COVID-19 pandemic. This application demonstrates the importance to differentiate Taiwanese from Chinese for the global security, and reinforces the suggestions that this research provides to the China-Taiwan Relation.

## **Literature Review**

### **I. Social Constructivism and Taiwanese Identity**

Traditionally, the Cross-Strait Conflict is viewed through realism or liberalism. Under the concept of balance of power, realists consider China and Taiwan as two strategic competitors, that are expected to compete with each other. A conflict is unavoidable and will ultimately occur in the Taiwan Strait. However, realists cannot explain why, despite the distrust between the two sides, Cross-Strait economic and cultural cooperation has increased in recent years, especially during the eight years of Ma Ying-jeou Administration (2008-2016). On the other hand, liberal school, which believes that cooperation in the economic and social arenas would eventually spill over into the political realm of unification, failed to predict the path of Cross-Strait Relation either. The continued integration—primarily in the areas of "low politics," including economic, cultural and societal integrations between China and Taiwan during Ma Administration, have not made the two sides closer to any visible and realistic road map of political integration, and not to mention unification.

Recent discourses suggest that social constructivism (in shorthand: constructivism) is a better lens to view Cross-Strait Relations, which has increasingly become a conflict of identity. The traditional IR-theories focuses on the distribution of material power, whereas Constructivism rejects such a one-sided view, and argue that the most important aspect of international relations is social. Constructivists are concerned with human consciousness and knowledge, and treat



ideas as structural factors that influence how actors interpret the world. In constructivist theory, norms and ideas shape interests as interests shape the actions of individuals and nation states. As norms and ideas can change people's perception about identity; therefore, they are crucial in explaining actors' behaviors.

According to polls on identity, although Han Chinese consists of the main groups of people on the Mainland and Taiwan, the percentage of Taiwanese residents considered themselves as Taiwanese has grown steadily. In contrast, the population holding Chinese identity has greatly decreased. A social change is undertaking in Taiwan and affecting its political climate and Cross-Strait Relations.

Within Taiwanese identity literature, there are various angles applied to examine the identity change. Wakabayashi and Lin's works both provide a chronicle analysis of the Taiwanese identity. In Wakabayashi's "Taiwanese nationalism and the unforgettable others", he identifies three stages of identity changes in Taiwan. The first occurred when Taiwan was colonized by Japan in 1895. Japanese culture was forced upon the Taiwanese, and the imminent arrival of Japanese troops became the first indication of a pan-Taiwanese identity, which was limited to Han. Both local Taiwanese and mainland immigrants became unified against the external Japanese threat.

The second change occurred when Japan was defeated in World War II. Taiwan was incorporated into the Republic of China (ROC), which was led by the KMT, as the Province of Taiwan. The Taiwanese welcomed this as a "return to the fatherland (回歸祖國)", and the KMT started promoting the Han ethnic as the dominant group and culture in Taiwan. However, on the

day before 28 February 1947, a local cigarette vendor was brutally beaten by the Nationalist police as they tried to confiscate her allegedly smuggled cigarettes. Due to the poor administration of the KMT, the incident sparked an island-wide uprising, which eventually led the KMT government to declare martial law. The 228 Incident produced a new definition to Taiwanese consciousness. People who came settled in Taiwan before 1945 were called Taiwanese, whereas people who came from China after 1945 were the "Chinese." The differentiation between Taiwanese and Chinese communities began.

Recent political liberalization starts the third identity change in Taiwan. The end of the martial law in 1987 and permission from the government allowing *dangwai* (黨外, *opposition of the KMT party*) to exist are largely considered as the beginning of Taiwan's democratization. As a result, "Taiwanese nationalism has assumed considerable prominence, and a cultural uniqueness has been gaining strength."<sup>1</sup>

Wakabayashi's work provides a general and historical framework of the chronicle change in Taiwanese identity. It points out the "unforgettable others"—Japan and China—of its formation and the time of its emergence and transition.<sup>2</sup> However, his study is limited in a deeper question: "what are the variables forming Taiwanese identity during these different stages?"

Another work analyzing Taiwanese identity and Cross-Strait Conflict is Lin's "Taiwan's China Dilemma." Same as this study, Lin embraces the thinking of constructivism, as she suggests "identity form the basis for defining interest." Her work looks into the oscillation of Taiwan's economic policies toward China after 2000 and combines the identity polls to see how the consolidation of Taiwanese identity affect its economic policies. Lin's work demonstrates the

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<sup>1</sup> Friedman, E (ed.) 2005, *China's Rise, Taiwan's Dilemma's and International Peace*, Routledge, Florence.p33

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

importance of Taiwanese identity in shaping policies, while since it is limited to economic policies study, it lacks the analysis of what are the variables forming such identity.

In the previous studies of Taiwanese identity, there were also approaches that considers identity as artificially constructed by opportunistic politicians engaged in “identity politics.” This approach believes Taiwanese identity is a tool to gain support for particular political leaders or public policies, and such identity politics has led Taiwanese voters to act emotionally or irrationally when considering Taiwan’s economic policy toward China.<sup>3</sup> Currently, such an approach is still being used by numerous critics and politicians, especially during election campaigns. While an intrinsic value is not shown in this kind of analysis. This perspective believes identity is simply an outcome of political contestation and entrepreneurs are manipulating identity as a tool for political gain. Yet, it overlooks Taiwan's unique history and values which create a deep sense of national identity and should not be dismissed simply as false consciousness created by a small group of extremists.

The above studies provide different perspectives in understanding the Taiwanese identity. Both Wakabayashi’s three stages of identity change in Taiwan and Lin’s trade policies analysis using the lens of identity, point out the importance of Taiwanese identity and its crucial role in affecting Taiwan’s policies. While the two studies did not point out what are the drivers and principle variables causing such formation and transition in Taiwanese identity. The literature that consider the Taiwanese identity as “identity politics,” on the other hand, oversimplified the formation of Taiwanese identity. A successful conflict resolution requires an approach to dive

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<sup>3</sup> Chen, K., 2004. Introduction to Taiwan Studies, Taipei, Taiwan: Boy Young. (In Chinese); Hsu, S. C. 2007. “Institutionally-Induced Identity Politics in Taiwan: The Challenge of Nationalism to Democracy.” Paper presented at International Conference on After the Third Wave. Taipei. Aug. 13-14.

into the history and structure of the society and to find out the nuance that shaping the dynamic of the collective narrative. Therefore, this research fills up the gap of these studies by providing a deeper analysis to understand the variable that help form and consolidate the Taiwanese identity. Also, few studies study the consolidation of Taiwanese identity during the Xi's rejuvenation era. As China serve a huge factor in shaping Taiwanese identity and the Chinese nationalism rises fast after Xi took the office, the studies also help the literature in Taiwanese identity to keep up with the current international climate.

## II. Formation of Identity

To identify the principal variables in the construction of Taiwanese identity, it is necessary to understand the formation of identity. With the unique history of Taiwan–Japanese colonization and the KMT's retreat and political liberalization after 1987 – it requires an approach from a nation-building perspective to analyze the formation of Taiwanese identity.

In the book “National Identity,” Anthony. D Smith, a British sociologist, provides insights of how a political identity is formed. Smith examines the nature, causes and consequences of national identity in the post-Cold War world. Nations and nationalism, he argues, are not simply political bodies and ideology, but cultural phenomena. They are multidimensional and encompass language, sentiments and symbolism. Thus, the Basques, Kurds, and Tamils form a clear national identity even without a state of their own, recognition of which contributes to turmoil and conflict. Smith's piece allows the research to fill up the gap of Wakabayashi and Lin's work. As the polls and interviews have shown an increasing trend for people in Taiwan recognize themselves as Taiwanese, Smith's case studies of national identity

formation, provides the lens for this research to dissect the Taiwanese identity and find out the principle variables that construct the identity.

As Wakabayashi mentions, the two "unforgettable others" are crucial in the emergence of Taiwanese identity, a social view to understand Taiwanese identity consolidation is also needed. Rousseau and Rocio's "Identity, Power, and Threat Perception" use the Social Identity Theory to approach cross-national conflict resolution. Social Identity Theory assumes that individuals automatically sort themselves into categories, and this is a natural cognitive process that occurs in every social setting.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the placement of the "self" in one category, in turn, will immediately create an "other."<sup>5</sup> The well-known international relations Constructivist, Alexander Wendt, has adopted the logic of SIT to predict that "outsiders" in international affairs will be viewed as more threatening than "insiders."<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the Social identity theory is extremely useful to understand how and why Chinese identity has been gradually diminished and abandoned by the people in Taiwan. It also helps explain the strong resistance to unification with Mainland China in Taiwan.

### III. Conflict Resolution

Smith and Rousseau and Rocio's works allow the study to dive into the mindset of Taiwanese people, and understand the drivers and variables of Taiwanese identity formation. While the ultimate purpose of the research is to propose a Cross-Strait Conflict resolution based on the findings. Therefore, when it comes to Conflict Resolution, the works by John Burton, an

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<sup>4</sup> Tajfel, H., 1978. Social categorization, social identity, and social comparison. In *A Differentiation between social groups: studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations*. London: Published in cooperation with European Association of Experimental Social Psychology by Academic Press, pp. 61-67.

<sup>5</sup> Rousseau, D.L. & Garcia-Retamero, R. 2007, "Identity, Power, and Threat Perception: A Cross-National Experimental Study", *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 51, no. 5, p. 747

<sup>6</sup> Wendt, A., 2014. *A Social theory of international politics*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Australian diplomat, are the must-read piece. In his book, "Conflict: Resolution and Provention," published in 1990, Burton differentiates ordinary, day-to-day conflicts and deep-rooted intractable conflicts, and identifies that resolving the latter type of conflict is quite different from that of the former.<sup>7</sup>

Burton's theory of human needs, which is the integration of the works of psychologist Abraham Maslow and sociologist Paul Sites, provides a guide to the problem-solving process and served as a standard to pursue in intractable conflict resolution processes. Burton says that recent insights from different disciplines and practical experience have conflated to where we see the beginning of a "theory of human behavior." He argues that human beings have certain needs that are basic, that are not malleable, that must be satisfied if there is to be individual development leading to conforming behavior.<sup>8</sup> In other words, "Needs reflect universal motivations."

Burton's work anchored with social constructivism, as he emphasized on the construction of a society, culture and identity. Burton says "if recognition, identity of self, and some measure of control over the environment are human needs, then the absence of their fulfillment will lead to adaptations that restrict development and perhaps create abnormalities in behavior or lead to antisocial behaviors."<sup>9</sup> Burton also suggests a new process of conflict resolution: "provention," which he describes as "the promotion of an environment conducive to harmonious relationships."<sup>10</sup> According to Burton, a long-lasting resolution would require a focus on the

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<sup>7</sup> Burton, J., Conflict: Resolution and Provention. In *A Conflict: Resolution and Provention*. New York: St. Martin's Press, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

nature of human behavior. Burton's human needs theory helps the study to apply the findings of identity formation with the Cross-Strait Conflict, and to propose a conflict resolution approach between Taiwan and China, which aims to resolve the root grievances within both sides.

Except for the theoretical input, this research will also incorporate the suggestions from the real-world studies. The peacebuilding between Taiwan and China requires a great deal of meetings and negotiations between the leaders of the two governments. Therefore, this thesis references the work "Kissinger, the Negotiator," which provides extensive experience of negotiations, including with China officials, by the former United States Secretary of State Kissinger. The work helps craft the strategies for future negotiation process between Taiwan and China.

## **Methodology**

Quantitative data—mostly polls – are extremely important in providing a general look of the political preference of the people in Taiwan throughout the time. While a deeper analysis to understand the change of the preference is needed. In this research, the puzzle is addressed by employing qualitative methods and utilizing the social constructivist school of thought. The research will first use the year of 1987, when the KMT Party ended the Martial Law and started the democratization process, to divide Taiwan into two generations. Discourse analysis of interviews is used to identify key narratives behind the formation of Taiwanese identity between different generations.

This interpretive study aims to illuminate causal connections of the factors shaping the Taiwanese Identity. The study hypothesizes that the difference in System has the biggest effect

on the formation of Taiwanese Identity among the three variables. In this study, public speeches, memes, and online posts collected by the author are used to support the findings. Other scholarly works analyzing the historical and political context are used as well, along with statistics, newspaper articles, and government statements.

## I. Analysis: Cross-Straits Identity Conflict

The formation of the Taiwanese identity, along with the resistance toward the Chinese identity together propel the identity conflict between the Mainland and Taiwan. In the following sections, the former two parts will first illustrate the factors shaping Taiwanese identity, the latter three parts will then explain the resistances toward Chinese identity of the people in Taiwan.

### A. Institutions, Democratization and Education:

In the last two decades, we see a great change of self-identity in Taiwan. According to the identity survey done by the Election Study Center at NCCU, the percentage of people recognizing themselves as Taiwanese has risen from 17.6 percent in 1992 to 56.9 percent in 2019. Whereas the Chinese identity has fallen from 25.5 to 3.6 percent (figure 1). Institution served as a major force in shaping Taiwanese identity in both generations before and after 1978.



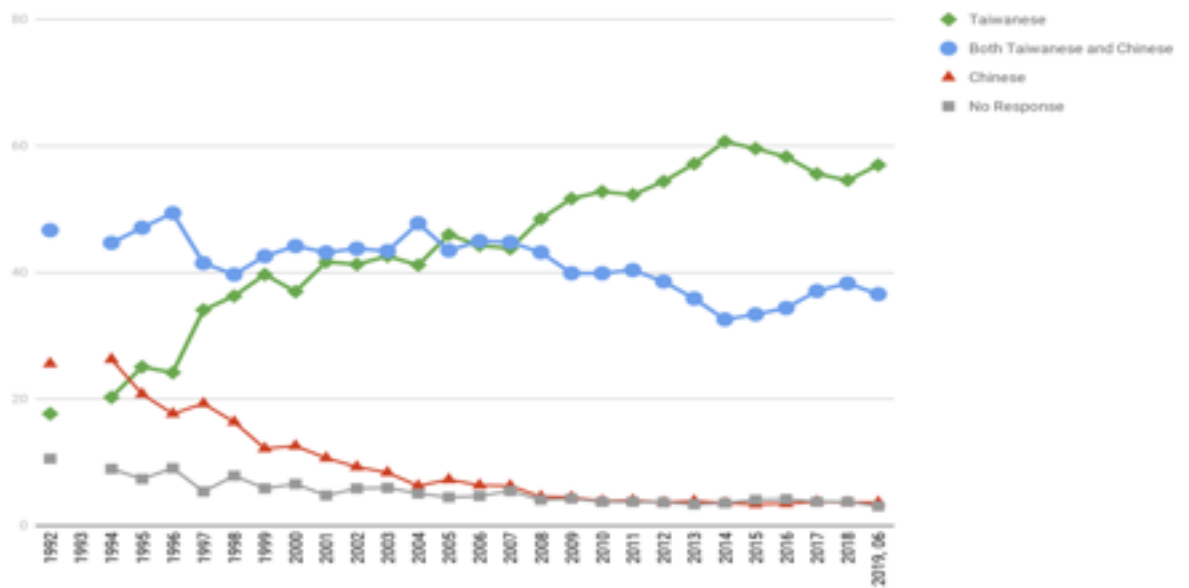


Figure 1: Chinese/ Taiwan Identity Survey (1992-2019.06)

Following Taiwan's handover from Japan to the KMT in 1945, was the four decades of educational and language policies, along with propaganda, intended to impose Chinese identity to the residents in Taiwan. The KMT restricted Taiwanese cultural activities, and launched a "Chinese Speaking Movement (說國語運動)," banning local dialects including Taiwanese, Hakka, and Aboriginal languages. Advocacy of Chinese identity is pervasive. As the below figure 2 shows, on the bottom page of the elementary exercise book were the slogan of "Be a happy and good student; Be an honest and true Chinese."

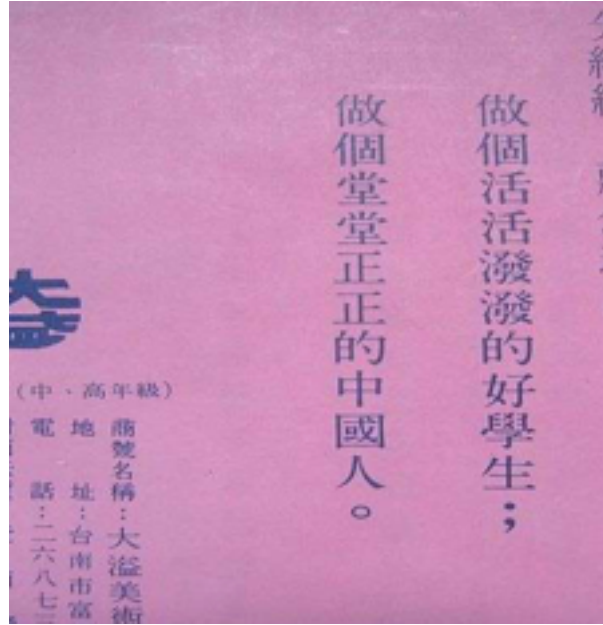


Figure 2: Slogan, advocating for Chinese identity, on elementary exercise book.

While forcing the integration of society to form a united Chinese identity, the KMT distinguished the "*waishengren* (外省人)" from "*benshengren* (本省人)", and imposed a segregation policy between the two groups. The former is the newly arrived mainlanders from China after Japan's handover; the latter is the people whose fathers had immigrated to Taiwan before the KMT retreated to Taiwan.<sup>11</sup> The population of *waishengren* is roughly 1.2 million, which comprises of 13 percent of the whole population in Taiwan.<sup>12</sup> The KMT imposed segregation policies which ensured *benshengren's* inferiority within the domestic political structure, ensuring that the upper political echelon was composed entirely of *waishengren*. In the theory of Social identity theory, it predicts that the categorization process leads to prejudicial and

<sup>11</sup> In Chinese, the direct translation of *waishengren* is: people from outside of the province (Taiwan); *benshengren* means: people from the province.

<sup>12</sup> The exact number is undetermined, however. The military households and regular households were calculated separately, and the number of military households remain confidential data.

discriminatory attitudes toward the out-group. These discriminatory measures, therefore, had prevented the formation of a common Chinese identity and also created rivalry between the civil war migrants and indigenous communities.<sup>13</sup>

The KMT's goal of "Retaking the Chinese Mainland (光復大陸)" after retreating to Taiwan, also hindered *waishengren's* recognition of Taiwan. With the hope of retaking mainland, *waishengren* held on to their identity as Chinese, and expecting the reunion with their family members in China. Therefore, during that time, "Taiwanese" was directly linked to *benshengren*. As Burton suggests, deprivation of individual and group needs can lead to intractable conflict. These needs include physiological ones as well as "self-esteem and self-actualization." If these needs are deprived, they lead "naturally to setting goals with the aim to satisfy them." The discriminatory measures of the KMT party greatly deprived the self-esteem of *benshengren*. The bad and corrupt administration and the discriminatory measures, also later lead to the 228 Incident, which set the beginning of the decades long internal conflict between *benshengren* and *waishengren*. The rivalry between *waishengren* and *benshengren* has gradually mitigated as the PRC's consolidated its sovereignty of mainland China, and that the hope of retaking Taiwan has faded away.

Smith suggests "national identity involves some sense of political community." While a political community implies at least some common institutions and a single code of rights and duties for all members of the community," he also points out that "a definite social space, a fairly

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<sup>13</sup> On the identity card, one's "province of origin" was based on where one's father or grandfather was born. During KMT's one-party rule, this kept the descendants of non-Taiwanese distinct from the Taiwanese. The indigenous people, constituting two percent of the population, had been categorized as a separate group by the KMT administration as well.

well demarcated and bounded territory, with which the members identify and to which they feel they belong" is necessary in forming a national identity.<sup>14</sup> Due to the discriminatory measures of KMT government, lack of belongingness for *benshengren* had made the Chinese identity that had been imposed on the residents of Taiwan extremely tenuous.

After President Chiang Ching-kuo lifted martial law in 1987, a democratization and liberalization process began. The freedom of speech and press, encouraged criticism against the pan-Chinese nationalism maintained by the KMT. In 1990, Wild Lily student movement (野百合學運), a student demonstration seeking direct elections of Taiwan's president and new popular elections for all representatives in the National Assembly, announced the start of re-asserting Taiwanese identity and culture through a series of changes in history education and language campaign.<sup>15</sup>

In 2000, president Lee Teng-hui began making statements such as "Taiwan culture is not a branch of Chinese culture" and "Taiwan's *Minnan* dialect is not a branch of Fujian's (a Chinese province in East coast) *Minnan* dialect" but rather a "Taiwan dialect."<sup>16</sup> Taiwan radio and TV also increased their Taiwanese *Hokkien* (another aboriginal race) programming. In 2003, Taiwan's Ministry of Education released a legislation proposal entitled "Language Equality Law," designated fourteen languages as the national languages of Taiwan. These efforts help

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<sup>14</sup> Smith, A., 1991. National Identity. In *National Identity*. Penguin Books, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> The original primary function of the National Assembly, which was not popularly elected until 1991, was to elect the president. This function was removed after the Constitution was amended in 1994 to introduce direct election of the president. In addition, the National Assembly had responsibility for the Constitution, but most of their power was transferred to the Legislative Yuan in 1997. The National Assembly was completely eliminated in 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Huining, Zhuang; Haixia, Huang. World News Connection *Hoping for an Early Completion of the Great Cause of National Reunification. China's NPC Deputies, CPPCC Members on Cross-Strait Reunification 2001*

diminish the use of standard Mandarin and its cultural influences in favor of revising the cultural and psychological foundations on the island of Taiwan by using other languages. On one hand, a unify Chinese identity has gradually removed under the process of political liberalization. On the other hand, the previous Taiwanese identity which directly links to *benshengren* has transformed into the one that encompasses multiple races and languages. Since the new Taiwanese identity allows people with different backgrounds to find their belongingness in the community, the identity is a lot stronger than the Chinese identity imposed by the KMT.

The lifting of martial law in 1987 also canceled the standardized textbook system. Since then, “how shall our history be taught” has always been the point of contestation. President Lee made the first step of textbook reform which began to adopt Taiwan-centric history. In 1999, while the Taiwan history was still a part of Chinese history, it, for the first time, became an independent chapter in the new history textbook. In the following years, the content of history textbooks has been the point of contention; yet, this content has been moving forward to a more Taiwan-centric view. Currently, the Taiwanese history is separated from Chinese history, and the liberalization process of Taiwan consists of a huge part in the textbook.

“Collective cultural identity refers not to a uniformity of elements over generations but to a sense of continuity on the part of successive generations of a given cultural unit of population, to shared memories of earlier events and periods in the history of that unit and to notions entertained by each generation about the collective destiny of that unit and its culture.”<sup>17</sup> Due to the institute change, the younger generation are those with life experiences that teach them that Taiwan is already the subject of its own history. The new version of history textbook also works

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<sup>17</sup> Smith, A., op. cit., p.25.

effectively in resolving the conflict between *waishengren* and *benshengren*. It embraces the conflict as a part of history, condemns the dictator rule of the KMT party, and recognizes the transitional justice processes. The new history textbook helps consolidate the Taiwanese identity.

However, even though the fragile Chinese identity faded away since the lift of martial law, the process of political liberalization and the difference in education still has a huge effect on people's political value, which, in turn, has a great implication on people's acceptance of the PRC's dictator rule. A huge division of political ideology exists between the people born before and after 1978. The term "*Jieh Yan Shih Dai*"(解嚴世代), which directly translates to: the generation after the end of martial law, has become a common title given to people born after 1978.

*Jieh Yan Shih Dai* grew up in a society that has moved toward liberalism through a series of democratic movements. Thus, they uphold the value of democracy. The term has been adopted by the young politicians to differentiate themselves from the older generation in terms of political value. For example, Lin YuKai, the City Councilor of Kaohsiung, identified himself as *Jieh Yan Shih Dai* during the election campaign to demonstrate his support to democracy.<sup>18</sup>

Compared to *Jieh Yan Shih Dai*, those who were born before 1978, have greater tolerance to dictatorial rule. In the interview, a 43-year-old male (born before the end of martial law) said, "I think the younger generation have taken democracy as a religion. While democracy is merely a system for people to choose an asshole from a bunch of assholes.... I may lose a bit of freedom

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<sup>18</sup> Lin YuKai's Facebook post with campaign video: <https://pse.is/QFQ93>

living under the rule of dictatorship, but I can still live well." The other 60-year-old male also suggests that "In 1987, I was a lieutenant. Taiwan's economy started to boom that year, and people did not care about having democracy or not." In contrast, an 18-year-old student said "I believe because of our education, my generation has considered human rights as a universal value". The other 18-year-old student adds "Economic development goes together with democracy. In dictatorial countries, including Cuba, North Korea or Nazi Germany, wealth goes to higher level of people and bottom level of the society remain poor." Regardless of whether such a claim is right or wrong, the interviews show the difference in value between generations due to the education they received and the democratic environment with which they grew up. Apparently, the effects of institution change as well as education do not fade away with the Chinese identity.

## B. Demography Change

Within the 70 years of separation, demographic changes mean 1) a decrease in the proportion of Taiwan residents who were born in the mainland and grew up under dictatorial rule, 2) an increase in native--born Taiwanese and receive an education that put Taiwan, instead of China, as the center of the history, and 3) an increase in population holding post-materialism which pursue self-expression values and quality of life. The demographic changes will continue to increase the difficulty for the CCP government to seek unification and create a Chinese identity in Taiwan as time pass by.

The term "*Tian Ran Du*"(天然獨) means the "naturally independent" generation. *Tian Ran Du* indicates that the younger generation in Taiwan would identify themselves as Taiwanese (as opposed to Chinese) and view Taiwan as an independent democratic country. This

phenomenon can be explained by Smith's Theory of National Identity. Smith argues that national identity "involves some sense of political community, history, territory, patria, citizenship, common values and traditions."<sup>19</sup> He also added that "nations must have a measure of common culture and a civic ideology, a set of common understandings and aspirations, sentiments and ideas that bind the population together in their homeland."<sup>20</sup> With the 70 years of separation with the Mainland, a series of democratic movements and the Taiwan-centric history education, "tradition" is now the only variable that Taiwan shares common with China. The rise of Taiwanese identity is inevitable. Such a trend can also be proven by the identity poll during the 8 years of the Ma Administration. President Ma had promoted economic integration and cultural exchanges between the Mainland and Taiwan. For example, in his first term, Ma restored the "Three Links" which open up postal, transportation (especially airline), and trade links with China. He also welcomed Chinese investors and students to Taiwan. Ma's policies have been largely pro-unification and have been seen by critics as part of a long-run scheme to steer Taiwan to "eventual unification."<sup>21</sup> While as figure 1 shows, the percentage of choosing both Chinese and Taiwanese identity has a great decline. In contrast, the growth of Taiwanese identity raised for 16 percent during his tenure, and the number is twice the growth during the pro-independent President Chen's tenure.

"Common economy with territorial mobility for members," according to Smith, is essential for the formation of a national identity, while in the case of Cross-Strait Relations, other factors apparently have greater power in shaping Taiwanese identity.<sup>22</sup> Smith points out "the

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<sup>19</sup> Smith, A., op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>21</sup> Lin, SS, 2016, Taiwan's China Dilemma: Contested Identities and Multiple Interests in Taiwan's Cross-Strait Economic Policy, Stanford University Press, Palo Alto. pp.97.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, p.14.



nation is also called upon to provide a social bond between individuals and classes by providing repertoires of shared values, symbols and traditions." He explains that the use of symbols includes: flags, coinage, anthems, uniforms, monuments and ceremonies. Through those symbols, "members are reminded of their common heritage and cultural kinship and feel strengthened and exalted by their sense of common identity and belonging."<sup>23</sup> Taiwan, or the Republic of China, has all the symbols mentioned above, and which are different from the mainland's. Social Identity Theory (SIT) pointed out that individuals automatically sort themselves into categories in a social setting.<sup>24</sup> After seventy years of separation, a social bond has been formed in the Taiwanese society, and reinforced the consolidation of Taiwanese identity. The category that people in Taiwan would automatically sort themselves into is Taiwanese instead of Chinese.

In an interview asking high school students "how will you answer 'Where do you come from', when talking to foreigners?" a 17-year-old male student answered "Taiwan" with a face that did not quite understand the question. He said "I thought people know the answer when they were born." Such intuitive response echoes with the Social Identity Theory.

Furthermore, during the 70 years the initial social and cultural divisions between *waishengren* and the *benshengren* have also blurred through decades of social interaction and intermarriage. The fieldwork of Li Kuang-chun demonstrated that many second generation of *waishengren* spoke fluent Taiwanese. The imbalanced sex ratio among the exodus population, with many more men than women also meant that a large number of male migrants had to seek

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<sup>23</sup> *ibid*, p. 17.

<sup>24</sup> Tajfel, *Op.cit.*, p. 61-67.

local companions.<sup>25</sup> The blur between *waishengren* and the *benshengren* helps create a uniform Taiwanese identity.

### C. Cultural Superiority

The previous factors—institutions, democratization, education and demographic changes and cultural superiority—are the forces that consolidate the Taiwanese identity. The following sections analyze the factors that prevent people in Taiwan from accepting Chinese identity. According to the social identity theory, in-group favoritism arises as a result of the formation of cultural groups. Because of the cultural superiority in Taiwanese society, Taiwanese people have a huge tendency to be separated from China. Historical events, cultural differences between Taiwan and China and the international perceptions all help lead to such superiority in Taiwan.

The first driver is the Japanese colonial legacy.<sup>26</sup> "Japanization policy(皇民化運動)"—implementing Japanese culture education and building modern infrastructures in colonies—adopted during the Japanese colonial period had transformed Taiwan into a modernized society. Under the rule of the Japanese government, people in Taiwan were educated to be very behaved and disciplined. In contrast, people in mainland China were experiencing the collapse of the Qing dynasty and a series of civil wars, making cultural developments greatly lagged behind.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Among the non-military population, the ratio of males to females was approximately 2:1. If military personnel (the lowest estimate around 270,000) were included, the ratio could be as high as 3:1. Li Tung-ming, "*Jutai waishengji renkou zhi zucheng yu fenbu*" (The profile of the main-lander population in Taiwan), Taipei Archives, no. 11/12, 1970, pp. 66-67.

<sup>26</sup> Wakabayashi, M 2005, Taiwanese nationalism and the "unforgettable others". in *China's Rise, Taiwan's Dilemma's and International Peace*. Routledge, pp.4.

<sup>27</sup> It also created conflict between *waishengren* and *benshengren*. When the KMT took over Taiwan, people in Taiwan despised those people. KMT's discriminatory measures toward *benshengren* and letting *waishengren* continually occupied higher positions in government entities, have even reinforced the grievance within Taiwanese

The second driver for the superiority of Taiwanese people is the *Tuhao*(土豪) culture in China, which emerged after China adopted the Open-Door Policy in 1987. China's rapid economic development leads to the emergence of a new social class of economic elites known as "*Tuhao*". The term loosely translated means "nouveau riche," though it means something more offensive, and deservedly. In Chinese "*tu*" means earth, and "*hao*" means rich or huge. *Tuhao* implies people from a poor peasant background, and have made it rich quick and don't quite have the manners, or sophistication to go along with it. *Tuhao* pursues material possession, instead of a spiritual value.

Through the thinking of constructivism, such *Tuhao* culture can be explained as a ramification of Marxist materialism promoted by the CCP government. In Skousen's work, "The Naked Communist," he pointed out that Marx and Engels oversimplified history, as they believed that material circumstances force the human mind to move in a certain direction and that man does not have the free will to resist it. Marx and Engels identified "free will" as being nothing more nor less than a conscious awareness of the materialistic forces which impel the individual to act. This conscious awareness of "natural necessity" makes men think they are choosing a course of action, when, as a matter of fact, they are simply watching themselves follow the dictates of material circumstances.<sup>28</sup>

Under this materialistic communism thinking, the material determines ideology. Accordingly, whoever controls the material power controls people's thinking. Today's *Tuhao*

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people. "A dog has left but a pig." Such language demonstrated that *benshengren* were even more comfortable with the rule of Japan.

<sup>28</sup> Skousen, W.C., 1960. The naked communist. In *The naked communist*. Salt Lake City, UT: Ensign Publishing, p. 64.

culture is the manifestation of such thinking. While across the Strait, as Taiwan had already been through the period of rapid economic growth, the thinking that takes hold among Taiwanese people, especially the younger generation, is post-materialism. Ronald Inglehart, a political and social scientist, posited that a major trend of value change in developed societies is from “materialist” to “post-materialist” values.<sup>29</sup> With economic affluence, the stress on economic and physical security and bread-and-butter (materialist) issues in the industrial age gradually give way to self-expression values and quality of life (post-materialism) issues in post-industrial societies. As Taiwanese people give priority to freedom of expression and participation in public affairs over fulfilling material needs, they despise the culture that pursues materialism and economic profits. Such superiority is relatively significant among the younger generation or the so-called *Jieh Yan Shih Dai* and *Tien Ren Du*. The value shift toward self-expression and post-materialism also poses a challenge to accept the authoritarian rule of the CCP.

Media propaganda also reinforced the superiority that has entrenched in Taiwanese society. Numerous media outlets have reported news on the misbehaviors of Chinese citizens in foreign countries. The news articles report the incident without making condemnation of those Chinese tourists, while this kind of news often has a higher engagement than other posts, and the comments below also show the superiority of Taiwan. For example, the picture below is a news post from Liberty Times, one of the major press in Taiwan. The news reported that Swedish TV released a video satirizing the misbehaviors of Chinese tourists. The post gained more than 5,000 likes and over 500 shares, which is significantly higher than other news posts. The comments condemning China also received many "likes. These media propaganda have created antagonistic

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<sup>29</sup> Inglehart, R., 2015. *Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics*, Princeton University Press. P.116-148

patterns of thinking that wove into the social fabric, and enlarged the alienation between China and Taiwan.<sup>30</sup>



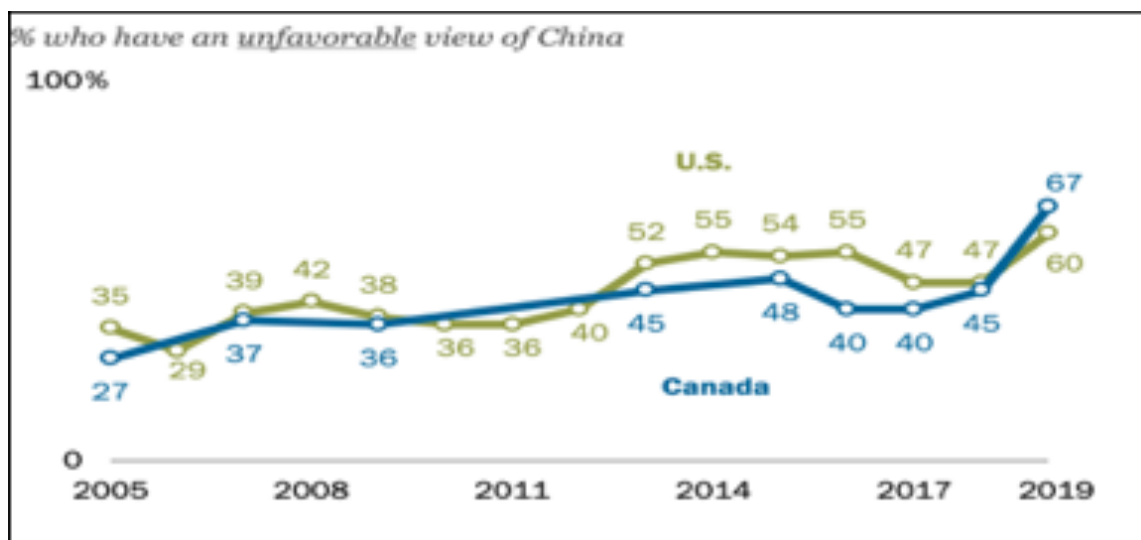
Figure 3: News Post and comments on the misbehavior of Chinese tourists.

#### D. International Perception

The international perception of Chinese also hindered the willingness for Taiwanese people to form an identity or recognize themselves as Chinese. According to the latest poll of Pew Research Center, while majorities in most countries agree that China's influence on the world

<sup>30</sup> Déloye, Y 2013, *National Identity and Everyday Life*, Oxford University Press

stage has grown markedly, this has not translated into favorable views of the country.<sup>31</sup> In Western Europe, the opinion of China is, on balance, negative. While 51 percent in Greece have a positive view of China, pluralities have an unfavorable view, ranging from 53% in Spain to 70% in Sweden. The share of people who evaluate China positively has also dropped since 2018 by double-digits in nearly half of the Western European countries surveyed, including Sweden (down 17 percentage points), the Netherlands (-11 points) and the UK (-11). Only in Greece and Italy has the opinion improved. Central and Eastern Europeans show more divisions in their assessments. More Bulgarians, Poles, and Lithuanians have favorable than unfavorable views of China, and Hungarians are nearly evenly divided. Conversely, a plurality of Slovaks and a majority of Czechs have unfavorable views of China.



*Figure4: Negative views of China in Canada and the U.S.*

*Source: Spring 2019 Global Attitudes Survey. Q8b, Pew Research Center*

<sup>31</sup> Silver, L., Devlin, K. & Huang, C., 2019. People around the globe are divided in their opinions of China. *Pew Research Center*. Available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/12/05/people-around-the-globe-are-divided-in-their-opinions-of-china>.

In America, negative views of China predominate in both the United States and Canada this year, according to the survey. 60 and 67 percent respectively see the country unfavorably (figure 4).<sup>32</sup> The decline in perception toward China may be caused by those countries' domestic issues or bilateral relationship with China. For example, in Canada, unfavorable opinions increased 22 points in the wake of the high-profile arrest of technology company Huawei's chief financial officer and the ensuing Canadian-Chinese trade conflict. Since the research was conducted during the summer of 2019, the decline in Western Europe and America may also be caused by the Hong Kong Protest. Plus, the U.S-China Trade War has also revealed the misbehaviors of China, including forced technology transfer, stealing national security data.

Views on China vary across countries, and the poll has shown Western thinking countries hold a relatively negative view on China. Taiwan has developed into a democracy, people, especially for the younger generation, pursue liberalism, which is more aligned with the Western idea. Thus, the decline of Chinese favorable view in Western Europe coincided with the rise of the Taiwanese identity poll in Taiwan. The identity survey of Taiwan was also conducted in June, and as figure 1 shows, compared to the previous year, people holding Taiwanese identity increased by 2.4 percent whereas both Taiwanese and Chinese identity declined by 1.7 percent. An interviewee said: "I will tell people that I'm Taiwanese without a doubt. From my personal life experience, it is hard for me to recognize that I'm Chinese. Even though many people think they are ethnically or culturally Chinese, when you go abroad and tell people that you are Chinese, they will think that you come from mainland China which is under the rule of the PRC. But the fact that we have our own president, we are not under the communist system and we do

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<sup>32</sup> In both countries, this is the highest unfavorable opinion of China recorded in the Center's polling history.

not do anything that abuses human rights. [Taiwanese] people have a great desire to identify the difference between China and Taiwan to foreign people, thus if you still tell people that you're a Chinese, it would cause huge confusion.” The negative view toward Chinese among Western countries serves a huge barrier for Taiwanese people to adopt Chinese identity. As the CCP's treatment of the predominantly Muslim Uyghur minority in Xinjiang has raised international concerns over human rights abuses and the protest in Hong Kong has drawn widespread attention to Beijing's dictatorship, the desire for Taiwanese people to differentiate themselves from China will only increase.

In some countries, the visa application administration also differentiates Taiwanese and Chinese people. For example, the Australian government gives each country an assessment level when granting students visas and citizenship. Assessment Level one represents the lowest immigration risk and Assessment Level five the highest. The higher the Assessment Level, the greater the evidence an applicant is required to demonstrate to support their claims for the grant of a student visa. In the assessment, Taiwan is rated as level one, whereas China is at level three.<sup>33</sup> In this case, it is hardly possible for Taiwanese people to adopt the identity of Chinese. It is degrading of identity and would actually bring immediate and real-life inconveniences to the applicants.<sup>34</sup> When Taiwan and China are taken as different entities by foreign governments, it diluted the formation of “Chinese” identity in Taiwan and reinforced in-group favoritism of the Taiwanese identity.

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<sup>33</sup> Assessment Levels Table: <http://www.bc.edu.au/files/Assessment-Levels-Table.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> Déloye, Y 2013, *National Identity and Everyday Life*, Oxford University Press



Besides the actions and policies from other countries to differentiate Taiwan and the Mainland China, the foreign policy strategy of Taiwan has also help strengthen the Taiwanese identity. While being excluded from the United Nations, in 2018, to showcase its readiness and ability to contribute to multilateral initiatives, Taiwan launched a U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) campaign in September with events on the sidelines of the Seventy-third General Assembly in New York. The events were themed—Taiwan Can Help, which highlighted its desire and qualifications to assist in the achievement of the SDGs. The events spotlighted Taiwan’s efforts to help other nations accomplish these goals in areas like environmental protection and medical care. In the same year, Taiwan also decided to give up its developing economy status in the World Trade Organization. As China’s role on responsible stakeholders in the international system has been questioned and received numerous critics, both of the actions have been taken as messages for Taiwan to distinguish itself from the Mainland.

#### E. Unification Approaches from China—Carrot and Stick Tactic

There are thousands of missiles aiming at Taiwan, while there are also a series of incentive measures serving to lure Taiwanese professionals and investment across the Strait and win over the Taiwanese peoples' hearts. However, both carrot and stick have little effect. China’s efforts to isolate Taiwan internationally and to use economic interdependence and military pressure to promote political integration—in other words, to make Taiwan believe that it has no alternative to unification—have the opposite effect in generating Chinese identity. In addition, sometimes it ironically contributed to a stronger Taiwanese national identity.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Lin, SS, Op.cit., p.30.

The CCP government's attempts to use military intimidation to influence elections, shows no effect as well.<sup>36</sup> From the very first democratic presidential election to the most recent one, records have shown that Taiwanese voters do not change their mind because of the threat from Beijing. In 1996, the first presidential election in Taiwan, the CCP conducted missile tests in the Taiwan Strait. The poll also showed a great lapse in Taiwanese identity with 10 percent growth in the year. According to the election record, in the past five presidential ballots, three were won by Beijing's opponent, the DPP. If unification is the goal for Beijing, those attempts look like a miscalculation by China. This year, the 2020 presidential election approaches during the Anti-Extradition Law protest in Hong Kong. China also banned solo tourists traveling to Taiwan ahead of the election. The action has been interpreted as a plan of economic coercion. While even though the DPP had a huge defeat in the 2018 midterm election, its presidential candidate, Tsai Ing-wen, still wins the 2020 presidential election with a higher rate than her first term.

Carrot policies are ineffective as well. On November 1st 2019, Beijing introduced 26 measures to further promote economic and cultural exchanges between “both sides of the Taiwan Strait”. The measures treat Taiwanese the same as their mainland counterparts. After the new policy was launched, a Chinese state media news anchor released a video announcing the sincerity of the CCP government, calling the island as “Wan Wan”, and inviting them to “come home.”<sup>37</sup> The video led to an uproar in Taiwan and in response to the diminutive term used to refer to Taiwan, Taiwanese netizens created sarcastic memes, as Figure 5 shows, to convey their feelings. The memes express the concerns of Taiwanese people, as it points out the CCP's

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<sup>36</sup>Hsiao, R., 2019. CCP Influence Operations and Taiwan's 2020 Elections. – *The Diplomat*. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2019/11/ccp-influence-operations-and-taiwans-2020-elections>

<sup>37</sup>The video that Chinese state-own media anchorwoman calling Taiwan (Wan Wan) to come back home: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BvaZH72cw4Y> (Only available in Chinese)

records on humanitarian abuse in other areas.<sup>38</sup> The meme at the right even monsterized the anchor. A Taiwanese politician Hung Tzu-yung (New Power Party<sup>39</sup>) also hit back on the policy saying that, “Thank you for your concern. We, the Taiwanese, are already at home.” From a Taiwanese perspective, such discourse represents disrespectfulness towards their identity. As Burton's Basic Human Needs theory points out "while interest is tradable, needs and values are not."<sup>40</sup> Beijing's attempts to earn Taiwanese people's hearts through material interest will not work if the CCP government doesn't recognize the identity need and democratic value of Taiwan.

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<sup>38</sup>The third slogan in the meme at the left is referring to the abnormally high rates of suicide-related deaths since the crackdown on Hong Kong protests began.

<sup>39</sup>The New Power Party is known for the input of the younger generation.

<sup>40</sup>Burton J., op. cit., p. 38.

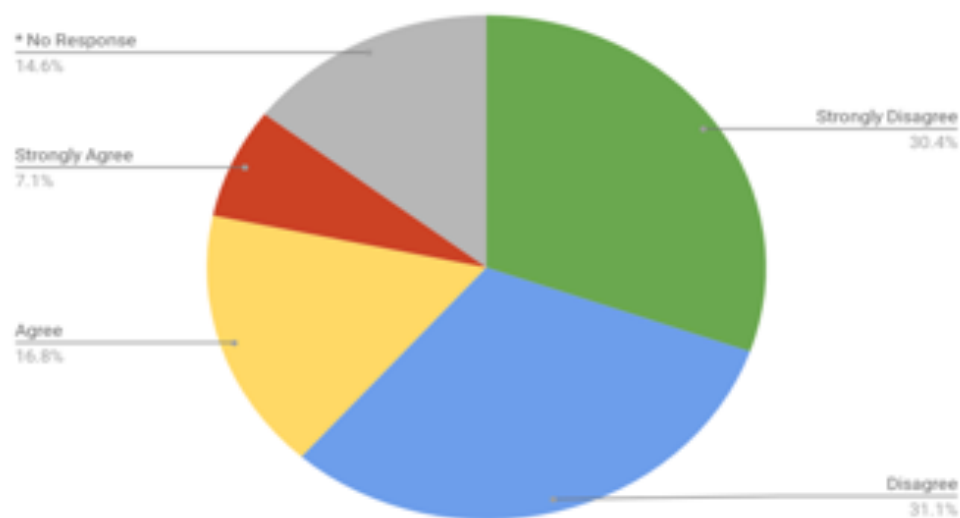


*Figure 5: Facebook Memes on Chinese State News Media Anchors (The meme at the left has 6.2K likes and 2.2K shares. The meme at the right has 5.7K likes and 4.4K shares)*

*Source: memepowertw/Facebook and A RAY/Facebook*

The surveys on Taiwanese people's tendency on unification also show the same result. Figure 6 shows that 61.6 percent (combining "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree") of people disagree with the China-Taiwan unification, when the political, economic and social conditions, vary between the two. While Figure 7 shows, there is still 57 percent of people disagree with the unification,

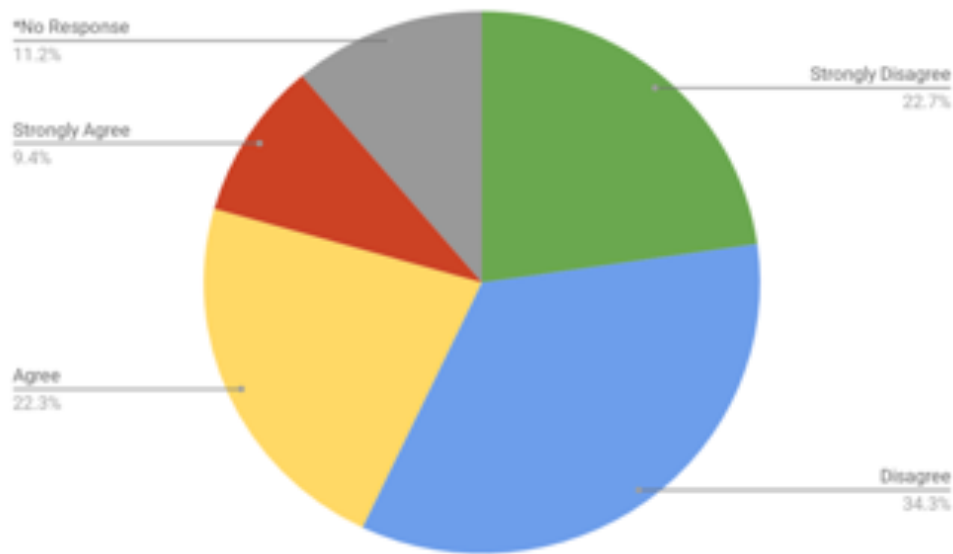
when the political, economic and social conditions are similar between Mainland and Taiwan. As the people over 60 years old (born before 1959) comprise of a bigger portion in the survey, the survey recipient's population does not align with the Taiwanese population. The survey may have a selection bias that more recipients have a higher tolerance to dictatorial rule. However, combining Figures 6 and 7, we see that the majority of people in Taiwan disagree with the unification under any circumstances and the real figure may be even higher.



\* No Response includes refuse to answer, depend, no common and no idea.

*Figure6: If Taiwan and the mainland are very different in terms of political, economic and social conditions, would you agree that Taiwan and the Mainland should unify?*

*Source: Taiwan Public Television Service Foundation (PTS) Youth News Program*



\* No Response includes refuse to answer, depend, no common and no idea.

*Figure 7: If Taiwan and the mainland are very similar in terms of political, economic and social conditions, would you agree that Taiwan and the Mainland should unify?*

*Source: Taiwan Public Television Service Foundation (PTS) Youth News Program*

## II. Outcomes

According to the analysis above, both internal and external forces are pushing for the consolidation of Taiwanese identity and preventing the adoption of Chinese identity. Internal forces include institution change, which the political democratization has also led to the change in education; demographic change and the shared memories of people in Taiwan. External forces include cultural superiority caused by the different ideologies between the mainland and Taiwan; negative international perception toward China among Western countries; and military pressures from China. The placement of the "self" in one category, in turn, will immediately create an

"other."<sup>41</sup> In the Cross-Strait scenario, the majority of people in Taiwan have put themselves into the self-category of Taiwanese and the Chinese have gradually become the category of "other."

At the 40th Anniversary of Issuing "Message to Compatriots in Taiwan (告台灣同胞書)", President Xi said both sides were part of the same Chinese family and that Taiwanese independence was "an adverse current from history and a dead end".<sup>42</sup> He argued that unification was "an inevitable requirement for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese people." The CCP is advocating unification through Chinese identity and the dream of Chinese rejuvenation. While such a strategy has a fundamental wrong assumption with the dominant identity in Taiwan. In Smith's book, he formulates the classical definition of nations as "a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members."<sup>43</sup> According to the analysis above, after 70 years of separation, Taiwanese identity has all the requirements to form a "nation," which is different to the Chinese identity, as Smith suggests.

The consolidation of Taiwanese identity has become more and more evident, and can be seen from the narratives on social media posting and pop music.<sup>44</sup> If the CCP remains to use the same measure and the same rhetoric to advocate unification, it will face even more intense

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<sup>41</sup> Rousseau, D. L. and Garcia-Retamero, R., Op.cit., p.747

<sup>42</sup> In response to Xi's message, President Tsai reiterated that Taiwan has never accepted the "1992 Consensus," which Beijing defines it as the consensus of "One China Policy."

<sup>43</sup> Smith, A., Op.cit., p. 14.

<sup>44</sup> Ho, W-C 2015, 'The production and reproduction of Chinese and Taiwanese identities in Taiwan's popular songs', *Social History*, vol. 40, no. 4, pp. 518–537, viewed 5 April 2020; Political Participation via Keyboards: A Case Study on Taiwanese Youth's Identity Construction through Political Discourse on PTT; Chen, C.-Y. (2019) 'Constructing National Identity: The Transformation of National Music (Guoyue) in Taiwan / *Artistica TNNUA*, (19), p. 55.

resistance and confrontation from Taiwan. The younger generation has shown higher support to the Taiwanese identity and the demographic change will make Xi's plan of unification harder as time goes by and make the chance of conflict higher. Therefore, the following section will propose a resolution for the Cross-Strait Conflict that incorporates the preceding analysis.

## **Suggestions for Cross-Strait Conflict Resolution**

*"A mutually hurting stalemate defines the moment as ripe for resolution: both sides are locked in a situation from which they cannot escalate the conflict ... [However], the asymmetry of internal conflict rarely produces the stalemate needed for negotiation."*

William Zartman<sup>45</sup>

In the past decades, politicians from China and Taiwan have proposed agendas for Cross-Strait conflict resolution. The economic integration and cultural exchanges during the Ma's administration also aimed to push for a peaceful relation between the Mainland and Taiwan. However, the proposals were either rejected by the CCP or refused by the Taiwanese people. The passing of the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA) by President Ma also led to the Sunflower Student Movement.<sup>46</sup> The failure of these proposals and measures provides great insights on how to better the future conflict resolution proposal. The following section works

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<sup>45</sup> Puri, S., 2016. Fighting and negotiating with armed groups the difficulty of securing strategic outcomes, London: IISS, the International Institute for Strategic Studies.p.41.

<sup>46</sup>Under the terms of the CSSTA, service industries such as banking, healthcare, tourism, film, telecommunications, and publishing would be opened to investment and businesspeople would be able to obtain indefinitely renewable visas for the other territory. It would become easier for businesses to set up offices and branches in the other territory and for large stakes in businesses to be sold to the other party's investors. The Ma administration calls it a preferential trade agreement that Beijing offers to Taiwan.



through previous proposals first, pointing out their weaknesses by using Kissinger and Burton's methods of Conflict Resolution and subsequently proposes a new peacebuilding strategy.

## I. Previous Proposals

### A. Confederation States of China

The proposition was first proposed by Taiwanese legislative Fei Shi-Ping (費希平) in 1984.<sup>47</sup> During 2001 Taiwan presidential election, the KMT candidate Lien Chan planned to bring the idea to the public. While his competitor Chen Shui-Bian called it an idea of selling Taiwan(賣台思想).<sup>48</sup> Therefore, the plan was taken back. The concept of Confederation States of China was shown as below:

*First, it follows the principle of equal while separated authority, and the gradual peacebuilding. The future content of "confederation must both honor the wish of Taiwanese people of self-governing, but also respect the national goal of one unified State.*

*Second, the confederation concept is not seeking for the independence of Taiwan, nor pursuing an immediate unification. Confederacy is a structure with a basic understanding of two separate autonomies but under one-roof concept. At the same time, under the same roof, the two sides coexist and coexist peacefully, so they are not seeking emergency. Therefore, it is not in any form of independence. Under this one roof, co-exist*

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<sup>47</sup>Fei Hsi-ping was a Chinese-born politician(*waishengren*) who served in the Legislative Yuan from 1948 to 1990. Fei was a member of the KMT during 1938-1960, and switched to support DDP in Sep 28, 1986. While Fei gave up the DDP party membership in Dec 19, 1988.

<sup>48</sup>Chen served as President of the ROC (Taiwan) from 2000 to 2008. He is ideologically committed to advancing Taiwan independence.

*with equal rights and mutual respect, therefore, nor is an immediate forced unification. The confederation shall be the most beneficial solution for maintaining the status quo across the Taiwan Strait.*

*Third, the confederation concept is not a commonwealth, nor a federal system. The Commonwealth is a loose integration with no unification in mind. Whereas the states under “federation” do not have complete autonomy, but suggest subordinate relation between the states and the central government. Therefore, neither the “Commonwealth” nor the “Federation” would be suitable for current Cross-Strait resolution.*

According to the preference poll, 14 percent of the population choose the option of "Maintain Status quo, while moving toward unification" which aligns with the idea of confederation in which China and Taiwan were sovereignly equals, but acknowledged full reunification as their ultimate goal. However, the idea received no support in Beijing. Liu Huawen, the Assistant Director of the Institute of International Law, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), has claimed that the confederation concept is based on the theory of "Special state-to-state relations, (特殊國與國關係)" which is proposed by the former president of Taiwan and is the disguise of independence. Liu called it a step back in history (歷史的倒退). Beijing does not accept any compromise on their sovereignty over Taiwan. While the chances for the mainland and Taiwan to walk to unification has only gone downward under their insistence.

## B. Republic of China (中華共和國)

The Republic of China agenda was proposed by seven leading researchers of Taiwan's Academia Sinica (National research center) in 2005 and published through the Joint statement of "Discourse on Cross-Strait Peaceful Relation——The Starting Point of the Chinese Peacebuilding” (兩岸和平論述—和平中國運動的起點). The agenda of the Republic of China is more detailed than the other two. It ensures the autonomy of Taiwan and preserves the current legal system in both regions. While different from the United Republic of China, the Republic of China agenda proposes that both the Mainland and Taiwan need to abandon their current constitutions and create a new one, which will be generated through a referendum of the whole electorate. In the sixteen major points of the agenda, it takes Beijing as the new capital of the Republic of China, uses the Five-starred Red Flag—the current national flag of the PRC— as the national flag of the Republic of China, and uses “March of the Volunteers”—the current national song of the PRC— as the national anthem of the Republic of China. In 2018 the proposal went viral in China, as Chinese netizens reposting the article.<sup>49</sup> The concept of the Republic of China was also praised by a Chinese columnist, who advocated that the leaders of the mainland and Taiwan should consider the agenda and work for a united China. However, although the concept was proposed by Taiwanese researchers, it did not get much attention from the general public. Few Taiwanese people even said that “the seven researchers had gone crazy.”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Pan, W.T., 2018. The Concept of Republic of China Has Gone Viral in China. *China Times*. (In Chinese)

<sup>50</sup> Anon, Response to the "Discourse on Cross-Strait Peaceful Relation Statement". *PTT (The major Bulletin Board System in Taiwan)*. Available at: <https://www.ptt.cc/man/DPP/D9C1/DDC4/DF39/D115/M.1130335463.A.878.html>

### C. United Republic of China (中華聯合共和國)

This agenda was proposed by a think tank in mainland China. The concept was inspired by the example of the United Republic of Tanzania, which is comprised of an island called Zanzibar and the mainland Tanganyika. Zanzibar is a de jure quasi-federal—while de facto unitary—country. The Zanzibar administration has its own President, constitution and a House of Representatives, who is responsible for legislation on domestic matters and external trade.

At the Nan Tien forum, held by Democratic Action Alliance (Taiwan) in 2011, Li Yihu, the director of International Politics program at Peking University said the "one country, two constitutions" system based on the case of the United Republic of Tanzania, can be used as a reference for China and Taiwan. In the Cross-Strait scenario, the new state is called the United Republic of China. The concept was later discussed in Li's book "Taiwan's style of One Country, Two Systems"(一國兩制台灣模式), published in 2015. The book was later recognized as the best political book by the National Office for Philosophy and Social Science of the CCP government. Lin Zhong-bin, the former Deputy Secretary of Defense of the Republic of China, later proposed this concept in Taiwan. While the concept did not get much attention, some critics have even said Lin is colliding with the CCP government.<sup>51</sup>

## II. Weakness of the Previous Proposals

According to the books of Kissinger and Burton, these conflict resolution agendas have a major problem that make them impossible to implement: They failed to understand the feeling of people. Overlooking the social context and neglecting people's feelings have shown that those

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<sup>51</sup> Yu, Jei, 2019. Lin Zhong-bin's China Can't Take Down Taiwan. *The News Lens*. Available at: <https://www.thenewslens.com/article/128866> (In Chinese)

who draft the agenda were using Realist and Liberalist international relations theories to address the Cross-Strait Conflict. Due to the reason these theories only focus on the issue of autonomy, sovereignty and trade partnership. Yet, Taiwan has now become a democratic system; thus, the perception of its people is critical in any policy implementation. Conflict resolution anchored in the Social Constructivist theory is necessary.

As Kissinger suggests, one fundamental element for future negotiation requires not taking your counterpart as "evil."<sup>52</sup> Currently, due to the way the CCP tackles protests in Hong Kong, the human rights abuses against Uighurs in Xinjiang as well as the massive surveillance networks—the Social Credit System—controlling the people and limiting all kinds of freedoms, the fear of accepting unification is unresolvable at this point. As the preceding memes illustrate, Taiwanese people have taken the CCP Government as the devil. Therefore, any conflict resolution agenda or concept with the ultimate goal of unification—even when promising to preserve the autonomy of Taiwan—is almost impossible to be accepted at this point. For Taiwanese people, this represents a unification with the devil.

In his theory, Burton contends that satisfying the needs of people and each actor is the premise of any conflict resolution. Without having the needs of each actor being met, any pursuit of unification would only create grievance, making the path of Cross-Strait conflict resolution even more problematic. The needs most salient to an understanding of destructive social conflicts, according to Burton, were those for identity, recognition, security, and personal development. Over time, however, he tended to emphasize the failure of existing state systems to satisfy the need for identity as the primary source of modern ethno-nationalist struggles. This

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<sup>52</sup> Sebenius, J.K., Burns, R.N. & Mnookin, R.H., 2018. *Kissinger the negotiator: lessons from dealmaking at the highest level*, New York: Harper. p.84-85

phenomenon can be explained by the fact that state systems have failed to keep up with the global trend, which Teitel suggests, in the post–Cold War phase, the historical production was also fundamental to building a state’s political identity.<sup>53</sup> The previous proposals made the same mistake. They have overly emphasized on the cultural commonality and the importance of unification, while neglecting the consolidation of Taiwanese identity and the rooted fear toward the CCP's dictatorial rule. Applying Chinese identity on people in Taiwan is equal to depriving the basic need of these people, and would in turn create a bigger conflict. Therefore, a valid resolution for Cross-Strait conflict would require recognition of Taiwanese identity.

Except for overlooking the identity need of Taiwanese people, the conflict resolution approaches of the previous proposals also do not align with Burton's conflict resolution principle and Kissinger’s negotiation lessons. These three proposals are seeking a road map to a political goal, which is the ultimate unification. However, according to Burton, a conflict resolution process is a proposal that pursues and creates an “environment” for rational and peaceful communication so the two sides can have better decision-making.<sup>54</sup> Kissinger also suggests that negotiators shall not regard the elements of a negotiation as fixed.<sup>55</sup> Instead of having an ultimate goal of Cross-Strait Relations, a consensus of "building an environment for rational and peaceful communication" needs to be established between the leaders of Taiwan and China. The consensus should also be held and compiled by both actors even when the Pro-Independent Party is elected in Taiwan.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Teitel, R.G., 2002. Transitional justice. In *Transitional justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Introduction.

<sup>54</sup> Burton J., op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>55</sup> Sebenius, J.K., Burns, R.N. & Mnookin, R.H., 2018., op. cit., p.270

<sup>56</sup> Among the eleven more vocal political parties, four for them have expressed their political stand as pro-independent. The report is available at: <https://www.thenewslens.com/article/19741> (In Chinese)

Small, island, and export-oriented states like Taiwan cannot afford protectionism. Global experiences have shown that this kind of state needs to rely on social-welfare policies and retraining programs for displaced workers to mitigate the negative impact of globalization.<sup>57</sup> Plus, our counterpart is the world No.2 economy, making Taiwan no advantage when competing with her in the global context. Therefore, researchers and politicians proposed resolutions and agendas, which aim to merge the two economies. While the polls conducted in July 2014 show that, almost the same number of respondents thought the pace of Cross-Strait exchanges was “too fast” as thought it was “just right”. Only a few thoughts it was “too slow.” Moreover, more than half thought the Chinese government was “hostile toward both the Taiwan government” and the Taiwanese people.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, as mentioned above, a feasible Cross-Strait conflict resolution—which can relieve the impact of globalization on Taiwan's economy—needs to be crafted through the lens of Social Constructivism, taking the apperception of the Taiwanese people into account. In Burton's Human Needs Theory, needs reflect universal motivations. Therefore, the following section will go through the needs of each actor in the Cross-Strait conflict.

### III. Actors' Needs

#### A. People Republic of China

##### 1) Identity Needs

In the Report of "19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China", fulfilling the goal of "National rejuvenation" has been repeatedly mentioned by Chairman Xi, demonstrating

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<sup>57</sup> Lin S., op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, p. 10.

its determination to accomplish the dream of a united China and One-China policy.<sup>59</sup> The driver of such a firm attitude was generated due to the hundred years of national humiliation between 1839 and 1949, when imperialism of Western powers and Japan intervened in China. Taiwan was the island that China lost to Japan during the period; thus reclaiming Taiwan is a necessary move for China's national rejuvenation.

## 2) Security Needs

Comparing the military force of Taiwan and the Mainland, Taiwan poses merely no threat to the PRC. While Taiwan's strong relation with the U.S. and its democratic system is crucial to the survival of the CCP government. Taiwan is located at the midpoint, also the most crucial point, of the first island chain, which refers to the first chain of major archipelagos out from the East Asian continental mainland coast. In the PRC' military doctrine, it views the chain as the area that it must secure and disable from American bases, aircraft and aircraft-carrier groups. Controlling Taiwan can effectively cut off the strategic chokepoint between the East and South seas. It also provides a channel to the second island chain and the rest of the Pacific.

The PRC' military doctrine has also perceived the United States as its major threat and competitor. Concerns about the remilitarization of Japan resurface on occasion as well. Transnational crime, terrorism, separatism, and contradictions among nations all contribute to China's security concerns. While due to the one-party dictatorial rule, the security needs of China largely lie in the security of the Communist Party of China. Freedom of speech is

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<sup>59</sup>In the speech, Chairman Xi commended on the Cross-Strait issue that *"We must uphold the one-China principle and the 1992 Consensus, promote the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations, deepen economic cooperation and cultural exchange between the two sides of the Straits, and encourage fellow Chinese on both sides to oppose all separatist activities and work together to realize Chinese national rejuvenation."*



considered a threat to the rule of party, thus, oppression toward democracy occurs to secure their authority.

## B. United States

### 1) Security Needs

During the Cold War period, R.O.C was one of the major forces for the U.S. to contain the expansion of Communism. Today, the PRC has grown to an unshakable power; however, Taiwan remains serving as the crucial role on the First Island Chain, which the U.S. uses to block China from entering the Pacific Ocean and to secure its military position in the Asia-Pacific region. With the South China Sea dispute on the point now, allowing China to reclaim Taiwan would lead to the expansion of Chinese territorial waters, which would render China more legitimacy in the South China Sea. The Taiwan issue may also serve a powerful bargaining chip for U.S. to maintain a dominant position when negotiating with China, including the South China Sea dispute and the North Korea missile crisis.

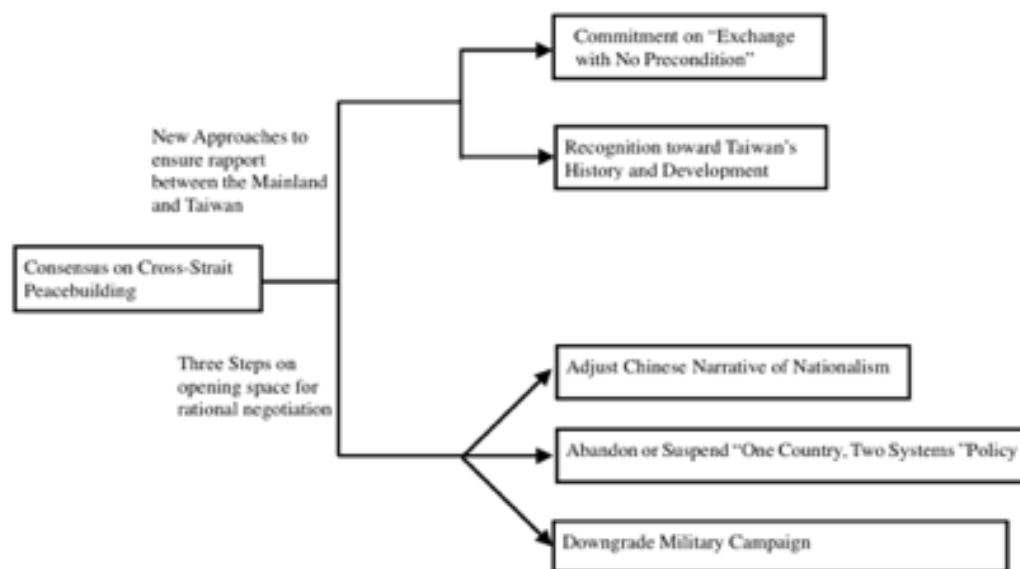
### 2) Reputation and Credibility

Between U.S. and Taiwan, lies a **【Taiwan Relations Act】**, which was signed in 1979 when U.S. broke off diplomatic relations with Taiwan, promised to protect Taiwan when being threatened. Except for Taiwan, the U.S. has also signed treaties with numerous Asia-Pasic countries, including Japan, South Korea, and Philippines. These treaties ensure the U.S.'s power in the region by committing to provide military aid and protection. Thus, falling short to secure Taiwan's security would deteriorate the U.S.'s trustworthiness and its leading power among allies. Plus, in the book "Mission Failure" Michael Mandelbaum, an expert in U.S. Foreign Policy, stated that "While becoming less valuable for American strategic interests, the island

became more attractive on the basis of American political values."<sup>60</sup> Success in establishing democracy and liberalized markets made Taiwan a great testimony of the victory in spreading American values".

#### IV. Cross-Strait Peacebuilding Suggestions

The following suggestions are based on the principle to create an environment for rational conversation and meanwhile maximize the extent to fulfill each actor's needs. As in the diagram (Figure 8) shown below, the first step is to establish a consensus on Cross-Strait peacebuilding. The suggestions include two major parts: new approaches to ensure rapport between the Mainland and Taiwan; and the three steps on opening up space for rational negotiation. The suggestions are present in the sequence of the implementing order.



*Figure 8: Diagram of peacebuilding strategy structure*

<sup>60</sup> Mandelbaum, M 2016, Mission Failure: America and the World in the Post-Cold War Era, Oxford University Press, Incorporated, Oxford.p.33

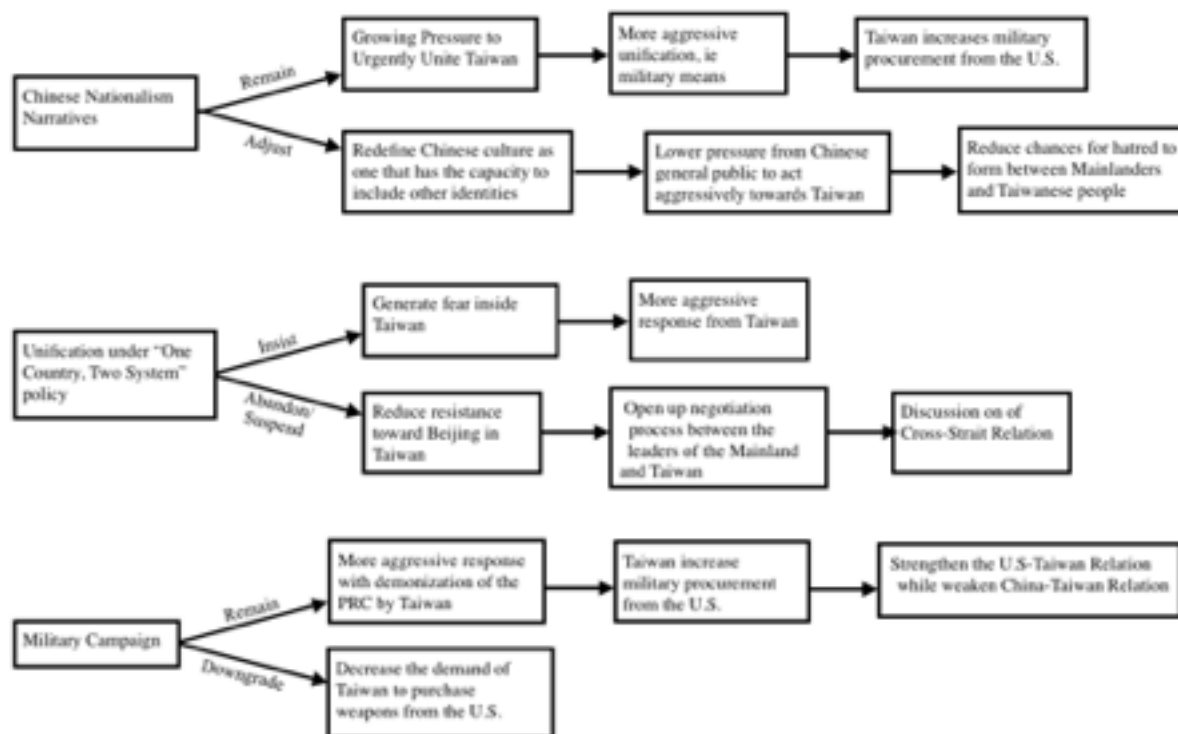


Figure 9: Path of the three steps to open space for Cross-Strait rational negotiation

## 1) Changing Narratives of Nationalism of China

China's nationalism today is shaped by its pride in its '5000 years' of 'glorious civilization' as well as its century of humiliation at the hands of the West and Japan.<sup>61</sup> However, the pride of the long history and the sentiment toward the humiliation is so strong that people, as well as the leaders of the CCP government, seldom mention the true spirit of the Chinese civilization—the Confucian thinking, which emphasizes benevolence, righteousness, proper rite, knowledge, and integrity. Chinese nationalism today is character by a strong sense on issues such as sovereignty and integrity of their territory due to the historical memory of Western and

<sup>61</sup> Callahan, W.A., 2004. National Insecurities: Humiliation, Salvation, and Chinese Nationalism. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 29(2), pp.199–218.

Japanese imperialism.<sup>62</sup> Thus, its narratives have been hijacked by rhetoric such as "Chinese Rejuvenation," "China cannot lose any inch of territory," or "Taiwan is a sacred, inseparable part of China." The growing level of popular nationalism in China, especially after President Xi took office, has forced Beijing to accommodate citizens' demand to act more toughly towards Taipei. It has also created more hate speech attacks between the Mainlanders and Taiwanese netizens.

Before reaching the point where it is possible to climb down the escalation ladder of conflict, it is necessary to recover from trauma.<sup>63</sup> Changing narratives of Chinese nationalism to one that emphasizes the true spirit of the Chinese history is a way of self-healing. It would also provide more flexibility for the CCP government on Cross-strait policy and decrease the resistance and hostility toward Beijing in Taiwan. In the thinking of Confucian, the sentiment toward the century of humiliation shall be diverted to the force to push for a global transitional justice.

## **2) Abandon "One China, Two System" Policy**

Created in the early 1980s by the former President Deng Xiaoping, "One China, Two System" aims to peacefully integrate—or reintegrate, from Beijing's perspective—formerly colonized territories, including Macau, Hong Kong and Taiwan, by permitting them semi-autonomous status in exchange for recognizing "One China." As Macau and Hong Kong have returned to China, Taiwan has now become the prime target of the policy. President Xi has reiterated the importance of one country, two systems as the only viable model for Cross-Strait

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<sup>62</sup> Commented by Edward Friedman, an expert on Chinese nationalism at the University of Wisconsin. <https://www.cfr.org/background/nationalism-china>

<sup>63</sup> Ramsbotham, O., Woodhouse, T. & Miall, H., 2016. Reconciliation. In *Contemporary conflict resolution*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity Press, p. 289.

Relations.<sup>64</sup> Yet, similar to the previous Cross-Strait Conflict Resolution proposals, the "One China, Two System" policy is an ultimate political goal. And what is required between the Cross-Strait Relations is a principle that aims to create a friendly environment for both actors to have a rational conversation, not a specific vision of an imaginary status.

In 2019, the protests in Hong Kong have led to great fears and questions about the viability of the PRC's "one country, two systems" policy. However, when Hong Kong was rocked by six months of often-violent anti-government protests, Xi chose to double down on the policy. In a speech in Macau, Xi said, "Macau's successful experience speaks volumes about the viability and strength of one country, two systems, as long as we are committed to it and act on it." As Burton said, the preservation of values—which for the PRC is the "One China value"—is a reason for defensive and aggressive behaviors.<sup>65</sup> Especially when the democratic fighters are bleeding, the insistence on One China Policy or "One Country, Two Systems" would only create more resistance in Taiwan, as it has become a source of fear. The demonization of the CCP government will be inevitable if the "One Country, Two Systems" is not abandoned. Plus, "One Country, Two Systems" policy is extremely unpopular in Taiwan and also has been questioned by the U.S. Department of State after the Hong Kong protest.<sup>66</sup> Abandoning the "One China, Two System" Policy would also mitigate foreign pressure on the PRC.

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<sup>64</sup> BBC, 2019. Xi Jinping says Taiwan 'must and will be' reunited with China. *BBC News*. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-46733174>

<sup>65</sup> Burton J., op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>66</sup> Department of State of the U.S press briefing archive: <https://www.state.gov/briefings/department-press-briefing-june-10-2019/#post-82620-HONGKONGCHINA>

### 3) Downgrade of Military Campaign

*“Deterrence theory, the basis of domestic enforcement and international strategic policies, is undermined because deterrence cannot deter in conditions in which human needs are frustrated.”<sup>67</sup>*

Over 1,500 missile heads along the coastline of China are aiming at Taiwan. Live fire military drills are constantly conducted, and fighter planes fly close to the island occasionally. Military tension rises during election periods, when China conducted a series of missile tests in an attempt to scare voters from electing the pro-independence candidate. Beijing also interferes with the U.S. arm-sale to Taiwan to suppress Taiwan's military strength. Although Taiwan possesses six thousand missile heads and that China is Taiwan's only potential enemy, the gap in military capability between the Mainland and Taiwan is so wide that Taiwan hardly has any advantage if a war erupts. Therefore, the downgrade of military campaign shall start from the Mainland side, by removing the missile deployment. This move will grant Taiwan no purpose to upgrade military capacity by purchasing arms from the U.S, therefore, would also decrease the tension between China and the U.S.

The Taiwanese people are unlikely to negotiate or sign any peace treaty with a gun to their head. In the 2020 presidential election shows that the general public prefer a person who stands firmly and does not compromise in front of threats.<sup>68</sup> As the quote above, the deterrence

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<sup>67</sup> Burton J., op. cit., p.33-34.

<sup>68</sup> Rousseau, D. L. and Garcia-Retamero, R. (2007) 'Identity, Power, and Threat Perception: A Cross-National Experimental Study', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 51(5), p.766

has little effect in accomplishing Beijing's goal. Instead, the security threat has generated great grievance among Taiwan society toward the CCP government.

#### **4) Exchanges with No Preconditions**

As mentioned before, the consensus of "building an environment for rational and peaceful communication" is necessary to establish between the leaders of Taiwan and the Mainland. In the general public domain, exchange between people across the strait shall not stop either. The lack of bilateral exchange may easily generate misunderstanding and forbid the trust to build between people of the Mainland and Taiwan, making the Cross-Strait Conflict less easy to resolve. In contrast, exchange programs from education to commerce to technology serve a crucial role to break off stereotypes, resolve the misperception between the Mainlanders and Taiwanese.<sup>69</sup> As Burton suggests "The cause or sources of conflict between individuals and groups cannot be separated from the totality of relationships, and the environment conditions that promote relationships. Valued relationships are probably the main constraints on so-called anti-social behaviors, and institutional and social circumstances can deprive many people of them."<sup>70</sup> Building valued Cross-Strait Relations is the way to cease hate speech attacks and irrational behaviors. Unfortunately, since President Tsai was elected in 2016, political exchange has been suspended and the scale as well as frequency of cultural, economic, and educational exchange programs have been reduced. Because she refuses to endorse the idea of a single Chinese nation

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<sup>69</sup>Sebenius, J.K., Burns, R.N. & Mnookin, R.H., 2018., op. cit., p.263.

<sup>70</sup> Burton J., op. cit., p. 47.

as the CCP government wants. On August 1st, 2019, Beijing even banned Chinese solo travelers from going to Taiwan due to the 2020 Presidential election in Taiwan.<sup>71</sup>

Currently, reconciling actions toward Beijing or merely accepting favorable conditions in trade, education or other aspects have been characterized as a betrayal to the land of Taiwan. Therefore, Track II Diplomacy has the crucial role in paving the way, building a better arena for Track I Diplomacy to make further steps. Given the strong anti-China sentiment in Taiwan, where some of the Taiwanese people have depicted the CCP Government as devil, the extent and the type of exchange program shall be carefully crafted and shall also be flexible due to mercurial Cross-Strait Relations.

In 1971, the exchange of table tennis players between the U.S. and the PRC at the World Table Tennis Championships in Nagoya, Japan has thawed the Sino-American relation and paved the way to President Nixon's visit to Beijing in 1972. The event has later referred to Ping-pong diplomacy, and has been seen as a key turning point in the relationship. However, after four decades, sport has become a sensitive topic of the Sino-American and Cross-Strait Relations at the current point. On October 4, 2019, Daryl Morey, the general manager of the Houston Rockets, tweeted an image which voiced support for the protesters in Hong Kong. The tweet immediately prompted backlash from Chinese netizens. The Chinese basketball leagues, streaming services, sponsors, and partners, have also cut ties with the Rockets and the NBA. As the NBA later apologized and removed the tweet, it created another backlash from the U.S., where netizens and numerous Senates condemned that the people's right of free speech shall not

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<sup>71</sup> Chung, L., Zuo, M. & Lo, K., 2019. Beijing's ban on solo travellers to cost Taiwan US\$900 million. *South China Morning Post*. Available at: <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3020787/beijing-halt-individual-travel-permits-taiwan-over-rising> [Accessed Oct 6, 2020].



be affected by the Chinese government.<sup>72</sup> In the context of Cross-Strait Relations, the sport exchange program may also be sensitive at current point, as the PRC has blocked Taiwan from participating in international competitions with her official name, nor with the name of Taiwan.

According to my observation, in this study, I suggest that the exchange on cuisine—beverage excluded, since the Chinese netizens have blacklisted and boycotted popular bubble tea brands from Taiwan, which show support to the Hong Kong protester—is the most uncontested and practical program.<sup>73</sup> People can seldom see hate speech attacks or debate between the Mainlanders and Taiwanese under any YouTube cooking or cuisine-related videos.<sup>74</sup> People from both sides would even exchange recipes and ideas of dishes. Taiwanese people would not stop going to Chinese cuisine restaurants amid rising Cross-Strait tensions either. Through the exchanges of restaurant chefs, cooking channel YouTubers and cooking-show hosts, positive views toward Chinese culture and the people will gradually form. Other cultural exchanges, including literature, arts or architecture, are also crucial in building valued Cross-Strait Relation. While the artists who come to Taiwan shall be carefully picked. Artists with strong political stands or background that would touch Taiwanese and Mainlanders nerves should avoid. The U.S. can be a good third party helping facilitate these exchange programs. Peaceful Cross-Strait Relations are beneficial as well to the U.S.'s stability.

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<sup>72</sup> Campbell, C., 2019. NBA Spat Becomes Latest Fissure in U.S.-China Relations. *Time*. Available at: <https://time.com/5695823/china-nba-houston-rockets-basketball/> [Accessed Nov 5, 2019]

<sup>73</sup> Elegant, N.X., 2019. How Hong Kong's Protests Are Roiling the World's Booming Bubble Tea Market. *Fortune*. Available at: <https://fortune.com/2019/08/22/hong-kong-protest-bubble-tea/> [Accessed Nov 5, 2019]

<sup>74</sup> The writer looked in to the top three most popular Chinese cooking channels on YouTube: “Ms. Kuo’s Magic Ingredients”, “Li Ziqi” and “Wang Gang the Food Writer”. People from China and Taiwan show great respect to each other when leaving comments. In contrast, narratives related to national identity and Cross-Strait Relation can be seen at the comment section of other categories of channels such as pop culture and travel blog,

## 5) Recognizing History and Development of Taiwan

Once the fear of military threat has removed and a valued relation has gradually formed, recognition toward Taiwanese identity needs to be next in place. Due to the political form of Beijing, recognizing the process toward democracy may be considered threatening their regime. While recognition must be given to the history of Taiwan. Actions from Taiwan to differentiate itself from the Mainland, such as “Taiwan Can Help” initiative and abandoning developing economy status, is an inevitable trend and will increase in the following years.<sup>75</sup> Recognition towards Taiwan’s history and development is, therefore, the crucial step to rebuild the connection between the Mainland and Taiwan.

In the reconciliation of France and Germany, occasions of symbolic gestures were extremely crucial, in which commemorations took up almost half of the occasions, playing a huge role in accelerating the tie.<sup>76</sup> In comparison, commemoration events have yet to be seen in Cross-Strait reconciliation. Commemorations can serve as a great platform showing recognition. For instance, together memorizing those who sacrifice in the Second Sino-Japanese War, and publicly acknowledge the bravery and merit of KMT party. Beijing's politician's visit to the museum of Taiwanese history, or having occasions of symbolic gestures take place at historical places in Taiwan can also demonstrate the recognition of Taiwanese identity. Furthermore, referencing the reconciliation between Germany and Israel, instead of burying the painful

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<sup>75</sup> “Taiwan Can Help” initiative includes donating surgical masks to other countries in need during the outbreak of COVID-19. Chen, S., 2020. Taiwan to donate 10 million masks to countries hit hardest by coronavirus. *ABC News*. Available at: <https://abcnews.go.com/Health/taiwan-donate-10-million-masks-countries-hit-hardest/story?id=69918187>.

<sup>76</sup> Gardner, FL, & Gardner, FL 2012, *Germany's Foreign Policy of Reconciliation: From Enmity to Amity*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, MD.pp.76-77.

history, China and Taiwan shall both vivify the Cross-Strait Conflict.<sup>77</sup> Building a museum to commemorate people sacrificed in the Cross-Strait Conflict is essential as people strive to promote peace across the Strait.<sup>78</sup> This implies it is time for the conflict to go into history and also demonstrate the courage to face and learn from history.

The principle of the above suggestions is to satisfy the needs of each actor; the goal of these suggestions is to build an environment which enables a valued relation and conciliatory mechanism to form.<sup>79</sup> Numerous changes are required to be made while, most importantly, rigid principles that have crippled the relation shall be abandoned.<sup>80</sup> In the above suggestions, the study referenced numerous successful conflict resolution cases in the post-war era. From these successful cases, we see strong leadership that possesses outstanding realism and political courage to make a change.<sup>81</sup> Willy Brandt, the former West Germany chancellor and the Nobel Peace Prize Winner, made multiple compromises to resolve conflicts, and adopted a new foreign policy that reversed previous refusals. He signed a treaty with East Germany and established diplomatic relations with Poland and other Eastern Bloc countries, he also accepted the loss of German land beyond the Oder-Neisse Line. While these actions had not received strong opposition from the mass public, instead, German voters endorsed Brandt's swallowing of the bitter pill, and Brandt's party won the 1972 elections with an increased majority. A change is required in Cross-Strait Relations. As Burton suggests "We have to move away from management of change designed to prevent change, toward a recognition of the need for change

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<sup>77</sup> Gardner, FL, & Gardner, FL., op. cit., p.20.

<sup>78</sup> Auerbach, Y., 2006. Forgiveness and reconciliation in identity conflicts: the Israel-Germany case.

<sup>79</sup> Burton J., op. cit., p.191.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid*, pp.236-237

<sup>81</sup> *ibid*, p.215.

in certain determined direction-determined, not by ideology, but by the objective criterion of need satisfaction.”<sup>82</sup>

## **Identity Formation Revisited in the Time of COVID-19**

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pneumonia was first identified in Wuhan China at the end of 2019. The disease quickly spread through Mainland China, causing multiple cities to shut down during the first two months of 2020. As the situation stabilizes in China and the infected cases continue to fall in China, COVID-19 started to spread around the globe, bringing chaos medically and economically. On March 11th, more than 190,000 cases of the disease have been reported in over 160 countries and territories, and COVID-19 is finally recognized as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). Before COVID-19 received much attention from the world and merely been taken as a regional epidemic, people and the government of Taiwan unite and stand at the front line to fight against the disease.

Taiwan is only eighty-one miles away from mainland China and a huge amount of people traveling back and forth every day. Early in this year, John Hopkins University modeled the spread of the virus, and predicted that Taiwan will have the second most confirmed cases of the world.<sup>83</sup> While today, Taiwan has flattened the curve before infection rates soared exponentially, and over eighty counties and territories that have reported more than Taiwan’s 395 cases. Infections may spike again in Taiwan, especially with thousands of Taiwanese oversea students and workers have flocked back home. Yet, Taiwan’s initial success is worth sharing not merely because of its lessons for containing the present pandemic but also because of its broader lessons

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<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, p.135.

<sup>83</sup> PBS NewsHour, 2020. How Taiwan has become a COVID-19 success story. *PBS*. Available at: <https://www.pbs.org/video/a-different-approach-1585775995/> [Accessed March 25, 2020].

about navigating pressing challenges around technology and democracy.<sup>84</sup> As news media around the globe praised and referenced the success of Taiwan, it, again, reinforced the consolidation of Taiwanese identity.

Taiwan's success has rested on a fusion of technology, civic participation, and the vigilance of government and people due to the tragic experience during the outbreak of SARS. In 2003, Taiwan was hit hard by SARS, a respiratory epidemic, eleven health workers died during the crisis. With the heartbreaking experience, when being informed with a SARS-like pneumonia outbreak in Wuhan China, Taiwanese officials quickly formed the Central Epidemic Command Center (CECC) to coordinate swift responses across government agencies and keep citizens well informed on the disease and any official measures. Following the establishment of CECC, Taiwan implemented border controls before a single case was confirmed; merged the national insurance database with the immigration and customs database to keep track of people's health conditions and travel history; and being the first region to ban exports of surgical masks to ensure mask supply.

The value of Taiwan's tech-enabled civic culture has also become abundantly clear in the current outbreak. Dozens of community-created apps helped complement government response to the pandemic and limit the death toll. Face Mask Map, a national real-time map for every Taiwanese citizen to track the stock of masks in every pharmacy, is one of the most celebrated examples. At the beginning, the app was developed by a Taiwanese programmer for his friends and close relatives. Soon after, Audrey Tang, Taiwan's Digital Minister reaches out to this

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<sup>84</sup> Lanier, J. & Weyl, E.G., 2020. How Civic Technology Can Help Stop a Pandemic. *Foreign Affairs*. Available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2020-03-20/how-civic-technology-can-help-stop-pandemic>

programmer. Within a matter of days, Tang and his team turned this idea available for every Taiwanese citizen. Another platform, which allows individuals to voluntarily share reports about symptoms, was later created to help citizens reduce exposure to the virus. Information on the platform was verified and collated. The result was then combined with more community-created apps that enable users to download their smartphone location history to determine if they may have been exposed. Privacy was carefully protected in these apps and platforms, and the movements of individuals were not visible to other users. The guiding principle in these innovations was not top-down control but mutual respect and cooperation.

Taiwan has not only demonstrated its strength in technology and civic participation during the outbreak, but also showed its excellent medical capacity, even without being a member of WHO and has been barred from attending the annual World Health Assembly since 2017. Currently, there is no vaccine nor treatment for the pandemic yet, but the WHO has suggested Remdesivir may be effective in treating the COVID-19. After informed with the news, a team from National Health Research Institutes successfully synthesized Remdesivir at the gram-level on their own. Furthermore, Academia Sinica announced in early March that they have developed antibodies for the COVID-19 virus test in only 19 days.

As the world is inundated with negative news stories of cities lock down and growing infection rate, most residents in Taiwan carry on their lives as normal, with offices and schools open. Many restaurants, gyms, and cafes in the capital, Taipei, are still bustling, although most premises will take temperatures and spray hands with sanitizer before allowing customers in. Posts and videos expressing gratitude of being a Taiwanese or able to live in Taiwan are

everywhere on social media, boosting the sense of proud of Taiwanese identity.<sup>85</sup> In contrast, while China has also successfully contained the outbreak, the success is blamed to be accomplished through inhuman and draconian control on information. As related news reports have gone viral in Taiwan, it reinforces the sentiment for Taiwanese people to reject the identity of Chinese.<sup>86</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic has produced both internal and external force to the consolidation of Taiwanese identity.

From a global perspective, the world sees the importance to differentiation of Taiwanese and the Mainland China for the sake of global health and development during this world crisis. At the beginning of the outbreak, many world leaders and public health experts express their concerns that the exclusion of Taiwan in WHO, as well as the WHO emergency meetings on the coronavirus, may create a loophole on global health security networks.<sup>87</sup> While with the fully independent system from China, Taiwan shows its strong capacities in technology, medical system, and governmental response and the narrative quickly changed. The exclusion of Taiwan has now become a loss for our global public health.<sup>88</sup> Taiwan's model of harnessing technology as a tool of democratic creativity and help government respond to the pandemic, also offers an alternative to both the top-down surveillance of the Chinese state and the technophobic Western thinking.<sup>89</sup> In the 21st century world, almost all of the major challenges, including climate,

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<sup>85</sup>Blare Chen YouTube Channel. 2020, *9 countries 1 message, Foreigners in Taiwan speak about COVID-19*. video recording, YouTube, < <https://youtu.be/6LnQJ5dk3VU>>

<sup>86</sup> The most well-known news is that Dr. Li Wenliang, the whistleblower of the deadly coronavirus outbreak, was being silenced and died 8 days after diagnosed with COVID-19. The other one is two citizen journalists, Fang Bin and Chen Qiushi, were arrested for posting video of hospital in Wuhan.

<sup>87</sup>Cheng, J. & Wong, C.H., 2020. As Virus Spreads, Isolated Taiwan Risks Being a Loophole in War on Epidemics. *The Wall Street Journal*.

<sup>88</sup>Media from more than 15 countries have reported the successful experience of Taiwan. The "Foreign Affairs" and "Foreign Policy" have both published journals analyzing how Taiwan become a world model with being a part of WHO.

<sup>89</sup> Lanier, J. & Weyl, E.G.,

health, trade and technology, cannot be restricted by borders. The world needs Taiwan to be in the room, helping to shape a better global policy and to strengthen the universal value through innovative technology. If the world's multilateral bodies continued to exclude Taiwan, it will come as a cost to the globe, as we see in this COVID-19 outbreak.

## **Conclusion**

This research has demonstrated the strengths of Social Constructivism in analyzing the identity-based conflict. By diving into the history and the transition of sociopolitical context in Taiwan, the research points out the principle variables forming and consolidating the Taiwanese identity. The variables can be divided into the internal and the external ones. The internal factors include: institution and education change, which the was brought after the political democratization since 1978, demographic change, and the shared memories of people in Taiwan. The external factors include: the negative international perception of China among Western countries and military pressures from China against Taiwan. All these variables, developed during the last seventy years, lead to the consolidation of Taiwanese identity, which in turn, prevent the adoption of Chinese identity for Taiwanese people. Therefore, the current nationalistic narratives of president Xi to pursue unification only create grievances of Taiwanese people and increase the tensions between the Taiwan Strait.

The research not only takes Social Constructivism as a lens to analyze the Taiwanese identity; the analysis also uses the lens to help propose a Cross-Strait conflict resolution. According to Burton's Basic Need Theory, the study examines the needs of each actor in the conflict. As presented in the previous part, the growing nationalism in China and its hundred years of humiliated history, has increased pressure of CCP's leader to pursue unification and take



over Taiwan. Meanwhile, Taiwan serves as a pivotal strategic partner of the U.S. Protecting Taiwan from the invasion of China secures US's reputation and its leadership in the Asia-Pacific region. As a crucial determinant in U.S-China relation, the stability of Cross-Strait Relations is important to the global security, so is the resolution of the Cross-Strait Conflict.

From the reflection on the failure of the previous Cross-Strait Conflict Resolution proposals and base on Burton's conflict resolution principle, the research provides suggestions to deescalate the tension between the Mainland and Taiwan. The suggestions do not seek for any ultimate goal of the China-Taiwan relation. Instead, it grabs on the principle to create an environment which enables a valued relation and conciliatory mechanism to form between the actors by satisfying the needs of each actor. The consensus on Cross-Strait peacebuilding needs to be established between the Mainland and Taiwan first. Following the consensus are the two approaches and three steps to ensure rapport between the Mainland and Taiwan and to open up space for rational negotiation. As identity is a crucial basic need, these approaches and steps aims to eliminate the grievances of Taiwanese people by recognizing the formation of their identity. It also removes factors that may pose a security threat to the Taiwanese people. At the end of this research, it reexamines Cross-Strait Relations during the current COVID-19 outbreak reiterates. Again, the revisit shows the strong desire for Taiwanese people to distinguish themselves from China. It also demonstrates how the differentiation is important and beneficial to global security.

The stability of Cross-Strait Relations is crucial to the world as is its peacebuilding process. On the Double Ten National Day, 2016, President Tsai Ing-wen called on the two governing parties across the Taiwan Strait to "set aside the baggage of history and engage in

positive dialogue for the welfare of people on both sides.” According to the peacebuilding framework provided by the research, it would now require CCP’s leader to hold out an olive branch and shows his willingness to build a peaceful relation with Taiwan.

Taiwan's crucial strategic position has put it at the center of regional geopolitical competition for centuries. Further research on Taiwanese identity and Cross-Strait peacebuilding strategy is needed to decrease chances for risk on Taiwan Strait to escalate and create a stable environment in the Asia-Pacific region. The various implications of this research also clearly demonstrate how identity forms and creates challenges in cross-border conflict. With civil wars, climate changes, and poverty forcing people to relocate and crossing borders, the research is here to call for more studies on identity formation globally. These efforts will be continuously critical for the global stability, and for the full exercise of human rights.

## Appendix



Figure 10: Geopolitical Significance of the Taiwan

Source: Duarte, M.P., *China and the Sea: the Changing Nature of Chinese Naval Behaviour*. REVISTA MILITAR. Available at: <https://www.revistamilitar.pt/artigo/817>

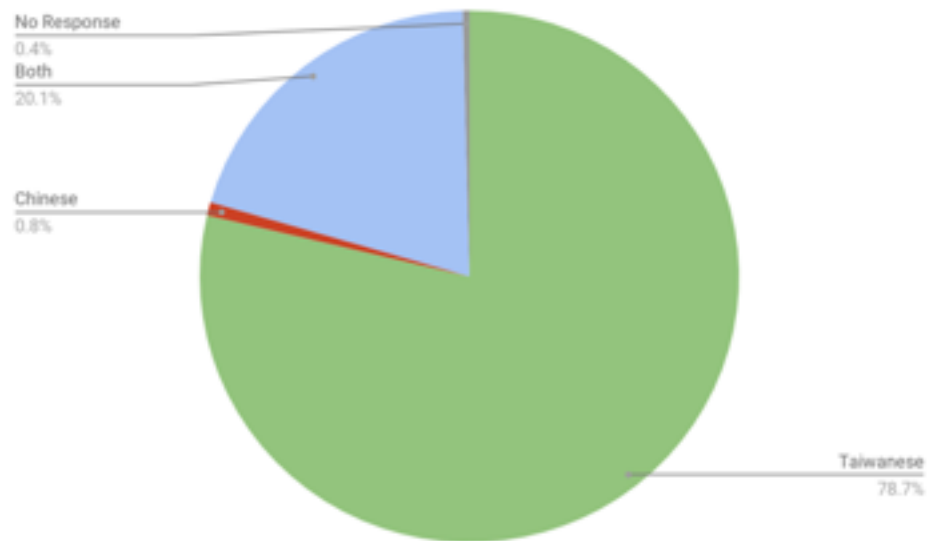


Figure 11: Chinese/ Taiwanese Identity Youth Survey 2019

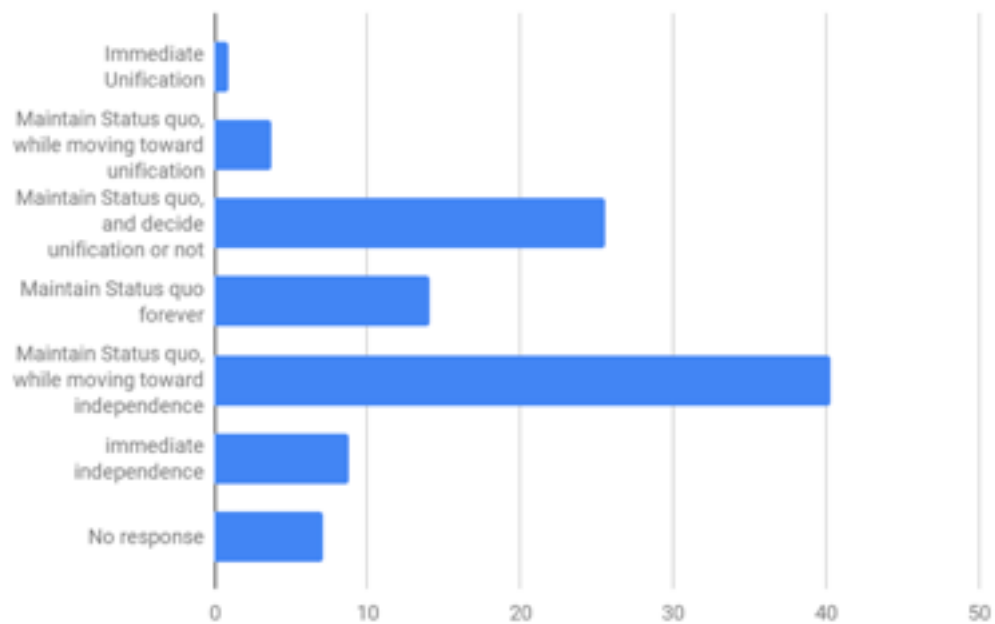


Figure 12: Preference of Cross-Strait Conflict Among Youth

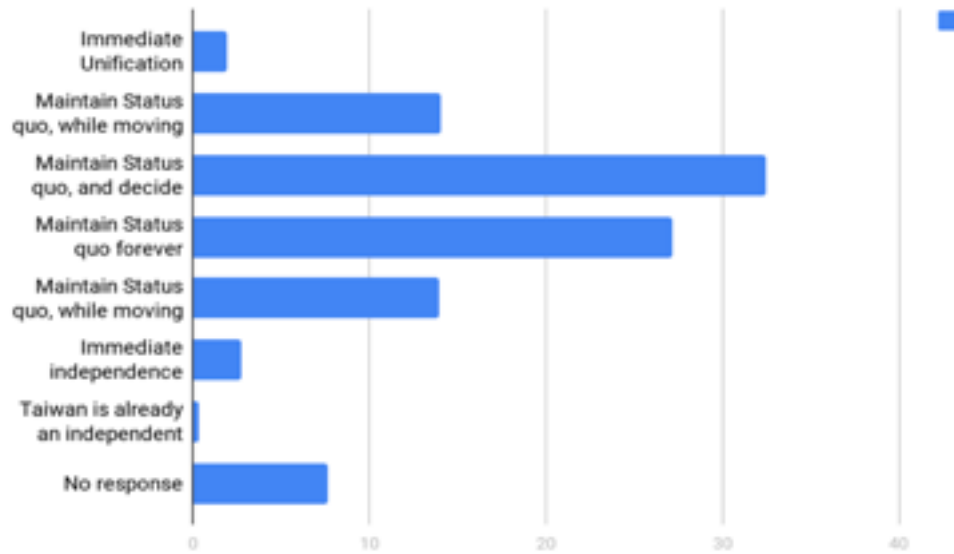


Figure 13: Preference of Cross-Strait Conflict Among All Generation

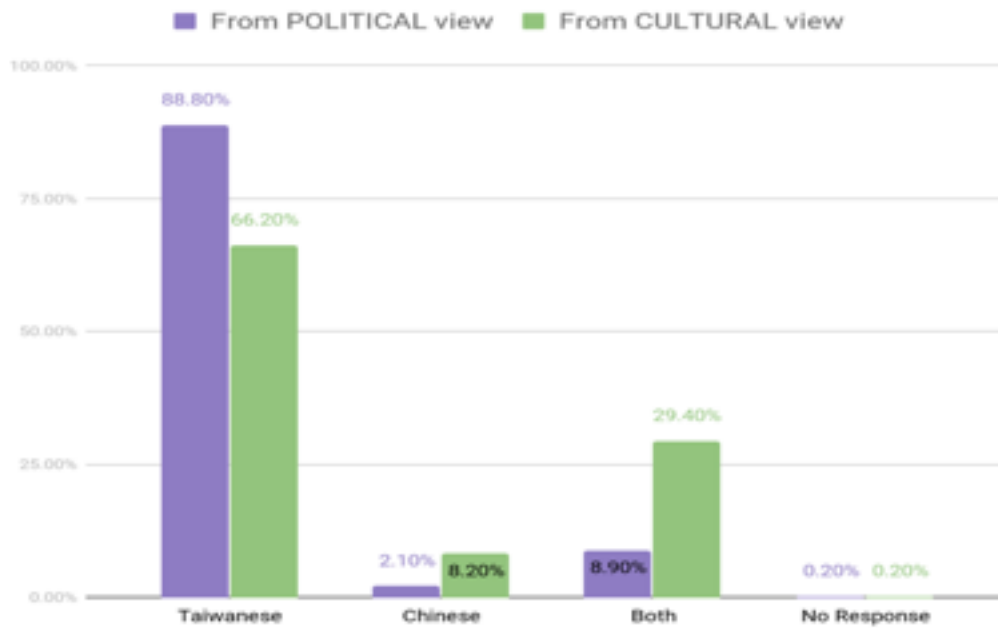


Figure14: Which identity would recognize yourself as?

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