

Taiwan's Nation-Building Project

*The strategies and impact of constructing a Taiwan-centered national
imagined community*

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Summary

This study is about the nation-building project of the Pan-Green coalition -which will be referred to as Taiwanese nationalists- in Taiwan. This project aims at cultivating a Taiwan-centered nationalism and self-consciousness in order to enlarge the national sentiments for independency. The rise of democratization in the 1980's has evoked a rise of Taiwan-centered nationalism. Moreover the Taiwanese nationalists are facing the opposing the Pan-Blue coalition, which strives for reunification with Mainland China.

This thesis analyses the motivations and strategies of the Taiwanese nationalists, and the impact of this nation-building project has on society. Taiwanese nationalists feel they have the fundamental task to cultivate a sense of Taiwanese subjectivity and the nation-building project is based on the conviction that Taiwan should be an independent nation.

The analysis is done on the basis of a two-folded framework. This framework exists of the works of Benedict Anderson and Nira Yuval-Davis. Anderson's work focuses on nationalism and his concept of 'national imagining'. His approach helps to understand the nation-building project as a project that aims at creating a political imagined, which is characterized by Taiwan-centered nationalist sentiments. Moreover Yuval-Davis' theory elaborates on the individual discursive positioning and it will function as a complementation to Anderson's theory. She uses a more differentiated approach on the theme of national identification based on her idea of culturalized discourses and subjective understanding. The combination of both theories establishes a framework that enables us to acknowledge the different levels of national imagining which are related to the process of nation-building.

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Introduction

The current political situation of Taiwan, also known as the Republic of China, is characterized by a division between the so-called Pan-Green coalition and the Pan-Blue coalition (Schubert, 2004, p. 534). The Pan-Blue coalition is mainly represented by the Kuomintang Party (KMT) and it aims at desires reunification of Taiwan with Mainland China (Schubert, 2004, p. 542). The Pan-Green coalition, which I will refer to as Taiwanese nationalists, strives for the independency of Taiwan. The biggest Pan-Green party is the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which has experienced increased support since the 1980's (Tang & Tang, 1997, p. 285).

Through the rising power of the Taiwanese nationalists the Taiwanese political environment has shifted from a political monopoly of the KMT towards democratic political sphere: Where Taiwanese citizens first passively had to except the authoritarian rule of the KMT (Wang & Liu, 2004, p. 571), they are now able to choose between two major political groupings (Fuh-sheng Hsieh, 2005, p. 13). The case of Taiwan is remarkable since we can find strong Taiwan-centered nationalist sentiments within Taiwanese society, but Taiwan's legal status still remains to be undetermined (Kuijper, 1996, p. 9). So this has articulated the debate about the future prospects of Taiwan: should Taiwan fight for independence or strive for reunification with Mainland China?

With the rise of democracy, national identity, which is related to the future association between Taiwan and Mainland China, became an important factor in dividing people into different political camps (Fuh-sheng Hsieh, 2005, pp. 13, 15).

Therefore, Taiwanese citizens have to reflect on their definition of national belonging and they have to determine the way they perceive Taiwan's future. After all, voting for one side implies supporting the future outcome represented by that side as well. This brings a kind of tension in Taiwan society: at the political level citizens are being forced to choose one side, but at the daily life level many Taiwanese citizens are influenced by both Taiwanese and Chinese culture (Schubert, 2004, p. 537).

Since the 1980's, the Taiwanese nationalists have started to cultivate a Taiwan-centered nationalism and self-consciousness. Hereby they put emphasis on promoting one type of nationalism that should represent Taiwanese society. They draw upon Taiwan-centered

sentiments in order to gain support for an independent Taiwan. They aim to increase one type of nationalism, but their efforts so far have resulted in an increasing polarization of ‘Taiwaneseeness’ and ‘Chineseness’ within the political discourse (Weiming, 1996, p. 1117).

This study will provide a postcolonial analysis of the Taiwanese nationalist nation-building project. The goal is to map the features of the nation-building project by explaining them in postcolonial terms. Moreover it aims at creating a hybrid theoretical framework by combining two existing academic approaches in order to get a better understanding of the rise of Taiwan-centered nationalism and its impact on Taiwanese society.

1. Theoretical Framework, Research Question and Method

I will reflect upon the Taiwanese nationalist nation-building project by using the academic work of Benedict Anderson and that of Nira Yuval-Davis. Doing this, I aim for a better understanding of the motivations and strategies of the Taiwanese nationalists and the impact the rising nationalism has on society. Prior to the current political environment, Taiwan has experienced different periods of foreign and domestic colonial cultures- Dutch, Spanish, southern Chinese, Japanese and the monopoly rule of the Kuomintang (Liao, 2010, p. 200). Therefore it will be interesting to focus on the topic of national identification from a postcolonial perspective and to examine to what the extent academic terms from this field of study could increase our understanding of the nation-building project.

1.1. A combined theoretical framework

Both authors focus on the theme of national identification. Though, the way they approach this theme is different. Anderson's book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (2006) greatly supports the understanding of nationalism in the context of this thesis. In this work, Anderson argues that all nations are constructed through processes of 'collective imagining' rather than fixed concepts. It will be relevant for my research to apply Anderson's notion of collective imagining on the case of Taiwan, since it could help us to understand why there is such a division in Taiwanese opinion about whether to reunify with Mainland China or not. In other words, in line with Anderson's vision we can assume that Taiwanese society consists of several groups, which differently 'imagine' Taiwan as a nation. It is this idea of the imagining of the nation, which will help us to understand the motivations and strategies of the Taiwanese nationalists.

In her book *Gender and Nation* (2009), Yuval-Davis emphasizes the idea that each individual is shaped by the intersection of multiple discourses. I will use her work in order to examine which insights we get from applying a more differentiated approach on the topic of national identification and nationalism. Her work points to a more nuanced notion of identity and nationalism compared with Anderson's approach.

So on the one hand, Anderson puts the act of individual identification in a wider collective context of the community while emphasizing the importance of ‘imagining’ through language and representation. On the other hand, Yuval-Davis analyses the act of individual identification by emphasizing the individuals’ positioning in a culturalized discourse and how the notion of subjective understanding is significant in this identification process.

1.2. Relevance

The combination of both approaches constitutes a new framework that helps us to apply a unique analysis on the nation-building project. The framework establishes a discourse that emphasizes both the collective and the individual level of national imagining. It leads to notions as the individual attachment to the wider context of the collective imagined community and the individual positioning within existing discourses. This bilateral focus enables us to analyse the nation-building project from different angles and it may help to explicitly indicate the relation between the strategies implemented by the Taiwanese nationalists and the related changes within society. This could be a relevant contribution to the current academic discourse since it helps to acknowledge the different levels of national imagining to which the process nation-building is related. Moreover the combined framework stimulates to critically reflect on both works.

1.3. Research question

This study will try to answer the following research question: How does Anderson’s theory of nationalism and national imagining and Yuval-Davis’ vision on individual discursive positioning help to understand the strategies of the Taiwanese nationalist nation-building project and its impact on society? In order to answer this question, I will focus on the following sub-questions:

1. What is the Taiwanese nationalist nation-building project considered in the post-colonial context of Taiwan?
2. What is Anderson’s theory of nationalism and national imagining?
3. How does Anderson’s theory contribute to a better understanding of this nation-building project?

4. What is Yuval-Davis' theory of individual discursive positioning?
5. How does Yuval-Davis' theory contribute to a better understanding of the nation-building project?
6. What insights regarding the nation-building project do we gain when taking into account both theories?

1.4. Method

First I will elaborate on the Taiwanese nation-building project and the way it came into existence, the main challenge faced by the Taiwanese nationalists, and the impact it has had on Taiwanese society so far.

Hereafter I will make tangible the motivations and strategies of the Taiwanese nationalists and the challenges they are facing in gaining support. I will do this by means of Anderson's notion of nationalism and national imagining. Moreover I will critically reflect whether Anderson's notion of 'collective imagining' is sufficient to understand the social context the Taiwanese nationalists are acting in. From this critical reflection I will arrive at the conclusion that a more differentiated view of national imagining is necessary for the analysis of the nation-building project.

Therefore, I will shift the focus to the more individual level by introducing Yuval-Davis' book *Gender and Nation* (1997). I will elaborate on her notion of culturalized discourses, subjective understanding and transversal politics and I will discuss in what way her vision should be taken into account when analysing the case of Taiwan.

During the analysis I will show in what way the two works offer different approaches regarding the analysis of the nation-building project. Moreover I will show which insights we gain from these findings, and how this contributes to a more all-embracing analysis.

For the analysis, I collected data on the nation-building project from the articles 'Taiwan's Self-Conscious Nation-Building Project' (2004) by David Lynch and 'Cultural Identity and the Politics of Recognition in Contemporary Taiwan' (1996) by Tu Weiming. Both articles are published in the scholar journals *The Asian Survey* and *The China Quarterly*. I have chosen to use these texts for my analysis, since together they give a very good overview of the nation-building

project and the cultural and political changes within society since the 1980's. Moreover they complement each other very well: where Lynch's article presents the features of the nation-building project by linking it to Andersonian terms, Weiming brings another focus by elaborating on the theme of cultural identification in Taiwan. Since Lynch refers already several times to Anderson's theory, I will take Lynch's assumptions as a starting point of my analysis and illustrate them by referring to Anderson's theory more explicitly. Finally, I will show how the nation-building project has led to a polarization of national imagining. The article by Tu Weiming elaborates on the theme of cultural identification in Taiwan and therefore it will function as a complementing text to Lynch's article.

By using an Andersonian framework I will analyse the motivations and strategies of the Taiwanese nationalists within the in the context of collective imagining. Subsequently, I will shift my focus to a more individual level using Yuval-Davis' vision on individual discursive positioning. During the analysis I will not go into depth regarding specific aspects of the nation-building policies and nationalist narratives. Rather I will focus on how both approaches help to understand the relation between motivations and strategies behind the nation-building project and its impact on society.

In summary, Anderson's work will help me to appoint the motivations and strategies of the Taiwanese nationalists. Though, the multi-ethnic diversity of Taiwan and the remaining influence of the colonial period might imply that Anderson's idea of national imagining within collective contexts does not provide a full understanding of the nation-building project on society. Therefore Yuval-Davis' vision on individual discursive positioning offers an opening to a more complete understanding while it offers a more differentiated view on national identification.

2. The Nation-Building Project in the Postcolonial Context of Taiwan

2.1. The rise of democratization of Taiwan

Since the 1980's there has started a democratization process and as Shin-Huang Michael Hsiao notes, the people of Taiwan have started to construct a collective consciousness in defining the autonomous quality of 'the society' (Hsiao, 1990, p. 163). This democratization derived from a growing civil society, which had grown strong enough to challenge the monopoly polity of the state (Hsiao, 1990, p. 166). According to Weiming (1996), this was due to many factors:

The transformation of an agrarian community into an urban society, a substantial increase in per capita income, the virtual elimination of illiteracy, the construction of a 'public sphere' and the emergence of a middle class" (Weiming, 1996, p. 1128).

Also the growing independence of the mass media, the liberalization of speech, and commercialization of life provided an impetus for new social movements, which were on the one hand independent of the political center, but on the other hand they had access to and influence on the political center (Weiming, 1996, p. 1128).

It is not surprising that the emergence of many social movements, which challenge the policies of the ruling KMT, is closely related to a rising political consciousness in Taiwan. Lynch shows that since the 1980's Taiwanese nationalists have initiated the project on Taiwanese nation-building in order to stimulate the Taiwan-centered identification and to enlarge the national sentiments against re-unification with Mainland China (Lynch, 2004, pp. 513-517). With the recognition of the DPP as political party in 1987 we see how supporters of Taiwan-centered nationalism moved their way up into the official political sphere (Rigger, 2001, p. 946). This has resulted in a division in the political sphere between the Pan-Green coalition and Pan-Blue coalition.

2.2. The Taiwanese nationalists and the Kuomintang

The way Taiwanese nationalists are using nationalism as tool for self-consciousness, is different than the way the KMT is doing. Where Taiwanese nationalists promote a Taiwan-centered nationalism in order to strengthen the movement to independence, the KMT promotes a Sino-centric (pro-China) nationalism since they assume Taiwan to reunite with Mainland China in the future (Lynch, 2004, p. 520-523). So both coalitions use political narratives to stimulate different ways of national imagining.

Furthermore, the legacy of the KMT rule is still influencing Taiwanese society nowadays. Lynch refers to Lee Teng-hui, former president of Taiwan (1988-2000) and Taiwan's most famous nationalist, saying that the main problem of Taiwanese people is that

[...] they unconsciously accept as reality the Sino-centric myths propagated by the KMT and reinforced through encounters with Westerners, myths that assert that 'Chinese culture is superior within the world' and 'the Chinese people are the world's most outstanding' - and, of course, that Taiwan is part of this culture (Lynch, 2004, p. 520).

Moreover, Weiming mentions that the KMT saw Taiwan as a territorial base for the revitalization of Chinese culture: young people's minds were instilled by "[...] the sense that learning to be authentic Chinese is not only a national calling but also a personal existential quest" (Weiming, 1996, p. 1134). Also, during the KMT regime the Taiwanese cultural elites lost their social status and cultural expressions. Taiwanese history was ignored or denied, the local languages were structurally replaced by Mandarin and other political voices were silenced (Weiming, 1996, p. 1124). In other words, the distinctive Taiwanese voice was hard to find. So the fact that the KMT propaganda and narrations have influenced and still influence Taiwanese consciousness and the way Taiwanese citizens imagine themselves regarding China, is the main challenge to overcome in the nation-building process.

2.3. Polarization of “Chineseness” and “Taiwaneseness”

So far, the rise of Taiwan-centered nationalism has resulted in an increasing polarization of ‘Taiwaneseness’ and ‘Chineseness’ within the political discourse (Weiming, 1996, p. 1117). Tu Weiming mentions:

In this transitional period, the ‘politics of recognition’ will inevitably challenge all forms of institutional structure and cultural practice tainted with perceived Chinese chauvinism. Taiwanese authenticity inevitably clashes with Chinese identity (Weiming, 1996, p. 1122).

This is in line with Anderson’s notion that progressive and cosmopolitan intellectuals often insist on the roots in fear and hatred of the Other and its affinities with racism (Anderson, 2006, p. 141). We recognize this assumption in the fact that the Taiwanese nationalists make strategic use of this vision of polarization, by representing China as the ‘other’ or defining Taiwanese identity in terms of what China is not. For example Lee Teng-hui mentioned: “Taiwanese and Chinese culture are as different from each other as Taiwanese culture is from American culture” (Lynch, 2004, p. 520). Also the Taiwanese nationalists argue that Taiwan has created a distinct culture during the century-long separation of Taiwan from the Chinese mainland (Wang & Liu, 2004, p. 573).

Moreover, according to Weiming, Taiwanese cultural identity is often perceived to be based on a critique of Sino-centrism (Weiming, 1996, p. 1119). He argues:

Since the ‘sorrow of the Taiwanese’ has, in a significant way, been caused by the hegemonic discourse of the pre-Taiwanized KMT, the rejection of chauvinist Chinese culturalism is perceived as a precondition for the purification of the Taiwanese soul. (Weiming, 1996, p. 1138,1139).

Therefore it seems reasonable that the initial stage of Taiwanese intellectual and spiritual self-definition takes a form of de-Sinification (Weiming, 1996, p. 1139).

3. The Nation-Building Project in Andersonian Terms

3.1. Motivations of the Taiwanese nationalists

According to Lynch (2004), the nation-building project has derived from an urgent feeling that Taiwanese nationalists have to cultivate a sense of Taiwanese subjectivity. This urge evolved out of a growing fear that Taiwan would reunify with China too easily. Lynch points to the fact that the history of Taiwan is characterized by peripheralization, which means that Taiwan has always been part of a wider national entity. Therefore Taiwanese people have only perceived themselves as an appendage of someone else's subjectivity, rather than being their own subject in history (Lynch, 2004, p. 517). Like Chang Yen-hsien—curator of the National Museum of History in Taiwan since 2000- argues:

[...] by means of political, economic, and cultural peripheralization, the Qing, Japanese, and Republican Chinese rulers were able to cultivate precisely the passive and 'tragic' mind-set among the Taiwanese could lead them to accept China's blandishments and a Hong Kong-style 'one country, two systems' status, without putting up a fight (Lynch, 2004, p. 517).

Lynch stresses that the Taiwanese nationalists feel they have the fundamental task to cultivate a sense of Taiwanese subjectivity and that the nation-building project is based on the conviction that Taiwan is as much a subject in history as other nation-states are. Therefore it enjoys the right to determine its own future independently from Chinese pressure (Lynch, 2004, p. 517).

If we put this in line with Anderson's work, we can say that Taiwan has the right to 'imagine' itself as an independent country rather than being part of a bigger whole. So this would mean that Taiwanese nationalists feel the urge to stimulate the imagining of a new Taiwanese nation independent from Mainland China. According to Anderson, all nations are cultural artefacts that are constructed through processes of collective imagining (Anderson, 2006, pp. 4, 6). And it is exactly this conception of nation-building, which Lynch mentions, that gives the Taiwanese nationalist intellectuals and other activists the self-confidence to transform Taiwan into an independent nation-state (Lynch, 2004, p. 514). Indeed, if all nations are constructed, why

can't they construct a new Taiwanese nation independent from China? As nationalist Ch'iu Kwei-fen writes: "Ordinarily we think of nations as consisting of territory, a government, and people. But Anderson points out that actually these things are not enough. The formation of a nation relies importantly on peoples 'national imagination' - that is, a common identity among the people living on this piece of territory" (Lynch, 2004, p. 514).

3.2. Strategies of the Taiwanese nationalists

If we focus on the strategies of the Taiwanese nationalists and relate them to Anderson's approach, we can make several remarks that could help to gain a better understanding of these strategies.

3.2.1. Cultivating a Taiwan-centered community

Anderson mentions that particular cultural artefacts, like nations and nationalism, have aroused deep attachments (Anderson, 2006, p. 4). He explains that nationalism is about the affection for the place where you are born, where you feel at home, where you can communicate instinctively in your mother tongue. Also, nationalism is about the affection for the symbols that give that place a special meaning, for example a national flag, an anthem, or national celebrations (Anderson, 1994). It is this feeling of national attachment that can mobilize emotions and commitment to the nation and that creates a sense of solidarity. So his vision suggests that these emotions of attachment are fundamentally experienced within the context of a collectivity and as a result a certain community is imagined. Here Anderson introduces the concept of 'an imagined community', with which he refers to a community that is differing from an actual community since it is not or cannot be based on face-to-face interaction between its members. Moreover, he assumes a nation as an 'imagined political community', since a nation "is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson, 2006, p. 6). Furthermore Anderson uses the concept of 'collective imagining' in order to illustrate that people feel connected on the basis of national sentiments and therefore a certain community is imagined (Anderson, 2006, p. 6).

Lynch suggests that since Taiwan has already people, a territory, and a government, they have to construct a strong collective identity and promote the concept of a Taiwanese nation (Lynch, 2004, pp. 514, 516). Also he argues that the notion of Taiwan being peripheral should be challenged, and people should understand that the peripheral character is itself imagined and constructed (Lynch, 2004, p. 517). So in line with Anderson's notion of imagined communities we could say that Taiwanese nationalists make use of Taiwan-centered nationalist sentiments in order to establish a Taiwan-centered imagined community that supports their pro-independency beliefs. Here media, narrations and education play a central role.

3.2.2. The importance of media and narrations

Anderson shows that media and narrations make it possible for nationalist leaders to use nationalism as a tool for nation-building. He emphasizes that language and media played an important role in the process of national imagining and the establishment of imagined communities. He argues that language is of importance since "through the language [...] pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures are dreamed" (Anderson, 2006, p. 154). Moreover he stresses for the idea that the nation "[...] is now nestled firmly in virtually all print-languages; and nation-ness is virtually inseparable from political consciousness" (Anderson, 2006, p. 135). Here I would like to mention that the influence of narratives is twofold. On the one hand society is influenced by narratives because of national rhetoric structures and symbols. On the other hand, narratives strengthen collective feelings when they act as common subjects which are consumed by 'the people' of the nation.

Regarding Taiwan, Lynch mentions that "the actual act of imagining the nation was an *intellectual* effort to construct the Taiwanese nation" (Lynch, 2004, p. 515). For instance, former president Lee Teng-hui aimed at reconstructing the media landscape in order to stimulate Taiwanese people to imagine a new nation-state. Lee stressed that all media are focused on Chinese imperialism and that therefore he argued: "if Taiwan is to establish subjectivity, the government and social elites must move to de-Sinify media content and reorient it toward native Taiwanese themes" (Lynch, 2004, p. 522). In other words, media should shift their focus from Chinese cultural products towards products that represent Taiwanese authentic culture. Though, a radical reconstruction of media policies would not match the ideologies of a democracy. Also,

Taiwanese people are quite likely to continue to watch Sino-centric television programs (Lynch, 2004, p. 523). So as Lynch mentions: “Lee’s desired changes to ‘mediascapes’ and public spaces would unavoidably be a difficult process” (Lynch, 2004, p. 523). Therefore Lynch emphasizes the importance of “discovering and properly conceiving a distinctive and worthwhile Taiwanese literature” in the process of nation-building (Lynch, 2004, p. 523). Although literature might reach less people directly than mass media does, literature does form the deep structure upon which mediascapes and nations are built (Lynch, 2004, p 524).

3.2.3. Recovering cultural roots

Furthermore, Anderson suggests that language and narratives are not only important for the active promotion of certain nationalist sentiments, but also that they play a role in the recovering van cultural roots. He argues that identity, which cannot be ‘remembered’ must be narrated (Anderson, 2006, p. 204). Anderson notes: “Awareness of being embedded in secular, serial times with all its implications of continuity, yet of ‘forgetting’ the experience of this continuity “[...] engenders the need for a narrative ‘identity’” (Anderson, 2006, p. 205). Via narratives we, as transient individuals, are able to transfer memories and experiences to the following generations. It contributes to an imagined community, in which a sense of national identity connects the current generation to both their ancestors and the future generation. And it is language through which collective memory can be re-found and the imagined community can be reconstituted (Liao, 2010, p. 202).

Regarding Taiwan, the urgent feeling of recovering cultural roots resulted in the retelling of the Taiwanese story (Weiming, 1996, p. 1124). As Lynch shows, the original 1920s-30s literature was rediscovered by a new generation of writers in the dark days of the 1960’s (Lynch, 2004, p. 542). This literature tended to be ‘tragic’ in tone, and originally Taiwanese had accepted this tone as a reflection on the “island society’s slavishness and passivity in the face of oppression” (Lynch, 2004, p. 524). Though, the new generation of writers used the theme of tragedy as a subtle form of resistance against the KMT repression in the 1960’s (Lynch, 2004, p. 524). Moreover during the democratization in the 1980’s and 1990’s, topic on Taiwanese literature, languages, and history which were restricted before, became widely researched (Wang & Liu, 200, p. 572). Lynch mentions two books, which were the first works of history written

from an entirely Taiwanese perspective, were and still are ground breaking in the process of democratizations and the rise of national consciousness are Shih Ming's *Taiwanren Sibainian Shi* (The Taiwan people's 400-year history), published in 1962, and Wang Yu-te's *Taiwan: Kumen de Lishi* (Taiwan: A history of struggle), published in 1962 (Lynch, 2004, p. 519). Since these Taiwan-centered narratives explicitly refer to Taiwanese historical moments, they build a bridge between past and present from a Taiwanese nationalist perspective. Therefore the collective memory is re-found and we could assume that this stimulates the imagining of a Taiwan-centered imagined community.

Furthermore, the presidential term of Lee Teng-hui has been a period with many cultural reforms. During his term, a series of educational reforms were implemented in order to reshape the identity of Taiwanese youth. For example a new high school history and social studies curriculum that was called *Renshi Taiwan* (Knowing Taiwan) was approved. This curriculum was Taiwan-focused: it aimed at teaching young Taiwanese to 'establish themselves on Taiwan, have concern for the mainland, and open their eyes to the world'" (Lynch, 2004, p. 516). These new textbooks "assert that Taiwan's ethnic pluralism has produced a distinctive 'Taiwanese consciousness' and that the Taiwanese people have repeatedly demonstrated heroism over the centuries by resisting the imposition of the authoritarian rule from abroad, especially from China" (Lynch, 2004, p. 516). So through national narratives which drew upon collective historical memory and which remind the suffering of predecessors, the sentiments of Taiwan-centered nationalism were incessantly strengthened.

4. Critical Remarks on Anderson's Work

In sum, I have shown that the Taiwanese nation-building project could be assumed as an Andersonian project, in which the Taiwanese nationalists try to establish and Taiwan-centered imagined community through Taiwan-centered national narratives and the recovery of cultural roots. As Lynch shows, the motivations Taiwanese nationalists can be put on the same line with the vision of Anderson that all nations can be constructed as long as a certain national community is imagined.

So, Anderson's vision on nationalism might seem to be perfectly suitable both as an inspiration for the nationalists and as a framework for analysis of the Taiwanese situation. Though, there are also several point I remarks I would like to make regarding his work in relation to the Taiwanese case.

4.1. Two opposing national communities

First of all, the fact that both coalitions are gaining support on the basis of two opposing national convictions, makes it extremely hard to define one collective national identity and to decide about Taiwan's future position as a nation. Moreover this has resulted in an increasing political emphasis of two opposing types of national imagining.

Within the current political environment, Pan- Green and Pan- Blue coalitions are both reflectors and amplifiers of a national identity. Both coalitions make strategical use of national imagining and this amplifies the dichotomy between different ways people identify themselves regarding Taiwan's future as a nation. Therefore it is hard to define one national collective identity, since this "...is predominantly rooted in the people's identification with their sovereign state" (Schubert, 2004, p. 535). These different ways of collective imagining result in different imagined communities. Nowadays in Taiwan we find two different ways Taiwanese tend to imagine themselves: on the one hand there are the people who identify themselves with the Pan-Green coalition and on the other hand the people who identify themselves with the Pan-Blue coalition.

Anderson's work suggests that collective national imagining can lead the construction of a nation. Though, it does not take into account a situation like Taiwan where two imagined

communities are opposing each other. Therefore it is important to note that Anderson's work should not function unproblematically as an inspirational source for Taiwanese nation-building. Especially not when we take into account the fact that the rise of Taiwan-centered nationalism has only caused an increasing polarization of "Chineseness" and "Taiwaneseness" within society (Weiming, 1996, p. 1117).

4.2. A need of a more differentiated approach

Secondly, the strategies of the opposing coalitions might let it appear as if there is full dichotomy within Taiwanese society. Though we should critically ask ourselves if this is also the case with the act of national imagining on individual scale.

The Taiwanese nationalists use Taiwanese essentialism as a tool to free society from the pro-China influences in order to establish a Taiwan-centered imagined community. Though, does something exist, which we could categorize as essential Taiwanese culture?

The Taiwanese nationalists might strive for a Taiwanese culture freed from the Sino-centric influences, but they cannot ignore that many Taiwanese citizens grew up during the KMT rule and that for them Taiwanese culture includes Sino-centric influences as well.

In order to exemplify this, I would like to mention that it is not always possible to separate Taiwanese nationalist representations from Chinese influences. The Taiwanese nationalists aim at creating a Taiwan-centered imagined community by putting an emphasis on representations of Taiwanese culture. Though, it is important to acknowledge that historical events have often shaped the current perception of the nation. This can be recognized in Taiwanese national symbols and representations. For example, the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall in Taipei is a Taiwanese national monument that was erected in memory of Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang Kai-shek was Taiwan's former President who fled from Mainland China and implemented the KMT regime in 1949 (Huang, et al., 2004, p. 159). So this monument is explicitly referring to the successful invasion of Chinese mainlanders and does not represent the local Taiwanese ethnicities. Still the Memorial Hall is often used as a national symbol. Another example is the Taiwanese national anthem, in which the Three Principles of People are praised. Sun Yat-sen, who was a Chinese revolutionary and the first president of the Republic of China, initiated these principles (Chun,

1994, p. 60). Both examples refer to national symbols, which aroused out of Chinese influences, but are assumed to be Taiwanese symbols that represent Taiwan as a nation nowadays.

I would also like to suggest that regarding the individual scale, it is important to be aware of the fact that each individual is influenced by the intersection of multiple discourses and cultures. And it is this statement, which Anderson fails to take into account.

Anderson's work suggests that each individual fits within a specific imagined community, but it does not elaborate on the overlapping of imagined communities or the blurring boundaries between them. Moreover he only focuses on the individual attachment to the wider contexts of collective imagined communities. So he does not differentiate between different imagined communities and the way attachment of the individual can be based on the intersection of multiple imagined communities. Furthermore he does not take into account the intrinsic processes of self-determination of the individual when focusing on national imagining.

It is remarkable that the appointed deficiencies of Anderson's work can also be recognized as deficiencies within the strategies of the Taiwanese nationalists. Since they emphasize one type of national imagining, they fail to relate to the diversity of society. Would this suggest that they rather should change strategies? In the next section I will elaborate on why a more differentiated approach of national identification would be important.

5. Discursive positioning of the individual: Yuval-Davis' approach

5.1. Culturalized discourses

Yuval-Davis brings another focus on the theme of national imagining by arguing for the need of a more explicit focus on the positioning of individuals within existing systems of meaning. Therefore, she is covering a perspective which is missing in Anderson's work. Moreover, regarding Anderson's work, she mentions:

Although usually the national and ethnic 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983) are supposed to transcend gender, class, regional and other differences, very often they can become signifiers, at least partially, of 'otherness', constructed as having come from a different 'stock' (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p.47).

In order to avoid this signification of 'otherness' and differences between different imagined communities, Yuval-Davis emphasizes the need of being aware of the fact that we are all positioned in culturalized discourses. This is important, since it is in these culturalized discourses that meaning is completed. She argues that culturalized discourses are discourses in which:

[...] cultures have been transformed from static reified homogeneous phenomena common to all members of national and ethnic collectivities, into dynamic social processes operating in contested terrains in which different voices become more or less hegemonic in their offered interpretations of the world (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 41).

By saying this, she suggests that cultures are products of the interaction of different voices, which are competing for their level of hegemony. In other words, her vision shows us that it is important to be aware of the fact that culture is a product of human interaction and that all individuals are positioned in a discourse characterized by competing powers. Regarding nations, she assumes that they "[...] nations are situated in specific historical moments and are constructed by shifting

nationalist discourses promoted by different groups competing for hegemony” (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 4).

If we look at the situation of Taiwan of nowadays, we see that both coalitions are promoting their own nationalist framework in which they emphasize their vision of Taiwanese culture. Moreover it is important to recognize the shift of nationalist discourses since the 1980's: the rise of Taiwanese nationalism has caused a loss of persuasive power of the China-centered perspective. In fact, “Sino-centrism has become marginalized to a *de facto* oppositional discourse” (Weiming, 1996, p. 1121). So we see a shift in of nationalist discourses: through the nationalists narrations and strategies of the nation-building project, more people have shifted away from Sino-centric nationalism and have start to identify themselves with the Taiwan-centered nationalism. They increasingly imagine themselves as citizens of an independent Taiwan. This shift is closely related to a change in the way the community is imagined. Where the imagined political community used to be represented by the China-centered KMT regime, the imagined political community is now more and more associated with Taiwanese national sentiments. Though, both discourses remain to have influence on society. Moreover, we should not forget that the former KMT regime might have left its traces and that a part of Taiwanese society will still be influenced by the political strategies of that time. If we support Yuval-Davis' statement that cultures are products of interaction of different voices, then we could suggest that Taiwanese culture arose out of the interaction of the Pan-Green and Pan-Blue strategies. Would this mean that Taiwanese national culture has become a hybrid phenomenon characterized by the influences of both coalitions?

5.2. Subjective understanding

In relation to her notion on the discursive positioning of the individual, Yuval-Davis states that cultural models have become resonant with subjective experience. She states that these models “[...] become the ways individuals experience themselves, their collectivities and the world” (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 42). Regarding the case of Taiwan Gunter Schubert (2004) shows that:

China and Taiwan remain part of the people's subjective understanding of what their national identity is, although they apparently attach different dimensions of national

identity to each. Whereas China is often identified with the ethnocultural underpinnings of the nation, Taiwan is foremost understood in historical and political terms (Schubert, 2004, p. 537).

Though, the nationalist nation-building project insists on the de-Sinification of Taiwanese culture in order to increase Taiwan-centered nationalist sentiments (Lynch, 2004, p. 513). In other words, they implement strategies to homogenize and naturalize a Taiwanese social category that is characterized by pro-independency beliefs.

If we follow Yuval-Davis' assumptions by stating that both China and Taiwan remain part of the people's subjective understanding of their national identity, and that Taiwanese national culture has to be assumed as an hybrid phenomenon, would this suggests that the Taiwanese nation-building strategies of the de-Sinification of Taiwanese culture, misfit the cultural hybrid characteristic of Taiwanese society?

5.3. Identity politics

In her work, Yuval-Davis' introduces the concept of 'identity politics'. She explains this type of politics as strategies which "[...] homogenizes and naturalizes social categories and groupings, denying shifting boundaries and internal power differences and conflicts of interest" (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 131). Moreover she writes:

In such 'identity politics' individual identity has become equated with collective identity, whereas differences, rather than being acknowledged, have been interpreted by those holding the hegemonic power within the movement as mainly reflections of different stages of raised consciousness, while the difference between groups is perceived to be the authentic and important one (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p.127).

Also she mentions that those strategies include aspects of empowerment as they entail a spectrum of political acts, like individual resistance and collective political mobilizations that aim to challenge the power relations in society (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 131).

The characteristics of identity politics can be found in the strategies of the Taiwanese nationalists: they try to challenge the power relations in society by homogenizing the category of Taiwanese culture in terms of de-Sinification. As mentioned before, during Lee Teng-hui's presidential term, media were stimulated to shift their focus from Chinese cultural products towards products that represent Taiwanese authentic culture (Lynch, 2004, p. 522). Though, does a certain homogenized and authentic Taiwanese culture exist? And if it does, would this culture be representative for Taiwanese society?

In line with Yuval-Davis, I have suggested that Taiwanese culture has hybrid characteristics and that both Taiwan and China remain part of Taiwanese subjective understanding. Therefore if the Taiwanese nationalists would actively continue with de-Sinifying Taiwanese culture, would this then not lead to the destruction of the existing hybrid Taiwanese culture of nowadays?

5.4. The paradoxical situation of Taiwan

After using Yuval-Davis' work in order to reflect upon the case of Taiwan, I would like to point to something remarkable and paradoxical, which is happening in Taiwan: the Taiwanese nation-building project aims at gaining support by promoting a homogenized national imagined community. Moreover, they make use of strategic essentialism as they emphasize the dichotomy between Taiwanese-ness and Chinese-ness. Though, analysis on the individual level shows that Taiwanese individuals have many different backgrounds and are influenced through different discourses. Therefore they cannot be categorized as solely Taiwanese or solely Chinese. So if the Taiwanese nationalists continue their nation-building as they do, they will never gain the support of the whole society. It would only increase the social boundaries within society.

I would even like to take it one step further by stressing that the de-Sinification strategies of the Taiwanese nationalists are discriminating against their own citizens. With the rise of Taiwanese nationalism, the native Taiwanese –which are often supporters of the Pan-Green coalition- gained more power in Taiwan and “the Mainlanders have lost many of the privileges they enjoyed in the past” (Scott, 2006, p. 3). Many mainlanders –which often support the Pan-Blue coalition- feel threatened by the shift in political power and the shift in the political discourse (Scott, 2006, p. 3). The increasing emphasis on representations of Taiwanese authentic

culture and narratives made the mainlanders feel increasingly more like outsiders in Taiwan (Scott, 2006, p. 7). They are increasingly adopting a diasporic identity as ‘Chinese’ in Taiwan, since the more Taiwan is imagined as an independent nation which is represented by an increasingly Taiwan-centered imagined community, the more they will feel excluded from that nation.

Therefore, I would suggest that the Taiwanese nationalists should be aware of the effect their de-Sinification strategies have on society. They should be aware that their attempts to essentialize Taiwanese culture might lead to further polarization between “Chineseness” and “Taiwaneseness” within society and that this could decrease their chance on gaining a majority of support from society.

5.5. Transversal politics

In order to answer society’s needs, I would propose that the Taiwanese nationalist should change their strategies: they should not stimulate Taiwan-centered sentiments in terms of de-Sinification, but they should embrace a hybrid form of the ‘new Taiwanese’.

In some cases we already can recognize this mindset. For instance, Shih Cheng-feng, who is member of the World United Formosans for Independence (WUFI), stressed that “the Taiwanese Nation refers to all people who love Taiwan, identify with Taiwan, and are willing to struggle for Taiwan, regardless of race, ethnicity, or provincial background; the stress is on loving Taiwan, not on the blood and cultural ties of ‘the Chinese Nation’” (Lynch, 2004, p. 526).

Yuval-Davis stresses for ‘transversal politics’ as an alternative to ‘identity politics’. She states that “in ‘transversal politics’, perceived unity and homogeneity are placed by dialogues which give recognition to the specific positioning of those who participate in them as well as the ‘unfinished knowledge’ that each such situated positioning can offer” (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 131). Transversal politics differentiates between social identities and social values. Also it assumes that “epistemological communities, which have the same common value systems, can exist across differential positioning and identities” (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 131).

Could this type of politics be an alternative to Anderson’s work as inspiration for the Taiwanese nation-building project? It could inspire the Taiwanese nationalists to differentiate between social identities and social values if they would recognize the unique discursive

positioning of people. This might enable them to move away from their top down approach of implementing an essentialist strategy upon society. Also, it could motivate them to enhance a more bottom-up strategy of designating a hybrid community, which is already unconsciously imagined and to act upon what this community really needs.

Though, I would like to suggest that transversal politics should not be seen as an alternative to identity politics, since it will be very hard to create a political environment freed from all the characteristics of identity politics. Rather I would propose transversal politics as an inspirational idea for political strategies in order to avoid a political environment which is only characterized by identity politics.

6. Conclusion

This thesis focused on the research question: How does Anderson's theory of nationalism and national imagining and Yuval-Davis' vision on individual discursive positioning help to understand the strategies of the Taiwanese nationalist nation-building project and its impact on society?

Analysing the phenomenon of Taiwanese nation-building, I have taken into account Anderson's vision that nations and nationalisms are constructed concepts. In line with his approach, we could suggest that the strategies of the Taiwanese nationalists are based on the motivation to increase the 'imagining' of an independent Taiwan. Moreover, I have shown that the Taiwanese nationalists use Taiwan-centered narratives as a tool for nation-building in order to construct a Taiwan-centered imagined political community. Through educational reforms and the recovery of cultural roots, the Taiwanese nationalists aim to raise Taiwanese consciousness. So, the strategies of the nation-building project can be explained on the basis of Anderson's work.

Though, it seems that Anderson's approach might have certain deficiencies regarding the situation of Taiwan. After all, Anderson's work does not reflect upon a situation where different opposing imagined communities have come into existence. In Taiwan we find two opposing coalitions, which stimulate two different types of national consciousness in order to establish different imagined national communities. So far, this has only resulted in an increasing polarization of "Chineseness" and "Taiwaneseness".

Furthermore, Anderson does not take into account the intrinsic processes of self-determination of the individual when focusing on national imagining. Therefore it fails to take into account the idea that individual identification can be based on the intersection of multiple discourses and cultures. Taiwanese people live in a daily context of various cultural and political influences and they are influenced by a long colonial history. Though, Taiwanese nationalists aim at establishing a Taiwan-centered imagined community build on de-Sinification principles. In other words, there is a discrepancy between the strategies of the nation-building project and way Taiwanese society is characterized.

Therefore I have suggested that Anderson's work is not cannot explain fully the reasons behind this discrepancy of the intention and the impact of the nation-building project on society.

In this respect, Yuval-Davis' approach is a valuable complement to Anderson's work. Her theory gives a more differentiated view on the act of individual identification by focusing on culturalized discourses and subjective understanding. In line with her approach, we are able to recognize the fact that each individual is influenced by the intersection of multiple discourses.

In this thesis, I have shown how Anderson's work on nationalism and national imagining and Yuval-Davis' theory of individual discursive positioning form a combined framework that may help to understand more fully the relation between the motivations en strategies of the Taiwanese nationalists and its impact on society.

On the political level Anderson's idea of imaging communities clarifies the developments of the Taiwanese nation-building project opposing the KMT strategies. The tensions this creates in society can be better understood from the individual perspective of Yuval-Davis' theory.

In respect of the Taiwanese nation-building project, I have shown that most of the strategies aim at building a Taiwan-centered community in terms of de-Sinification. So far, this has only resulted in a polarization of the political environment. Therefore I have suggested in line with Yuval-Davis' notion of transversal politics, that the Taiwanese nationalists should embrace a more nuanced approach in order to gain support. Her suggestion of transversal politics is theoretical relevant, but it might be hard to put it into practice. Anyway it could function as an inspirational idea for the development of political strategies in Taiwan in order to act upon society's needs.

Immediately this evokes question like how should the Taiwanese nationalists change their strategies in order to answer society's needs? And what impact would this have on the way the Taiwanese national community is imagined? In order to answer these questions more research needs to be done on the positioning of Taiwanese individuals within intersection of multiple discourses in order to understand what political strategies would be more suitable for Taiwanese society.

Finally, I should mention that I, as an individual, am also positioned within a culturalized discourse and influenced by the intersection of different discourses. For instance, I originate from a country, well known for its ‘poldermodel’ focusing on consensus, rather than on conflict. It is important to be aware of this positioning and to acknowledge that it may have influenced my decisions and suggestions throughout the analysis. This notion should be taken into account when reading this thesis.

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