

'A Unique Society Among the Chinese'

National Identity Formation in Taiwan



Masterthesis Antoinette Kelder
Student number 0315028
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Supervisor: dr. A.C.M. van Westen
Utrecht University
Faculty of Geosciences

It is at times like these that the mind finds the oddest jobs to do in order to avoid its primary purpose, i.e. thinking about things. If anyone had been watching they would have been amazed at the sheer dedication with which Granny tackled such tasks as cleaning the teapot stand, rooting ancient nuts out of the fruit bowl on the dresser, and levering fossilized bread crusts out of the cracks in the flagstones with the back of a teaspoon.

Wyrd Sisters, Terry Pratchett.

| Summary

Within Taiwan, two pathways to a national identity seem feasible: to a Taiwanese national identity and to a Greater Chinese national identity. Party politics and the propagation of a nationalist project are closely related, with each of the two existing political wings, Pan Blue and Pan Green, primarily promoting itself by adhering to either of these views on national belonging. The way in which a national identity is being recreated by individuals amidst this ideological struggle is the central concern of this thesis. The research focussed on students, with one of the reasons for this being their ability to speak in English about this abstract topic. A further element in this study pertains to the idea that a study period abroad in critically different countries could cause the students who went there to have ‘amassed numerous similar or common path elements’, and this could cause the students to recite their national identity in critically different ways. In order to analyse this, I have devised three different samples: students who participated in an exchange program to the United States of America (USA), the People’s Republic of China (PRC), and those who had studied in Taiwan only. Through the central research problem I studied both these ideas:

How do Taiwanese students construct their national identity in the face of two competing paths to a national consciousness, and to what extent and in what way does an international experience influence the re-performing of their national identity?

In considering this question, I emphasized a national identity as an endless process of becoming, following Judith Butler’s notion of performativity. Thus, it is the thoughts and acts of individuals that constitute the existence and content of any national identity. Through the use of language, symbols, rituals and the performing of simple everyday practices, an individual shapes an identity, while being shaped by these factors at the same time. This reasoning, in tandem with Smith’s (1986:7) quote that ‘phenomena like ethnicity or national sentiment are so largely bound up with expressions of attitude, perception and feeling, that purely structural approaches will inevitably seem remote from the objects of their explanations, even when they do not seriously mislead’, caused me to research the topic through qualitative, in-depth interviewing. As I felt that quantitative comparisons are useful in capturing general trends, I issued a questionnaire as well. Together, these two

methodological approaches were useful in giving a personal, detailed and freely formulated view on ideas about a Taiwanese identity, while also providing a more aggregated outlook. Upon analysis of the quantitative data gathered within this format, it can be concluded that there is no question of the three populations I meant to sample, but from one population only: Taiwanese students. The qualitative data confirmed this representation, but provided more detailed information as well. Shared daily life experiences in a community governed through democratic routines seems to be instrumental in consolidating confidence in the existence of Taiwan and a Taiwanese national identity. Furthermore, the insecure relations in the international community and political influences by the PRC create a stronger linkage with the survival unit – the *de facto* independent Taiwan. The students did not consider themselves part of the formerly advocated ‘Greater China’, but instead felt repressed by the PRC: the Mainland has thus been clipped from the in-group. This is also caused by the fact that the existence of this ‘Greater China’ is not being repeated in education, media or daily encounters anymore, so that this category has lost its former resonance.

The political discourses, focussing on the ever-lasting reality of a Greater China or on the existence of an independent, Taiwanese national identity are being reinterpreted in a more flexible manner than 20 years ago, when the ‘Green’ and ‘Blue’ visions on the future were mutually exclusive. Resistance to election strategies referring to these oppositions is growing. Though a Chinese identity is generally dismissed as a national identity, students described it as their cultural identity; thus assimilating these two apparently irreconcilable opposites into a single but ever developing ‘unique society among the Chinese’.

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1 | Introduction



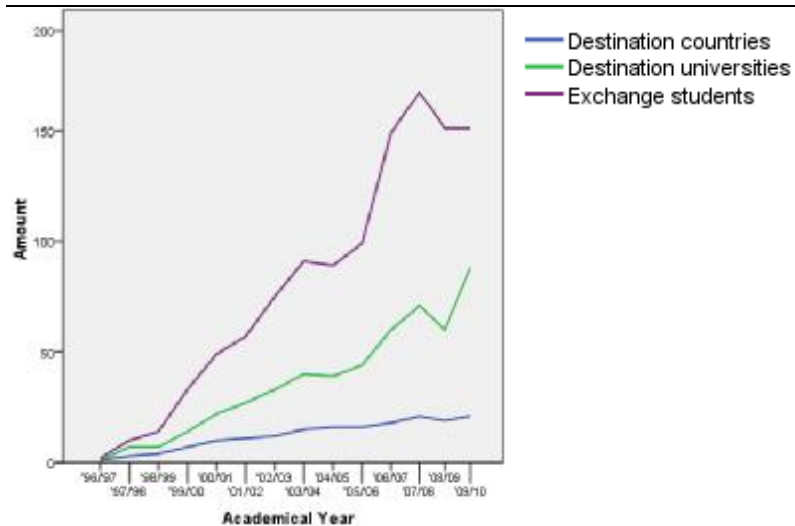
The Republic of China (ROC) with a temporary government on Taiwan, the ROC as part of the People's Republic of China (PRC), or an independent Taiwan? Disagreements about this issue are of various natures - among them legal, economic, social and historical – which will make for many future papers and theses to be written. The legal issue, the question to which state the territory of Taiwan belongs when several peace treaties and unilateral agreements are taken into account, is highly contested and as yet undecided. On the one hand, China is regarding the island as part of its legitimate territory, and the main aim of Chinese Taiwan-related policy is to secure the return of the island group or at least to prevent a permanent and formal separation from Mainland China (Tsang 2001:1). The current Taiwanese president Ma Jing-Yeou stated in an interview in October 2008 that 'under the ROC constitution, the ROC definitely is an independent sovereign state, and Mainland China is also part of the territory of the ROC' (Taipei Times 10-08-2008). Although both camps have been easing their respective positions on this issue, it currently is and for the past 8 years has been *the* most hotly debated topic in Taiwanese politics and media.

I am not planning to develop a decisive legal argument over the course of this thesis. Many convincing academical disputations exist already – and still, conclusions are inconsistent. This uncertainty however has given rise to a peculiar political situation in Taiwan. The national political arena is divided in two, as it is in the USA or in the United Kingdom. However, the main contrast between the parties is not based on convictions regarding a liberal attitude or social equity, but whether there should be future unification with China (as proposed by the Kuomintang, or KMT) or a formal declaration of independence, as the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) is planning for. Thus, in Taiwan, party politics and the propagation of a nationalist project are closely related, a situation which is rather uncommon. Each party is promoting its idea on this issue, and quite vigorously so as can be judged by headlines in Taiwanese newspapers. From the public messages issued by the KMT and DPP, ranging from educational textbooks to institutional names to media output, quite contrasting pictures are emerging about what it is (and, conversely, is *not*) to be Taiwanese. These images are based on the premise that Taiwan is part of China and that individuals should identify as Chinese - or that Taiwan actually is a sovereign state, and that people should appreciate Taiwan's specific values. The uncertain political status of Taiwan in this way also influences the development of quite a central identity in this age of sovereign nation states: that is, the formation of a national identity.

1.1 Towards a research question

This process of national identity formation is to be the concern of this thesis. Taiwan and China are engaged in quite a sensitive and complex relation towards each other, and because of the ambiguous legal status of Taiwan and mass migration from China, the development of both national identities seems to be feasible within the *de facto* independent Taiwan. These two differently oriented identities are being defined as irreconcilable opposites – and they surely are proposing rather conflicting national projects and shared futures for Taiwan - which causes strong feelings to be involved in their formation. In this thesis, I will study the way Taiwanese people are negotiating their national identity when there are two competing paths to a national consciousness available. However, it will not be an option to pose my questions to all Taiwanese people. Besides the obvious reason that it would take incredible amounts of time, language proficiency limits my research group as well. That is, I am unable to speak Mandarin, let alone Taiwanese, and very few Taiwanese people can speak their minds in English. Another reason for focussing on students is that early adulthood is an active phase in identity formation. The development of identity starts in the infant phase already, and ends only in old age. Young adulthood is especially interesting when considering the coordination between an individual and his social environment (Erikson 1959: 25).

Thus, in the course of this research, I will ask how Taiwanese students are negotiating their national identity. This is an interesting topic in itself, but there is another element which has the potential to spice up the analysis. Since 1996, there are possibilities for Taiwanese students to go on exchange, and complete part of their curriculum abroad. In the course of time, more and more exchange positions have become available, and the variation in destinations also increased. To give an indication of this process I include the exchange statistics of National Taiwan University, Taiwan's leading academical institute (see graph 1.1).



Graph 1.1 Outgoing exchange program of National Taiwan University

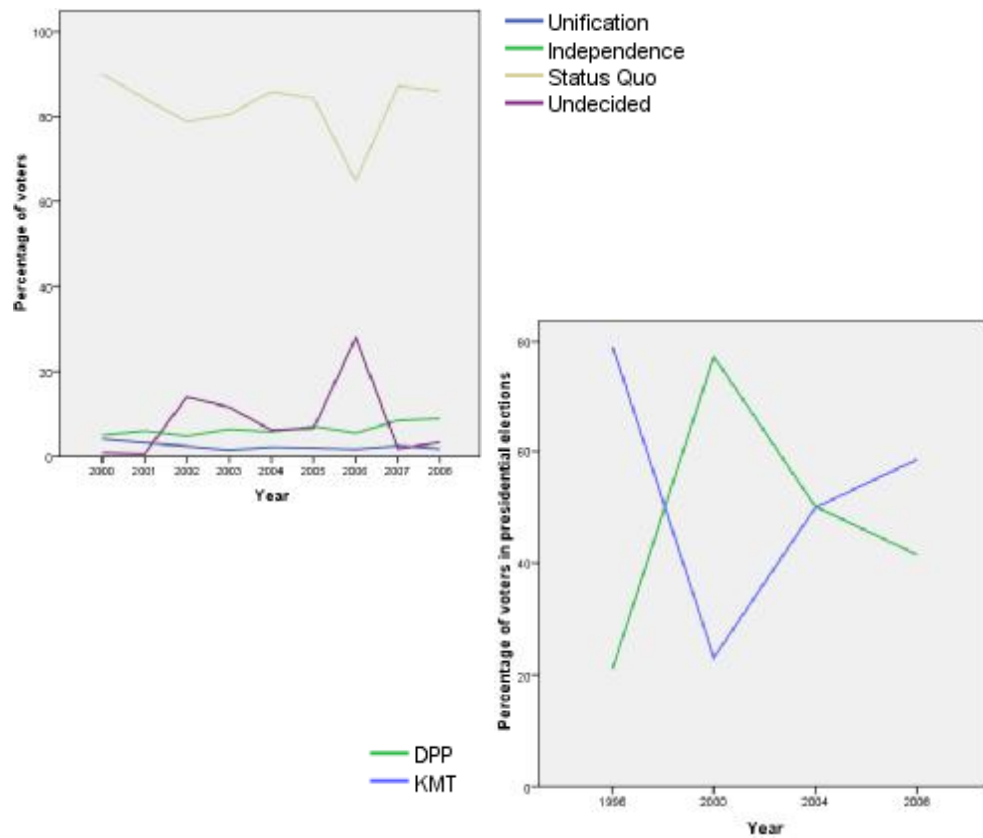
It seems a bit late to initiate an academical exchange program halfway the 1990s, but this is related to the political situation of Taiwan which I will elaborate upon in chapter 4. Before that time, students did study abroad – most government officials and those in higher managerial positions did so – but then it was more common to obtain an entire degree abroad, instead of completing only one or even half a year overseas. Over the past 14 years, the possibilities for students to go on exchange have broadened; and the amount of students taking these opportunities has increased accordingly.

Quite a bit of research has been carried out in order to discover the ways and degree to which people who undertake an international move can influence their source country - in negative as well as positive ways. Brain drain, or the outmigration of skilled individuals, is a prominent example of a negative effect, while the sending of remittances is an illustration of a potential positive effect. Just as importantly, however, many theoretical and policy documents claim there are ‘soft’, harder-to-measure benefits attached to international migration as well (see for instance Levitt 1998, Nichols 2002, Goldring 1992, GCIM 2005). These benefits can be social or cultural, with migrants returning with ideas

which might shed a new light on existing traditional roles, consumption patterns or lifestyles. Some benefits are of a more technological nature, when returnees start acting as a mentor in a professional or more personal setting, and are as a result transferring the skills and knowledge they have gained from their experience abroad. In addition, returning migrants can cause political changes, such as introducing certain governance practices, by setting up new institutions or by calling prevailing political identities into question (Goldring 2004). Interestingly though, where the economical effects such as financial remittances have been analysed profoundly, the opposite seems to be true about these softer outcomes, with hardly any studies proposing theory on the ways and degree to which these other kinds of 'remittances' influence a country of origin.

One of the 'softer' influences is related to changes in the political environment and identities of the source country. An interesting issue here is the degree to which returning migrants are influencing the production and reproduction of a Taiwanese national identity, which in the case of Taiwan is a very prominent issue. It is envisaged that return migrants bring along new ideas, values and ambitions, and could exert an innovative influence on the political environment upon return. The Taiwanese political status has been contested now since 1949, and within Taiwan the related unification versus independence debate has been going on especially since 2000. When considering the stances of the KMT and the DPP, it would seem logical that especially immigrants who came from China in 1949 and their offspring (12% of the total population) would vote KMT, while the other inhabitants (88%), having longer relations with Taiwan, would vote DPP. However, other determinants, such as economic policy and governance attitudes, are influencing this voting behaviour as well, causing sentiments on the subject to change. For example, the current economical issues are making many Taiwanese look more positively to China, and more receptive to the ideas of the KMT. Thus, within Taiwan the sentiments on the matter are subject to change, resulting in differing political statements over time regarding the issue: while the former president was openly speculating on the possibility of subjecting the independence of Taiwan to an official referendum, the current leader is seeking to tighten diplomatical contacts with China. The opening up of direct passenger flights from China to Taipei and vice versa is an example of the tightening of their relations. As it is, the majority of Taiwanese people like to view the island as having its own independent governing powers, be it in the current *de facto* fashion (graph 1.2 and 1.3). In spite of the rather consistent

outcome of these opinion polls, both DPP and KMT maintain their discourse on what Taiwan is, and what it entails to be a Taiwanese citizen.



Graph 1.2 Desired political status of Taiwan
(adapted from mac.gov.tw/english)

Graph 1.3 Results in presidential elections
1996 - 2008

The question now has become how Taiwanese students are negotiating their national identity, and whether I can find an empirical substantiation to the claim that an international experience can lead to differences in the way a national identity is being

negotiated. The idea is alive in the popular imagination, although it is hard to find solid proof for statements of that nature. For instance, in an Elsevier article on Chinese nationalism, the lead runs as follows: 'the economic crisis further ignites ever present but slumbering nationalistic feelings in China. Eruptions of anti-western sentiments are being fed by the fast growth of the internet and by the numerous Chinese who have studied abroad' (05/2009:38). Although the author states his case conclusively, this remains to be investigated. In order to research this problem I will approach three groups of students: those who have studied in Taiwan only, those who went abroad to the People's Republic of China and those who studied in the USA. I have chosen these three groups for three reasons. In the first place I think that the Taiwanese national identity is partly being formed in reaction to Chinese pressure. Secondly, the USA is an important source for keeping dreams of a future independence alive. Finally, the responses of students who studied in Taiwan only can serve as a basis for comparison in trying to establish whether there is any difference in ideas about a Taiwanese identity between those who experienced a temporary migration, and those who have not.

The way I will research the matter is twofold: I will conduct in-depth interviews beside carrying out a quantitative research. Initially, the reason for conducting interviews was a intuitive one as I felt I did not know enough about the situation to be able to devise a questionnaire which would enable my participants to express their most subtle opinions. Later, I found an excellent quote in Smith (1986:7) expressing my position very well: 'Phenomena like ethnicity or national sentiment are so largely bound up with expressions of attitude, perception and feeling, that purely structural approaches will inevitably seem remote from the objects of their explanations, even when they do not seriously mislead'. However, I still feel that quantitative comparisons are useful in capturing general trends. That is why I issued a questionnaire to all participants, and selected part of these respondents for further in-depth interviewing based on the questionnaire they had already filled in. In tandem, these two methodological approaches are useful in giving a personal, detailed and freely formulated view on ideas about a Taiwanese identity, while also providing a more aggregated outlook. In chapter 3 the specifics of the methodology will be detailed, and its strengths and weaknesses will be discussed.

In chapter 2 I will describe the theoretical background I use when I analyse the data; and which already informed the design of my questions in the first place. As this thesis

concerns national identity, my opinions about what an identity is are rather crucial. In this introduction I already used phrases such as ‘negotiating’ or ‘producing and reproducing’ a Taiwanese identity – a choice of words which is hinting at my preference for approaching identity as a type of creation, a process on which an individual has a great influence. Judith Butler, whose work is focussed on the construction of a gender identity, views identity as ‘an endless process of becoming’ (Salin 2002:5). Her constructionist view is proposing that every new action reconstitutes an identity. The heart of her approach is that there is no such thing as a ‘pre-existing category’, no subject: there is no state of being that one simply ‘is’, but ‘all is about the process of becoming, the determinants of becoming and the way in which one assumes an identity’ (Salin, 2002).

Thus, I am writing this thesis from the premise that a national identity is an actively constructed identity instead of an existing category. This is a view which is also held by the most prominent writers in a national identity, which is why I think these theories fit together well. According to Butler, some identities have a tendency to ‘solidify into a form that makes it appear to have been there all along’ (Salin 2002:46). This notion renders her line of reasoning equally well applicable to the construction of a national identity, even though her own work is concentrating on gendered identities. This belief of an ever-present identity can be encountered in nationalist thinking as well. It is referred to by Geller (2006/1983; 46) as ‘the nationalist ideologue’s most misguided claim: namely, that the ‘nations’ are there, in the very nature of things, only waiting to be awakened’, and by Hobsbawm (1990:14), as the idea that ‘national identification is somehow so natural, primary and permanent as to precede history’. Thus, according to my interpretation, there is no pre-existing subject in the nationalist case either: it is the thoughts and acts of individuals that constitute its existence and contents. Through the use of language, symbols, rituals and the performing of simple everyday practices, an individual shapes an identity, while being shaped by these very factors at the same time. Allan Pred (1981) offers a potentially fruitful theory of social reproduction which sheds light on the way this mutual influence of structure and agency is occurring in practice. He proposes ‘the external (corporeal action) - internal (mental activity and intention) dialectic’, meaning that every action an individual undertakes leaves a mental impression which will guide the choosing of future actions (1981:10). Indeed, all international migrants have gained experiences through the actions they have undertaken, and these behaviours, and the impressions of them, have an influence on which actions an individual will undertake in the future. It is here

hypothesized that the act of studying abroad and returning again could thus have implications for the way international re-migrants take part in the production and reproduction of a political identity, and in this way materialize one of the ‘softer’ effects, in this case a political effect, which are said to be achieved by re-migrating individuals. As I said, the chapter concerning my theoretical framework will go into more detail as to how these different pieces of theory are linked together.

After introducing my topic I would now like to put forward the central research problem I formulated based on the foregoing line of thought:

How do Taiwanese students construct their national identity in the face of two competing paths to a national consciousness, and to what extent and in what way does an international experience influence the re-performing of their national identity?

By means of the research questions, discussed in chapters 5, 6 and 7, I will analyze the data I have gathered:

- How does the way Taiwanese students assess contrasts between the political parties in Taiwan influence their view on national identity and does having had an international experience make a significant difference?
- How do students judge the sovereignty of the island Taiwan and in what way do the relations the Republic of China has in the international community influence the way they renegotiate their national identity?
- Which language tools, rituals, symbols and daily practices are of prime importance to Taiwanese students in the creation of national identity?

The results of these questions can serve to gain an insight in the way Taiwanese students are negotiating a national identity in the face of two competing nationalist projects.

2 | Theoretical Framework



This theoretical framework serves to contextualize my research topic, that is, the way in which Taiwanese students ascribe their national identity, and whether studying abroad has a recognizable influence on the constitution of this identity. In general, two main claims are made by universities trying to attract participants in their exchange programs (Dolby 2004: 150):

- (a) Studying abroad promotes cross-cultural understanding;
- (b) Studying abroad enables reflection on the values and way of life in your own country, and its place in the international community.

A central theme in the particularization of these claims is how national identity can evolve into a more open and inclusive category. In this study I will examine if and how a study period abroad influences a student's understanding of their national identity, by cross-referencing students who did and did not take part in academic mobility programs. Additionally, I will establish whether going abroad to host countries critically different from the home country causes divergent views on national identity to develop.

From this passage three main themes for theoretical exploration emerge: nationalism, national identity and academic mobility in relation to identity formation. In the following these issues will be discussed.

2.1 Nationalism

Many academic articles and books have discarded nationalism as a vital ideology in current times. It has been a potent (and awfully violent) source over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, causing a bad aftertaste to linger to the word still. Nation-states are considered an artefact of modernity, and fit poorly in the current postmodern times (Billig 1995: 132-3):

'Processes of globalization, which are diminishing differences and spaces between nations, are also fragmenting the imagined unity within those nations. [...] Local, ethnic and gender identities have become the site of postmodern politics. [...] The result is that the sovereignty of the nation-state is collapsing under pressure of global and local forces'.

Globalization processes have enabled goods, people and ideas to move across state boundaries while suffering less and less friction, causing question marks to rise as to why

these borders should retain their current primacy. Thus, along with the rise of relatively weaker political units, renowned writers like Hobsbawm and Bauman have predicted the 'coming end of the age of society identified with the nation-state' (in: Thompson 2001: 20).

Down-to-earth practice however shows the world of today is still modelled to the ideal of nation-states – or sovereign states, to put it more accurately. These states are paramount in matters concerning migration and the granting of citizenship, which is a strong argument showing their unrelenting relevance (Billig 1995: 142). The continued existence of states in its turn causes continuation of the creation of nationalisms (Calhoun 1994: 319), as the existence of a nation is a key legitimizing factor for the existence of a state: 'the coupling of state with nation has become part of our common-sense, our taken-for-granted political and cultural world' (Jones & Smith 2001: 104).

Given this pre-eminence of nations and nationalism, many analyses of the development of these phenomena have been written (see for instance Anderson 1983, Armstrong 1982, Breuilly 1982, Gellner 1983, Hobsbawm 1990, Hroch 1985, Seton Watson 1977, Smith 1986) proposing links with the erosion of religion in Europe (Anderson), the transition from a feudal to a capitalist society (Hroch), or the importance of industrialization and a division of labour (Gellner). The main problem is that since modern times, the vast majority of people has ceased to consider the right to rule as a divinely endowed characteristic – as had been the case during the *ancien regime* - and that a new type of rationale was required to justify the exercise of state power. To this end, a territorial conception of state was introduced, which only in the second place – though by necessary consequence – extended the exercise of power to all the people and all activities inside that territory (Jones e.a. 2001: 27-8). The relationship among all citizens ('the nation') and between nation and state became quite abstract, causing the need to explicitly nurture and maintain feelings of belonging to both of these entities.

Nationalism then is a theory of community (or what a nation is), and an ideology positing that a nation is the natural unit to divide the world into (Billig 1995: 63). In the literature, nationalist claims are described as promoting two interpretations of what a nation can be: an ethnic version emphasizing the cultural similarity of community members, and a civic alternative stressing citizenship in a state with its political institutions as a denominating factor (Smith 1991: 9, Calhoun 1994: 305, Suleiman 2003: 23). Both types of

nationalism embody cultural and political aspects, but hold different assumptions when it comes to the 'chicken-or-egg' discussion: ethnic nationalism argues that a political unit should be derived from a cultural unit, while civic nationalism attests the opposite (Suleiman 2003: 25). In general, it is assumed that civic nationalism endorses a tolerant and inclusive nation, whereas ethnic nationalism is seen as exclusive and potentially disruptive (Hansen & Hesli 2009: 2).

What these two types of nationalism have in common though is that the nations they foster are *creations*: all writers on nationalism stress the artificial character of all nations. The primordialist view concerning the idea of a nation running through one's veins has not made it through the peer reviews, and has, probably for good reasons, been discarded as an academic view on the matter. Sadly, this is where consensus on what a nation is ends. To put it in Anderson's words (1983: 3), the concept of nation 'has proved notoriously difficult to define', and there are quite a few competing versions. To give but a taste:

- 'The nation is an imagined political community' (Anderson 1983: 6).
- 'The nation is a particular type of large social group; its members are not in immediate personal contact with each other. Membership is characterized by a combination of several kinds of relation: economic, territorial, political, religious, cultural, linguistic' (Hroch 1985: 4-5).
- 'A nation is a community of people, whose members are bound together by a sense of solidarity, a common culture, a national consciousness' (Seton Watson 1977: 1).

As this thesis is not focussing on the development of a definition, it is but necessary to signal the most important points which are coming forward: a nation is developed out of a multi-dimensional identification of individual people with the national society at large, while the notion of unity and the rationale for the necessity of this unity are skilful creations.

2.2 National Identity

National identity has been the focus of large quantities of research, which have led authors to assert that these identities are 'complex, variable and subject to manipulation' (Suleiman 2003: 4). Through a national identity, members of a nation are socialized as 'nationals' and 'citizens' sharing a unique culture. A sense of national identity is a strong source in defining

the location of an individual self in this world, as the shared culture binds members into a collective personality (Smith 1991: 16-7). Smith further characterizes this identity as thoroughly multi-dimensional, and impossible to simplify to one isolated element (in: RMO 1999: 45, but also Krostelina 2008: 34). The importance of any building block of one's identity (for instance gender, religion or language) as a means of identification may differ from situation to situation, depending on the saliency of that attribute as judged by the individual (Suleiman 2003: 19). In this line of reasoning, an identity is viewed as a situated self, which is actively chosen among a wider set of possible identities (Coupland 2007). Or, as Amartya Sen put it in his *Identity and Violence* (2006: XIII): 'We have to decide on the relative importance of our different associations and affiliations in any particular context'. According to Fredrik Barth though, it does not matter how different members of a group are from one another, as long as they adhere to the notion that they are part of a particular group of human beings, as opposed to all other national groups (in: Gullberg 2000: 20).

If a specific identity is not brought into play for stretches of time, it still remains a 'constant latency' which can be taken up in future circumstances (Billig 1995: 69). In unthreatened nation-states, this usually is the case, though the risk of losing an international soccer match can arouse these feelings already. What can be concluded is that an identity is the product of the interaction between an individual and his or her social surroundings, and consequently involves a considerable subjective aspect (Gullberg 2000: 21), which is no different when it comes to a collective national identity. Thus, a national identity presupposes an external *alterity*: there needs to be a 'constituting other' in opposition to which an identity can be produced (Tolz 1998: 995). In Taiwan, China fulfils the role of antagonist, the outsider with whom direct competition is going on. Elias remarks that in processes of identity formation over long periods, it is informative to think in terms of a shifting 'us versus them' balance, to see how and why different groups of people might or might not be included in 'the nation' (in: Mennell 1994: 194).

An individual is thus taking cues from other people in understanding what the attributes, values and behaviours of a national should be. Anderson, Gellner, Hobsbawm and Seton Watson all agree that the development of an overarching national consciousness which individuals can tap into should be attributed to the work of small educated political elites. In this way, it is the dominant group that is actively deciding and implementing the

content of a national identity. These elites provide a nation with proper historical interpretation and amnesia, uniting all members through collective struggles, traumas, victories and conquests, and links all those living to 'the great cultural accomplishments of the past' (Calhoun 1994: 314). Thus, each nation has its own collective memory, with practice proving that one and the same historical event can motivate several narratives of it.

There are, however, 'clear and unavoidable limits' to invention and imagination in fashioning these narratives (Suleiman 2003: 7): 'Imagination, invention and mythologizing work only to the extent that they can successfully exploit authentic and highly significant aspects of the culture of those for whom a national identity is being constructed'. In Taiwan, there are two parties competing for presenting the most plausible collective history, and its associated national identity. In doing so, both camps – this certainly is an appropriate choice of words, taking into account media output since 2000– are working hard to naturalize their vision of the identity of citizens of the ROC: a vision of a greater Chinese identity, including the PRC, or a Taiwanese identity focussed on experiences on the island itself. A crucial issue is whether there will be a future unification with China, or a formal declaration of independence – the dividing line in current politics, and to some degree even society. Chapter 4 will elaborate on the history of identity formation on Taiwan, in which any form of native attachment has been efficiently suppressed over a period of some 30 years. After this period ended, citizens had the prospect of two alternative routes to national consciousness, as members of the oppressed nationalities could openly state their feelings of belonging. Fact remains though that the 'model nationals' the two competing nationalist discourses in Taiwan are arranging are two individuals of quite a different nature, which renders a sharp edge to this identity project.

The existence of at least two main versions of what it means to be a citizen of the ROC further signifies that a national identity is a creation – and that there is no conquering version established yet. Gellner (1983: 46) for instance states that the premise of a pre-existing national identity is 'the nationalist ideologue's most misguided claim: namely, that the 'nations' are there, in the very nature of things, only waiting to be awakened'. This is also what Judith Butler, a social scientist analysing the constitution of identities, is hinting at when she claims that some identities seem to have a tendency to 'solidify into a form that makes it appear to have been there all along' (Salih 2002: 46); and this is exactly how national identities like to portray themselves.

In practice though, simply awaking is not an option: more labour intensive and funds consuming nurturing is to be done. National communication systems are very important assets in this effort (Gellner 1983: 50, Calhoun 1994: 187), because these are the means by which a group identity can be developed between members of a community. Ongoing inculcation clouds from view that a nation is not a naturally occurring category, but instead is an imagined construction that individuals need to learn about. It is widely, but nonetheless all too easily, assumed that a nation-state is the natural unit of organization; it is even a step further to take for granted that the boundaries and characteristics of these units are rooted in a coherent historical path leading up to the current, righteous condition of statehood. Individuals need to bring about this discourse relating to a nation-state in order for it to remain a reality - nations and nation-states are actively produced and constantly reproduced entities.

2.3 National Identity as a Process

One of the products of nationalism is the development and maintenance of a national identity. As is the case with a nation, feelings of national identity must be stimulated: an identity geared towards a nation is not a question of nature, but of nurture. Hroch (1985:14) phrased this nicely, by stating that 'the nation is made up of individuals whose patriotism is not an unalterable datum, but undergoes a long formative period'. Where classical approaches to identity assumed this to be an essential inner self – much like the primordialist perception of nations – recent publications view identity as 'always project, never settled accomplishment' (Calhoun 1994: 27). In this way, identity formation becomes an active and context sensitive process. The notion of identity as a process, with discourses as organizing elements and the possibility of subjects to repeat an identity in a way that challenges existing social relations, has been theorized upon by - among others I should add - Judith Butler (1999). However, her contributions have caused some arousal because she destabilized regular ways of thinking about gender identities (Halsema 2000: 7), which, just like national identities, are a type of collective identity. Her studies are concerned with the language and discourse by which identities are constructed (Salih 2002:11). According to Butler, an identity is not a pre-existing and logical category, but a construct – and individuals have a power to reconstruct it according to discourse, or as a variation upon it. A point in

case then becomes how this 'construct' or outline came to be: which groups are by what means in charge of the reasoning process leading to accepted and dominant identities? Chapter 4 will go into that issue for the specific case of Taiwan.

It is worthwhile to consider Butler's conceptions of identity and identity formation a bit more extensively. Her first and most important assertion is that identity is a performative construct. This idea of 'performativity', which is her term for it, is a way to reconcile the influences of discourse and individual agency on identity formation. According to Butler, it is impossible for an individual to function outside discourse, and so these structures are exerting power on behaviour. But on the other hand, the 'reciting', 're-performing' or 're-inscribing' of an identity grants any subject the power 'to subvert the [discoursal] law against itself' (Salih 2002: 62). This may seem as yet another way to merge the extremes of hard core structuralism and fully agency oriented approaches; or that is what it seemed to be to me, ingenuously formulated but nonetheless very much reminding me of Anthony Giddens' structuration theory (1984). This theory is also aiming to resolve the opposites of agency and structure, and the micro and macro points of view. According to a clear summary found on Wikipedia.org (2009), the theory proposes that 'all human action is performed within the context of a pre-existing social structure which is governed by a set of norms and laws which are distinct from those of other social structures. Therefore, all human action is at least partly predetermined based on the varying contextual rules under which it occurs'. But it is also the repetition of the acts of individual agents that are reproducing the structure. And in this *duality of structure*, as Giddens calls it, structure and agency are constraining each other, and developing together.

This seems to be very close to Butler's 'ground-breaking' ideas relating to discourse and the power potential in the performing of acts. However, there is a subtle but essential difference between the two theories. Butler's idea is that an identity is a sequence of acts and that there is no 'pre-existing performer' (Salih 2002: 45). An example Halsema (2000: 15) is giving to clarify this idea is that it has no clear cut meaning to say about oneself 'I am a woman'. Instead, this is the repetition of an already meaningful phrase: existing ideas about what it entails to be a woman are echoing with it. But these meanings differ over times, places and contexts; and as these connotations are pre-existing the subject, an identity as a 'woman' – or in the case of this study, a 'Taiwanese' – becomes something you are repeating, doing, rather than something you have been all along. Then, an identity is an effect of the acts an individual is - or, by contrast, is not - performing, instead of the cause of

these acts; and it was this implication of her theory that caused most commotion.

Butlers second central claim, which I touched upon before, is that the performing and re-performing of an identity might shift existing power relations (Salih 2002: 44). If an identity is being shaped *en route* instead of being a pre-given, this creates quite a bit of uncertainty to those benefitting from a status quo. With an identity being a shifting fabrication, 'it is possible to act that identity in ways which will draw attention to the constructedness' of that identity (Salih 2002: 65). This can induce changes in subject positions, because an increased consciousness of the control of one group over another could be the first move towards transformation. Thus, those in power will have to re-stress their values constantly, while those who are not in power can always try to get in a better position.

In Taiwan, an intense power play is going on over the degree to which citizens are identifying with Taiwan or with China – an identification which the local political elite is keen to influence. This makes Taiwan an interesting case to study the dynamics of national identity. As will be elaborated upon in chapter 4 there have been changes in the degree to which society identifies with one or the other option, and from the analysis of the data it emerges that the degree to which an individual identifies with either option is instable as well.

Importantly though, the question of national identity in Taiwan is also fuelled by the Taiwan policy of the People's Republic of China, which regards the existence of self-governance on the island as an unfulfilled mission of the 1946 - 1950 civil war. Both political entities regard themselves as the representative of 'China', which is an untenable situation (Billig 1995: 73): 'Two [China's], recognising each other, are unthinkable. Codes of national particularity are seriously threatened by a duplication of names'. Mennell (1994: 188) observed that when competition with an outsider group is sufficient to endanger the security of people's daily routines and way of life, 'emotional identification with one's own unit is likely to be strong', an assertion Giddens (1991: 18) and Billig (1995: 16) agree with. For a large part due to its extensive and strong national economy, the PRC has a strong vantage point from which to insist on their territorial claim using a discourse on 'national unity' and 'natural boundaries' (Husmann 1994: 155). In Taiwan, which is being threatened militarily, economically as well as politically, an emotionally charged 'we-image' (ibid.) - or national

identity - in relation to the survival unit can be expected.

The United States of America, even though not formally recognizing the ROC, is the strongest ally in preventing the PRC from simply annexing the island. This power play can be expected to reinforce ideas about a 'them-and-us' relation (in this situation, the PRC versus the USA and ROC jointly) and influence 'any idea concerning the relation between one's own and other places, involving feelings of (in)security or (dis)advantage' (Dijkink 1996: 11).

2.4 Discursive and Non-Discursive National Identity Formation

These notions about one's own nation and its relation towards others need to be developed. Kuroiwa and Verkuylen (2008: 408) described 'the development and maintenance of 'groupness' and a sense of collective 'we' as key tasks for any [...] political organization' as I have already stressed in the section on national identity. There is a wide array of elements which can play a role in a group definition, including historical figures, currency, musical traditions, architecture, language, cuisine, a ritual calendar, sports, the natural landscape, occurring flora and fauna, holidays, a national flag and anthem, et cetera (Suleiman 2003: 23). These are some of the elements Smith (1991) could have had in mind when he stated that a national identity is thoroughly multiple.

There are two ways in which these elements can be composed into a national identity: through conscious confrontation with the issue, or through unconscious but relentless reaffirmations of the existence of a national unity or the state. Different means may be used in a passive or an active role, as Micheal Billig argued in his *Banal Nationalism* (1995). His central example is the flag, which, when waved on special occasions, can be a 'psychological magnet for sentiments'. Other 'magnets' of this type are commemorations or yearly festivals: 'The yearly calendar of the modern nation would replicate in miniature its longer political history: brief moments of nationalist emotion punctuate longer periods of settled calm' (ibid: 45, see box 2.1).

Box 2.1: Official commemorative holidays in Taiwan

All nations honour specific dates which are deemed to have been of special importance to the development of the nation, and in Taiwan this situation is no different (gio.gov.tw):

Date	Occasion
January 1st	Founding day of the Republic of China in 1912. 1912 has also been designated as the starting point for the Taiwanese calendar (see receipt below)
February 28 th	Peace Memorial Day, commemorating the 2-28 incident and 'honouring the suffering and loss of many innocent people'
March 29 th	Youth Day, 'reminding of the heroic accomplishments and sacrifices of the nation's martyrs'
September 3 rd	Armed Forces day (formerly known as Victory Day), to "instill the concept of 'Honor for the Military and Love for the People'
Double 10 th day	Birthday of the Republic of China, celebrated every year on October 10th to 'commemorate the 1911 Wuchang Uprising, ending Qing rule as well as the imperial era, a milestone in China's political development'
October 25 th	Taiwan Retrocession day. This day commemorates the ending of Japanese rule on Taiwan. 'When the people in Taiwan heard of this news the nation erupted with euphoria and celebration'.
October 31 st	Commemoration Birthday Chiang Kai Shek
November 12 th	Commemoration Birthday Sun Yat Sen
December 25 th	Constitution day, celebrating the 1947 ROC constitution

During KMT rule, these days were celebrated energetically, and part of the constructing and maintaining Chinese identity (Corcuff 2002: 80). Nowadays though, the birthdays of Chiang Kai Shek and Sun Yat Sen have ceased to be a public holiday, lowering their importance in relation to the existence of the ROC.



Most flags, however, are waved ‘unflaggingly’ (see figure 2.1): ‘Unwaved flags are providing banal reminders of nationhood: they are ‘flagging’ it unflaggingly. The reminding, involved in the routine business of flagging, is not a conscious activity: [...] it is occurring as other activities are being consciously engaged in’ (1995: 41). Coins and banknotes usually bear national symbols as well, though these remain largely unnoticed in making routine payments. Billig (1995: 41) further states that the naming of a currency can be a ‘highly symbolic and controversial business’, which in the case of the ROC and the PRC is outspokenly so. Both national banks are claiming to be officially representing the value of the Chinese yuan (元), though each currency is known through other designations (‘New Taiwanese Dollar and Renminbi, respectively) as well. The symbols occurring on Taiwanese money are a mix of native Taiwanese as well as traditional Chinese icons, which is further depicted in box 2.2. Lowenthal (1994: 17) additionally states that countries have a tendency to depict themselves in landscape terms, which in Taiwan also seems to be the case. The shape of the island Taiwan is widely in use by governmental agencies and organizations, which deepens the idea that Taiwan is an autonomous administrative unit.



Figure 2.2 Taiwanese ‘unflaggingly flagged’ flags along Keelung Road

Box 2.2: Symbolism on Taiwanese currency

Currency	Picture	Chinese Symbolism	Taiwanese Symbolism
NT\$ 1		Chiang Kai Shek	Chiang Kai Shek
NT\$ 10		Chiang Kai Shek	Chiang Kai Shek, Rice
NT\$ 50		Sun Yat Sen	-
NT\$ 100		Sun Yat Sen, Plum Blossom	Chung Shan Building Along with Orchid, Bamboo and Chrysanthemum, this plant forms 'the four gentleman, used to depict the 4 seasons since the Song Dynasty (960 – 1279)
NT\$ 200		Chiang Kai Shek. Orchid	Chiang Kai Shek
NT\$ 500		Bamboo	Youth Baseball, Sika Deer, Dabajian Mountain
NT\$ 1000		Chrysanthemum	Elementary education, Mikado Pheasant, Jade Mountain

2.5 Student Mobility and the Re-citation of a National Identity

There are many types of mobility, and student mobility in the context of an academic exchange program is but a small piece of this vast amount of current movements. Its significance is not related to its quantity though, but especially to the future role these students will have in navigating their nation in a world that will most likely be still more interdependent and connected than it already is (Dolby 2004: 153). The students at NTU are furthermore selected through their merits: only the top 2 percentile of high school students can enter this university, based on standard national entrance exams.

The influences of a study period abroad have been researched, mostly examining psychological changes, career benefits or the advantages in learning a foreign language (Dolby 2004: 103). Little research has been done to analyze the relation between a study period abroad, and the reproduction of a national identity afterwards, though Dolby (2003, 2004), Deutsch 1952/19971 and Healy 2006 are interesting examples. Dolby (2004) considers going abroad as a critical encounter with the national self, but she specifically discussed the way American students dealt with the preconceived opinions of their national identity, and how they displayed their national identity in order to influence these prejudices. Healy (2006) approached the topic by assessing the degree to which individual students are fulfilling 'ambassador roles' for their own country. In practice, she analysed differences and similarities in the way Canadian students disseminated their national identity, in relation to the way the Canadian government prototyped this identity. No attention has thus been paid to the changes that might take place in ones own national identity as a result of spending a period abroad. It is agreed upon to though that a national identity can be subject to change, and it remains a question whether a period abroad can be specified as a critical experience in this process.

Each of these studies used a qualitative and interpretative method focussing on the individual, though there is a case to be made for considering a national identity 'above all, an ideology of the first person plural' (Billig 1995: 70). However, from the above section it is becoming clear that reaffirmations and reproductions of a national identity are related most of the time to the small, everyday routines *individuals* implement. Thus, a collective identity is a way to talk about a community as a whole, but it also is way of life individual members are living. In this way, it becomes informative to analyze the feelings and opinions of persons and to discuss what bearing elitist 'models of the ROC national have on the

identification of their subjects.

When I consider academic mobility, I follow the definition as formulated by the UNESCO: 'Academic mobility implies a period of study, teaching and / or research in a country other than a student's or academic staff member's country of residence ('the home country'). This period is of limited duration, and it is envisaged that the student or staff member return to his or her home country upon completion of the designated period' (Unesco.org 2009). Within this definition it is feasible to consult undergraduate, graduate and PhD students, which I have done. According to Healy (2006) there are several possible arrangements when going a period abroad, which all can be expected to have a different impact on a person, ranging from moderate to extensive (see figure 2.2)

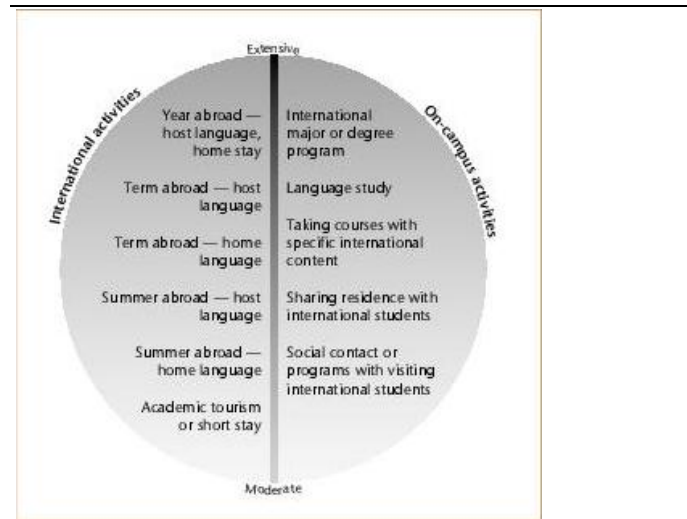


Figure 2.2 Classification of exchange experiences

During the data gathering process, students in the following three categories have been approached:

1. Term abroad – home language
2. Term abroad – host language
3. Year abroad – host language
4. International major or degree program

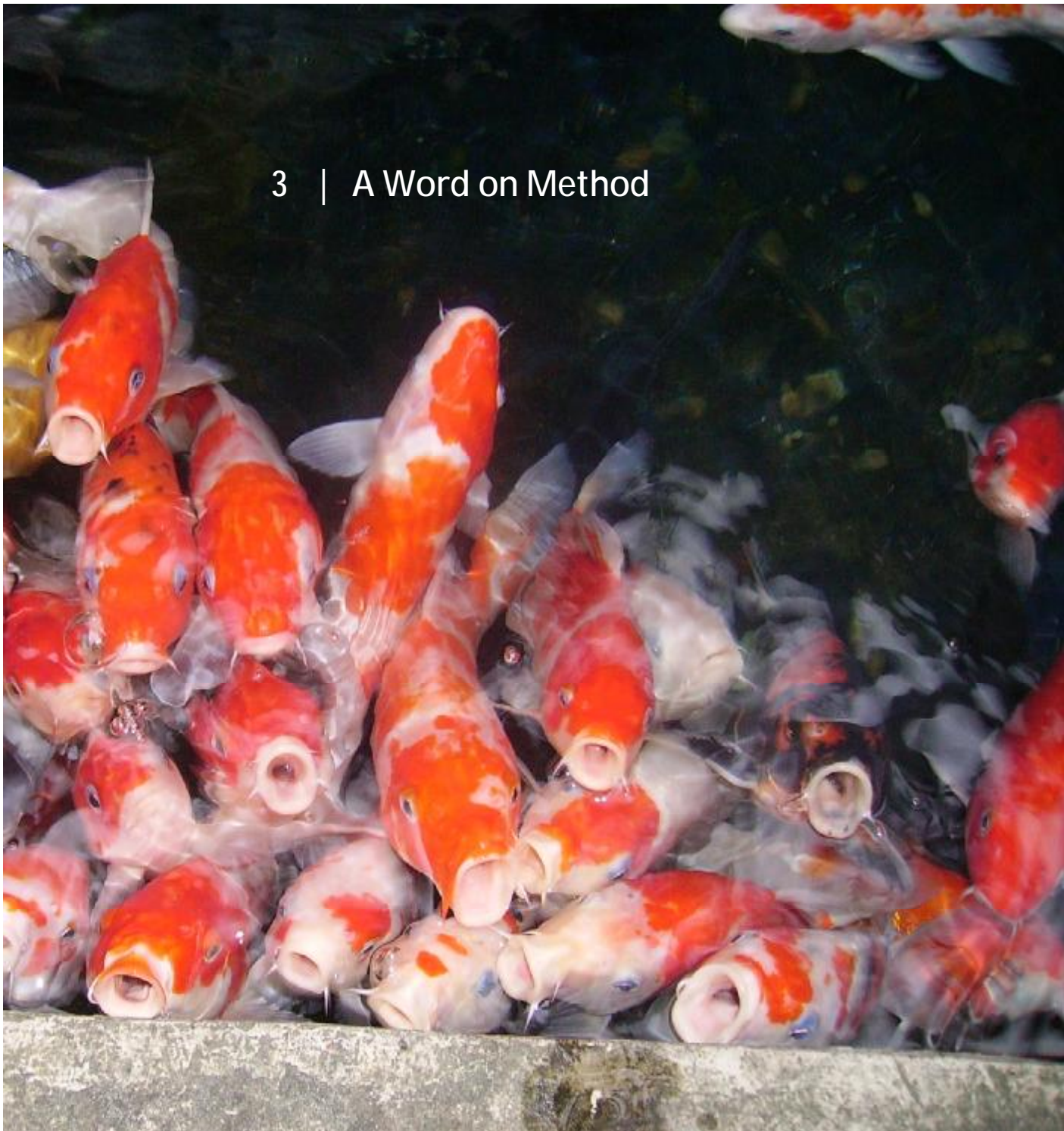
In these categories, it can be expected that the student in question has had wide-ranging and intensive contacts in a new, international environment, which could have an influence on the recitation of their national identity.

It is, however, not yet altogether clear how a personal experience would have an influence on nationalistic feelings on a collective scale. Critical Language Study gives a suggestion as to how this can come about: ‘people internalize what is socially produced and made available to them, and use these experiences in their social practice’ (Fairclough 1989). Allan Pred further developed this idea of internalization in his 1981 article *Social Reproduction and the Time-Geography of Everyday Life*. This article is strongly related to Anthony Giddens’ work on Structuration Theory, and is thus based on the premise that ‘social reproduction, and the individual-society relationships it subsumes, occurs via the process of structuration, or the dialectical interplay between structure and everyday practice’ (1981: 15). He then introduces an ‘internal – external’ dialectic to explain the ‘flowing dialectical relationship between the practices of particular individuals and the workings and transformation of society’ (1981: 8). It is this oppositional relation that can help to shed light on linkages between personal impressions and the re-performing of a collective national identity.

When the internal – external dialectic is accounted for, Pred equates the external with corporeal action, and the internal with mental activity and intention. Every project an individual engages in – which can be anything, from constructing a table to completing an academic study - then causes the accumulation of ‘internal impressions and experiences that are fundamental to her absorption of normative prescriptions and rules and to the shaping of her beliefs, values, perceptions, attitudes, competencies, expectations, tastes, distastes, and her conscious and subconscious motivations, and hence her conscious or subconscious goals and intentions’ (1981: 11). The central idea is that the completion of projects over the course of a life at one and the same time are rooted in past experiences, and serve as the roots of future practices (1981: 10).

The proposition in the context of my thesis would be that by studying abroad, students gain impressions which will cause them to rethink their national identity. Moreover, I will examine whether the different environments in which the students are adding mental impressions to their individual repertoires (that is, in the USA or in the PRC) has an influence on the way they feel about being a Taiwanese person. In this way I am trying to see if there are similarities between those persons who spend time in a comparable milieu. Pred is suggesting that this could very well be the case: these persons might have ‘...amassed numerous similar or common path elements, and the uniquely emerging consciousness of many or most of them contain strong ideological resemblances and a shared structure or feeling’ (1981: 12). Dijkink (1996: 2) shares this opinion: ‘Living somewhere means being exposed to the continuous stream of discourse produced by a local society and experiencing events which differ in kind from those happening elsewhere in the world’. It will be interesting to see if this premise holds for the case I am studying, that is whether those students who have studied abroad rethink their national identities differently as compared to their stationary counterparts – and whether there can be said to be intergroup similarities as well.

3 | A Word on Method



The data and conclusions of this thesis are grounded in a 5-month fieldwork carried out in the capital of Taiwan, Taipei. Over the course of this project, during which 140 questionnaires and 25 in-depth interviews were completed, methodological choices regarding the research design and research methods were made, which will be elaborated upon in the first and second section of this chapter. The third part goes on to describe some general characteristics of the sample I have worked with, and in the final section I will make some comments on my position as a researcher.

3.1 Research Design

In order to be able to answer my research questions, which mean to assess intergroup differences, I have adopted a comparative design. During the analysis I have used identical methods on three meaningfully contrasting cases, that is, students who studied abroad in either China or the USA, and students who did not take part in an academic mobility program. From this it follows I have used 'purposive sampling' for my research, as I wanted to establish a correspondence between my research questions and my sample (Bryman 2004: 333). In order to find the actual interviewees, I used snowball sampling. I met people in the dorm I lived in, I placed an add for my interviews in several virtual bulletin boards (hosted by National Taiwan University (NTU), and having the topics 'studying abroad', 'Da-Lu (Mainland) Society', 'studying in China' and 'studying in the USA'), and contacted the International Office. When I met someone who helped me, I always asked if by any chance he or she knew someone else who met my criteria of being a student, having studied abroad (or not), and – importantly - able to speak English. Within this general type of research design I am using a multi-method approach, which I will detail further in the section two of this chapter. In order to gather the data from each group of students I followed a cross sectional design, in which data are gathered 'at a single point in time in order to collect a body of data in connection with two or more variables, which are then examined to detect patterns of association' (Bryman 2004: 41).

Within this research, the formal characteristic of validity is an important issue, with the subcategories of measurement validity and internal and external validity deserving some elaboration. *Measurement validity* describes the degree to which the measures I devised for the concept I am studying - national identity- are actually tapping in to this matter. This criterion applies specifically to the quantitative part of this study. A national identity is a complex system built up out of numerous 'banal' as well as consciously experienced elements, and is, as Smith (1991: 16) wrote, 'thoroughly multi-dimensional'. For

that reason it is hard to define the feelings students have about their national identity by means of separate questions, as each *individual* item of this composite is not crucial – but only so in relation to the whole web of expressions of national identity. I have partly accounted for this by asking about several items in conjunction, for instance by ranking the most common state symbols. The most important verification however were the qualitative interviews I conducted, which were based on the questionnaire. In this way the measurement validity is safeguarded as the students could voice their interpretations of the questions I posed.

A second issue is *internal validity*, or whether a conclusion incorporating a causal relationship actually holds. In my study, which has the aim to see if and to what degree students with an international experience define their national identity differently, I have identified ‘a study period abroad’ as the factor which possibly has a causal effect on the construction of national identity. An important question, which I will detail further in paragraph 3.3, is whether there were is already an a priori difference between these groups – for instance because those Taiwanese students who are eligible for academic mobility programs are a selected group already.

Last, but certainly not least, *external validity* is an issue: is it feasible to generalize the conclusions of this study beyond the specific research context? From this point of view, the issue of how participants are selected becomes crucial. A first thing to remark here is that I have only consulted students, and it will therefore not be possible to apply my findings to the current Taiwanese society as a whole. A further issue is that I have only been able to interview students who were able to understand English well enough to complete a questionnaire with a rather abstract topic. As many participants have enrolled themselves through my internet adds, it is hard to assess the degree of non-participation. In paragraph 3.3 some general characteristics of my samples will be assessed. From the students who completed a questionnaire I have selected the subgroup with whom I also completed an interview, so that these qualitative interviews could serve to enhance the interpretation of my quantitative data. The first step in the process was always to fill in a questionnaire for me (see the next section on self completion questionnaires for an elaboration). The questionnaire ended with a request to write down an e-mail address and phone number if the participant was willing to speak with me about the subject in more depth. In the groups

of students who went abroad to the USA and who did not go abroad at all nearly all were open to this follow-up. This was different in the group of students who went to China, and consequently I have spoken to less students in this category.

3.2 Research Methods

As I mentioned above, I used a multi-method approach in order to answer my research questions, combining historical analysis, self completion questionnaires and qualitative interviewing. I will discuss each method separately below. A multi-strategy approach is not necessarily better than a single research strategy, but I choose to employ different methods so that 'qualitative research may *facilitate* the interpretation of relationships between variables' (Bryman 2004:460). The Oxford guide on *Social Research Methods* is proposing this as one of the possible added values to combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The actual field work took 5 months to complete, and was carried out at National Taiwan University in Taipei.

3.2.1 Historical analysis

It is the central aim of this thesis to consider how Taiwanese students are constructing their national identity, when two different structures are being offered. In the case of Taiwan, it is the two political parties - the Kuomintang and the Democratic Progressive Party - that have controlled the production of these structures. I want to study the ways in which individuals are negotiating their position in relation to the standard discourses that are offered to them, and an historical analysis provides the prototypical subjects propagated by these two sources. Thus, I will study the different *discourses* that have been constructed around Taiwanese national identity. Judith Butler is considering discourse *the* most important tool in identity formation, and through examining the two opposing discourses it can be emphasized how different versions of the Taiwanese national subjects are being produced.

The notion of discourse denies the existence of one external reality, but instead emphasizes that different versions of reality that are put forward need to be investigated (Bryman 2004: 370). In Taiwan, the central question whether 'we' are Chinese or Taiwanese still is an undecided challenge. Therefore, there is no single structure or clearly dominating discourse relating to national identity in Taiwan as there is, for instance, in the Netherlands.

Within the Dutch discourse, we have agreed upon our Batavian roots, the goals of our common battles, the descent of our monarchy, highlights in our history and the feeling that the Netherlands is a meaningful entity within the European Union that should not be dissolved – something that might have been highlighted in the Dutch ‘nee’ in a referendum on a European Constitution. In Taiwan though, discourse can be found up-and-running since the landing of Chiang Kai Shek in 1949. While my interviewing is almost completely concerned with bottom-up identity construction, this first step in my data gathering and analysis pertains to the top-down, structural identity construction.

The interesting situation in Taiwan is that two structures are being pursued, which clearly shows discourse is action oriented. The two political discourses are struggling to convince individuals as to the rationality of either one or the other national identity, by using slogans such as ‘It is the Taiwanese people’s turn to manage our own destiny’ or ‘The 21st century belongs to us Chinese’. The aim of the discourses then is to develop model Republic of China or Taiwan citizens; an additional aim is to destabilize the rationalities underlying the other discourse by producing different types of ‘facts’ and emphasizing different aspects of the same situation. This latter aim clearly illustrates that ‘discourse is concerned with establishing one version of the world (see for instance figure 6.1) in the face of competing versions (figure 6.2) (Bryman 2004: 371). In describing the two discourses related to national identity in Taiwan I also conducted two interviews with government officials (DPP and KMT), both lasting over 2.5 hours. I scheduled these interviews towards the end of my data gathering period, and thus created the opportunity to expose my interpretations to reactions of the sources of discourses I tried to describe.

3.2.2 *Qualitative interviewing*

The second step in my research is to understand how Taiwanese students are positioning their national identities in relation to the structures offered to them. Qualitative interviewing enables a researcher to gain rich and in-depth information, and a reminder of a quote by Smith (1986:7) which I presented in the introduction already indicates the necessity of this type of information: ‘Phenomena like ethnicity or national sentiment are so largely bound up with expressions of attitude, perception and feeling, that purely structural approaches will inevitably seem remote from the objects of their explanations, even when

they do not seriously mislead'. In order to carry out the interviews I developed an interview guide which I used for every interview. It took some time to develop this guide; I tested and afterwards improved my open-ended interview questions twice by conducting two test rounds of my interview. These rounds served to establish how much time an interview would approximately take, to check whether my way of questioning was understood and logical in its structure, and to find out whether there were omissions in my questioning.

The process of interviewing itself was flexible: I was interested to see how my interviewees were framing and understanding the issues I proposed to them. I solicited as rich and detailed answers as I could by asking additional questions, and by being a knowledgeable and attentive listener. Interviews took on average one hour and 15 minutes, with the shortest interview lasting 40 minutes and the longest over 2 hours. All interviews were conducted in English, which necessarily excluded part of the possible target group. Interviewing took place in public areas, mostly in coffee shops such as Starbucks. Beforehand, almost all participants said their English was very poor. They usually started out very shy and with short answers, but became more elaborate after the first questions. The test-interviewing helped me to neutralize this 'warming-up' by giving some additional time to the small talk right before the interviewing. I also used this talk to ensure participants that I was not examining their knowledge and probing them for 'right' answers, but was interested in their own opinions. Quite a few interviewees seemed to be anxious about giving the answer they thought I wanted, as emerged from quotes like 'is that right' or 'is my answer complete now'.

In the introduction I already specified I wanted to interview three different groups of students: those who had an international experience in either the USA or China, and those who studied in Taiwan only. Initially, I planned on conducting 10 interviews in each category. In practice, I managed to find 10 students who studied the USA and 10 who studied in Taiwan, but it was much harder to find those who went to China, and have them to agree to an interview. As a first reason, much less students went abroad to China than to the USA: NTU does not have a central exchange program with China yet (it commences in the academic year 2010), and degrees obtained there have only recently, in 2009, obtained legal validity in Taiwan. A second reason is that the students who did go to China felt themselves to have a poor fluency in English, and thus unable to help me when it came to open interviewing. I managed to find 5 interviewees who studied in China.

The abovementioned fact that all my interviewees had already completed the

questionnaire beforehand did have some implications for the way my interview questions were answered. During the interviews, several people said out loud they were trying to remember the questionnaire in order to answer my question ‘better’. It does not pose a problem to my results however, as I used the interviews to properly understand the issues which were put forward in the questionnaire – even though my interview questions did not refer to the questionnaire directly. The actual interview guide I used can be looked up in Appendix 1.

All interviews were taped and literally transcribed; there were no objections to this request. This complete text was then used to identify subjects, themes and categories relevant to the three research questions, a process which is better known as *coding*. Coding renders the total body of data (in the case of this study 223 running pages) accessible, and organizes the initial jumble of unprocessed data. In the first phase, during the open coding, each interview was read very carefully and divided into fragments which were labelled for their meaning, and then mutually compared. The result of this phase is a *code tree*, expressing connections raised by participants. This code tree was then used to describe patterns in the data.

A second step is to interpret the emerged codes. During this ensuing phase of *axial coding* the results are rearranged in order to gain insight into more abstract relations. This time codes are used as a means to reassess the contents of the interviews, thus reanalysing the initial describing structure through a theoretically sensitive procedure. This phase leads to a new and integrative code tree. Based upon this product of analysis, theoretical statements can be formulated.

3.2.3 *Self Completion Questionnaires*

I gathered quantitative data on the students’ sense of national identity by way of a 26 item questionnaire, which comprised of the five themes: (a) political party preference, (b) views on personal identity; Chinese or Taiwanese, (c) attitude about Chinese or Taiwanese culture, (d) ideas about the future of Taiwan; unification, independence or status quo and (e) Taiwan in the international community and personal demographical questions. For reference, I included the questionnaire in appendix 2.

I distributed 50 questionnaires to students who studied in the USA, 40 to those

who went to China and 50 to students who studied in Taiwan only, producing a sample containing 140 elements. I chose this amount, because a minimum sample of 40 allows for statistically valid procedures. Almost all questions were close ended, and soliciting either a yes / no answer or used a Likert scale to measure a disposition. In the case of one question, quite a lot of respondents added a non-included answer: where I considered the question 'Do you prefer the Blue or the Green Coalition?' to be in need of the options 'blue coalition' and 'green coalition', 24 respondents still added the category 'neither of them'. I had omitted this third option intentionally, as I felt it would give too much opportunity for my respondents to refrain from giving an opinion. When respondents added their own answer stating that they liked neither, they usually did so in rather strong terms (see for instance figure 3.1).

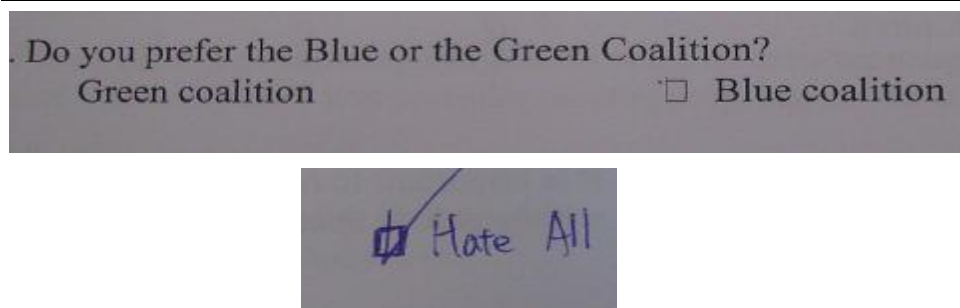


Figure 3.1 Excision of a questionnaire

Each student answered the same questions in the same order, though questions relating to the international experience were omitted in the questionnaire given to the group which studied in Taiwan only. In this way, I can analyze whether members of the different groups I devised answer their question the same or differently, as well as collecting data directly relating to the international experience. In some cases, I was personally present when students filled in their questionnaire, in most cases the questionnaire was completed through e-mail.

Upon completion of the required amount of questionnaires I have entered all data into the analytic software package SPSS. The goal of my research is to establish whether my three independent samples originate from one overall population (if the data display identical distributions), or represent separate populations.

The use of parametric models in determining relations between the samples was not allowed, as I have collected nominal and ordinal data only. These models require scale or measurement input, while the demands for the input onto non-parametric tests are lower: these are based on an a-select sample while data can be measured on an ordinal scale (de Vocht 2002: 223). For this reason I have measured interaction between the samples by means of a Mann Whitney U test, designed to assess whether independent samples come from the same distribution. This test assumes both samples are originating from the same distribution, and from the same population. Each test has been carried out on an 95% significance level. The next section will describe some general characteristics of my samples.

3.3 General characteristics of the research sample

In this section I will point out some specific attributes of the students who have completed a questionnaire, and have been interviewed. Taking into account my central research question, all of the persons included in this research are students. All participants studied in the Taipei Province, and most in Taipei itself. In the first place I have recorded personal characteristics concerning the age, duration of stay abroad and voting preference split over the three groups (a) having studied in Taiwan, (b) having studied in China and (c) having studied in the USA. Furthermore it could be possible that the origin of the parents and grandparents of a participant might also influence my dependent variable, as family members are said to exert a strong influence on the decisions and opinions of their children. I kept track of this information by adding the question 'From which country or countries did your parents and grandparents come?' Finally, the place of origin of the participant itself might be relevant. When we have a look at a map of electoral outcomes, it shows the north and south are in political terms distinct from one another. In general, those originating from the south of Taiwan tend to vote for the DPP, whereas those from the north mostly appreciate the KMT. For reference, I added two maps (figure 3.2 and 3.3) depicting the outcome of the presidential elections of 2004 (which was a victory for the DPP, or the green

coalition), and the elections of 2008 (which was won by the KMT, or the blue coalition).

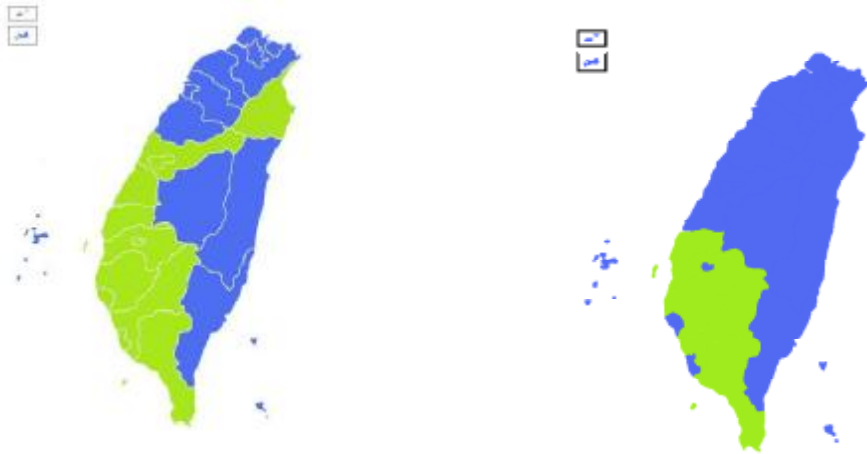


Figure 3.2 Outcomes presidential elections 2004

Figure 3.3 Putcomes presidential elections 2008

I kept track of this characteristic by asking ‘Where in Taiwan are you from?’ I classified these answers into four categories - north, east south and central - which is a categorization commonly used in Taiwan by governmental institutions. In figure 3.4 depicts map distinguishing these four regions. In table 3.1 these general characteristics of the samples have been summarized.



Figure 3.4 North, South, East and Central Taiwan

Table 3.1: General characteristics of the three independent samples

	PRC		USA		Taiwan	
n	40		50		50	
Age (average and range)	25 (20 – 38)		24 (19 – 31)		25 (19 – 39)	
Time abroad in months (average and modus)	13 (2 and 6)		24 (6)		-	
Voting preference	Pan Blue	61.8 %	Pan Blue	46.8 %	Pan Blue	36.7 %
	Pan Green	26.5 %	Pan Green	38.3 %	Pan Green	34.7 %
	Neither	14.9 %	Neither	14.9 %	Neither	28.6 %
Origin (grand)parents	Taiwan & China	15 %	Taiwan & China	21 %	Taiwan & China	11 %
	Taiwan	70 %	Taiwan	53 %	Taiwan	45 %
	China	15 %	China	23 %	China	43 %
			USA	2 %		
Origin participants	Taipei City	56 %	Taipei City	49 %	Taipei City	40 %
	North	24 %	North	15 %	North	11 %
	South	12 %	South	15 %	South	36 %
	East	6 %	East	-	East	2 %
	Central	3 %	Central	21 %	Central	11 %

Based on this table some remarks can already be made. It seems that those who have not studied abroad have more pronounced negative feelings about the two coalitions. A second prominent number describes that students who went abroad to China have a markedly higher appreciation for the Blue coalition, or the KMT. It is widely suggested that an appreciation for the KMT is closely linked to the origin of one's parents and grandparents. This seems not to be the case however: especially in the group of students who went to China, direct Chinese ancestry is represented least. In fact, in the sub-sample of having studied in Taiwan direct Chinese ancestry was represented highest – and approval of the KMT lowest.

This group, with Chinese parents and grandparents is referred to as 'Mainlanders' or Waishenren, and accounts for 12.5% of the 2005 total population (see figure 3.5). In this sample, that group is thus rather severely overrepresented. This occurrence can be explained by the fact that within Taiwan, Mainlanders are very much concentrated in Taipei and the North of Taiwan, which is where this research was carried out. From the first analyses it seems though that parental origin and political preference are not, at least in the case of students, that closely correlated. In the sample as a whole, those originating from the North are overrepresented; because I was stationed in Taipei, my chances of running in to a Northerner were relatively high. If my results show a tendency towards a Chinese national identity, the outcomes should first be controlled for ancestry and the origin of the participant.

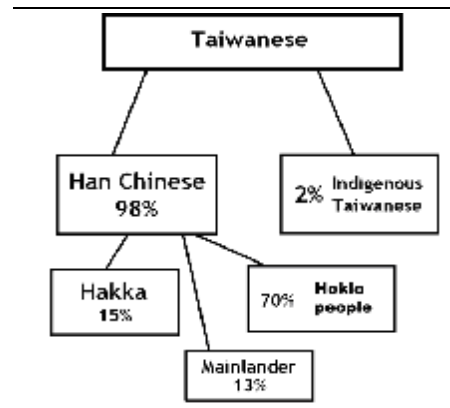


Figure 3.5 Ethnic composition citizens of Taiwan

The age distribution over the different groups is comparable. The amount of time students stayed abroad shows a big gap in the average months students studied abroad, though the amount of time observed most frequently is the same. This is caused by the fact that numerous Taiwanese obtain a full degree in the USA, instead of remaining there for one or two semesters only – as is the case in the PRC. All students have stayed abroad long enough to be able to reflect on their national identity.

A final matter of significance though is the fact that those students eligible for an academic mobility program are a preselected group already. By means of a standardized language test in English, German, French, Japanese or Spanish the best scoring students are selected. For the exchange semesters in the academic year 2010/2011 359 out of 514 applicants were selected, which amounts to 69.8 %. The central measure through which students are selected is language proficiency, which is independent from an individual's notions about national identity. It is harder to establish in what way students were selected in order to participate in an exchange program to the PRC; language proficiency has not been leading, and selection was not yet organized by NTU. These students either went there voluntarily (through intercession of their family) or used scholarships awarded by the PRC government. Should the group of students from the PRC-sample stand out for their

pro-Chinese sentiments, the notion of their personal pre-selection for a Chinese exchange program should not remain undiscussed.

3.4 My position as a researcher

The most important part of this study consists of qualitative methods, which makes my own person and background an integral part of the analysis. It is therefore important to assess the degree of influence my very presence might have had on the data I collected, and the interpretation I give to these findings during analysis. Alfred Schütz (1899 – 1959) was an Austrian sociologist who took refuge in America by the end of the 1930s. As such, he was in for a whole new cultural experience, causing him to devise three different ‘types’ from which a situation can be viewed (Smith 2003:16):

- *The person in the street* – someone who operates through tacit knowledge, without need for deeper reflection;
- *The cartographer* – someone with expertise; but very much detached from an object, and thus unable to understand the specifics of a social situation;
- *The stranger* – Someone who is passing through, but who needs to establish an adequate grasp of existing social relations in order to get by. The stranger is neither unreflective like the person on the street, nor trapped within the narrow vantage point of an academic specialism.

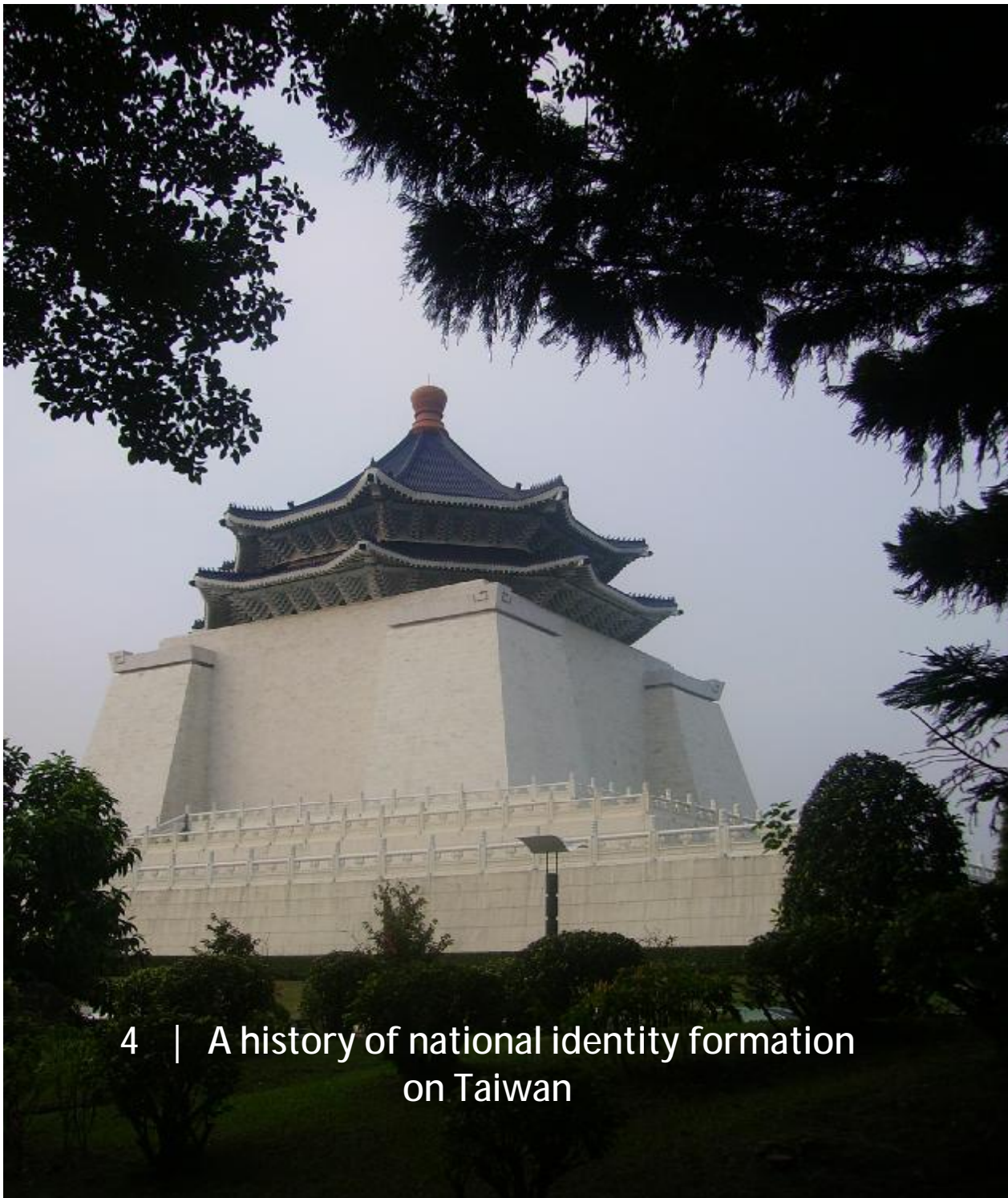
According to Schütz, the strangers ‘have a unique vantage point, able to participate in everyday life yet still maintaining a degree of detachment’ (Smith 2003: 17).

When I carried out this 5 month fieldwork in Taiwan, I was a typical stranger: I knew nobody, was puzzled by each and every Chinese character and had never been in Asia in general or in Taiwan in particular. I did have a lot of mental stock, in the form of background readings - which to some degree made me an expert, at least on the history and political situation in Taiwan. This expertise should not be overstated though, as an interesting quote in the Taipei Times (09/26/2009) exposes: many foreigners only have ‘gained a superficial understanding of the country by listening to swaggering locals’, and are nothing but ‘fast-food experts’. As I have only limited time for completing this thesis, I cannot deny some degree of truth in this opinion. I have the impression though that the body of literature on the topic available in English is comprehensive, and as I have spent over a year in background reading and following the news, I feel to have defused this setback. During my stay in Taipei I compared the structures I had come across in the

(scientific) accounts I read to the accounts actual individuals were giving.

Being a stranger provided me with another advantage. The issue I studied, national identity, is a very sensitive topic in Taiwan, and a discussion of its specifics lead to an argument easily. However, this is the case only among Taiwanese (and Mainland Chinese), as they are life-long insiders in the situation, and judging quickly. People spoke freely to ‘a stranger’ as they felt they were ‘objectively’ explaining their views to me, while feeling no pressure to defend their opinions. Because I was a ‘stranger’ to the situation, Janice (USA) told me she felt free to talk about this topic, and was even more encouraged to explain her views: ‘If you were a Pan Blue member, I would say, the question is sensitive. But you are a foreigner, so what is wrong to talk about it with you? So I am happy about you as a foreigner studying Taiwan. Maybe you are a channel for the people outside to know what is going on in Taiwan’. That Taiwanese people do not like to give their opinions on this issue too overtly among each other, I experienced when one of my interviewees was being overheard by someone he knew; it turned out to be an extremely shallow and non-informative talk which was excluded from further analysis. Although I still only understand a fraction of Chinese characters, through my position as a stranger I was still able to get sufficient grasp of existing social relations.

Furthermore, the issue of national identity is accompanied by strong feelings, and some of my interviewees indeed made a parallel to religious understandings - and especially to the problems in uniting these types of fundamentally different world views. As Yin (Taiwan) put it: ‘You know, in Taiwanese education we have little political education. We won’t discuss it, because some take it like religion. Religion cannot be discussed, you know. Taiwanese identity is like a belief, like God. We won’t talk about whether it exists or not, because if you believe then it exist, and if you don’t believe, it doesn’t exist’. As a stranger, I am no convert to any of the political beliefs. From this standpoint, I am in a good position to present a more detached and hopefully less biased account of the formation of national identity. Thus my position as a researcher is the one of a stranger – a perspective specifically tailored to linking the daily lives of individuals to abstract accounts of it.



4 | A history of national identity formation
on Taiwan

Through this historical analysis, I would like to outline the context in which national identity formation in Taiwan takes place. A passage from George Orwell's novel *1984* is quite telling in this respect:

'Who controls the past', ran the Party slogan, 'controls the future: who controls the present controls the past'.

Naturally, this 'Party' does not seek to actually change factual events completed in the past. However, there is agreement on the close relationship between the perceived history of a nation and the formation of a national identity (Cruz 2000:277):

'Actors [...] manipulate the positive and negative values assigned to past defining experiences to craft 'simply is' statements about reality, and drawing on this generalization, identify viable routes to a better future'.

In this process of identification emotions and imagination play a central role, and the group controlling the elements which a people comes to feel attached to, comes to hate or to deem important for any reason, in a way controls the past. Divergent 'knowledges' of past and present experiences underlie a vision of a Taiwanese or a Chinese national identity, while anticipating different futures (Yu et al 2008: 45)

It might strike a reader as somewhat grotesque to encounter a quote from *1984* as a first taste to this chapter. Since 1949 however, Kuomintang rule can be characterized as one-party and authoritarian. During the period of martial law (which lasted from 1949 until 1987) the party strictly specified acceptable conduct. During this period, nationalism was one of the key values of the KMT, and through conjoining education, media output and daily life experiences, the development of a Great Chinese identity was promoted.

Though martial law was lifted in 1987, it was especially since 1996 and 2000 that another group gained credibility in their bid for control of the Taiwanese past – and with it an important building block of national identity. This other party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), and the KMT are proposing two competing historical narratives (see box 3.1 and 3.2) which are the basis for the competing presents: a Greater Chinese or a Taiwanese identity.

Box 4.1: The Democratic Progressive party (DPP)

The DPP was founded in 1986, but was rooted already in its opposition to the KMT one-party authoritarian rule. The DPP is also referred to as the 'Pan-Green Coalition' as the DPP has a strong alliance with the Taiwan Solidarity Union and the Taiwan Independence Party. The current official position of the party is that the "Republic of China (Taiwan)" is an independent and sovereign country whose territory consists of Taiwan and its surrounding smaller islands. Its sovereignty derives from ROC citizens only. It considers Taiwan independence to be a current fact making a formal declaration of independence unnecessary. The DPP rejects the "one China principle" as the basis for official diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC) and advocates a Taiwanese national identity which is separate from mainland China, People's Republic of China. The DPP argues that its efforts to promote a Taiwanese national identity are merely an effort to normalize a Taiwanese identity repressed during the years of authoritarian Kuomintang rule.



Box 4.2: the Kuomintang (KMT)

The KMT was established in Mainland China upon the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911. The KMT or pan-blue coalition agrees that the Republic of China is an independent and sovereign country that is not part of the People's Republic of China (PRC), but argues that a one China principle can be used as the basis for talks with the PRC. The KMT tends to favour greater economic linkage with the People's Republic of China, and is partial to a Chinese national identity. The KMT also opposes Taiwan independence and argues that efforts to establish a Taiwanese national identity separated from the Chinese national identity are unnecessary and needlessly provocative.



The struggle over these two national identifications leads to the gravest political contradiction in Taiwan: the unification versus independence debate. As it is, two viable options for the development of a national identity are available in Taiwan, while, to put it in Chu's words (2004: 484), 'neither principled believers in independence nor principled believers in unification are numerous enough to give any elected Taiwanese leader a clear mandate for imposing a solution on the question of national identity anytime soon'.

It is a rather unusual situation that political parties are actively propagating discourse on national identity; in most countries this simply is a taken for granted category. During the martial law era however, voices propagating a vernacular version of national identity had been actively demoted and suppressed. When a process of democratization did set in, DPP leadership linked the three concerns of democracy, Taiwanese identity and self-determination (Chu 2004: 498). From then on, the two political parties have been toiling for their respective claims about Taiwan's statehood and the national identity of its citizens. While the Chinese nationalists are encouraging exchanges with China and ultimately favour unification, Taiwanese nationalists promote a Taiwanese identity and look forward to a permanent, *de jure* separation from China.

This chapter will elaborate on the history of the formation of national identity in Taiwan, and will go into the struggle over national identification. First though, I would like to present a quick overview of Taiwanese history by means of a timeline.

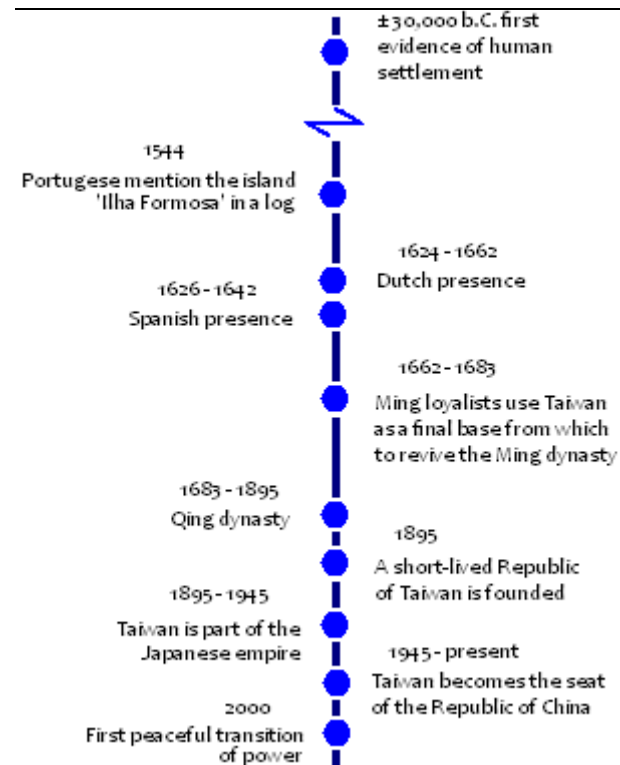


Figure 4.1 History of Taiwan in a nutshell

4.1 The era of Japanese rule 1895 - 1945

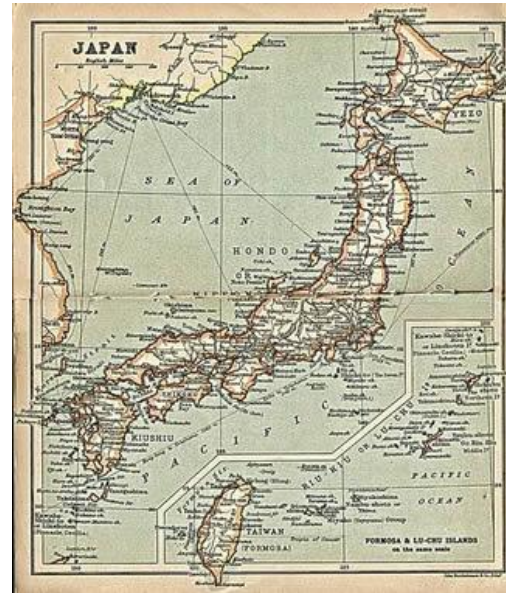
The actual history of the formation of a national identity though starts only under control of the Japanese empire (1895 – 1945). Taiwan was ceded by the Qing empire to Japan as part of the arrangements upon their defeat in the first Sino-Japanese war. As it appears from some historical sources, the loss of Taiwan was not considered unacceptable, nor was its acquisition deemed all too much of a prize (see box 4.3, Chou 1999: 31-2).

It was Japan's first colony though, and was meant to be showcased to the West to prove Japan was a 'worthy imperialist' and an equal to the western powers (Ching 2001: 17). For this reason, the Japanese invested considerably in Taiwan in order to introduce the island into the modern age (Ching 2001: 16). They instated an elaborate census, formal land rights, modern irrigation systems, a rail- and highway system, electricity, modern education and public health facilities. On the other hand, Taiwan and Japan were in a colonial relation, with human and natural resources being transferred to the colonizing country. Especially towards the end of WWII this became a sizeable burden. In 1919, the Japanese initiated a *dōka* ('assimilation') policy, which aimed to educate Taiwanese as responsible subjects of the Japanese empire. Japanese became the official language – also in education – and residents were familiarized with Japanese culture and customs, about which many elderly people in Taiwan are still intimately knowledgeable. Thus, the Taiwanese gained a Japanese political and cultural identity (Ching 2001).

The end of WWII brought the era of Japanese rule to a close, be it looked upon as a more or less positive colonial memory, or left the negative imprint of an occupied period. The UN put Taiwan under the administrative control of the ROC. When in 1951 the actual session of Taiwan from Japan to China was to be legally provided for, legitimacy issues were already at play as both the PRC and the ROC claimed there was but one China; and both were referring to themselves as the legitimate version. There are still intense legal struggles going on over the legal technicalities of all the treaties and declarations involved in the cession process, as these might prove a new state is justified, or that the actual government of China has its seat in Taipei (Lee 2004: 16).

Box 4.3: Taiwan according to Qing and Japanese government officials

In 1894-95 the first Sino-Japanese war was fought, which ended in a victory for the Japanese. As part of the arrangements upon losing this war, the Qing empire handed over Taiwan to Japan by means of the Treaty of Shimonoseki. Qing officials were not bothered too much by the abandonment of Taiwan though: 'In Taiwan, the birds do not sing, the flowers are not fragrant, the men are heartless and the women faithless. Ceding it away would not be a pity at all'.



The Japanese on their part were similarly impressed by what they found:

'Dirty water was running around the houses and some people lived together with dogs and pigs. Though there were public toilets (in Taipei), excrement was found everywhere. The inhabitants seemed to possess no knowledge of sanitation. A large number of prostitutes with advanced syphilis appeared around the city. Education

lagged far behind. Pressed so hard to earn a living, they (Formosans) had no time for learning. Farmers and coolies did not receive even an elementary education; merchants could read and write, but their knowledge was limited to bookkeeping and business correspondence. Ninety percent of males were completely illiterate, and female literacy was naturally lower'.

4.2 The era of KMT rule 1945 - 2000

In 1945 Chen Yi, a KMT official of the still singular China, was dispatched to Taiwan to become chief executer and governor of the regained province. Although residents of Taiwan were eventually welcoming Chen Yi and his retinue happily, these feelings changed because Chen's rule brought corruption, unemployment and severe inflation to the island (Chou 1999: 41). The Taiwanese did not feel treated like 'the long lost sons of Han', but felt another colonial relation was being established – and on worse terms, for that matter. 'Dogs go and pigs come' was a slogan which could be encountered on walls all over Taipei to express this feeling (Kerr 1965: 97).

On February 28 1947 an anti-governmental uprising began, which was incited by a more or less random event (see box 4.4, Chou 1999: 41-3). The uprising spread to all cities on the island, and was violently crushed by the KMT government. The interpretations of this '228' incident vary: was it the brutal killing of innocent Taiwanese, or the repressing of rioting communists and people spoiled by the Japanese? At any rate, it has proven to be a significant formative experience, creating bitterness in Taiwanese people towards the KMT (Edmondson 2002: 25-6).

Box 4.4: The February 28 Incident

On the evening of February 27, 1947, agents of the Tobacco and Wine Monopoly Bureau and four policemen checked unlicensed vendors for cigarettes. They caught a widow, confiscated her cigarettes, and hit her on the head with a pistol when she begged them not to confiscate her money and tobacco. When people nearby attempted to help the woman, the policemen fired several shots into the crowd, killing one person. A crowd gathered at The Taiwan New Life Daily, demanding that this incident be reported. The chief editor told them that the government's Propaganda Commission had just ordered him not to report the incident. The people took to the streets, moving on to Military Police Headquarters and the Taipei Police Bureau, demanding that the guilty police be severely punished.

Box 4.4: continued

On the morning of the next day, February 28, people gathered again. At noon, protestors took over a radio station, spreading the news of a street demonstration. When people gathered at Chen Yi's office, Chen's policemen arrived and fired into the crowd, killing two more people and injuring several others. Protestors got angrier and started to beat Mainlanders who were walking in the streets. The anger spread to every city on the island. On the evening of that same day, Chen Yi declared martial law. Policemen and soldiers patrolled the streets, shooting pedestrians.

Chen Yi filed a report to Chiang Kai Shek describing the incident as a 'rebellion' that required a military crackdown. On March 8, Chinese troops sent by Chiang Kai Shek arrived at Keelung harbour in northern Taiwan:

'Soldiers on deck had begun to strafe the shoreline and docking area, even before the ships had reached the pier. As the Nationalist troops came ashore, they moved out quickly through the streets of Keelung, shooting and bayoneting men and boys, raping women. Some Formosans were seized and stuffed alive into burlap bags found piled up at the doors of sugar warehouses, and were simply tossed into the harbour'.

Further brutal killings of innocent Taiwanese followed. Politicians, members of the Settlement Committee, journalists, teachers, students, and many others were arrested and executed in secret in the four months that followed. The precise number of victims is not known.

On the other side of the Taiwan Strait, the civil war between the Communists and Nationalists had flared up again after the Japanese threat belonged to the past. In 1949, this war was decided in favour of the Communist party, and the KMT retreated to Taiwan. Two million people from the Mainland, mostly soldiers, government officials, scholars and students, immigrated into the six million strong local population,

while most immigrants chose to live in and around Taipei. Taiwan became the ROC's final place of retreat, and the base from which to regain the lost homeland: the territory of Mainland China. Based on a 'One China' ideology the PRC government was not acknowledged, while Taiwan was regarded as a mere province of this homeland which now had its righteous government temporarily seated in Taipei (Yu et al 2008: 38).

During this 'state of emergency', which was to last 38 years from 1949 to 1987, martial law suspended many civil rights, including the freedom of assembly, association, expression and publication. Strikes, demonstrations and the formation of political parties was suppressed. An era of White Terror - or the suppression of political dissidents - began, enforcing obedience to martial law by arresting, trying, imprisoning or executing those considered a possible threat. This episode caused many Taiwanese to be very cautious about talking politics outside the family circle, or even there: people were considered a threat for any farfetched reason (Chen 2000: 159).

The political system that was originally designed to represent the interests of the whole of China was transplanted to Taiwan; all provinces of the ROC were to remain represented (Chou 1999: 54). For this reason, re-elections were impossible as no new representatives could be elected from the mainland, communist controlled provinces. In order to preserve legitimacy within a One China ideology, the KMT burdened itself with a very rigid political system.

4.3 The Republic of China on Taiwan

From the moment Taiwan became the last stand of the Republic of China (ROC), the KMT government took it upon itself to realize the three fundamental Principles of the People of their founding father Sun Yat Sen: Nationalism, Livelihood and Democracy. In order to fulfil the first principle, the instilling of a Greater Chinese identity was taken up seriously. Calhoun stated that 'Nationalism in power is often a repressive ideology demanding strict adherence to the authority of the official embodiments of national tradition' (1994: 325), and in Taiwan this clearly was the case. The island was to be purged of the Japanese influences, and movements regarding Taiwanese culture were to be suppressed. During the Dutch rule, the presence of Koxinga and the rule of the

Qing empire, millions of Chinese had immigrated from Fujian and Guangdong (see figure 4.2): 2.3 million people of these origins were present in 1894, on a total population of 2.6 million. During this time Taiwanese culture has steadily been Sinicized (Yu et al 2008: 38), so that after the period of Japanization the notion of a Chinese consciousness could still be accepted. The narrative which was being constructed was still located within ‘the limits to invention and imagination’ as proposed in the theoretical framework.

Developing this identity in people who had lived on Taiwan for generations and had never visited the Mainland is not an easy task. To this end, government (which equalled KMT up until 2000) delivered the same message –that is, we are heir to the Chinese culture, and bear responsibilities in rebuilding the nation-state which the evil communists have defiled- through various channels (Chen 2000: 166). Language policy, education, the re-naming of streets, the naming of national institutions, media output and public activities were connected to build up a Chinese national identity and a One China ideology.



Figure 4.2 Situation of Guangdong and Fujian in the PRC

Mandarin Chinese became the official language in public venues, schools, official documents and broadcasting. This was a big transition, as residents of Taiwan spoke either Japanese, Taiwanese (also referred to as Hoklo, the language spoken by those originating from Fujian), Hakka (by those originating from Guangdong), or one of the aboriginal languages. In school, reading class was named 'national language class', which regulated the idea that Taiwan actually is a Mandarin speaking society (Wilson 2009: 419). Implicitly, the message was spread that to speak Taiwanese was provincial and backwards, while to write and speak Mandarin Chinese was elegant and conveying sophistication (Chou 1999).

When it came to education, Chiang Kai Shek, former generalissimo and president of the ROC on Taiwan from 1949 until 1975, was an adherent to the view that this is more than just the acquiring of general knowledge by children. In the Elementary School Curricula Standard, government explicitly stated that 'education should serve to promote nationalism and national interest' (Chen 2000: 76). Education then served to promote state-imposed notions of 'home', and to prepare children for their future responsibilities in the nation-state reformation.

Thus, a 'Greater Chinese' identity was being inculcated: Taiwan is a part of China, culturally, politically and ethnically. Through national language class, the reinterpretation of history and the presentation of geography, Taiwan was assimilated into the Chinese culture. Taiwanese history and cultural identity itself were ignored (Chou 1999: 19). Students were taught that Mainland China was the place they would live one day, and that it was their sacred duty to 'recover our lost land and save our compatriots from the evil communists' (Chen 2000: 65). Besides longing for the Mainland and the virtues of patriotism, strong anti-communist feelings and a hatred of the Japanese aggressor were encouraged.

The KMT government also creatively employed the public space of Taipei in order to promote a great Chinese identity (Chen 2000: 132-144): Taipei was the new 'provisional' capital which was to reflect the grandness of the whole of China. The strategic renaming of streets, the construction of memorial halls, the instating of statues and the naming of parks were the essentials pursued within this framework (Corcuff 2002: 80-3).

Streets and areas were to be renamed so as to ‘purge’ the city of remnants of its Japanese past, and to turn Mainland China into a tangible reality. Streets were named after cities and counties in the mainland – in a way that matches the actual Mainland geography – with the two arterial roads being named after Sun Yat Sen (Chungshan) and Chiang Kai Shek (ChungCheng). Another type of street names also features to represent the nationalist ideology, and to give but a few examples:

<u>Street name</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Fuxing Luo	reviving-the-nation street
Guangfu Luo	recovering-the-nation-state street
Minchu Luo	Nationalism street
Aiguo Luo	love your country street

Interestingly, these street names are still in use today, the only exception being the abolishment of the ‘Long live Chiang Kai Shek’ road. Through this strategic renaming of streets, Taipei became a reflection of the Mainland when the KMT was still powerful there. Taipei itself became a non-place in this process, while nostalgic feelings towards the Mainland got stimulated.

Two other prominent features in Taipei are the Memorial Halls built to commemorate Sun Yat Sen and Chiang Kai Shek, the two persons considered most important in the development of the Republic of China. After the ending of martial law in Taiwan the notion of Chiang as a faultless leader and the cult associated with his person became debated though, and in 2007 the DPP government changed the name of the hall to ‘National Taiwan Democracy Memorial Hall’ (see figure 4.3) and the open space in front of it to “Liberty Square”. The guards who stood watch before the statue of Chiang within the hall were dispatched, and the statue itself was rather roughly removed. This renaming episode was a political scandal in Taiwan, and was revoked in July of 2009 when the new KMT government reassigned the hall again its original title. Adherents of the Green coalition took this occurrence as an opportunity to express their view (see figure 4.4).



Figure 4.3 Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial renamed



Figure 4.4 Symbolic meaning of the Chiang Kai Shek Memorial Hall

The naming of national institutions is another case in point. These were all named in relation to the state they were operating in, and within the One China ideology, this logically meant China: China Airlines, China Telecom, Chinese Petroleum Corporation, China Post, China Central Bank, and so on. These official titles implicitly endorsed the notion that China was led from Taiwan.

In 2007, the names of several national institutions were ‘decinisized’, meaning that allusions to “China” (中國 Zhong Guo, or 中華 Zhong Hua) were replaced by the characters 台灣, Taiwan. These changes were problematic to KMT ideology, as they were challenging the notion that the island Taiwan is a part of China. The problem was felt to be that if these title changes would reach some critical mass, the habit of using ‘China’ would switch to the use of ‘Taiwan’ in company titles (Lee 2004: 27). The postal system was even using stamps on which only ‘Taiwan’ was printed. The KMT expressed its objections to the name changes, and when the party was reinstated in 2008 as the ruling party, the name of the national bank and the postal system were restored. In the case of the postal stamps produced by the China/Taiwan/China Post, an interesting time series of the naming debate has emerged (figure 4.5).



Figure 4.5 Stamps printed in 2003, 2008 and 2009 respectively

Through media the KMT had another means of reiterating their nationalistic, China-centred and anti-communist message. In the era of martial law, radio, television, news papers and magazines were under direct control of the KMT, and their publications were subject to censorship (Chou 1999: 56). Tight control of the media became untenable in the 80s, but in the years before all messages conformed to a KMT pre-selection of what was news worthy, and a KMT interpretation of those selected items.

As the news was presented from one viewpoint only and within one ideology, no serious debates were enacted through media, and no competition between different versions of the same medium existed. Over half of TV and radio programs were presented in Mandarin Chinese, further endorsing the notion of Taiwan as a Mandarin speaking community (Dreyer 2003:2).

Finally, official commemorative holidays were all inspired by events which had happened on the Mainland (See box 2.1), except for Peace Memorial Day which is celebrated since 1995. When it came to public cultural venues, the KMT fostered Mainland Chinese cultural expressions only. The most important cultural collection is displayed in the National Palace Museum, also known as 'little forbidden city': upon retreating from the Mainland the KMT brought with them nearly all mobile artefacts from the premises of the Forbidden City in Beijing. Through this collection, the KMT argued the ROC is the sole preserver of Chinese culture, an argument which gained in importance after the cultural atrocities committed during the Cultural Revolution on the Mainland in the 1960s.

By contrast, expressions of indigenous Taiwanese culture such as opera and puppet theatre were excluded from government support (Dreyer 2003:2). The use of Taiwanese or any other indigenous language was severely discredited, as it was implied that a person who spoke that language was most probably daft and culturally ignorant.

In sum, all these measures prompted a famous Taiwanese poet to say that ‘there was only one voice left in the society, and the voice was from one group of people who controlled Taiwanese society’ (Chou 1999: 53).

4.4 Democratization

It actually is rather surprising that the ROC could hold on to Taiwan in the face of Mao Zedong’s determination to deliver Taiwan from the Nationalists. As the PRC has vastly more resources and troops to deploy, this probably would not have been the case had the Korean war not broke out in 1950. As the American army was fighting PRC soldiers in Korea, the US government was anxious not to lose their logistic basis: Taiwan (Chen 2000: 70). A fleet was send in so as to keep the PRC from taking Taiwan, and later on a security treaty between the US and the ROC was signed. This pact allowed the ROC to remain in power and enabled the KMT to instate their ‘One China’ ideology. This active involvement of the USA in the ROC – PRC contention has caused me to decide upon the USA as another ‘constituting other’, though not in the role of an antagonist as the PRC, but as am example in the ways Taiwan portrays itself as different from the PRC. These two cultures both exact a great influence on the Taiwanese national identity, but are nonetheless very different from each other. Thus, I wonder if visiting these countries in the context of academical mobility causes different interpretations of one’s national identity to emerge.

Over time, however, culture and identity began to evolve from the ideal type set by Chiang. The possibilities for the KMT to actually retake the Mainland by force were declining (Dreyer 2003: 3), and as ‘retaking the Mainland’ was one of the legitimizing pillars of KMT-rule, its leadership saw itself in need to implement change so as to maintain political legitimacy. In 1972 Chiang Ching Kuo, the generalissimo’s eldest son, initiated a Taiwanization policy. The aim was to fortify internal solidarity by taking on Taiwanese into the KMT and as government officials; positions formerly

exclusively held by Mainlanders. The KMT thus tried to 'win Taiwanese loyalty to the regime, promote ethnic harmony and link the interests of the Taiwanese more closely to the KMT'. Chiang Ching Kuo's idea behind the move towards democracy was a new interpretation of 'retaking the Mainland'. Originally, this was planned to be accomplished by force but as time went by, the US withdrew support and China grew stronger. Chiang Ching Kuo came to believe that the only way for the ROC to overcome the communists was to first promote democracy and prosperity in Taiwan, and then to convey this democratic experience to the Mainland. As Chiang Ching Kuo put it: 'We must serve as a beacon of light for the hopes of one billion Chinese so that they will want to emulate our political system' (see figure 4.6)

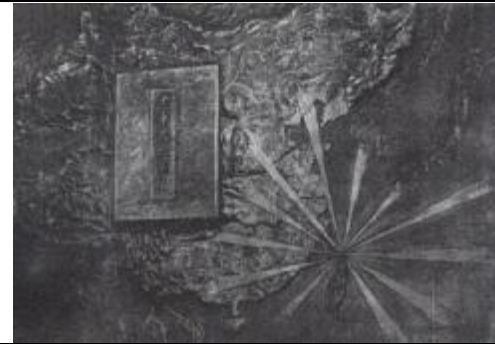


Figure 4.6 Taiwan as a beacon of light: plaque in the Presidential Hall

In 1984 Chiang appointed Lee Teng Hui, a native Taiwanese, vice president and his successor. By virtue of being Taiwanese, he would be able to deal better with the internal threats from the emerging Taiwanese nationalists. Lee introduced a territorially defined identity that allowed an individual to describe himself as both Chinese and Taiwanese, and proposed that all living on Taiwan should be thought of as Taiwanese. This concept of 'New Taiwanese' was a vehicle for a diversity friendly and assimilative identity, to avoid a division between the minority of the Mainlanders and the rest of Taiwanese society. Through the gradual instalment of democratic practices

and involving citizens in decision-making, people got used to thinking of Taiwan as a legitimate governmental entity (Chu 2004: 499).

Lee was also the first to re-interpret the 'One China' principle, by making a bid for UN membership in 1993. The ROC actually was one of the founding members in 1945, but in 1971 the U.N. seat representing 'China' was switched from the ROC to the PRC when the KMT rejected the option of a 'two-China' policy: the ROC would not hold office on a same footing with the CCP bandit regime.

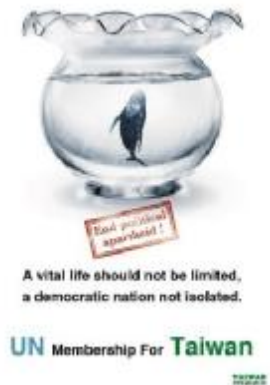


Figure 4.7 Taiwan in the UN

The Beijing government was not amused at their attempt at re-entry, and its strong reaction helped to raise awareness in Taiwan about the island's fragile political status. Where the 'One China' discourse at first provided the ROC legitimacy in the face of the 'bandit communist regime' of the PRC, it now serves the PRC in barring the ROC from entering the international community. As it turns out, the PRC has a strong bargaining position in demanding that about all countries in the world recognise the PRC as that one China (see box 4.5)

Box 4.5: Countries recognizing Taiwan as the one China



Belize	Kiribati	Saint Lucia
Burkina Faso	Marshall Islands	St Vincent and the Grenadines
Dominican Republic	Nauru	São Tomé and Príncipe
El Salvador	Nicaragua	Solomon Islands
Gambia	Palau	Swaziland
Guatemala	Panama	Tuvalu
Haiti	Paraguay	Vatican City
Honduras	Saint Kitts and Nevis	

These 23 countries neither have a vibrant economy, nor are key diplomatic players.

Except for these more political developments, Lee endorsed cultural related changes as well. A nativist literature, telling stories about ordinary life on the island, gained in popularity, and native performing arts were promoted and subsidized (Chu 2004: 499). In fact, the views on what embodied 'high' and 'low' culture were encouraged to change, with Taiwanese cultural expressions not being excluded a priori anymore.

As a result of the Taiwanization of the KMT, the 80s saw an increasing democratization, and the move from a severely authoritarian state to a soft one.

Power relations became less uneven, so that 'the imposed sense of [Taiwanese] inferiority was weakened and could be challenged (Mennell 1994: 183). It was not a full democracy allowing for the organization of political parties, demonstrations or uncensored publications, but when in 1986 the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was founded it was not suppressed – and actually admitted into political spheres. Where this political movement initially was banned and known as 'Dangwai', or 'outside the party', it could now participate in mainstream politics.

In the 1990s the right of the president on an unlimited term of office was restricted to 4 years only, and from 1996 onwards the DPP was allowed to compete for this highest political office as well. For the KMT, this was another step away from its core commitment to Chinese nationalism (Chu 2004: 498). In 1996 Lee Teng Hui was re-elected, and by the public this time. Lee kept endorsing policy which did not bear witness of Chinese nationalism either; he strongly opposed full scale economic integration with the Mainland, and persistently vetoed policy proposals related to the lifting of the ban on the three links of postal communication, trade, and maritime and air transport (Chu 2004: 500). He feared that too great a dependence of the Taiwanese economy of entrance into the Chinese one would jeopardize Taiwanese sovereignty. At the peak of his presidency, 'he was viewed by a majority of native Taiwanese as the embodiment of the glory and honour of the Taiwanese people and the protector of political independence from the PRC's hostile reunification campaign' (Chu 2004: 500). Within the KMT though, some considered Lee nothing short of a traitor to the KMT cause of Chinese nationalism. Lee's leadership over the course of his 12 year presidency does a lot to explain why native Taiwanese feel attracted to the KMT just like people with a mainland origin do. In the early 50s, the older Chiang had already attracted Taiwanese by initiating a program of land reform which forced landlords to 'sell' all their lands exceeding a specified amount of acres to the government, who gloriously redistributed this to many native farmers (Chou 1999: 55).

3.5 Changing of the Guards

In 2000 the 2nd presidential elections were held, with a victorious outcome for the DPP candidate Chen Sui Bian. The DPP originated from the period of *White Terror* (1949 ~ 1972), and now got the opportunity to broadcast their ideas on national identity. Even though the KMT had tried to wipe out nativist ideologies, these kept existing alongside the official Chinese nationalist discourse: democratic reforms permitted an out-in-the open appraisal of Taiwanese consciousness and identity (Chu 2004: 497). In the former USSR, 'the most basic reason for nationalism to flourish [...] has to do with repression' (Calhoun 1994: 319), which also seems to apply to the situation in Taiwan; something the DPP also explicitly states (see box 4.1).

Where the KMT considers Taiwan a province of the whole of China, the DPP thinks of Taiwan as sovereign and independent: it does not belong to the PRC, and the sovereignty of Taiwan does not include the mainland (see fig 4.8). In other words, 'Now, the Republic of China is Taiwan' (Lee 2004: 16).

In 1964 an overseas Taiwanese published a declaration advancing three points which are still promoted by the DPP in their independence discourse (Chou 1999: 77):

1. The people on Taiwan and the citizens of the PRC are different, based on their different historical experiences
2. The ethnic nation and the state are not necessarily congruent: 'one can be proud of his Chinese ethnic cultural heritage and still wish to be politically separate from China'
3. Countries are formed by a sense of community and a shared destiny, not necessarily by common blood, culture, or language

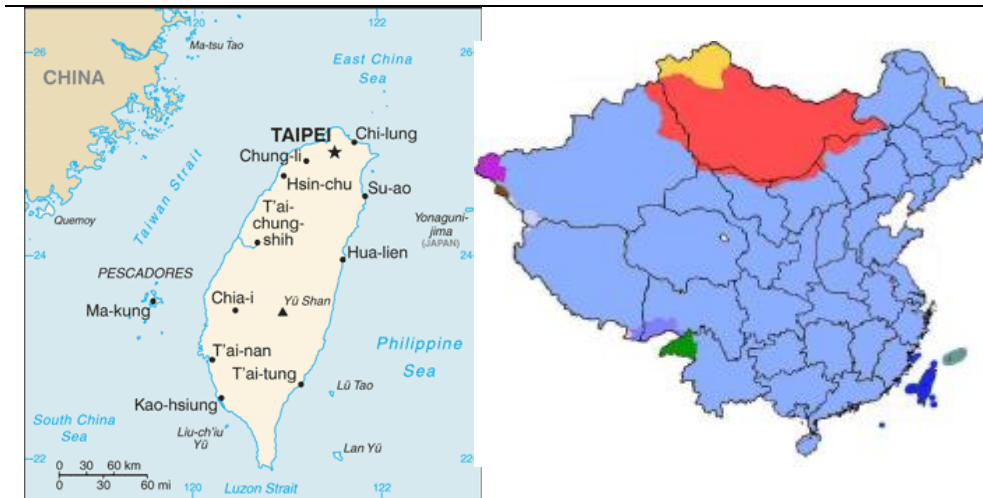


Figure 4.8 Taiwan according to the DPP

Figure 4.9 The ROC according to the KMT

In the face of this conception of reality, Taiwan should draw up a new constitution, replacing the one ratified on the Mainland in 1947. The PRC though does not condone any non-‘One China’ policy, and in 2005 the CCP passed an anti-secession law: the PRC can now employ any means necessary to ‘protect sovereignty and territorial integrity’ - including military intervention (Yu et al 2008: 44). This development has made many Taiwanese prone to understand DPP, independence and disaster as equivalent.

Within the political system the DPP anticipates, freedom, democracy and self-realization are of primary importance. In this context, the DPP steps onto the stage of good governance, to create a contrast with the KMT’s former authoritarian and suppressive rule (Lee 2004: 15). The proceedings of the KMT related to the February 28th incident and the ensuing White Terror period amount to the KMT’s original sin, which is sometimes strongly emphasized by the DPP to discredit the KMT when it comes to serving the interests of the Taiwanese people. This governance crisis on the part of the KMT was further aggravated due to the minority mainlander control over the majority of Taiwanese, and the corruption and monopolizing of benefits for KMT members. Through media and political talk shows, a feeling of collective victimization by the KMT was instilled (Lee 2004: 18). Recently however,

the DPP has lost its innocence in good governance as former DPP president Chen Sui Bian was judged guilty of embezzlement, taking bribes, and money laundering during his presidency.

Another issue arising from approaching Taiwan as a separate and sovereign territory is the development of an identity geared towards this territory: an indigenous Taiwanese national identity. According to the DPP, government should attach 'equal importance to modern and traditional culture, and promote awareness of Taiwan's history and native culture' (DPP.org, 2009). Over the course of the DPP rule from 2000 tot 2008, the identity issue and debate gained somewhat of a sharp edge. All mainlanders, up until the 3rd generation, were categorized as 'pro-China' without distinction, and the inception of an 'either / or' tactic in defining New Taiwanese (as opposed to Lee's assimilative version) resulted in an unfriendly attitude towards mainlanders, with China and anything related to China being called into question or even discarded (Lee 2004: 18). People who were unable to speak Taiwanese started to be suspects when it came to their loyalty to Taiwan. Where speaking Taiwanese was once considered vulgar, it now has become an essential skill for politicians in order to prove their sincerity towards their electorate.

Educational reform is a further issue strongly promoted by the DPP, as school curricula had been under strict control of the KMT. According to the DPP, schools have emphasized outdated dogma, and should in future 'promote independent, creative thinking and an objective knowledge of history and current affairs, while at the same time encouraging social consciousness and traditional culture and values' (DPP.org, 2009). These educational reforms turned out to be a source of contestation, as the DPP pursued some crucial changes:

1. Chinese history became foreign history
2. The history of Taiwan as a settler society (see figure 3.1) was emphasized
3. Differences in the historical trajectories of the PRC and the ROC were stressed
4. Discussion and multiple interpretations became acceptable
5. The Japanese were no longer considered evil occupying forces

This reinterpretation of history, and for many citizens a personal re-valuation of their past, has been crucial for a move away from a pure Chinese identity (see figure 4.10).

Interestingly though, there neither is a majority who is identifying as fully Taiwanese. Within official DPP political discourse, the focus shifted from a mono-cultural Chinese interpretation towards an appreciation of multicultural diversity. When taking the population composition into account, this seems a logical thing to do (see figure 3.5). In practice however, especially Taiwanese or Hoklo tends to be promoted.

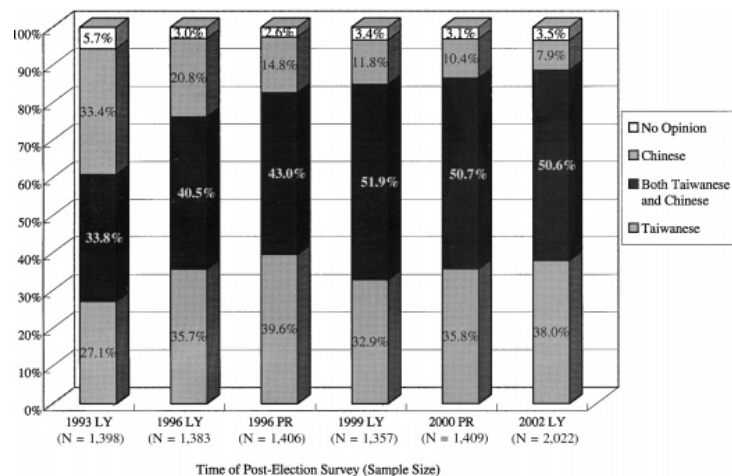


Figure 4.10 Longitudinal changes in national identification in Taiwan (Chu 2004: 501)

A final key issue for the DPP is to counteract Taiwan’s isolation in the international community. To bring this about, the DPP began fostering ‘substantive’ relations through economical and cultural links with countries already recognizing the PRC, and is setting great store by membership in any international organization and bilateral ties. Within these networks, Taiwan is consistently portraying itself as a country upholding democratic values and human rights, and as such has a right to exist and should not be permitted to become part of communist China. The PRC is a strong contestant in this DPP quest, disallowing Taiwan to take part in any international assembly under the name Taiwan, or even at all. The DPP considers this an insult to their political system, and a hindrance to promote a Taiwanese identity as separate from a Chinese.

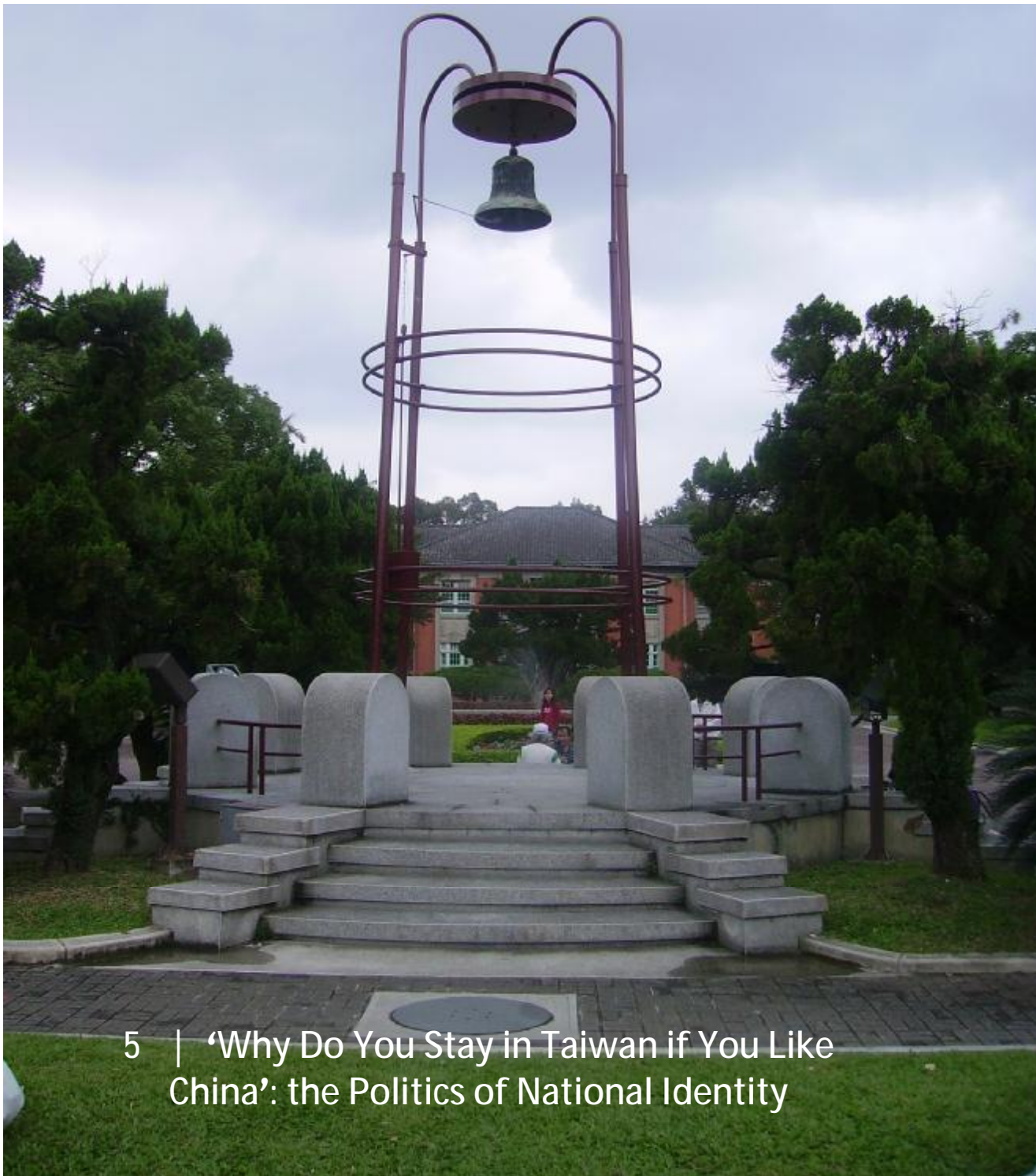
When the DPP came to power in 2000, Chen's regime faced serious economical issues: the 1997 Asian financial crisis had affected Taiwan as well and the corporate sector called for economical reforms. In order to sustain competitiveness, high tech firms had become more and more dependent upon low cost manufacturing possibilities on the Mainland, and Lee's ban on direct interaction with the PRC hampered business opportunities. Though the ban on the three links was not relaxed, Taiwan did join the WTO in 2001 so as to create business opportunities in the wider world; and was thereby obliged to lift import bans and trade sanctions against the Mainland (Lee 2004: 509). It is somewhat ironic that it was the DPP, promoting a Taiwanese nationalist discourse, who inadvertently enabled cross-strait economic interaction. From a businesslike point of view though, it was about time; the PRC's economy was booming through Deng Xiaopeng's more pragmatically inspired economic policies. Given Taiwan's partially shared culture and language proficiency, it could have an enormous advantage in penetrating this market, and excluding Taiwanese from these opportunities for ideological reasons while the rest of the world was trying to get on board was unacceptable to aspiring entrepreneurs.

Chen and the DPP's emphasis on Taiwanese nationalism and its possible repercussions on economical development became a theme that was picked up by the KMT. They began to promote economic integration – even though it was Lee Teng Hui who installed trade disincentives with the PRC in the first place. From then on, the KMT advocated itself as the protector of Taiwanese economic interests and employment. In doing so, the KMT took the role of the reasonable counterweight to the DPP's sometimes emotional public manifestations. It can be reasoned that economic integration though will mostly benefit higher educated people with mobile skills or capital, who are able to compete in a global market. Low skilled individuals, however, will find themselves in direct competition with PRC citizens who require less pay and secondary provisions. As it is, highly skilled people are overrepresented in the Taipei area, while the latter group is mostly represented in the southern and central parts of Taiwan. This led to the following equations (Lee 2004: 20):
Pan Blue – North – (internationally) educated – sophisticated - relatively high incomes
Pan Green – South – provincial in social experience and cultural orientation – simple minded – low incomes.

Currently, a true media war is raging over the question of national identity and the related Unification versus Independence debate. There are six TV channels presenting 24-hour political news on a scale from 'deep' green to 'deep' blue. In political talk shows, and in editorials from newspapers which are also located on the same colour scheme, there is 'news' on national identity and unification or independence every day, which is presented in rather polarized terms, biased and sometimes accusatively formulated.

From this history of national identity formation on Taiwan it can be derived that 'the problem of national identity in Taiwan has remained the most controversial issue over the past two decades. The national identity of the island remains divisive, uncertain and explosive' (Yu et al 2008: 37). The general tendencies of people's identification are being monitored regularly by means of opinion polls. Public opinion research on unification or independence, the use of the name 'Taiwan' in international relations many more items is being carried out regularly (MAC 2010). A reason for this is that when a government is actively working upon the attitudes of people, the measurement of effects on these attitudes is indispensable to evaluating whether a kind of policy is 'on the right track' or not; subsequently, reflection can take place, and adjustments can be made. This means there is a very tangible aspect to the instilling of thoughts into people's mindsets: it is an active process, in need of regular support.

It remains to be seen how Taiwanese students are negotiating their national identity in the face of these active manipulations and differing motives. In the following chapter I will discuss the first research question.



5 | 'Why Do You Stay in Taiwan if You Like China': the Politics of National Identity

As it emerged from chapter 4, the political elites within the DPP and KMT are important sources in offering a realization of a national identity for Taiwanese citizens. In very few countries mainstream parties are nationalistically motivated, a situation which in Taiwan proves to be a political opposition creating genuine tensions between its residents. Either option – an eventual unification or a formal independence – will influence the lives of Taiwanese deeply, and as Fred (Taiwan) put it: ‘Unification or independence will influence our security, so we concentrate on this topic. This topic will change our lives very much. In case of a unification, we have to follow the Chinese government, and in case of independence we have to face the force of China. So this is the most important topic’.

Education was described as an important means by which ideology could be inculcated, a view to which a member of the KMT party I interviewed still adheres: ‘Education is just a tool for the ruler. They communicate what they want to the people’. A second main platform from which political parties are spreading and reinforcing their views on national identity are the media. Several news channels and papers produce daily news biased to one side or the other. When viewing identity formation as an active and context sensitive *process*, the ideological clash the students are contended with every day could leave traces in the way they are formulating an opinion on their national belonging. For that reason the question guiding this chapter runs as follows:

How does the way Taiwanese students assess contrasts between the political parties in Taiwan influence their view on national identity and does having had an international experience make a significant difference?

All my interviewees mentioned education was an important source in defining their national identity. The contents of especially history and geography curricula are highly politicised, and are an important means of creating resonance for either of the two worldviews. The students I interviewed were all still educated within the Greater China ideology championed by the KMT. Marvin (USA) explains: ‘I thought I was Chinese before. Because in Junior High I believed what the textbook said, we came from China and one day we will launch another war and conquer the communist government. But finally I know it is just a slogan, or a legend that will never be practised’. In current elementary and high school education, however, the notion that Taiwan should be a part of China is less and less emphasized as a result of textbook revisions. Li-An (PRC) gives extra lessons to a high school student, and

observed the following: 'I was a little surprised to discover that in describing the national population amount or to describe the weather distribution in Mainland China, Taiwan is no longer on the map. That is different from our days in high school. They are now trying to exclude Taiwan from the concept of China. Because before the government told us and we thought ourselves, although we have been separated from the Mainland, we still think of ourselves as Chinese, as an inhabitant of the Chinese culture and its historical experience, and linked ourselves to the future development of the whole of China. But in recent years, the government tried to change this kind of consciousness. I don't really agree with that. Your only goal and your only land is Taiwan, and you should not have emotional linkages with China. Yes, it is a very unique comparison before 2000 and after 2000'.

Though multiple perspectives are taught and accepted in education now, Fred (Taiwan) still remains sceptical: 'Of course you learn more perspectives, but is it the truth? It may just be a story told by someone or by some party. Of course they can supply some truth to their history'. The former restriction and still-going-strong manipulation of information has made the students I interviewed acutely aware that one and the same historical event can motivate several narratives of it, and has turned them into critical consumers of information. All students felt that the education policy influenced them very much, up until the point they were able to reinterpret this knowledge through additional sources by themselves. Upon recombination, national belonging to a 'Greater China' was discarded by all but one of my interviewees: identity formation for them clearly has been an active as well as a context sensitive process.

5.1: Much ado about nothing?

A vastly more important component in the way the students reinterpret their national identity has been media coverage of politics in Taiwan. Several interviewees mentioned that the media did stimulate their interest in the issue of the formation of a national identity. As Kathleen (PRC) put it: 'All the media attention makes you wonder about being Taiwanese'. Lee (USA) agreed with this: 'Because it is on the TV every day and they show the conflict between the KMT and the DPP, people start to make a choice, to think which side is better for us?'

When the students actually reconsidered the substance of their ideas about

national belonging, media output was of no significance. Participants from all groups felt the news to be very biased and manipulative, which prevents a personal representation in accordance with proposed contents. Thus, the Blue and Green principles and the way they are being disseminated are influencing the way Taiwanese students are renegotiating their national identity – though not in the way ideology would have it. Sying (PRC) and nearly all other students conceded to be tired of political news: ‘Most things in the paper are everyday almost the same. If you read the Liberty Times, it is always about how Ma Ying-Jeou is bad and how his policy is bad. It is the same on the TV news. So in fact, I don’t think this will help to shape ones identity’. Something to remark here is that political developments get extensive coverage on several TV channels and in papers. Prior to the year 2000 this debate did not feature in public media, as the KMT government still controlled contents of the mainstream media. After 2000 the DPP also started to advance their views, and anno 2010 each party inculcates their message as thoroughly as possible: ‘There are political talk shows from 2 o’clock in the afternoon to 8 o’clock, and then the golden period of TV time, from 8 to 11 o’clock, always talking about politics. I think it is too much, it is too much for a normal society to take that much information from politics. We should know whether our government is doing a good job or not, so whether the politicians from both sides are doing a good job or not. People have a right to know. But in Taiwan, it is going too far. It is gossip, too detailed, and sometimes the problems mix up with hatred, with bias. From both sides, and to both sides’ (Hank, DPP).

The channels are related to either one of the two political views, and students are well aware of the bias in coverage this causes. As Kathleen (PRC) put it, ‘You can see very very Green, because channel 53 and 54 are more supportive of the Green party. If you go to channel 55, it is more like Blue, and the 50 and 51 is somewhat neutral, and then back to the Blue. If I go to a restaurant, and I see some guy watching channel 54, I will know for sure this guy is supporting the Green party’. Li-Ming (Taiwan) explains the bias in reporting further: ‘Some channels support the Green, and some the Blue party. And the same sentence will be explained differently in each channel. Like one channel will cut the first half of a sentence, and the other channel the last half of the sentence. And then it can become very different’. Inculcation is a strategy commonly employed by an elite trying to preserve power, in an attempt to ‘neutralize’ a given view on reasonability and possible solutions.

It was interesting to learn none of the students I interviewed look forward to this news, and even consider it boring and a waste of time: they feel that the information

discussed in the political programs does not lead to progress or valuable insights. As several students complained, 'news' is an overstatement of what the coverage entails. As Sying (PRC) for instance said: 'Well...in fact, I used to like to watch these talk shows at first. I think that to listen to those professionals in political issues just makes some...most of the talk show leaders made quite wonderful or interesting comments about the government at that time. But after years and years it is just about discovering the politicians in their private affairs. I don't care if Ma Ying-Jeou is a homosexual or not. If he still can think well, you can love anyone you love. But the talk show will talk about that he loves a male, like Ma Ying-Jeou he loves a male, he is a kind of shame to our country'. Shu-Fang (USA) made a similar comment when she said that 'I would say that this news is necessary for people to know about what is going on. But some of the news seems trivial to me. For example, I don't really like to know what the presidents wife likes to wear. Or I am not really interested in their relationship or...' A reason for the extensive coverage was guessed at by Sying (PRC), who noted that: 'Even if there is only 1% watching these TV shows, it is still many people. Politicians don't care about the percentage, they just want a stable group of people who are interested, they just want to maintain the basic electorate for their work'.

When the coverage does pertain to content, over-commitment to the favoured party is a common frustration for the students I have talked with. This leads to a-priory rejection of any idea or argument proposed by the other party. Peng (Taiwan) considers this a problematic issue: 'I think it is a very bad phenomenon. They always say something against another party, even though they are right. And they don't judge think by the reality, they judge by their colour'. All students agreed upon this, with Marvin (USA) formulating his irritation at this explicitly: 'If you are different from me, I am against all your other policies. For example economic development, Pan blue votes against just because it is a Pan green policy. And so the Pan green does vice versa. I think it is very meaningless...'

One questionnaire item explored the degree to which the students considered the issues of opposition between the Pan Blue and Pan Green coalition to be exaggerated. Around three quarters of each group felt this to be the case, as shown in table 5.1.

Table 5.1

The oppositions between the Pan Blue and Pan Green coalitions are exaggerated

Group	Yes	No	No opinion
Period abroad in the PRC	76.9 %	7.7 %	15.4 %
Period abroad in the USA	70.6 %	13.8 %	15.7 %
No academic mobility	78.8 %	3.8 %	17.3 %

The results of a Mann-Whitney test revealed there are no significant differences in the way these three groups judged this question, so that they stem from the same population.

A reason why the students go into this matter is that they feel that political parties are able to spread their views in cooperation with the media, and the way the students feel about the methods through which political coverage is realized has been commented upon above. As Lee (USA), among others, felt, 'We have too many TV channels which have a lot of news all the time. It is not good for our people, it is not good for our health and it damages our brains. Their viewpoint is not fair, and... the leader of a party and the public media, they influence the way we look at each other'. Importantly, a significant share considers political parties to be *the* most important force in shaping a national identity (See table 5.2).

Table 5.2

Political parties are the most important force in shaping a national identity

Group	Yes	No	No opinion
Period abroad in the PRC	41.1 %	41.0 %	17.9 %
Period abroad in the USA	31.4 %	43.1 %	25.5 %
No academic mobility	54.0 %	20.0 %	26.0 %

That in itself is already an unusual situation, as day-to-day party politics are usually divided across liberal/conservative lines instead of nationalistic proceedings. A quote from Lee (USA) clearly signifies how closely intertwined he feels politics and national identity are: 'In the presidential election in 2000 I voted for the DPP and of course my parents voted KMT and my brother voted for another candidate, and my sister voted for another candidate. In that year, we had 5 candidates. And all of our family voted for a different candidate. It also tells the truth that the Taiwanese identity is very complicated'. The importance of political parties in shaping a national identity, the liberal amount of media coverage and the biased nature of this input makes for an outspokenly negative influence of feelings surrounding the struggle for national identification.

5.2: Dividing Taiwanese

Even though the students feel there is no content to the differences between Green and Blue, it was explained to me that the tensions between the political parties –exaggerated or not- are extended to society in general. The question of national belonging bears a great significance to the daily life of Taiwanese people, something which Da-Xia commented upon: 'Those politicians and those people shown on TV, they talk about this usually and argue with each other, I think that is a kind of problem in Taiwan. They don't produce any good knowledge for us, because the politicians just confuse us, and make people fight with each other. So that is a problem'. In the same vein, most students felt that politics and political news coverage promote a strong dividing line between Taiwanese people.

The DPP politician I had an interview with also saw this dividing of Taiwanese people through political argumentation. As he put it, 'In Taiwan elections are always focussed on negative things, always attack, always trying to point out the other's weakness. I don't think it is healthy, but it is simple, it is fast, it is efficient and it is effective, so they always try to use the negative approach'. An important negative approach is to emphasize there are fundamental differences between those who originate from the Mainland and came to Taiwan in 1949, and those who were already living there. As Peng (Taiwan) put it, 'the DPP always emphasizes that the migration belongs to the KMT, and the local Taiwanese people to the DPP. And it is an election skill for the DPP to talk about this, to divide the people in these two groups. And the DPP always tries to send a message to

those local Taiwanese people, something like, we, the local people, have to govern the country'. Peter (Taiwan) disapproves of this tactic: 'The situation of politics is very horrible. Because each time an election is coming, the DPP stands up, we love Taiwan, so all Taiwanese people should vote for us. But they always distinguish themselves, we are Taiwanese, KMT is not Taiwanese. They will betray Taiwan, something like that. And if you don't agree with this idea, then you don't love Taiwan. So this issue is, how to say that, politicized'. Thus, by extension all those sympathizing for any given reason with rapprochement with the PRC are criticized as traitors. Lee Teng Hui's efforts to reconcile all living on Taiwan into an assimilative 'New Taiwanese' identity are not accepted anymore in political discourse. Where it was essential for the KMT to incorporate their minority of Mainlander members into a possibly hostile social environment, the interests of the DPP in emphasizing that 'Taiwanese people should vote for the DPP' can be easily deduced from figure 5.5.

Under the presidency of Chen Sui Bian, the DPP governed Taiwan from 2000 to 2008, and many students feel that as a result of the DPP's strategy to distinguish itself from the KMT hostility between the different political currents has grown. Two students gave an example of the practical strategies that are used by the DPP to accomplish differentiation: using origin, and speaking in an overtly emotional manner. Lee (USA) voted for Pan Green, but was disappointed in the way the president dealt with ethnical differences: 'Our president Chen, he had some special personality traits. He liked to make things more conflicting, more serious, more complicated. And the words he used were not nice, he was not considerate to the others. Especially to the generation who came from Mainland China because of the war. A lot of those who came with the KMT party, they have their whole families in Mainland China but they can't go back. They really made a lot of contributions to Taiwan, it is true. But president Chen, he doesn't think so, and he said it in not very good words. And I think it explain the problem, and brings a lot of hate, people become contrasted to each other. And I think it is not good for this island, this conflict. We have a right to express our opinion, it is a free country. But as a leader of a country, you have to be more careful when you speak, and you have to think from more points of view. So in my opinion we all live on the same island, and even though we have a different opinion about each other but we should respect each other and continue to communicate and show more sympathy and empathy to each other. We don't know what will happen in the future, but at least we have to hang together and care for each other. Not like because you don't agree

with my viewpoint I won't help you, that is not a good way to get ahead. So I don't like the situation now between the two parties'. Adam (Taiwan) also voted for Pan Green, and was disappointed by this way of governing as well, which he felt to be immature: 'I don't like some statements the former president Chen Sui Bian made. Like... if you like China, you can swim to China. In Taiwanese, it sounds funny. We have no limit, you can live in China. Why do you stay in Taiwan if you like China? Like that. But I think these sentences are not good for peace. As a president, even if they oppose you, you should be respectful, you should not say like children, you don't like this? you are out! So I think the DPP should change its view. They should respect Pan Blue. They should not say emotional sentences. Because if you want to have peace, you should respect others. That is a very important thing. We have a lot of conflict now, because the two parties don't know how to cooperate and talk about the future of Taiwan, because they always think, your idea is bad for Taiwan, my idea is the good way'

Interestingly, none of the students saw the KMT as an agitator, not even Janice (USA), who explicitly supports the Pan Green Coalition: 'some of the KMT people have a Chinese identity. And to them, Taiwanese identity is a political issue that is aroused by the DPP party'. In Critical Language Study an explanation for this can be found: if an elite has managed to naturalize their view on the world through including and excluding items in their own interest, it becomes less and less clear that they are communicating an ideology just as well. In this way it becomes possible for the KMT to act as the 'voice of reason' in case of an argument, and enables the party to manoeuvre the opponent into a subordinate position. As a result, DPP supporters are frequently portrayed as being aggressive and violent, and felt to be important instigators of problems between people – with the historical motivation for this purposefully left out of the picture. Another strategy is to portray DPP politicians as politically underdeveloped. In this way, Peter (Taiwan) -who is Blue inclined- explains their supposed violence as a legacy from the DPP's underground origins: 'In my opinion, the Green group is more violent. Maybe this is because the original members of the DPP had no other means to protect themselves, they could not participate in the elections or something like that. They could not get into the centre of the government. So they need to use some violence, to attract the people, to call a lot of people to protest against this government together. So at that time, if they used violent

behaviour, I think, maybe that is OK. Because they have no other, better measure. But at this time I don't think so! There are so many means, they can participate in elections and anything. But the politicians in the DPP now, they think our DPP ancestors used violent behaviour, so we still use violent behaviour. But they don't notice that the time is different, the situation is different'.

A further tactic to win votes is to play upon fears people might have regarding a war in the case of independence, or the erosion of democratic institutes in the case of unification. Thus, the Unification versus Independence debate makes for a sure audience: Gillian (PRC) agrees with Fred (Taiwan) that 'the people who want to win the election use this issue to win votes'. The futures of the Taiwanese in case of a unification or in case of independence will be widely different, which is one of the reasons why people attach strong feelings to this topic. As Wan (PRC) put it, 'I think it is important because we will want to know who will want to become independent. And maybe in our mind they will become our hero or become the one we hate, but people still want to know. We still want to know who cares about the present, or who wants his own nation. Maybe there is someone of the Green party saying, we want independence, and then China says something about this and then America will talk about it...that makes me feel very insecure. Or someone says we want unification, and that makes me feel worse, like oh my god, we will be part of China'. All students mentioned the political situation in the PRC as unacceptable to be transplanted to Taiwan, where they have become 'used to the freedom to speak or to vote or to publish or to gather'. From chapter three it emerged already though that the PRC is strongly opposing a Taiwanese secession, which has become one of the reasons the students mentioned for not wanting to become independent. As Marvin (USA) phrased it, 'I think probably most people vote for unification, because if we pursue independence, then China will launch a war. They legislated an anti-independence law, which states that if any part of China would like to be independent or change the current situation, the Chinese government has the right to launch a war to control the situation. I think most people are afraid of the war'.

In effect, a large majority does not want to decide upon the topic of national identification and the necessarily related choice of Unification or Independence. As can be derived from chart 5.1 too much political action towards either unification or independence is not being approved of.

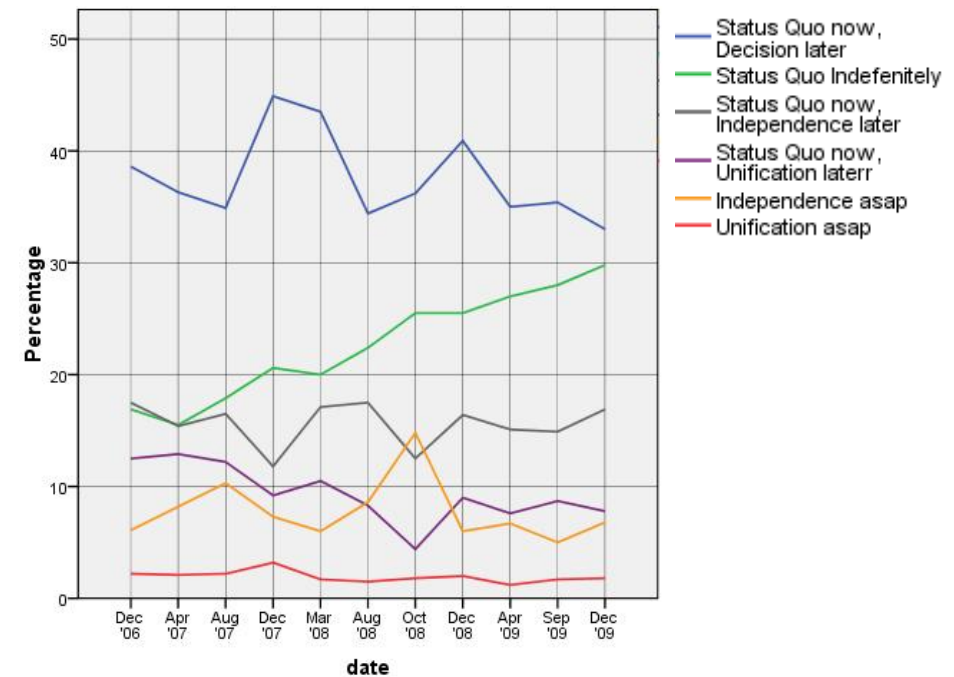


Chart 5.1 Unification or Independence? (Source: Mainland Affairs Council 2010)

Something all students agreed upon however is that they consider the status quo impossible to maintain for a long time to come. Most feel that the everlasting discussions about it are wasting time that could have been used productively, and two students also mentioned that the status quo actually costs a lot of money that could have been invested in more valuable services or institutions, instead of in the army. This is one of the reasons why Kathleen (PRC) felt the status quo to have an expiration date: 'Sooner or later you will have to chose one or the other. Buying weapons, I think it is costing a lot of money, and there is no war, we are going to put it in the storage and maybe in ten years they are going to be old and useless, so you don't use them anyway. Because to buy weapons and not use

them, I think it is a waste of money. And they could have invested a lot of money in education, in hospitals...in something people can really enjoy’.

These strategies’ relation to ethnic diversity, strong emotions, and playing at feelings of insecurity about a possible war meant to attract voters do not remain confined to the political sphere only, due to extensive media coverage. None of the students appreciated endless senseless bickering, and were regretting the hostility it provokes between ordinary people. As Yi-Jie (Taiwan) put it, ‘It is like... a performance of politicians of the parties. It’s a trick, everything they say. I don’t believe a word they say because they change their opinion often. And I think they say that because they have to make us think they are doing something for us. But I never believe that, if you really consider the people of your country, you will try to...like not this situation, to keep the people apart fighting each other. I don’t think it is a really good way’. As it appeared from the interviews, the students feel that especially the DPP has a strong hand in fanning negative sentiments among the Taiwanese. Adam (Taiwan) further observed that ‘one likes independence, one likes unification. And they are hard to mix. In many news items, they say family members are fighting, and couples getting divorced... this is the worst situation, but in Taiwan, many people will argue because of this. Even in the family’.

Some of the students I interviewed mentioned this quarrelling within their nuclear family as well. When one of my interviewees stated that he shared the same political opinion as his parents, a friend of him joked that that was probably in order to safeguard his monthly stipend. Several of the students pointed out that especially during the campaign for the presidential elections, they avoid discussing their preferences within their nuclear family. However, there are also families in which politics can be discussed, as is the case in Lee’s family (USA). In 2000, there were 5 different candidates, and each family member in his family had voted for a different contender. When Lee’s choice turned out to be somewhat disappointing¹ his family sometimes made him face this. As he told me, ‘We don’t go crazy about party things. Taiwanese can get very crazy and pay a lot of attention. So my DPP vote did not cause a big problem in my family. But then president Chen won the election, and he didn’t do very well. So every time I watched the TV news my mom told me, that is because of you. And then I say, shut up’.

¹ After a 16-month trial, in September 2009 Chen Sui Bian received a life sentence and a 6.1 million US\$ fine on charges of embezzlement, money laundering and taking bribes while in office from 2000 to 2008 (Wikipedia.org, 2010a). This sentence was reduced to a 20 years’ jail term in June 2010.

One problem the students mentioned in communication between supporters of the Green and the Blue side was the phenomenon they described as ‘having a deep colour’. In effect, being of a ‘Dark Blue’ or ‘Dark Green’ disposition means that this person supports their party blindly, and loathes every member as well as all policies proposed by the other party. As Peng (Taiwan) put it, ‘I think Taiwanese people are enthusiastic about politics. So there are a lot of people from two groups, they have a deep colour...for them it is a good issue to attack the other party, they feel it is an important issue to identify, to attack other people, to say you are not Taiwanese’. It can be noted that in this case as well, specifically the Green supporters are portrayed as the assaulters. Peter (Taiwan) also considered the Blue fanatics as an origin for ongoing conflicts: ‘Some people are really very deep deep deep Green and deep deep deep Blue. They cannot stand any people that support DPP, or they cannot stand any people who support KMT’. Interestingly, Peng himself prefers the Green Party, while Peter supports the Blue Coalition. Thus, both are able to not only find fault in ‘the others’, but are willing to take a critical stance on what they are supporting themselves as well.

As it seems, the Chen Sui Bian phraseology regarding the divisions between ‘immigrants’ from Mainland China and those Taiwanese who lived in Taiwan for 400 years already has made it into common language. His expressions which were aiming at alienating those who are in favour of greater interaction with the PRC for whatever reason are repeated by his public as well, according to Yin (Taiwan): ‘Maybe we will say that, if Blue people love China, then why won’t you Blue get back to China, and then they will hate Blue people. So deep Green people will think you should go back to your province, get out of here, get out of Taiwan. It turns this kind of emotion into hate, that will cause a fight, or some behaviour like that. And sometimes people just hate Blue or hate Green, without really supporting the others’. Interestingly, Yin -who also happens to be preferring the Green Party- also points to the hostile strategies by deep Green members first, while only then saying that Blue supporters aren’t specifically gentle either.



Figure 5.1 No topic for small talk

Through this language of stark opposition between the political currents, and through inciting distrust from both camps to both camps, speaking about political preference has become, once again, a no-go area in the public domain (see figure 5.1). Both Li-Ming (Taiwan) and Shai-Ming (USA) commented upon this problem, and as Shai-Ming has experienced: 'I remember I took a taxi one time. And many taxi drivers support the Green Party. And when they carry the customers, they usually ask people about their political tendency. So we talked about a political topic and I didn't agree with him. So he said to me, get out. That is a problem. But the situation got better, because it is very tense only during about half a year before presidential elections'.

In practice, elections are rather plentiful in Taiwan: referenda, local elections, municipal and provincial elections, parliamentary elections and of course presidential elections have Taiwanese heading for the polling station nearly each year (wikipedia.org, 2010b). Thus, political campaigning and politicians picking on each other is more often than not the order of the day. 'They may say the other side tends to do something bad for Taiwan. They just try to set the other up. So in contrast they make people hate the other side, and attract people to them', Fred (Taiwan) observed.

In discussing the sensitiveness of politics and national identification, some even made references to religious beliefs: 'we won't talk about it too much, because some take it like religion' (Yin, Taiwan). Dax (USA) added to this: 'You have half a chance to meet someone who has a different opinion. And if you know that is the case...well, if you are Christian and you know half of the country is Catholic and half Protestant, you won't talk about religion that often'. A commonly used strategy is to simply ignore the issue, and as Shu-Fang (USA) said, 'I think it is mostly a political issue to have a different opinion on, and we don't want it to interrupt our social life, so...' Some of my interviewees, like Peter (Taiwan) were attributing the sensitivity of this topic to the doings of the DPP: 'If this topic is sensitive, it should be attributed to the DPP politicians'. On the other hand, the past policies of the KMT were also brought up as a reason for the topic to be sensitive, as it arouses strong emotions in some people. Lee (USA) explained: 'Most people who support the independence of Taiwan, they also have a bad feeling to the KMT party. And then that feeling is very very strong'.

5.3 Overcoming the division

In discussing the sensitivity of the topic, all three groups agreed that this was especially true for the older generations, and as Marvin (USA) phrased it: 'I think for my generation it is not really problematic, but for the older generation'. Or as Kathleen (PRC) put it: 'One came to Taiwan near the Qing dynasty, and one came with Chiang Kai Shek. And they think that is different. But it is not that much anymore, at least I don't see it in the newer generation'. Furthermore, the students I interviewed all felt that the election structure is becoming more and more flexible, and that the idea of always sympathizing with the same political colour –which is quite usual now- is likely to become something of the past for them. As Gillian (PRC) told me, 'I am blue now, but it is flexible. I am no colour, I think that I will be more in the middle. I can stand here and look, and think which one is true... I can identify that'. Peng (Taiwan) agrees with her, and re-stresses that it is important to compose a coherent opinion instead of restricting yourself blindly to either colour: 'In the young generation, like us, we don't have a colour. I think most people in our university can have their own attitude to look at those political issues. They don't always choose sides in a way that you should always support the Blue party or the Green party. We must judge on

thinking, common sense, not depending on the colour'. Several of the students I interviewed had already experienced swinging from one party to another based on their judgement of developments themselves:

- 'During the Chen Sui Bian presidency, I thought he did too much to make Taiwan go independent (see figure 5.2). I think that is really a bad thing, because I was afraid that we may be attacked by China. I was worried that we may have a war, so I was a little bit to Blue at that time. But after Ma's time if office, I think it is better to return to the Green party, because I think he is too much... trouble' Wan (PRC).
- 'I don't think I will vote for Pan Blue all the time, I might think Pan Green has a good proposal and then I will vote for them' Dax (USA).
- 'In the past years I liked Blue better. But in recent years, I think people in the Pan Blue are not as talented as I think. And maybe they are a little bit conservative. Not like Pan Green, they also use people that are very young' Li-Ming (Taiwan).



Figure 5.2 Chipping away at the 'One China' policy

Not all however agreed that this situation is already common, or will even spread from the higher educated individuals. According to Shai-Ming (USA), people are currently still voting in a preconditioned manner, though he hopes this will change in the future: 'Maybe someday it can be like in the US, this time we vote for party A, then party B, and then party A again. But in Taiwan it is not possible. People only vote for this party only, no matter who is its candidate'. Both Sying (PRC) and Dax (USA) acknowledged that this tied voting still occurs, but both restricted it to the older generations who felt they 'owed' to either of the two parties. As Sying (PRC) related, 'Well, for my father, because he was born in a village in a KMT enclosure, almost all of his education was sponsored by the KMT, because my grandpa was a KMT soldier. So he may not accept the policy of the KMT, but he thinks that he owes the KMT too much so he must vote for them. But in fact I think my fathers thought is more like the DPP, I don't think his thought is like the KMT. He just votes because he thinks he owes too much'.

Several students mentioned that they considered it healthy that the traditional differences between Blue and Green are blurring, as they personally discovered society is not ordered in the way the politicians propose: 'According to politicians, the majority from Pan Green is from Taiwanese, and Pan Blue is from the immigrants [from 1949]. But even though I am Taiwanese, I don't think all the Taiwanese should support Pan Green. Because most of my best friends are Hakkaneese, and some of them are from Mainland China. While I am a student, I always make friends with these kind of people. For example, Hakkaneese are a very small percentage of the people in Taiwan. So I can know how they dislike Green. For instance, politicians of Pan Green always use Taiwanese when they speak in public. But those friends of mine, they don't know Taiwanese. So they feel very frustrated when they don't understand what they say. So because of the background that I grew up in, I know that although your ancestors are from a different kind of culture, you still can make friends and you still can live together. Being a Taiwanese or being able to speak Taiwanese is not important. So I don't actually agree with what Pan Green or what Pan Blue says' (Peng, Taiwan). Dax (USA) further explained that the original respective national projects of the parties are not actually resounding with the youth anymore: 'people in my generation support Taiwan as an independent country, because we were born here, we had few contacts with Mainland China when we were young. You think Taiwan is an independent

country for sure, even I do, while I can be classified as a Pan Blue person’.

From the combination of table 5.3 and 5.4 it can also be derived that supporting unification or independence is not necessarily linked to supporting the KMT or the DPP. The percentage of people supporting the Pan Blue coalition is not reflected in the statement inclining to unification, and the percentage supporting the Pan Green Coalition is significantly lower than the proportion of respondents leaning towards independence.

Table 5.3

Do you prefer the Blue or the Green coalition?			
Group	Blue	Green	Neither
Period abroad in the PRC	61.5 %	25.6 %	12.8 %
Period abroad in the USA	50.0 %	38.0 %	12.0 %
No academic mobility	36.7 %	34.7 %	28.6 %

Table 5.4

Which of these statements come closer to your own view?		
Group	If Mainland China and Taiwan were to become similar in economic, social and political conditions, then the two sides of the Strait should be united into one country.	If, after Taiwan announced independence, it could maintain peaceful relations with the Chinese Communist Government, then Taiwan should become an independent country.
Period abroad in the PRC	35.9 %	64.1 %
Period abroad in the USA	23.5 %	76.5 %
No academic mobility	31.4 %	66.7 %

While a common remark thus is that the relation between individuals and a party is getting less pre-given, the students also commented upon the relations between individuals. As Janice (USA) said, ‘My roommate’s parents are from China, and she is an extremely pro-

independent person'. From this quote a loosening in the relation Mainlander / Unificationist can be derived, and a relaxing in the relation Mainlander / Native as well.

Thus, the students I have interviewed are done with the way in which the parties are distinguishing themselves from one another, and are disappointed in the time that politicians are wasting in drawing dividing lines between people. Peter (Taiwan) phrased a strong opinion: 'I think the political situation really needs a change. We cannot be divided into two groups of people. We should be one, only one. Because there are not so many people in Taiwan, and our country is not very big... We need to get together and make the same effort to make us stronger. We cannot be divided in two groups'.

The opinions as to whether the divisions between Taiwanese citizens actually can be overcome differ, though a slight majority in each sample feels that the separation between Blue and Green is a concern of the earlier generations (see table 5.5).

Table 5.5

The Blue vs. Green distinction is a concern of the earlier generations, not mine.

Group	Yes	No	No opinion
Period abroad in the PRC	54.1%	29.7%	16.2%
Period abroad in the USA	52.0%	44.0%	4.0%
No academic mobility	50.0%	32.7%	17.3%

As Shu-Fang (USA) forecasted: 'I think in the following 100 years, it won't disappear. Now in the street, the Mainland identities are still very different from the native ones, and the way they think about the racial issue is still different. And they came like, 200 years ago? And it is still there. It passed on from the parents to the children, from generation to generation. People will find a way to listen to each other, but when that will be...it will not be easy'. Also, several students pointed to the fact that the debate meant that everybody could give their opinion even though the shape the debate has taken is not considered attractive. As Lee (USA) put it, 'This issue was never talked about before. I think it is a good condition that

a lot of people will think about their own future. So although there is a lot of conflict between people, I think it is a good process. But the conflict between the two groups, I think it is too overt, and out of control and...it is not very good'. Adam (Taiwan) agrees with this statement, and adds to it that he feels that individuals should learn to restrain themselves in a discussion: 'Taiwanese should be taught: even if you don't like something, you should still respect them. You should not say emotional sentences [like Chen Sui Bian did], it doesn't work. You will make the conflict more and more'. In chapter 7 the theme that Taiwanese are still learning how to exercise their democratic freedoms will be elaborated upon.

One issue that several students mentioned as probably having a beneficial effect on easing the conflict is the passing away of the older generation. Syng (PRC), whose grandfather came from China, told me his father faced problems with his in-laws: 'I found it really matters to people of 50 or so. Especially my mother's sister, my aunt. She didn't speak to my father for many years, because she thought my father is from China, and also he sent me to China to study, so... she doesn't hate, but she dislikes to see my father or talk with my father'. Dax (USA) acknowledges that persons of middle age and above are serious about this matter, but also mentions that these distinctions are not important anymore in the below 30 generation. As he saw it, 'politicians are trying to exaggerate differences like can you speak Taiwanese, are you a native Taiwanese or are you retreated with Chiang Kai Shek. In my grandfathers generation, they were pretty serious about it, I would say. But I think that in my generation, it is not important anymore'. Janice, Shai-Ming, Fai (USA), Kathleen (PRC), Da-Xia and Peng (Taiwan) agreed explicitly with him.

5.4 Towards political substance

The acronyms 'KMT' and 'DPP' have been used interchangeably with 'Pan Blue' and 'Pan Green' throughout this thesis. Actually, these colours comprise of several parties, with each party taking a different stance on one topic only: Sino-Taiwanese relations. This fusing of parties under a single roof dominated by either the DPP or KMT was carried through in 2000, just after the presidential elections. Peter (Taiwan) did not consider this to benefit Taiwanese politics: 'I think about 8 years ago there were also many parties in Taiwan. But they all merged in to a Blue related or Green related group. I don't like that'. Even though all of the students disapproved of the over-absorption in relations with the Mainland, this preferred election strategy does not show any sign of abating. As Janice put it, 'I think as

long as China is our problem, there will be something to argue. But internal policies or... I don't think there is really significant difference between the parties'.

Thus, in practice, a majority of the electorate still rewards the concentration on relations with the Mainland: 'Most people say they are moderate. But when they vote, they will vote for some guy. And this guy is not in the middle. Unless they don't vote. And maybe if the voting rate drops below 50%, maybe the politicians... they are smart, if the voting rate is below 50% they will know most people don't like what they say. But now the conflict lasts, they can still win the election through it, and they will think, because I speak in this manner, I can win the election. So next time, I will do it again. So they will not change themselves' (Adam, Taiwan). Through my questionnaire I also learned which part of the students actually materialized their right to vote, which confirmed Adam's statement that at least half of the people I have spoken to votes (see table 5.6).

Table 5.6

Do you vote in elections on Taiwan?		
Group	Yes	No
Period abroad in the PRC	92.3 %	7.7 %
Period abroad in the USA	74.5 %	25.5 %
No academic mobility	77.4 %	22.6 %

In the past, the Non-Partisan Solidarity Union which campaigned on belonging to neither side did exist. It was more or less absorbed by the Blue party however: 'Well, I know there was a middle party, they were from parts of Blue and parts of Green and they wanted to play the role of the party in between. But it didn't work. The first thing is, this party had internal debates, so they still knew, you are Blue and you are Green. And from outside, the other two tried to pull it apart, and make the middle party choose their side. So when the leader of the party was convinced by the Blue party, there was no middle party anymore' (Yi-Jie, Taiwan).

Many students however mentioned they would like to see ‘a focus on the reality, not the problem of ideology:

- ‘I think it is very boring to debate whether to vote for one or the other...because the Republicans and the Democrats in the USA and in France or the UK, their two parties are much more different in political and social issues. But in Taiwan Pan Blue and Pan Green really have no difference except for the China policy. I don’t really see their attitude to the countryside of Taiwan or to labour or to immigrants from South East Asia, I don’t really see the difference between their policies. It really matters to our society, but they don’t care about that. They never... they only care about whether our China policy is like brabrabrabra’ (Marvin, USA).
- ‘We should care more about environmental issues, and pollution’ (Li-Ming, Taiwan).
- ‘It would be more interesting how the two parties could find similarities between them, or try to work out a plan to get a better life quality for the poor people’ (Shu-Fang, USA).

Thus, the whole issue of national identification is starting to play second fiddle – though all students are sensitive about it because any solution will have a severe economic or military impact. All were clamouring however for more political discussion about interventions in actually occurring social, environmental and economical problems Taiwan needs to solve. If it were up to Marvin (USA), ‘the whole Green / Blue issue will be dismissed, and we will gradually develop a conservative and liberal model like other countries such as Japan or in Europe’. In a country where territorial belonging is all but clear, this is a strong statement – but it clearly shows the degree of impatience with political proceedings of the students.

5.5 Domestic Decision?

A final issue is that, in the face of internal disagreements over the belonging of Taiwan and external forces and support Taiwan would face or receive, none of the students believe that any decision on this topic can be taken in the short term. This, according Shai-Ming (USA) and several others, makes it an irrelevant topic to discuss: ‘I don’t think it is important to discuss it every day because it is not time to unify or be independent now. So it makes no difference, if you discuss it or not’. The reason it is not time to unify or be independent yet is in the first place related to the internal disagreement among Taiwanese people, even though the reality of a sovereign Taiwan is important in the identification of Taiwanese:

'Now, everybody, most of Taiwanese relate to a Taiwanese identity, so the two parties say they are a Taiwanese party, not a Chinese party. Even if Pan Blue says their target finally is unification, and Pan Green finally goes for independence. But they won't stress this opinion, because we all think unification and independence won't be better than the situation right now. For example, Pan Blue has a tendency for unification, so they will communicate more with China. Pan Green will finally promote independence, so they try to spread communication to other countries, and try to let the world know Taiwan. They just use this kind of policy to attract people, to make people feel that even ruled by them, the situation now won't have a very large change. Because most of us think the situation now is the best' (Fred, Taiwan). The truth in this latter statement speaks clearly from figure 5.1 above.

Another reason for not solving the Taiwanese question of sovereignty relates to the interference of outside forces. As Janice (USA), who supports the Green Coalition strongly, colourfully expressed it: 'I think even claiming that we are going to be independent, this action is not wrong, it is correct, it is right, it is something we should do and we should strive to do. But now, because of China, we cannot do this. It is like there is a robber, he puts a knife on your throat and threats, no, you cannot be independent. But still, I have to be independent'. Yi-Jie also relates to the interests the international community has in maintain the Taiwanese status quo, thus castrating Taiwanese politicians on this issue (see figure 5.3): 'Actually, I don't think they really care about independence or unification. Because the thing is much more complicated than our politicians could control. They are afraid to really formulate their vision. And they know we don't have enough resources to go against China. I don't think they have the courage to decide, any of them, Green or Blue. Imagine that if you are Taiwanese now, and chief of the ruling party, do you dare to say clearly, A or B? Like president Chen Sui Bian, before he was president, he had his opinion, he always wanted to be independent. But what happened when he became president? He didn't talk about it so much, and he didn't insist 100%. But after his presidency, when he had become like a normal person, he was very determined again'. The next chapter will thus further expand on the way the position of the ROC in the international community influences the way the students renegotiate their national identity.

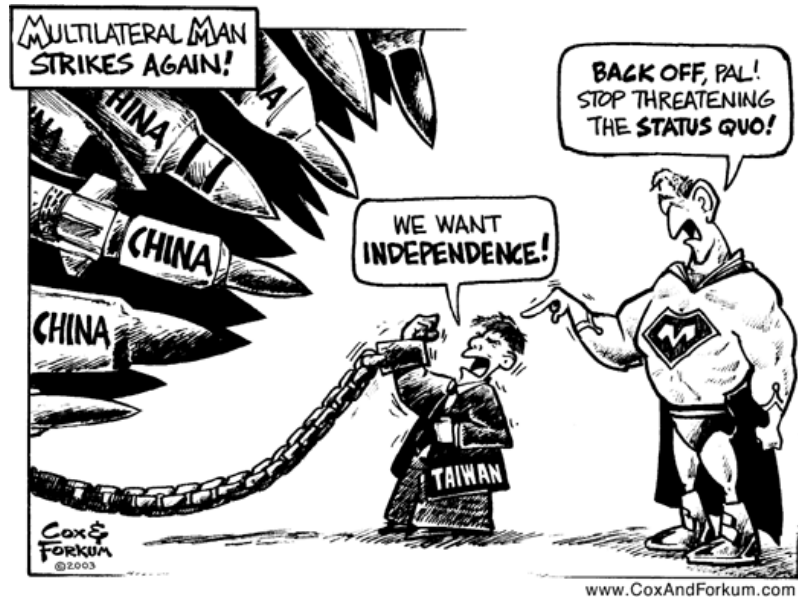
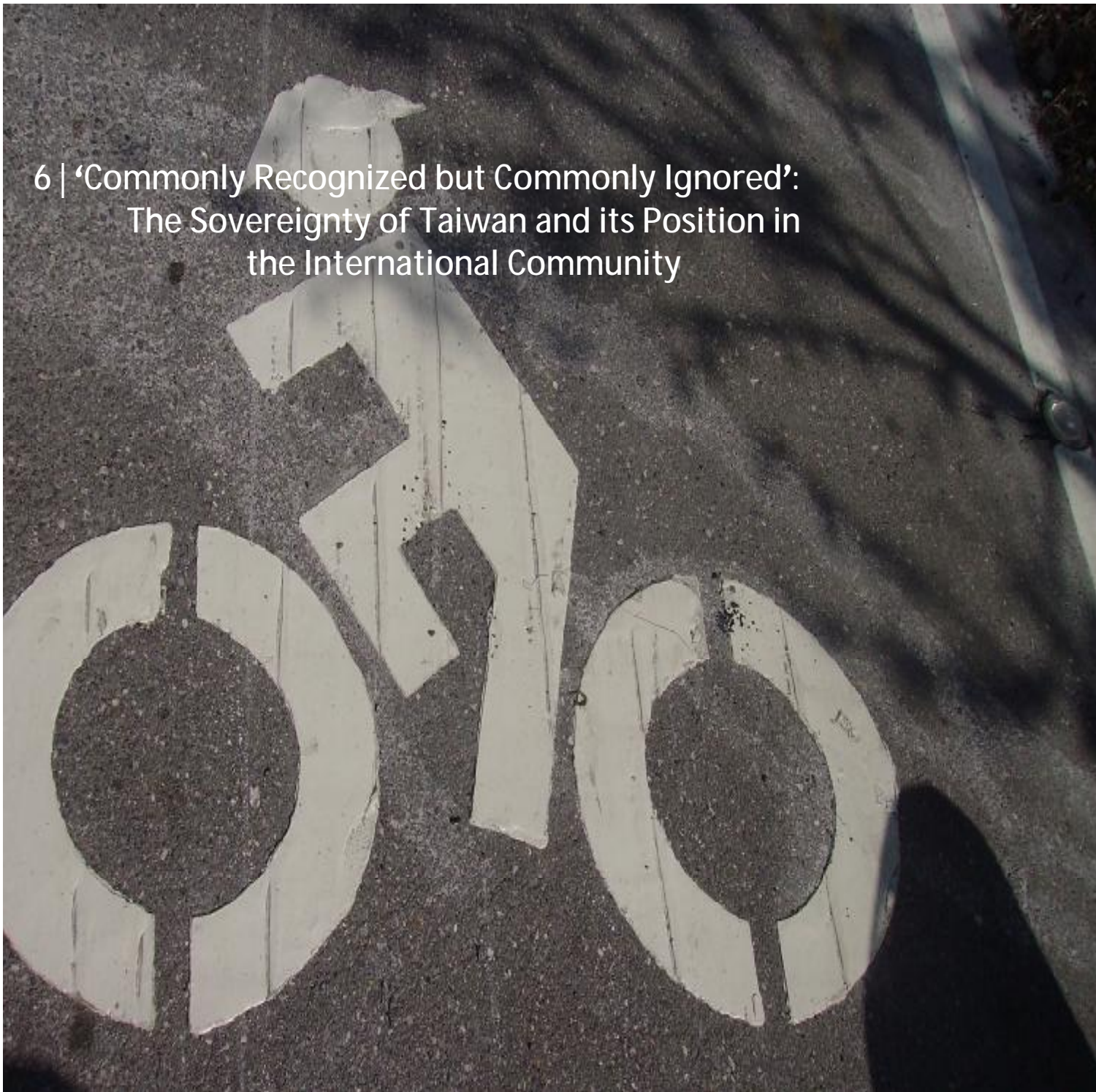


Figure 5.3: interpretation of Taiwan in the international community

6 | 'Commonly Recognized but Commonly Ignored':
The Sovereignty of Taiwan and its Position in
the International Community



As elaborated upon in chapter three, Taiwan enjoys an uncertain position in the international community, with its sovereignty being recognized by 23 countries only (see box 4.5). Additionally, the two main political parties within Taiwan have a difference of opinion when it comes to the borders of the ROC (see figure 6.1), and the relations this ROC should have with other countries, in particular with the PRC. These discussions and the uncertainties in the way the political body of Taiwan is regarded in the international community may influence the way the students I have interviewed recreate their national identity. This issue is also emphasized in the literature, where Tolz (1998: 995) stated that ‘there can be no identity without an alterity’. The question directing this chapter runs as follows:

How do students judge the sovereignty of the island Taiwan and in what way do the relations the Republic of China has in the international community influence the way they renegotiate their national identity?

A first matter is to explore if the students I interviewed consider the island Taiwan a sovereign political unit, while then analysing the way the relations Taiwan has within the international community are defining the way they renegotiate their national identity.



Figure 6.1: Official borders of the ROC

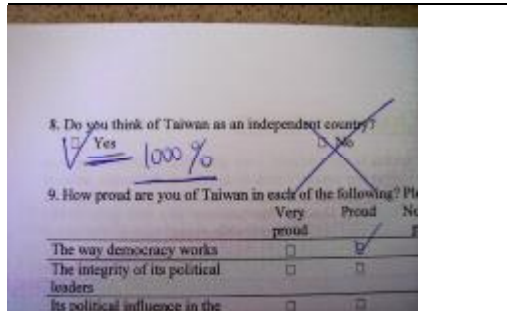


Figure 6.2: De facto sphere of political influence

6.1 The island Taiwan as an independent country

A first issue to look at is the way the students I have interviewed situate Taiwan in relation to the countries of the world: as the actual China, a part of China, or as Taiwan in its own right. This is a revealing category, as it shows the territory the students are relating their national identity to. According to official national discourse and the ROC constitution, Taiwan still is the one China in the world, and the Taipei authority the legitimate government of the whole of China as depicted in the above map. In practice this is not emphasized anymore, though the students I have interviewed were educated into this understanding of the ROC and its citizenship. The tensions between the attitude of ‘Taiwan is Taiwan and China is China’ as former president Lee Teng Hui (1988 – 2000) put it and the Greater China ideology are for some still to be digested. As Li-An (PRC) related: ‘Before the Beijing authority joined the UN, we could still plan we are the only authority representing China. But once we were excluded from the UN and the Beijing authority joined this group, and once their whole power was rising in the 80s, when people thought about China, they no longer referred to Taiwan, but they referred to the Beijing authority. So it is a change in Taiwanese people. It is a new issue for us to think about. Because when you read the constitution of the ROC, you’ll find we still claim our territory consist of outer Mongolia, Tibet, XinJiang, and of course Taiwan, and southern China’.

When I asked the students in the questionnaire whether they considered the island Taiwan an independent country or not, a large majority did (see table 6.1), which is in accordance with the remark Dax (USA) made in the last chapter that nearly all students regard Taiwan as independent (see figure 6.3).



Figuur 6.3 Emphasized opinion

Table 6.1

Sample	The island Taiwan is an independent country	
	Yes	No
Period abroad in the PRC	84.6 %	15.4 %
Period abroad in the USA	94.1 %	5.9 %
No academic mobility	96.2 %	3.8 %

When subjecting the data to a Mann Whitney test, the students who went abroad to the PRC seem to answer this question as belonging to a different population, with students who studied in Taiwan only and in the USA being more likely to regard Taiwan as an independent country.

This outcome exemplifies an item which featured in the theory: a national identity needs to be re-enacted in daily life if individuals are to consider it 'real'. Now that the formerly emphasized Greater China ideology is hardly ever re-cited in education, in the news or in other daily encounters, students are starting to consider Taiwan as distinct from this previously advocated unit of national identity. This can be related to Suleiman's notion of resonance: the national-territorial picture as painted in Li-An's quote does not have a clear relation to the daily life experiences the students have in *Taiwan* – as opposed to in-China-as-a-whole.

Over the course of the interview I also discussed whether the students considered the island Taiwan to be an independent state. All students with one exception felt this to be the case. Yin (Taiwan) put it very strongly: 'I cannot understand why somebody would think Taiwan is not a country'. Shu-Fang (USA) agrees on this obvious independence of Taiwan: 'In reality, Taiwan is already independent from China. [...] Everybody knows that we have a different political system, different laws and different passports. We have to have a visa to get into China!' Fai (USA) observed however that considering the island as an independent country might be limited to the youngest generation: 'Like when someone asks you, is Taiwan independent, you will say yes. Young people will say, yes. Older people they might say: yes, but that is my own opinion. I think it is because they grew up under more serious conditions, like when you said 'Taiwan is independent', you got caught or something, so they won't speak aloud. For us, we grew up when Taiwan is really independent'. Even though official KMT ideology has it that only the ROC (see figure 6.1) and not the island of Taiwan (see figure 6.2) enjoys sovereignty, this clearly is different in the minds of the students I interviewed. It was not uncommon to hear them disconnect Taiwan from the Mainland altogether, as Shu-Fang for example did. This decoupling of Taiwan from the concept of China shows a shifting 'Us vs. Them balance', as Elias proposed (in: Mennell 1994: 194). As Shu-Fang felt it, through different laws and a different – democratic - political system, the line of inclusion has shifted. In the next chapter several other reasons for this shift will be mentioned as well, among which the use of distinguishable languages, shared daily life experiences, the continued existence of aboriginal tribes and past colonization experiences.

In fact, instead of belonging to the same group the Mainland was considered *the* major obstacle in curbing any *de jure* aspirations Taiwanese might have. The dissimilar political education of the Mainland Chinese and Taiwanese is one of the causal factors, as Da-Xia (Taiwan) conceived it: 'We think... most Taiwanese think Taiwan is a country. But I think all Chinese in China, they think Taiwan is just one of their provinces and we cannot just be separated. But that is the truth, we have our government and they have their government'. This disagreement with China made several students I interviewed wanting to keep a low profile when it came to self government in Taiwan. As Li-Ming (Taiwan) put it: 'Because Mainland China cannot recognise us as an independent country and we have no

force in an engagement, I think it is not good to say loudly in the political sphere that we are independent. This is not a good thing. I think we should just be friendly with them on the surface, then we can do our independent things by ourselves'. Again, it is interesting to see how unconsciously the Us vs. Them balance is used in practice. Li-Ming is proposing to be friendly with *them* – who according to official doctrine are part of *us* – and do independent things by *ourselves*, a group which can also be seen as but a very small part of the official *us*-category.

Wan, who went to the PRC, shares Li-Ming's conception of who 'us' and 'them' are, but is on the contrary more explicit about a national identity: 'I think there is a change after I went to China, I think there are a lot of people in China, if they all think this way, there is really really little hope for us to become independent. That made me depressed, but that still made me grow that identity. I just think, we can't let this happen!' Sying however, who also went to the PRC, noticed a slight change in the mindset of the people he met when he discussed the question of Taiwanese sovereignty: 'Many Chinese like to discuss this issue. At first, we don't want to argue with them because it is useless. Taiwan is an independent country or not...but after many years of discussion we may discover that in fact they can realize that in fact Taiwan is independent. Well, they will not say an independent country. An independent region. It is different from Hong Kong and Macao. We have our own military and we can go to many countries with visa on arrival, which the Chinese can't. If they were born in Taiwan, they think they will also think they want independence. But almost all the people I met in China, they had a higher level of education. So they can think in a more logical way or put things in other positions'. Both Wan and Sying consider Taiwan to be independent, but have different opinions on the question if the Mainland Chinese could accept this political situation – even though they have both studied abroad in the PRC.

One student however felt differently about the independence of Taiwan. Li-An (PRC) is not encouraging Taiwanese independence, but was arguing for another conception of sovereignty: 'Today we are used to the nation state system. And when we see it in history maybe we can also see this is a European experience. It also is a globalization experience. But if we see more and more problems in this system in the future, maybe Taiwan can be a pioneer to make a new type of sovereignty, because sovereignty is an important concept for the people in south east Asia. Prior to the 19th century, the nation concept for Chinese people was Tian Xia (天下). It is a core, and the likeness of your culture

with the core will define your political position. So for Chinese, they will think maybe the main part of the Chinese is the core, and the Manchu and the XinJiang and Tibet is the inner part of our country, and Vietnam, and Korea and maybe even Japan is the outer region of our world. But it is still linked. The different types of linkages depend on your likeness with the main part of China. Tian Xia is a very unique system between Asians. Even today, Taiwan uses some parts of Tian Xia to know other countries, to know our relationship between our neighbours'. This way of determining international relations really does justice to the term 'Zhong Guo', or 'Middle Country': the core around which the international community would revolve would be China. Even though Li-An sympathizes with the Greater China ideology, he still considers Taiwan an independent political unit ('Taiwan uses some parts of Tian Xia to know other countries'), but he does not agree that this is a good situation.

6.2 The ROC, the ROC on Taiwan or Taiwan?

The conflict over the borders of the ROC and the shifting Us vs Them balance is also reflected in the way the Taipei government refers to the China on the other side of the Strait – and to the island itself. Before 1996, the island was referred to as the ROC, with the PRC being related to as the Mainland, a piece of territory still belonging to the whole entity. After 2000, when the DPP government came into power, much was done to change the way Taiwanese would judge 'us' and 'them' categories. According to a young KMT member, cooperation between the DPP and media has been very important: 'I think the most important thing the Chen Sui Bian administration did is to impact the media. They controlled it by any means they could. They even requested the media outlet to change the term Mainland China or Mainland to just China. If you call China China, we are different countries. That is why 8 years ago the DPP supported the TV stations that used China as a term. Ow, and that Liberty Times [a green predisposed news paper]. But now, if you turn on the TV to watch the news, almost all stations use China. They don't use mainland China. And you know, it will make some difficulties for the young generation in their national identity. You know, who is China? Our country should be called the Republic Of China. And the China Post, why otherwise the China post in Taiwan? And China Airlines, why would we use China? China television station, the China Petroleum Company... They only use CPC now. And if you ask, what does C mean? They just don't know'. The changes in what the island is officially

called was also shown in the stamp sequence in figure 4.5.

Lee, who went abroad to the USA, also noticed this rearrangement in the way people should categorize their island in relation to China. The subtle modifications in the title of the island in some public media was an important marker for him to think explicitly about Taiwan as a politically independent unit: 'Because when we read the news paper, most use a Chinese word Zhong to mean Taiwanese. When they describe the relationship of Taiwan and America, they use Zhong and America. So most people think the word for our country is Zhong Guo. And when the DPP got to power things changed, we started to use Tai. And Zhong got to mean China. That it is a big problem, because we translate that Zhong automatically to Taiwan. No problem, Zhong means Taiwan. But it changed when we knew more and more about the reality of our situation in the world and we now know no one expects the Taiwanese to think Zhong means Taiwan. I was just very confused, and a little shocked. I think we have to make a choice if Tai or Zhong equals Taiwan. I think that we are no longer Chinese. I think we have to make a choice now, with lots of different opinions coming up, like Zhong means Taiwan because Taiwan is the only one legal Chinese country in the world. Some still think. But for me, I start to give up this Zhong meaning Taiwan, Taiwan is Tai'.

This latter quote clearly signifies the importance the naming debate can have for individuals in the process of deciding to which national category they belong. However, it also is a very political discussion, and most of the students I interviewed had enough of politicians discussing these ideological questions. In the questionnaire an item explored whether the respondents thought the island should be officially named 'Taiwan' or 'ROC', and the political charge implied in this question might explain that in each sample a large proportion indicated that it did not matter to them (see table 6.2).

Table 6.2

Sample	This island should be officially referred to as...		
	Taiwan	Republic of China	It does not matter to me
Period abroad in the PRC	61.5 %	17.9 %	20.5 %
Period abroad in the USA	47.1 %	25.5 %	27.5 %
No academic mobility	62.3 %	7.5 %	30.2 %

What becomes explicitly clear is that the 'Republic of China' or Zhong Guo is a viable category for a minority only. Even though this was the nationality the students were educated into, it seems to have lost its resonance with the greater part of the students, did the territory formerly belonging to the island.

In conjunction with these changes in the way Taiwan and the PRC are related to each other and referred to in the news, the way the PRC government is being regarded has changed as well. This is something Li-An (PRC) elaborated upon: 'Another interesting thing is how we call the government across the Strait. It also has been a long term transition. Because I think before the 1990s, in the cold war period, when we referred to the government, we just say 'the communist bandits', Gong Fei. We will think of them as a rebel group, and we are the right government. And when we refer to the people or to the geography, we will just say Da Lu, it means Mainland. But after 1990 the Gong Fei was transferred to Zhong Gong. It means Chinese communist. We still not see it as a country or as a formal government, but we no longer see them as a bandit. We are the equal political entity in the 1990s. But little by little the reference of Zhong Gong will change to Zhong Guo. It just means China. Now we just call Hu Jintao the Chinese president. But before 2000, we will not because we still think our president is all of the Chinese's president. Before 2000, we will maybe say the leader of the Chinese communist, or the president of the Mainland China or the communist party. We will not directly say he is the Chinese president. But after the 2000, we little and little start to use the term China to refer to the things and the people across the Strait, especially since 2004. It is a turning point, I think. So when you read some papers in Taiwan, you will find one of the major papers in Taiwan is the China Post, and if the China Post reports anything about China it is all happening in Taiwan. It is the heritage of our historical background. Like the CPC, the China bank, China Airlines...'

Step by step, the words and expressions describing the relation between the ROC and the PRC are changing. There are two English-language news papers in Taiwan, the blue-oriented China Post and the green-affiliated Taipei Times. Even though the first paper emphasizes news on cooperation between the Mainland and Taiwan, both treat them as different political entities. The Taipei Times is more strongly doing so, underlining hostilities and never applying the word 'Mainland' to the PRC territory.

Currently a majority of students seems not to feel part of the Greater Chinese population, and on top of that feels repressed by the PRC government. The principle of the Taipei government being the government of the whole of China is not taken seriously anymore, nor is the idea that the PRC actually belongs to the ROC instead of the other way around. As a result of these changes, the students are considering themselves to belong to an oppressed nation, which should take caution in the pace and extent of linkages with the PRC. Li-An (PRC) told me about this change in ideology: 'After the Tiananmen massacre in 1989 we have a very very strong impulse in Taiwan. The students at that time thought, hey, our counterparts in Mainland China do such great things, we should do something too. There is a strong encouragement and during 1989 there were also a lot of students in Tai Da [National Taiwan University] who came to protest for the communist authority, to urge them to say sorry to the students in Beijing. At that time there is still a strong linkage with the people and students between Taiwan and the Mainland. But when things come to 20 years later, to nowadays, you see there are several students, they will strife for the Tibet freedom or the Tibet independence in Tai Da school. So you can see the transition of the emotion. They both urge Beijing to apologize or to step back, but in the emotions of 1989 they will see themselves as a Chinese people, and want to rebel against the false government on the Mainland. But in 2009, the students goal is to urge the Chinese people to not invade Tibet. For Taiwanese students to say these sentences is a little awkward in that sense, because it means they are no longer seeing themselves as Chinese people. It is a transition. So in their perspective they will think Taiwan and Tibet have the same condition, they are both oppressed by the Chinese people. Just before the 2008 election there was some unease in Lhasa, and so the DPP candidate said hey, if you choose Ma Ying-Jeou, the today of Tibet will be the tomorrow of Taiwan. It is interesting'. As a result of the changing way in which the students are regarding the relation between the ROC and the PRC (while even openly questioning the reality of the ROC), the relations with the PRC are a sensitive issue.

6.3 Relations between the PRC and ROC

As elaborated upon in chapter three, the KMT wishes to extent especially economical relations with the PRC, since there is much to be gained for Taiwanese business in this booming economy. It is not uncommon to hear KMT politicians say that it is impossible for Taiwan's economy to survive without direct and less restricted trade with the PRC (see

figure 6.4) – for many items are still banned and the extent of investments is limited, to mention but two of the restrictions on Cross-Strait exchange Lee Teng Hui introduced to dampen the ‘China-fever’. The DPP on the other hand maintains the utmost concern in expanding relations with the PRC, so as not to grow dependent upon access to the PRC economy. This party seeks to diversify international relations and project Taiwan to the wider world, not only in economical relations but also by promoting Taiwan as a distinct political unit upholding democratic values.



Figure 6.4 The DPP [Chen Sui Bian] and the restrictions on Postal, Trade and Transportation links

In the questionnaire three statements were related to the way students felt about Sino-Taiwanese relations. All of these have a clearly political background, which might explain the rather large proportions of the respondents in each group that indicated to have no opinion on these issues. The first statement explored the degree to which the students agreed to the KMT rationale that Taiwan can only benefit from having greater economical interaction with China (see table 6.3).

Table 6.3

Sample	Taiwan can only benefit from having greater economical interaction with China		
	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
Period abroad in the PRC	41.0 %	33.3 %	25.6 %
Period abroad in the USA	33.4 %	35.3 %	29.4 %
No academic mobility	32.1 %	28.3 %	32.1 %

About one third of the students of each sample considers this to be the case, while a group of about the same size disagrees. When I discussed this statement during the interviews, the lure of China's booming economy was mentioned by several students: 'China's economy is developing now, and it could be the great power in the world. So if you think rationally, we should want to go back to China, because China is going to be a great power in the world' (Yin, Taiwan). Adam (Taiwan) is displeased with this attitude of the KMT, as he feels it undermines confidence in Taiwan itself: 'I think we should have confidence, because Pan blue people will tell you, our future depends on China. I don't like the idea, but most people will agree with it'. Several students expressed that economic cooperation is a way for the KMT to open up the road to a future unification project. Marvin (USA) for example expressed that he thought it impossible not to have economic cooperation with China, but that this cooperation should go hand in hand with a further development and promotion of a distinct Taiwanese profile: 'I think just like most of the people that we finally understand that we can't beat China, because 10 years or 15 years ago China was not so strong, and both in political and economical and military fields we were probably still competitive with them. We had lots of companies to export our goods to other parts of the world...and we were not having a diplomatic war. Because we are now really less confident, we have only 25 or less ambassadors outside Taiwan. I think we finally realize we are going to cooperate with them, whether politically or economically, but that we can develop our own characteristics or cultural industries, such as high tech industries, we promote the best we can. Instead of taking China as an enemy, we are taking them as a big friend'.

The second statement reviewed whether the students felt if the expansion of ties between China and Taiwan is going too fast, an issue which the DPP party is reiterating often (see table 6.4).

Table 6.4

Sample	The expansion of ties between China and Taiwan is going too fast		
	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
Period abroad in the PRC	43.6 %	33.4 %	23.1 %
Period abroad in the USA	29.4 %	25.5 %	45.1 %
No academic mobility	35.8 %	20.8 %	37.7 %

Again, a large segment does not have an opinion on this topic. Syng, who went to the PRC, belongs to the students who think the integration between Taiwan and China is following a proper pace. Moreover, he reckons extended linkages with China are inevitable to come into existence: 'I think no matter who became president, no matter Ma Ying-Jeou or Frank Hsieh [the DPP candidate], I don't think the condition would have changed a lot. Especially the direct flight between Taiwan and China, I think it is just a matter of time, though it might have been postponed to 2010, 2011 if the DPP guy became president'. A reason for considering the talks between the ROC and the PRC to be proceeding too fast is that the PRC is setting diplomatical limits for Taiwan in advance, which are related to the way the ROC officially understands its territory and relations with the PRC. As Adam (Taiwan) put it: 'China always says, you must recognise the one country, one China formula, and then we can talk about the future. This is not negotiation, this is not respecting our limits'. A second issue would be that in the agreements that have been reached, the interests of the PRC are felt to be dominating those of the ROC, especially by those who sympathize with the idea of Taiwan as an independent political unit. As Wan (PRC) exemplifies: 'Just like, the airplane can just fly to China, but before it could not. I think this kind of thing is very bad for us because we may compromise our national safety. The problem is that we have to model the route the way they want. Beijing insists that we fly a route here over part of the Taiwan secure area. We store our weapons there, but this will never be mentioned in Taiwan and Beijing announcements. But this is a very smart move'.

A final issue in the rapprochement between the PRC and the ROC would be that the students I interviewed are all very apprehensive about likely changes in the Taiwanese political climate should a future unification become all too likely. In the next chapter I will elaborate on this, and Janice (USA) put it very strongly: 'I don't trust the Chinese

government. I don't. I think Taiwan government should keep distance between Taiwan and China in terms of security, and our ideology'.

The third statement related to the degree to which the respondents considered the European Union model of extended integration a desirable projection of future relations between Taiwan and Mainland China (see table 6.5).

Table 6.5

Sample	The European Union model of extended integration is a desirable projection of future relations between Taiwan and Mainland China		
	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
Period abroad in the PRC	53.9 %	23.1 %	20.5 %
Period abroad in the USA	37.3 %	21.6 %	41.2 %
No academic mobility	56.6 %	18.8 %	22.6 %

There still is a large tract of respondents that keeps from taking a clear stand on this issue, but this time there are less respondents who disagree. Wan (PRC) is one of the students who do not think this could be a way for the ROC and the PRC to cooperate, due to the large power differentials between the two: 'I agree that the EU model is a very good model to improve integration between countries, but I think it will never work between China and Taiwan. Because Taiwan is very small and China is very big, and we don't have that many people and we don't have...even though we have some familiar identities, I think that we don't share the same ideology, democracy'. Also in this case, the importance of the difference between the communist rule in the PRC and the democratic system of Taiwan is reiterated as an obstacle of prime importance.

From each group of interviewees there were also students thinking about this type of future in positive terms, all stressing that this cooperation would assume the same independent political status recognized by the PRC as well. As Adam (Taiwan) put it: 'Pan Green thinks, we should not depend on China. But it does not mean we should not cooperate with China. So it is important, we should have a close relationship with China, but we can be divided. Like the Europeans and the EU. The Union consist of many countries. I hope the same: we are a union, but we are two countries'. Li-An (PRC), who considers himself a unificationist, also likes the idea of remaining in charge of domestic matters: 'Some politicians in Taiwan will urge a future of unifying as the EU. That we will both

recognize each other as a political entity and take care of our domestic things, while we can still built the same roof and under this roof is Taiwan, the Mainland, and maybe Hong Kong and Macao. And maybe call it the Chinese Union, or something like that'. Finally, Dax (USA) stresses that this structure could serve well to extend cooperation with the Mainland, which remains a controversial issue in Taiwan: 'I think Taiwan is like an independent country, but I think there should be more communication between Taiwan and Mainland China. That's my point, yeah. I think Europeans now thinking about the EU, there is not a whole lot of difference that you are from Holland or from Germany or...we are from different countries, but we are now trying to help each other, and the governments work together, you have the same kind of currency, you can work, you can travel very easily. And I hope it's the future of Mainland China and Taiwan, that the relationship will be like... well, maybe it is not really united as a country, like you only have one president. Everyone should be electing their own president and have their own constitution and state army, but they can communicate with each other and they work together'.

6.4 Bilateral relations of Taiwan

However, not only relations with the PRC are a source of contention, linkages in the international community are as well. As Marvin (USA) already mentioned in the above section, 'we are now really less confident, we have only 25 or less ambassadors outside Taiwan'. The official recognition by other countries thus is an important factor in determining the viability of a Taiwanese nation-state. It is an issue extensively commented upon in the news, as Yi-Jie (Taiwan) related: 'Like... the relationship with other country, you'll see the news on TV about a new country who wants to be our brother. The news will tell us that if they don't like to be our brother, they like to be the brother of China. And something bad might happen, causing some trouble... then the next moment you will see a government official for building the connections with other countries, or the president, and they will say something, like we are going to visit the countries who are still our brother, we'll try to maintain a relationship with them'. The students I interviewed were well aware of the power play involved in the relations Taiwan can develop in the international community. It is strongly felt that in Taiwan's efforts to built up official bilateral relations or to join international organizations, and to internally reach a consensus on the question

whether Taiwan should be an independent country or not, they are being influenced by forces outside Taiwan as well. As Yi-Jie (Taiwan) put it, 'I think that many countries around us don't want us to decide if we want to be independent or not. Like the USA, or Japan, and many others. China doesn't want Taiwan to be independent, because they are afraid that when we announce our independence, there will be many others. Mongolia, Tibet, Macao... But China is also afraid to be clear about unification very violently, because it won't be accepted by other countries. So somehow I think the role of Taiwan is just like a piece on the chess board, manipulated by many. This is why we cannot have the clear vision about the identity, because we are being manipulated'.

The opposition of China is particularly strong (see figure 6.5). The growth and opening up of the Chinese economy to other countries is taken as an important reason for many countries not to acknowledge Taiwan and to respect the Chinese wishes: 'China is a big country you know, and has a very important position in the UN. So it is more important for us, because other people, foreigners, they don't matter whether you are a country, they just depend on whether you have good things for them, interest. So for other countries, China has more interest for them, and Taiwan has not' (Yin, Taiwan). Gillian (PRC) also considered this issue, which makes her feel uncertain about American support should the PRC at some day take a unilateral decision about Taiwan's political status: 'We are so small and China has risen in recent years, and their economy is more important in the world, so... America now is in economic trouble, so maybe China's help is important, Taiwan doesn't have enough available to help America. So China's rule is maybe more important to America. So when China wants to attack Taiwan or maybe use arms, we don't have enough to defend ourselves. Maybe in the future we will belong to China'. Janice, who went to the USA, is also aware of the Taiwanese dependence on American protection, and feels undermined by it: 'I think we are waiting for a chance... maybe something really important happens in the international society so we have a chance to be independent. For example, if there is a civil war in China, maybe we have a chance to be independent. Now, we have no way to take action. I am sad about this, because we cannot take our own action, we have to wait for the US to protect us. I really hate this, and... I really hope in the near future something will happen in China, like a really big earthquake or something, that will enable Taiwan to take some action without drawbacks by China'.



Figure 6.5 PRC opposition to Taiwanese foreign affairs

This limited recognition in the wider world, and its related vulnerability, leads to the feelings of insecurity and disadvantage Dijkink (1996) was referring to. These sentiments concentrate on three main issues: economic development, the formal value of travel documents of the Republic of China, and the possibilities for Taiwanese to express their nationality in formal settings. In the first place, economic development is felt to be hampered by the difficulties in interacting with other countries: 'If we could be recognized by most of the countries in the world, that would be good. But if it wasn't, it is the same as now. But for our livelihood, it could be good' (Yi-Jie, Taiwan).

Secondly, several students related about problems with their passports, as Lee (USA) did: 'One time I transferred from the US to Barbados, and to st. Vincent. And I showed my passport and it said Republic of China. Our cover is green, but Mainland China uses a red cover. But the official thought I am Chinese. And they don't show a friend to Taiwanese people, so they thought I was an illegal immigrant. He worried I would stay in their country, maybe looking for a job. So I was being detained. I was not allowed to go anywhere when I was waiting for my plane. And I was angry but it was no use. So I was in a bad situation, and I think about 2 or 3 hours later someone took me from that small room to the gate. It caused a problem to me, because of my passport, because people think I am Chinese'. Yi-Jie (Taiwan) related that this type of event is not uncommon, and described that it causes insecurity and the suggestion of insufficient regard for Taiwanese people: 'Like my friend, he was in Spain. And the government of Spain, sometimes they don't recognize us as Taiwanese. So he gets some trouble. He told me that when you go to another country, you can feel undervalued by the world'.

Finally, several students mentioned they felt Taiwanese politicians cannot speak in official terms about their nationality, as this hot potato is preferably steered clear of in the international community. Shu-Fang (USA) reasons all government officials know Taiwan is an independent political unit, but will not phrase this openly: 'In reality, Taiwan is already independent from China, but they are still so hesitant about the issue because they want to be acknowledged by the world, like other countries. But most of the international groups, they don't want to get involved into this, and in a formal or semi-formal international setting, the best thing is not to talk about it. Because if there is a delegate from China and we say that Taiwan is a country, that would really irritate them. But in fact, everybody knows that we have different political system, and different laws and different passports. We have to have a visa to get into China!' Gillian (PRC) on the other hand feels no one outside Taiwan considers the island independent, and because of this she feels discouraged in stating her national identity: 'I think in the international community, they all think Taiwan is not a country. So when I speak about independence, they are all confused about that. They think Taiwan belongs to China, why do you say Taiwan is independent'. When I asked her whether her stay abroad in the PRC had changed her feelings of national identity, she answered the following: 'Maybe... weakened. Some Americans think that China and Taiwan is no difference. So I think if they see that I emphasize that I am Taiwanese, it is not so meaningful. Maybe weakened. Because they think that we just have yellow skin and black hair and that is all.

Mennell assumed that when competition with an outsider group is sufficient to endanger the security of people's daily routines and way of life, 'emotional identification with one's own unit is likely to be strong' (1994: 188). It appears though that the type of emotion can vary. The above quote of Shu-Fang and Wan (p. 135) show an activist reaction relating confidence as Shu-Fang did, or a willingness for contestation in the case of Wan. Gillian on the other hand does nurture emotional attachment to Taiwan (she is proud of being Taiwanese, and considers the island to be politically independent) but shows a passive reaction as she perceives an overwhelming majority thinking differently from her. It also shows that the American attitude is important to her, which Janice also mentioned when she said she felt winded up over the fact that Taiwan must always stick to USA protocol in its international dealings.

6.5 Participation in multilateral organizations

Through its undecided international status, international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization are also hard if not impossible to become part of. From 1993 until 2008 Taiwan requested a vote in the UN to reassess Taiwan's appeal for membership, under the name of the Republic of China, the Republic of China on Taiwan and finally, in 2008, under the name of Taiwan. Each request has been overruled, but Yi-Jie (Taiwan) does not consider this to make life impossible: 'It is an organization called the UN, and they have to decide if they want to recognize Taiwan as an independent country, and they have to give vote. But they have it again and again, and all the time nobody wants to vote for us. I would be happy if more countries would vote for Taiwan, but I think many countries are afraid to do that. And without the recognition of the UN, our people still go about the world to do business, to build many kinds of connections with other countries. I heard on the news that sometimes they will have difficulties because other countries sometimes don't help. But still I think that people will always try to find a way to do business'. Kathleen (PRC) considers Taiwan *de facto* independent, but feels very unprotected to proclaim *de jure* independence without participating in the UN: 'In a way I don't want to be independent because we are a small country and we are not in the UN. Yeah, we are not in the UN'.

Another reason for being keen on joining the UN is that it would be an important victory in the DPP strategy of diversifying the relations Taiwan has with other countries in the world. Participating in UN activities would greatly improve opportunities to tell the world about Taiwan and a Taiwanese national identity. As Adam (Taiwan) put it, 'Many people don't know where Taiwan is. I guess the problem is China. China is convincing many countries to ignore Taiwan. Maybe we can join the UN and we can promote Taiwan in many countries'. Wan (PRC) also thinks this could be a good opportunity to be allowed speaking time in the international community, time which now is being claimed by the People's Republic: 'I think maybe a lot of people will support us if we talk about it with them, and not just know the Chinese viewpoint. If they know more about us, they will tolerate us. I think that may be helpful'. Besides aiming for UN membership the DPP is labouring to spread communication with the international community in other ways, for instance through academic mobility programs (figure 6.6), and the hosting of international sports events such as The World Games and Deaflympics in 2009, which were also mentioned by two of the students I consulted.

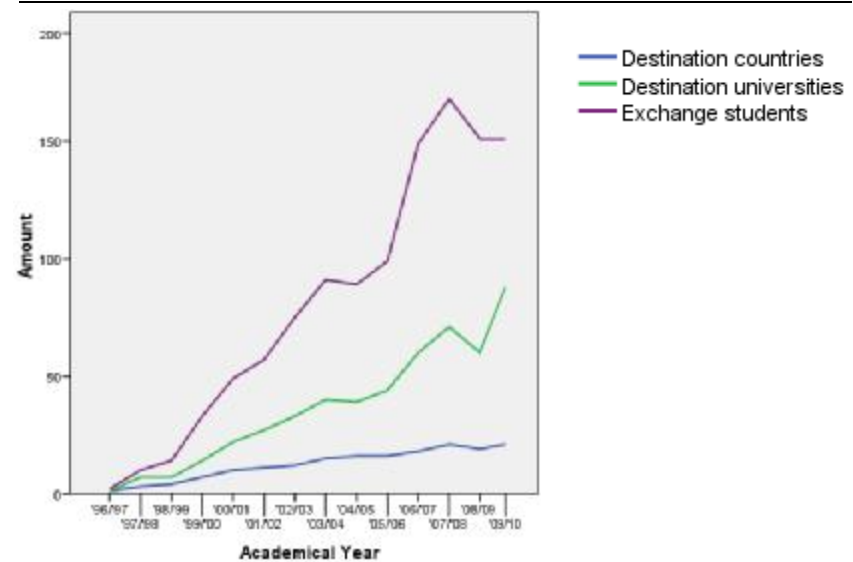
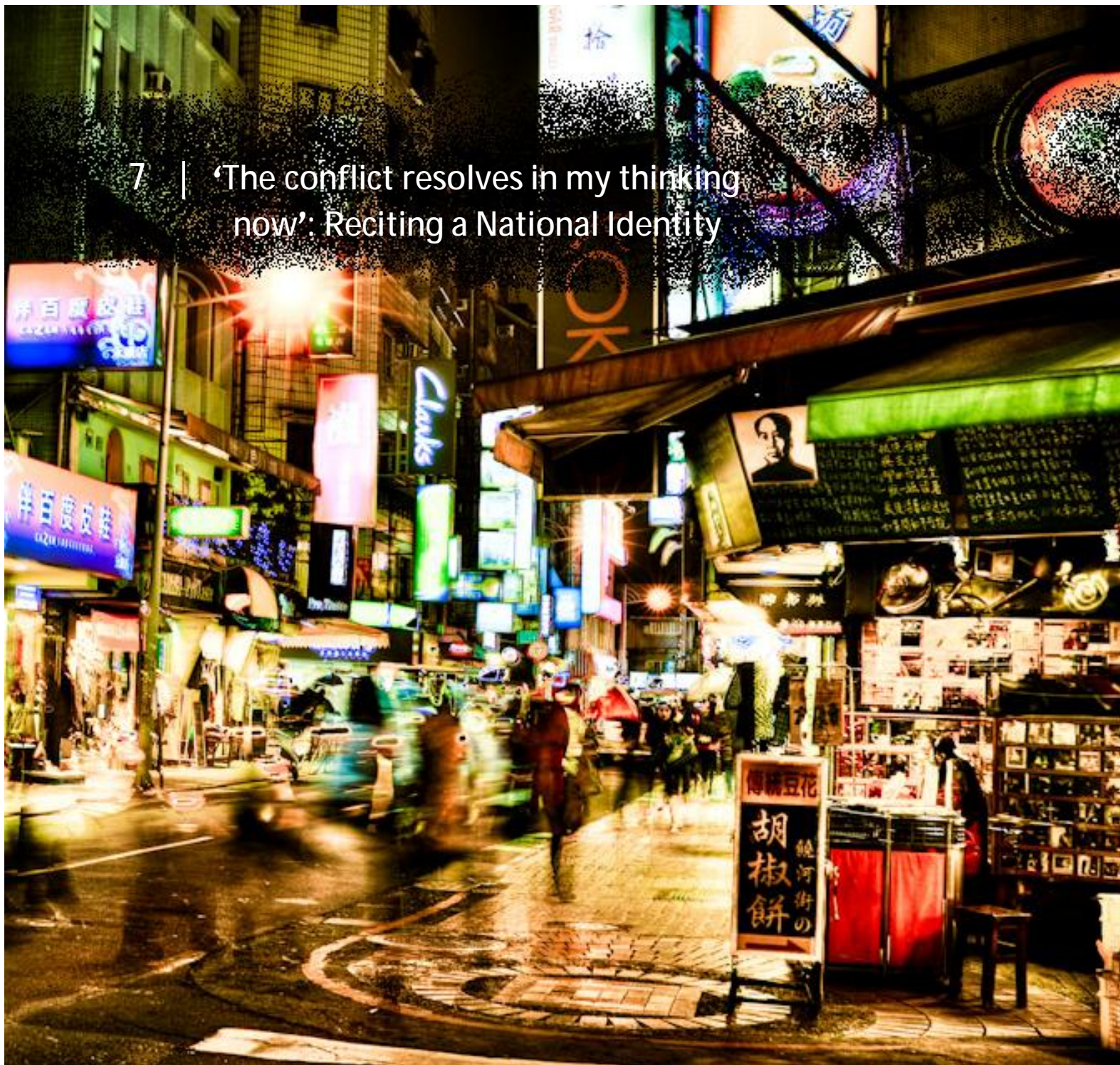


Figure 6.6 Participation in academic mobility programs

Having considered the national and international turmoil within which the students are negotiating a national identity, the final and essential question remains what elements are constituting their feeling of national belonging. The next chapter will expand on this topic.

7 | 'The conflict resolves in my thinking now': Reciting a National Identity



As elaborated upon in the two preceding chapters, the domestic political situation and Taiwan's position in the international community are important factors in recreating a national identity. A final issue which remains to be considered concerns the elements which are important in creating a Taiwanese identity: Which language tools, rituals, symbols and daily practices are of prime importance to Taiwanese students in the creation of national identity? An salient issue to bear in mind is the way these constituents jointly work to develop new dividing lines when it comes to the 'Us versus Them' definition; it seems that nearly all students, whether having had an experience abroad or not, are excluding themselves from the 'Greater Chinese' concept of national sovereignty.

Starting each interview, I asked whether the students considered their national identity to be an important topic. All consider this to be the case, although the students are rather bored by the way the topic is being discussed in the media. However, in relation to the past, fervently endorsed ideological stance of the KMT government, the subject stirs the minds of those I interviewed. As Fred (Taiwan) expressed it: 'Well, this is the core question. I think it is important to me, because before I thought we, we means I and other Taiwanese, are Chinese too'. This quote already shows the elasticity there is in the recreation of a national in-group. Lee, an interviewee from the group of students who went to the USA, put this even stronger: 'We think we are different from those who live in Mainland China. Maybe at first Taiwanese and Chinese had some kind of relationship, but now in terms of politics or in terms of culture we have significant differences'. The uncertain legal status of the island conferred additional weight to the question of a national identity, as was considered in chapter six. According to Eric (USA), 'a Taiwanese identity is important to me because we are not a regular, a formal country... but we still have our government and we still have a right to make our social democracy'.

As it turned out, the specific historical and contemporary experiences on the island of Taiwan and the democratic system were two of the most important factors determining the difference between 'Chinese' en 'Taiwanese'. Over the course of the interviewing I found that many constituting elements to this identity were mentioned, from which I distilled the above mentioned items as well as a fourth: the languages spoken on Taiwan. Interestingly, some four items that according to the literature could have been expected to be mentioned – the national currency system, state symbolism, national history and official holidays and

events – were discussed only upon my prompting. In the following sections I will develop the deduced elements further.

7.1 Historical events

When I asked the students which historical events they considered important in the way they constructed their national identities, interviewees from each group mitigated the importance of historical events: ‘At least in the young generation, the Taiwanese have a very weak relation to history. Taiwanese actually spend very little time on Taiwanese history, but a lot of time on Mainland Chinese history. And that makes people feel, why are we always learning history for other people? That somehow makes people anti-history, more focussed on the common experience’, as Fai (USA) put it. However, the Japanese presence on Taiwan, the period of authoritarian KMT rule, and the democratization of Taiwan were mentioned by students in each category.

In the timeline presented in figure 3.1 it becomes clear that Taiwan has experienced several successive foreign forces controlling a part or the whole of the island. This is an issue on the mind of my interviewees when I asked about elements constituting their national identity. ‘We have faced different forces: from the Dutch, from Koxinga, from the Qing dynasty, and the Japanese colonization and the reclaim of the KMT...it makes Taiwan a unique society among the Chinese’, as Fred (Taiwan) put it.

The presence of the Japanese (1895 – 1945) is considered important for two reasons. In the first place, as Lee (USA) explains, the Japanese assimilation policy has had some lasting effects: ‘During this stage, history was totally different from the Chinese because at that moment, mainland China was still under control of the KMT party. So lots of Taiwanese, when the Japanese occupied Taiwan, got a lot of influence from the Japanese education and culture. And now, this influences the way the old Taiwanese educate their children and their family. I think our generation, parts of us, we share the same culture with the Japanese. I think it has become part of Taiwanese culture’. A second reason is that the Japanese, although they were officially colonizers, stimulated economic development in Taiwan as well. According to Fred (Taiwan), ‘they constructed the basis of development of Taiwan and they brought Taiwan into the modern era’. Even though the students acknowledged there was a negative side to this experience as well, the Japanese remain

regarded in a beneficial light: 'What I can guess from my grandparents is that they had to work hard but earned little. But I think this is only part of the truth, we cannot regard it just as a colonial history, it is the kind of history that helped us develop' (Wan, PRC).

These positive feelings towards the Japanese developed in spite of the official doctrine that Japan is the enemy of the Chinese, which was stated in educational textbooks. The students I interviewed clearly do not share this view. Marvin (USA) states that 'we eat their food and we sing their songs and...most Taiwanese love Japanese'. Japanese popular culture is in style in Taiwan as well, as Li-Ming (Taiwan) observed: 'We always copy from Japan. Our TV programs, our hairstyle...' This general popularity also helps to explain how it can be that a Chinese government resides in a building erected by the Japanese. Da-Xia explained, 'the Presidential Palace is not a landmark for the Japanese period. But maybe there would have been a problem if it had been in China...'

Students from China and the USA also made a comparison between the presence of the Japanese and the ensuing Chinese KMT era. Compared to the well organized Japanese, the Chinese, who had just lost a civil war on the Mainland, made a bad impression. As Lee (USA) expanded on it: 'Although [the Japanese] regarded the Taiwanese as second level citizens, they really did a lot of things that were beneficial to us. But in 1949 when the KMT soldiers came to Taiwan, they used guns to rob food and clothes. To the Taiwanese at that time, KMT soldiers seemed like barbarians. Even though they had never seen them they thought the people from China are not educated at all, they use guns to rob everything they want. But the Japanese, they are polite. So... this kind of thought continued after generations'. In this case, the experiences inhabitants had in the occupied period seems to have a stronger bearing on identity formation than education does.

The period Chiang Kai Shek ruled in Taiwan (1950 – 1975), and to which Lee was already referring in the above paragraph, is also considered important in defining a national identity, though feelings about this era are ambiguous. As Fai (USA) phrased it: 'There are a lot of conflicts and confrontations in the last generation. And you are aware of that, but you want to keep it in the last generation. It somehow creates an atmosphere in Taiwanese society but... people usually want to keep it just the atmosphere, and not a real thing. But is it important? Yes, it is important. That makes you not talk about it. The Chiang Kai Shek period really makes the confrontation and the conflict of today, but we rather put it... we rather not talk about it'. As described in the history chapter, a cult existed around the figure of Chiang Kai Shek, and criticizing this faultless leader was unthinkable. However, since

Taiwan became a more open society after the lifting of martial law in 1987, the knowledge on Chiang as offered through the education system was gradually put into perspective through the additional information that was becoming more and more available through other media (see figure 7.1). As Lee experienced it: 'I didn't read a lot of articles from different perspectives because the information was controlled and...but things changed when I grew up and went abroad, when I read a lot of information about Chiang Kai Shek. It still confuses me, and now I consider him totally different. And of course I don't think he is a bad guy or he...Of course I think also about his contribution to Taiwan. It is true. And we should never forget this time. But also I realized at that time that he doesn't have a good side only, there is a bad side too. His person is put at too high a level, like god. But he is like a human being too. We have to think his influence is varied for Taiwan. So it is no longer important to celebrate him, but it is a very important element in the Taiwanese history'. During the interviewing I noticed the students were not very much inclined to spend too much time on this topic, and like Lee in the above quote, took trouble in the formulation of their answer. What is clear though is that the students have been deeply influenced by his history and geography education, inculcating them so to identify themselves with the Greater China.

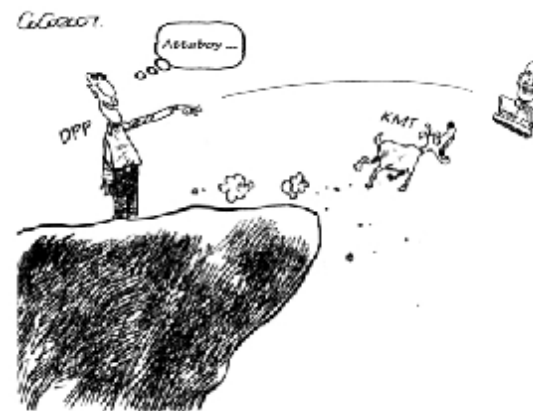


Figure 7.1 The end of the Chiang-cult

Some interviewees additionally remarked that Chiang did make efforts to develop Taiwan further: 'he didn't just come here and build a house for himself waiting to go back' as Kathleen (PRC) put it. In chapter three I had already described the land reform policy which made Chiang popular among poor native farmers in Taiwan, and the grandparents of one of the persons I interviewed actually benefitted from this agricultural scheme: 'My grandparents, they are not so rich, so they were the ones that got some land from that period. So they thought Chiang is good at that time' (Peng, Taiwan).

In the questionnaire three items related to whether monuments, commemorative days and state festivals were related to the students' renegotiation of a national identity. According to Billig (1995), these monuments and festival celebrate the whole political history of a nation on a micro scale. Again, a rather large proportion of the respondents (18 to 49%) remained indifferent to these issues, and between one and two thirds explicitly stated that these monuments and days are unimportant.

During the interviews I showed my respondents an overview of the official state-related holidays which is also depicted in box 2.1, but few could explain to me what the significance of those days actually was. Fred (Taiwan): 'Well, you just saw my reaction, like, what is it?' And even if they did recognize the official interpretation of those days, they were not very much impressed, like Shai-Ming (USA): 'Teacher's day, double nine day [laughing] those dates are not important to Taiwanese people now. The three important dates for us are Chinese New Year, the Dragon Boat festival and mid autumn festival'.

Only Peace Memorial day (two-two-eight, or the 28th of February: 2 28) was considered by some, as it still has a clear relation to relatively recent and relevant history. As Shu-Fang (USA) explained: 'You read it in the paper, and they call it 228 and it is a national holiday, and that is all you know about it. Before I talked with [a friend] I didn't think to much about 228 because non of my family sacrificed in that event. But her family, she remembered having sacrificed, so she was really angry about it. And after I talked to her about it I know how discriminating it was and how harmful to those involved'. Some students only mentioned the date though, but then realized they weren't exactly sure what 228 is about, like Rose (Taiwan): 'They say 228, but I am not familiar with that history... I don't know...' According to Li-Ming (Taiwan), this event clearly indicated that there was a difference between the incoming Mainland Chinese and those already living on the island, and 'due to an event, 228, they put a bad memory on the Chinese authority'. The ensuing

White Terror period was also considered an important historical episode, and as Yin (Taiwan) put it, 'it gives a background to the differences between Blue and Green now'. In practice, February 28th was the only official holiday that was perceptibly commemorated, and was discussed in the news papers when I was staying in Taiwan. The other official holidays that were planned in the period I was on the island (the commemoration of the birthday of Chiang Kai Shek on October 31st, the commemoration of the birthday of Sun Yat Sen on November 12th, Constitution Day on December 25th and Founding Day of the Republic on January 1st) all went by uncelebrated.

The process of democratization was considered of prime importance, and though it was brought up in the context of historical development specific to Taiwan, this subject deserves a section of its own.

7.2 Democratic rule

Specific hallmarks that students mentioned in the democratization of Taiwan were the first multi-party elections in 1996, the first transition of rule from the KMT to the DPP, and the annunciation of the end of martial law. As Janice (USA) saw it, 'During the 90s, we could for the first time elect our president directly, every citizen had the right to vote. I think that was a historical moment. And... maybe the first time we had the ruling party exchanged. Those things show how our democracy develops. There are many problems in our government and in our political system, but at least, the general people have the power to change that through their vote'. Li-An (PRC) added to this that this had profound effects on the way the citizens of Taiwan looked at themselves: 'I think 1996 can be described as a changing point of our social identity, because the Taiwanese think now that their leader is chosen by ourselves, not only by the representative assembly from the Mainland'.

Democracy thus still is a relatively fresh experience for Taiwanese citizens, as martial law was lifted in 1987 only. For that reason, Taiwan is not considered as a fully functional democracy yet in some articles (see for instance Lee 2004). Li-An, a student who went to China, acknowledges this issue: 'Our democratic system has lots of problems, but somehow it still stands for so many years. And people here are used to see party transitions, we can choose the representatives of our own opinion'. In the questionnaire I also asked respondents whether they were proud of the Taiwanese democracy, and the results are shown in table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Are you proud of your democratic system?

Group	I am proud of the way my democracy functions	
	Yes	No
Period abroad in the PRC	75.0 %	25.0%
Period abroad in the USA	73.0 %	26.0 %
No academic mobility	74.5 %	22.5 %

In each group quite a large proportion is not proud. This can be explained by the fact that at the time the interviews were conducted, the former president of Taiwan, Chen Sui Bian (2000-2008) was on trial for the embezzlement of 490 million Taiwanese dollar (15 US dollar), one of the ‘problems’ Li-An was referring to above. This incident caused many people to be somewhat disappointed in their political leaders – especially since Chen and his DPP had been promoting themselves as the ‘good governance alternative’ to the supposedly corrupted KMT party. For this reason, not being proud of the *Taiwanese* democracy does not have a one-on-one relationship with disliking a democratic government. On the contrary, many students were very positive about future democratic developments on Taiwan. Peter (Taiwan) put it as follows: ‘I think democracy now is not so good in Taiwan. But it can be better again, democracy in Taiwan is just in the make...’ The notion of Taiwan as a young democracy was reiterated often, along with the idea that the Taiwanese will be able to learn, as Peng (Taiwan) said: ‘For example, Europe or America, they have democracy for 200 or 300 years, but in Taiwan we have only 30 years. So while you look only in the short period, you may feel that Taiwan is in a very chaotic state or something. But while you take it longer, I think the democracy of Taiwan will become better’. In this light, the transition of the ruling parties, in 2000 and in 2008, have been important experiences in assessing the two parties, as Lee (USA) explained: ‘When Chen Sui Bian became president of Taiwan, it was the first time for Taiwan that the DPP became the main authority of Taiwan. This was very important to Taiwan. After eight years, it shows that the DPP is not as mature as we think. And the KMT is not as corrupt as we think. I think it is meaningful for both parties. Maybe they can... they will be better after this’.

All students thus considered democracy to be an important element in the way they described their national identity, and as Shu-Fang (USA) put it, ‘I think there is a thing like Taiwanese identity, like the way the government rules us is really different from the way

the Chinese government rules. For example, they cut movies, and some articles will be deleted from the internet if the government doesn't like the concepts in it...' Some students related the importance of democracy to the precarious legal situation of Taiwan. As Yin (Taiwan) explained, 'Democracy is really important, and I think it is the only reason we can tell the world we have the value, that it is necessary for us to exist because China is not a democratic country' (see figure 7.2). Showcasing the democratic developments in Taiwan is part of the DPP nationalist strategy to gain support in the international community, and is also brought forward in national politics.



Figure 7.2 Democracy and the PRC

This democratic experience, among the Chinese exclusive for the Taiwanese, is felt to have differentiated the Taiwanese and those who are living on the Mainland, and as Syng (PRC) put it: 'Although we are the same originally, because of different governmental policies our cultures have developed differently'. This democratic experience is felt to be more important than all the (vast) variations that already exist between the provinces of the PRC,

and is being described as a crucial characteristic differentiating the Taiwanese from *all* mainland Chinese, and as Da-Xia (Taiwan) phrased it: 'Because we have been separated from China for 50 years, our culture is more and more different from the other provinces of China. Because we have democratic politics, so the thoughts of our people are more open minded'. In that way, the cartoon shown as figure 7.3 does not hold: if China gets capitalistic enough worries about wage differentials and tidal waves of incoming cheap labour might be reduced, but the worries surrounding its authoritarian rule would remain of a prime, deal-breaking importance.



Figure 7.3 'If China gets capitalistic enough, could it seek to merge with Taiwan?'

Interviewees then logically related the freedom of speech and information to their democratic rule, and the discrepancies this implies with the communist rule on the Mainland. As Janice (USA) saw it, 'They have no real, no functional civil society, and they try to control people's thoughts'. This was a recurring theme, also expressed by Peng (Taiwan): 'You know, in mainland China the government control the media, so their thoughts, their education, they have put a lot of... people don't have their own thoughts, they just educate the people to be the Chinese they want'. Rose (Taiwan) considers this limited freedom to

have far reaching implications for society at large: 'We have more freedom to comment upon political issues or to express an opinion, or to get information from the world. I think this part, the freedom, will influence the whole society'.

The perceived lack of respect for human rights and democratic values in China thus is the main obstacle in any speculations on a voluntary fusion of the PRC and Taiwan. As Li-An (PRC) expressed it, 'The main factor is when we reverse to mainland China, we will have to associate directly with their government and we will...focus on the surprises from government to people and their ignorance of human rights. [...] We are afraid that if we unify with Mainland China then our democratic experience and our social climate will be washed away by Mainland China. Hong Kong is a good example. Once they united, they came back to China and their people could not say lots of words about the government. I think the Taiwanese are afraid of this, and they think this is a serious problem' (see figure 7.4).



Figure 7.4 Eating away democratic values

7.3 Taiwanese Language and Culture

Democracy was also felt to be beneficial to protecting the current additions and legacies of the aboriginal tribes of Taiwan to Taiwanese culture (see figure 7.5).



Figure 7.5 Officially recognized aboriginal tribes in Taiwan

The consideration for the aboriginal tribes was recounted as an example of the way the Taiwanese government treats its subjects better than the PRC government does, for example by Marvin (USA): 'I think their government doesn't really respect the aboriginal people, for example, the Tibetans and the Mongolians. Taiwan still preserves some of the aboriginal culture'. Quite a few interviewees found it hard to decide what they could label genuine local culture after several eras of foreign presence. The aboriginal tribes though, of which 14 are still existing and officially recognized by government, are a landmark of indigenous and unique cultural aspects. This is also what Li-Ming (Taiwan) talks about: 'I think the native people can illustrate the Taiwanese identity for a long time. They originated from the time before the Japanese until now'.

In the questionnaire I assessed the degree to which students consider governmental assistance to aboriginals a good expense, and those who went abroad seem more positive (see table 7.2).

Table 7.2: Assessment of governmental assistance to aboriginal tribes

Group	Governmental assistance to aboriginal tribes is good		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Period abroad in the PRC	82.5 %	2.5 %	15.0%
Period abroad in the USA	94.1 %	2.0 %	3.9 %
No academic mobility	77.3 %	11.3 %	11.3 %

In considering intergroup relations, it seems there is a significant relation between those who did not gain experiences abroad, and those who did. Students who went abroad attach more value to assistance to aboriginal tribes than students who did not; this was the only significant relation in this study which indicates that students who went abroad might stem from another population than those who stayed in Taiwan.

When considering the role of another type of traditional culture, being Chinese traditions, most students from each sample consider Chinese traditional culture the major part of Taiwanese culture (see table 7.3).

Table 7.3: The role of Chinese traditional culture in Taiwanese culture

Group	The role of Chinese traditional culture in Taiwanese culture			
	Completely different	A small part	The major part	The same
Period abroad in the PRC	10.0 %	36.0 %	52.0%	2.0 %
Period abroad in the USA	5.9 %	39.2 %	51.0 %	3.9 %
No academic mobility	0.0 %	35.0 %	60.0 %	5.0 %

When I asked the same question during the interviews, all interviewees acknowledged the importance of Chinese culture in describing their national identity. As Fred (Taiwan) saw it, 'I think the traditions of the Chinese are important elements of the Taiwanese. This traditional culture comes from our ancestors, so to be a Taiwanese, I have to be a Chinese'.

However, none of the respondents considered this overlap in traditions to be of crucial importance in defining the extent of a national identity: 'I think it is the same for all Chinese people. Just like your Christmas, you also don't think that that is special for the Dutch culture' (Dax, USA). Sying (PRC) added to this: 'That makes me think like, my ancestors are from China, but it doesn't mean that I am a Chinese'.

The reason for not feeling completely Chinese is the importance all interviewees attached to the blending of many different cultures in describing their national identity. This rationale also served to differentiate Taiwanese from Chinese. A statement by Fai (USA) illustrates this: 'They are all speaking about, Taiwanese is original from Mainland China, but they never tell what came next'. What came next is very much related to foreign presences in Taiwan, as was already depicted in the timeline presented in figure 3.1. As Fred (Taiwan) expressed it, 'We mixed many cultures, such as pirates, Japanese, Chinese, Aboriginal, Dutch and American. So that makes us different and special'. Marvin (USA) considers this synthesis the most important characteristic of Taiwanese culture: 'Probably that is what we call Taiwanese culture, I think we take more from the combination of all cultures'.

On the other hand, the students I interviewed generally considered Taiwan to be the sole preserver of Chinese Confucian culture and traditions and the Chinese language, so that this can be no argument used by the PRC to lobby for unification. Li-Ming (Taiwan) told me that 'they are governed by the CCP and had the cultural revolution. And this destroyed a lot of valuable culture of the Chinese. I think Taiwanese preserve some pure Chinese culture'. In this way, identifying with Chinese traditional culture is being detached from identifying with the PRC: 'I highly identify with Chinese culture. But not with the Beijing authority. In other words, I also live in the culture of Taiwan' (Li-An, PRC). Fred (Taiwan) said a similar thing: 'I just try to show that I am a Chinese, and also a Taiwanese, but I have to say Chinese is not the same as Mainland Chinese. There are many many Chinese living in other places than Mainland China, right? And they have different living experiences, they have different education and they have different political thinking. But finally we are in the same group'. This is an interesting interpretation of the in-group; though many Taiwanese regard themselves as preserving the Chinese culture, they do not consider themselves to be representing the Chinese nation anymore.

Interestingly, two different futures can be based upon the conclusion that Chinese and Taiwanese share many cultural traits. On the one hand, Adam (Taiwan) asserted the

following: ‘Maybe we have the same culture, but the same culture cannot mean we are the same country, just like the English and the American people. My idea is, even if we have 99% overlap in language, in festival days, in religion, in customs, it cannot mean we should be one country. Daily life experiences here are much different’. Li-An (PRC) on the other hand considers such an overlap a good basis from which to anticipate a future shared national experience: ‘For me, the Taiwanese and the Chinese identity is a dual identity, it is not a paradox. The Taiwanese identity is my love to my hometown, but the Chinese identity, it could be seen as a future responsibility or the higher national goal’.

A third prominent item which plays a role in the recitation of a national identity are the languages in use on Taiwan. Taiwanese and Mandarin are used by most of the people, also with the students who filled in the questionnaire. In the south of Taiwan, Taiwanese is generally in use, as it is with elderly people. According to Yi-Jie (Taiwan) ‘it is good to learn our local and native language, it keeps us connected to the older people, and it makes you feel more familiar, more at home with each other. I think there are many things worth learning in Taiwanese language, it has the wisdom of the old people here, and you cannot explain it in Chinese’. Eric (USA) agrees with this train of thought, and feels sorry about the diminishing capabilities of younger people to speak Taiwanese: ‘The generation our age, we don’t speak Taiwanese language as well as our parents. And this language is very important, through the Taiwanese language we can feel closer together’.

Even though the learning and use of Taiwanese and aboriginal languages is being stimulated by government, an intriguing question is whether respondents will stimulate their children to learn any of these languages. As it is, a majority does so, though a large group is not sure or even outright negative (see table 7.4)

Table 7.4: Acquisition of the Taiwanese language

Group	My children will learn Taiwanese		
	Yes	No	Don’t know
Period abroad in the PRC	62.5 %	17.5 %	20.0%
Period abroad in the USA	55.0 %	13.7 %	31.3 %
No academic mobility	67.9 %	9.5 %	22.6 %

Interestingly, especially students who went abroad to the USA emphasized the use of acquiring English. As Kevin (USA), who earlier on voiced his concerns about reduced Taiwanese language skills, put it: 'Of course the Taiwanese language is important. But I think English is important as well'. Dax (USA) also negates the prime importance of local language: 'I guess people in the younger generation, they probably think learning Taiwanese is a burden. Just like when you learn Latin. The old Taiwanese might think it is a great achievement, but I would say, maybe the next or next next generation won't speak Taiwanese anymore. I also hope that the culture will find its way to survive and to continue, but I won't say... maybe. My future wife will probably live in the US and I even wonder if my children will even speak Chinese'. In the Taipei region, Taiwanese is much less in use, causing some, like Kathleen (PRC), to stop considering it as a fundamental skill: 'But then, not even all Taiwanese people can speak Taiwanese'.

The fact that Taiwanese is considered not all too important 30% to 40% of my respondents can be related to the type of Mandarin that is most widely in use on Taiwan. It was originally meant that inhabitants of Taiwan would come to speak Pu Tong Hua, or standard Mandarin in use in the PRC, but this linguistic engineering has not quite succeeded. As Fai (USA) explains: 'There is Taiwanese, Hakka, aboriginal languages, and because of the colonized society, Taiwanese very frequently use other languages, and mix it together into so-called Taiwanese style Mandarin'. Thus, the Mandarin spoken in Taiwan (or the Taiwan style Mandarin as Fai referred to it) already embodies sufficient critical deviations from the standard Mandarin so as to consider it a unique, national means of communication. Sying, who went abroad to the PRC, experienced these differences: 'Our tongue is very interesting. If we only speak, you can already hear the difference'. At the same time, this Taiwanese style Mandarin remains intelligible to the wider Chinese community, while Taiwanese is not – a clear advantage for the latter way of speaking.

There currently is a strong emphasis on politicians' ability to speak Taiwanese, in order to 'prove' their genuine concern for Taiwan (see chapter 3). However, more and more people lose this language competence, and don't see the value of learning Taiwanese - or standard Mandarin, as they were taught in school. As Shu-Fang (USA) observed: 'I would say Taiwanese Mandarin is already very different from the Mandarin spoken in other parts of the Chinese region. The pronunciation is slightly different, the vocabulary use, and the syntax. And they are still fighting, oh, you have got to learn the classical Taiwanese, and learn to speak Chinese in class. So it is Taiwanese Chinese, it has already mixed together by

itself. And you guys are still fighting, it is so funny! Thus, according to these findings, it is very well possible that the prominence of Taiwanese in politics will lessen in the future. It also shows that language serves as a means to clip the Mainland Chinese from the definition of what 'we' and 'our' exactly mean.

7.4 A shared living experience

The totality of simple daily life experiences was a fourth element mentioned by members of each sample. Interviewees did not mean to isolate specific elements within this general experience, but meant that they felt to be part of the group of people living on Taiwan. As Marvin (USA) explained: 'I just think I was born on this island and lived here for over 20 years, so I feel I belong to everything here. Not culture, but probably the cities, the way we think, the way we talk...' In describing their feelings on this topic, all mentioned that it is important that the daily life experiences of Mainland Chinese and Taiwanese are very different. Nearly all of these differences were felt to be linked to the fact that both groups have a fully functional government influencing the lives of the citizens.

These different governments implemented policies that have a profound influence on the lives of citizens. Examples that were mentioned were the one child policy effective in the PRC, the cultural revolution causing the discarding of Confucian values, the implementation of simplified Chinese, and a different political education. As it seems, all students are using the PRC and Mainland Chinese in one way or another as a counterbalance against which to formulate the way they are reproducing their own ideas about their national identity.

When I asked my interviewees what they were considering important sources in their daily life experiences in constructing their national identity, a wide range of answers emerged: media, education, and politicians, as I have discussed before, but also family, fiction books and folksongs, travelling and direct contact with foreigners.

Speaking about national identity within the family was deemed difficult because all students linked this topic to national politics, a category many students rather not discuss with family members. As Rose (Taiwan) put it, 'We don't talk about political issues, or something that influenced my national identity. So my parents, their value or their thinking,

it doesn't really make a difference for me'. Yi-Jie (Taiwan) had a similar opinion: 'I don't really talk about this with my family. Because I intuitively know that they have a different opinion from me. Very different. Because when we do, we will somehow have some opinions against each other, and that may start the fighting. And that is not worth it'. Intermarriages between persons of different backgrounds has also become common in the last generation, which caused most children to have mixed parental influences on the matter of a national identity. They feel that they are more able to make sensible reflections through their insights in both worlds. As Gillian (PRC) phrased it, 'My grandmother and grandfather come from China, but my father's mother and father are from Taiwan, so they have a different thinking of the identity. I was influenced by them both, I think that I will be more in the middle'. Sying (PRC) also has developed a different view from his parent and grandparents: 'My grandfather, he came as a soldier to Taiwan. When I grow up, I always think that I am a Taiwanese, but that I have Chinese blood. But I don't think I am a Chinese. I am a Taiwanese'. Thus, children do not take on the views of their parents on national identity on a one-on-one basis.

Travelling around the island to get to know the local environment was mentioned as another source in shaping a national identity. As Rose (Taiwan) said: 'I would like to spend more time to visit the places in Taiwan. And I go to many cities in Taiwan before but it is just a tour or an excursion with my family, it was like my father and mother said, we go there today, or...it doesn't mean some other thing to me. But now, I would more like to find the beautiful place or the unique part of Taiwan on my own'. Marvin (USA), who is Taipei born, shares these ideas: 'I begin to experience the southern Taiwan and the eastern Taiwan and I really know the people there and to say oh, actually it is not only Taipei here. Probably I feel more about this land and the sites and the people there and I gradually think, probably we are not Chinese'.

Finally, interaction with foreigners was mentioned by interviewees from each group as an important source in developing a national identity. As Wan (PRC) said: 'When we meet the foreigners, I think that is a really important source in shaping our identity'. Allison (USA) said something similar: 'Every time a foreigner asks me a question related to Taiwan, I realize how limited my information about Taiwan is. I think I am inspired by them'. Some students specifically mentioned the importance of interacting with Mainland Chinese as a source in the recitation of their national identity. Like Da-Xia (Taiwan), whose girlfriend is from the Mainland but is living in Singapore now: 'And then after I met my girlfriend, that

is another reason for me to find out Taiwanese identity or Taiwanese and Chinese difference'. While students who went to the PRC did not explicitly mention the interaction with the Mainland Chinese as a constituting element, all related about the way they tried to avoid conversations on the political status of Taiwan and their opinion on it. As Kathleen put it, 'one scary thing is the question, do you think Taiwan should be part of China? You don't want to start a conversation that is very sensitive, especially in a foreign place. But then they will ask you to compare, and then you have to say they are very good. And then when you say something like, I think this part of Taiwan is good, then they will say, oh no, I think brabrabra...' Or as Gillian (PRC) experienced: 'I think that most of the Chinese students will want to argue with you, about do you think Taiwan is part of China? And you know, it is very stressful because we are there and we are the minority. And I will answer that I think both places are very good, but actually I think Taiwan is better'.

On the positive side, students who went to the PRC told they found that the Mainland Chinese are actually much more reasonable than they had expected before they had met them. As Kathleen said, 'You heard a lot of negative stories, before I didn't hear a lot of positive stories about China. And then you hear about the Tiananmen event, and Tibet is not free...so you think, this is not a reasonable sociable country'. This is a view Yin (Taiwan) shares: 'Because the most news letters tell Chinese people are bad men, so we don't want to be Chinese'. Both Sying and Kathleen (PRC) though have changed their opinion after they went abroad. 'Sometimes I think the Taiwanese media have put the Chinese people to far. They have a kind of discrimination towards Chinese. But after you lived in China for some years, you will realize that only very few people are like this. To most of people, their thought is quite logical, and they can accept all kinds of thought'. Rose (Taiwan) visited the Mainland, and also had the experience that the new generation is less dogmatic on the subject of Taiwan belonging to the PRC. 'The young generation who lives in China, they think Taiwanese and Chinese people are really different in many ways, in education, in habits, in the way they think about many things'.

Some of the questions I had were specifically posed to the students who went either to the USA or the PRC, in order to evaluate whether the daily life experiences – or the 'numerous similar or common path elements', to speak with Pred (1981) - they had gained abroad

caused a shared structure of feeling. The only issue that really stood out was that going abroad seems to strengthen the notion of the existence of a Taiwanese national identity. Three items in the questionnaire related to the question whether the students who went abroad had experienced a change in the importance they attached to their national identity. These three items all asked the same question, although they were phrased differently, and each item was answered in about the same way (see table 7.5):

Table 7.5

Group	My feelings about my national identity changed as a result of my stay abroad		
	Yes, they strengthened	Yes, they weakened	No change
Period abroad in the PRC	77.5 %	5.0 %	17.5 %
Period abroad in the USA	66.7 %	5.9 %	27.5 %

Among the interviewees I encountered, most related about the growth in the feelings of their national identity, though one interviewee from each group also mentioned that their feelings towards their nation had on the contrary diminished as a result of their stay abroad.

As Allison (USA) put it, ‘Strengthened, because in a different country, I will experience a different culture. And somehow I really wanted to do some comparison while I am learning their pattern of life. And I think, hmm, how do I live in Taiwan in the same situation. Because I tried to compare and also reflect my opinion for Taiwan. And it was positive’. Or as Janice (USA) said: ‘Of course it strengthened. The Taiwanese students I met in the USA, their Taiwanese identity all become very strong after they went to the US. We heard of a Taiwanese identity. And we started to realize what it is about a Taiwanese identity after we went to the US’. Lee (USA) mentioned the importance of the input of a foreigner point of view on the negotiation of a national identity: ‘Before I studied abroad, I never thought about it. And when I came there, of course we talked about our country. And from their questions, from their points, I will thought a lot. It made me reflect more about myself’.

However, it is not only the students who went to the USA who have had input to think more about their national identity. Students who went to the PRC, like Wan (PRC), share this experience: ‘I found myself different from others and I began to think, what is the difference between me and others? Am I Chinese, or am I different from Chinese? Am I really Taiwanese or what is Taiwanese... that conflict resolves in my thinking now’. Another

student told me that for him, his thinking about his national identity had changed from the differentiated view politicians try to impose, to a more comprehensive understanding of a national identity. As Sying (PRC) explained: 'For Taiwanese who stay in Taiwan it is always about the political or racial issue...like, diversify your identity. When you go abroad, you look at the identity as a whole. Now that I studied abroad, I am not as focussed on the political and racial issue, more on the Taiwanese identity itself'.

Two students however, also mentioned that their feelings about their national identity weakened as a result of their stay abroad. As Gillian (PRC) related: 'Maybe...weakened. Some Americans think that China and Taiwan makes no difference. So I think if they think that I emphasize that I am Taiwanese, it is not so meaningful. Maybe weakened. Because they think that we just have yellow skin and black hair and that is all'. Fai (USA) however also mentioned that he grew more proud of Taiwan during his time abroad: 'We somehow we think we are just a little bit better than Cambodia or some very poor African country, somehow we feel we are just a little bit above that. I am speaking frankly. And the first thing is you know, when I went abroad and I spoke to people from Brazil, South America, and I heard about the problems going on there, somehow I will say, oh it's not that bad'.

These unique life experiences in Taiwan make that the students I interviewed feel it is not easy to consider themselves as belonging to the same group as the Mainland Chinese. Additionally, many of the students I have interviewed are considering their national identity a *sich*, given that they consider their Chinese background but part of their national identity – and not even the most important part.

7.5 Constituting elements emerging from theory

From my theoretical framework two more issues emerged that would also be of importance in the creation of a national identity: the possession of a unique currency and symbolism related to the state. In practice though, none of my interviewees mentioned these elements unless I prompted them, upon which some still discarded one or both of these aspects.

Three items in the questionnaire examined whether my respondents felt that the

use of a unique national currency contributed to their feelings of national identity. One item questioned whether a respondent considers the symbols featuring on Taiwanese money (see box 2.2) well chosen, a second if the respondent felt if the use of a national currency reassured the independent existence of Taiwan, and a final item explored whether the use of this currency gave the respondents a feeling of home. All groups answered these questions in rather large proportions, that is between 20% and 45%, with 'neither agree nor disagree'. None of these groups thus seem to have outspokenly strong feelings related to their currency. In a way this was unexpected, as quite recently (in 2002) the money was redesigned based on a public survey as to what elements should feature on it. Fai (USA) thinks this politicization of symbolism is why students want to dissociate themselves from money and its symbolism: 'You don't feel Taiwanese because of the money, but it is a common experience. Somehow Taiwanese want to distinguish from government, so many things that have a government image, won't make you feel Taiwanese'.

In fact, between 11% and 16% of my respondents even felt the symbols on the money to be chosen badly. As Peter (Taiwan) let slip, 'Speaking of banknotes, we should chose something really representative to this country'. Sun Yat Sen and Chiang Kai Shek both feature on coins and banknotes, and several of my interviewees were doubting whether they could really accept them as symbols for their nationality, be it for different reasons. 'China sees Sun Yat Sen also as a father of their country, so it is not a good symbol for Taiwan', as Li-Ming (Taiwan) put it. Chiang Kai Shek's image as the father of the country has been discredited through his authoritative leadership, as was elaborated upon in chapter three. Finally, not all symbols on the banknotes were recognized. Kathleen (PRC) for example said when she examined a 5 元 coin, 'I don't know whether it is Chiang Kai Shek or Sun Yat Sen, the bald guy on the coins...' The students I interviewed especially appreciated the native flora and fauna depicted on the money.

When it came to evaluating the symbolisms most frequently used by government in relation to the citizens of Taiwan, the three different groups were almost unanimous in the way they assigned their values (see table 7.6):

Table 7.6

Symbol	Ranking of state related symbolism		
	Period abroad in the PRC	Period abroad in the USA	No academic mobility
The shape of Taiwan	1	1	1
The flag of the ROC	2	2	2
Taipei Tower, 101	4	3	3
Natural scenery	3	4	4
Sun Yat Sen	5	5	5
Baseball	6	6	7
Lotus flower	7	7	6

In the interviews, the shape of Taiwan was explicitly considered a good symbol to use in the context of state symbolism. As Peter (Taiwan) put it: ‘The shape of the island means that you live here, you were born here and maybe you will die here’. This shape is widely in use by many governmental institutions already (see figure 7.6).



Figure 7.6 Shape of Taiwan

The flag is interpreted in a more ambiguous manner, as having a flag is considered good as all real countries have their own flag. This type of common exclusiveness was a theme that was discussed in Michael Billig's *Banal Nationalism* (1995), and was mentioned by some of my interviewees as well. This specific flag though is closely linked to the KMT, as shows clearly (see figure 7.7).

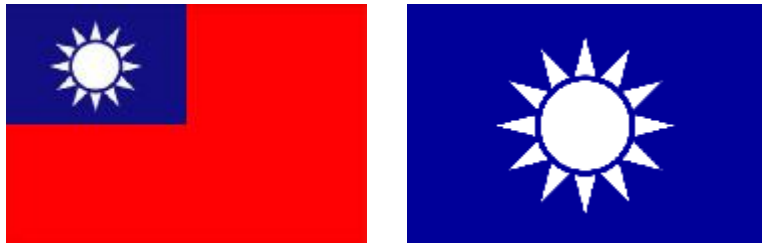


Figure 7.7 Flag of the ROC

Flag of the KMT

As Lee (USA) told me: 'The flag is a very good symbol in international relations. But... I think we need, we should have our own flag. I mean this flag, do you know the story about it? It is designed by our national father dr. Sun Yat Sen. And so we use this flag but... we are not allowed to use the flag in a formal situation. We use another flag in international competitions, or in the Olympic games. We use Chinese Taipei. And Chinese Taipei, it sounds like a part of China! So actually we use different flags in different situations'. A second issue emerging from this quote is that the PRC disallows Taiwan to use this flag in the international community. In sports events, for instance, Taiwan competes under the name of Chinese Taipei, using different flags for different events (see figure 7.8). This could be a reason that this particular flag was rated high even though it is strongly related to the KMT: it still is a constant depiction, and no ad hoc creation to respond to PRC demands.

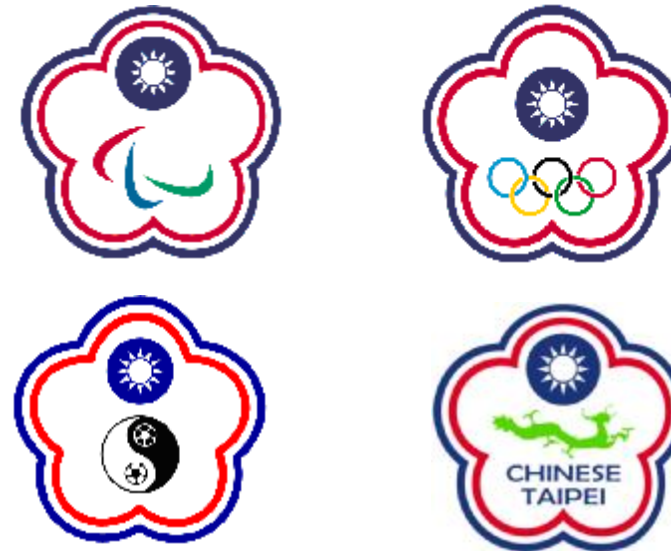


Figure 7.8 Taiwanese flags in use for the paralympics, the olympic games, football matches and the deaflympics

The plum flower, or the national flower of the ROC, is rated lowest of the given symbols. In Taiwan, this shape is common to encounter as well, and is also used as a watermark in the 100 元 banknote. Even though it can be seen often in Taiwan, it is considered a bad symbol for two reasons. In the first place for climatological reasons: ‘Actually, we don’t see this flower much in Taiwan. It grows in very cold weather, but Taiwan is not so cold so...it is more suitable for Mainland China, not for Taiwan’ (Lee, USA). Another reason is that this flower is the city flower of Nanjing as well, as Janice (USA) related: ‘The plum flower is the city flower of Nanjing. And Nanjing was the capital of the Chiang Kai Shek regime in Mainland China. If you know this history, maybe it is not a really good symbol!’.

The common depiction of Sun Yat Sen is problematic too, as was already mentioned in the section on a national currency. He is generally thought well of (as opposed to Chiang Kai Shek) but his relation to Taiwan is not completely clear. According to Adam (Taiwan), 'Sun Yat Sen is an interesting problem. I think he is a good guy, but he didn't do Taiwan... Maybe the ROC is built by him, but I think now, the ROC is different from the original ROC at that time'.

Baseball was a symbol that scored very low, even though an article by Yu et al (2008: 227) depicted it as a Leitmotiv in negotiating a common national identity: 'Baseball was the only thing that pulled the country together, [...] the only thing that made all the Chinese living in Taiwan throw away the shadows in their minds and forget troubling things surrounding them, thus integrating completely'. Dax (USA) did mention this issue as an important common denominator: 'Baseball is a good symbol for the young generation, they care about it a lot'. When it came to ranking baseball as a symbol describing their national identities, on an aggregate level students do not consider it of importance.

Coming to the end of the discussion of my third and final research question, all data have been described and analysed. The information I have thus produced will serve to formulate my ideas on the main problem which has guided this study.

8 | Conclusion



Upon analysis of the data I have gathered I now come to formulate an answer to the central research problem:

How do Taiwanese students construct their national identity in the face of two competing paths to a national consciousness, and to what extent and in what way does an international experience influence the re-performing of their national identity?

The latter part of this central research problem can be dealt with swiftly. It might have been perceived as incongruent with this aim that I have hardly ever distinguished between the three samples I have devised: students who studied in the PRC, in the USA, or in Taiwan only. According to Pred, these students might have ‘...amassed numerous similar or common path elements’ to influence the way they reconstruct their identity – elements which would differ as a result of going to the USA and going to the PRC. In earlier versions of this text I have distinguished between these three groups, without reaping significant correlations and resulting in an unsatisfying, if not to say boring text. Based on the outcomes of the Mann Withney Tests performed on the quantitative material, each sample turned out to belong to the same group, so that there is no question of the three populations I intended to sample, but from *one* population only, to which all three samples belong: Taiwanese students. Through the way this study has been devised it is by no means certain that this would be an independent category either; that could be an issue to test by means of future studies.

In the theoretical framework I reported that ‘little research has been done to analyze the relation between a study period abroad, and the reproduction of a national identity afterwards’, and this study confirms the sense in not spending too much energy on this topic. When viewing the recitation of a national identity as a process, going abroad cannot be specified as a critical experience in evoking change, even though this might be presumed in popular texts. Beforehand I expected that those who went to the USA could have gained more input for ideas on a separate Taiwanese nationality and a following Taiwanese sovereignty, while those who went to the PRC might have grown more positive about rejoining the Mainland. This latter issue actually plays a role when the Chinese government invites Taiwanese students through a scholarship. On the one hand, those students do tend to be more positive about the PRC, especially more positive than the students who stayed in Taiwan only. However, they mostly observed that they were

different from the people they met, even though some had not expected before going abroad. Studying abroad enables reflection on the values and way of life in your own country, and its place in the international community (Dolby 2004:150), but this did not lead to critical differences with the sample of students who did not have such an experience. In my method section I had considered the possibility of the PRC-sample being preselected, in a way that could cause them to be more positive about rapprochement with the PRC; upon analysis this is not the case.

From the analysis of the qualitative data a similar, though more nuanced representation emerged. This part of my study provided me with insights into the way Taiwanese students recreated their national identity while having two viable pathways to national consciousness – though there is no structural, consistent difference between the samples.

A first issue would be that, where original conceptions of a national identity rely heavily on a common culture rooted in a historical past, the students were explicitly invalidating this as a crucial and necessary basis for their nation. Though the relevance of states is being contested, the continued existence of these entities causes continuation of the creation of nationalisms (Calhoun 1994: 319), as the existence of a nation still is a key legitimizing factor for the existence of a state. Instead of focussing on the common culture and historical past, as was the rationale during the KMT authoritarian rule and still is the justification for unification put forward by the PRC, the students I interviewed focussed instead on common daily experiences. The language they speak, the media they read and use, education, fiction books and folksongs, travelling, input from family members and, most important, being embedded in democratic political institutions, were all mentioned as input for developing a sense of an independent Taiwanese nation. Thus, the students were all indicating they felt to belong to the community of Taiwanese people ('the nation'), not the 'Chinese' nation. In this context, questions on state symbolism in use on Taiwan yielded interesting results. Students had objections to the national flower, the national flag, the national fathers, the content of national history, several symbols used in relation to the state, official holidays and even the national map – issues that in most countries are thoroughly accepted and thus 'banal', to speak with Michael Billig (1995). In Taiwan though, the students do notice these items, and find many reasons for which they are unable or only

partly able to accept them, as they consider them to be biased or too closely linked to the KMT era on the Mainland.

Secondly, they feel this nation belongs to the state Taiwan, which most students consider an independent country, an outcome which demonstrates that a national identity needs to be re-enacted in daily life if individuals are to consider it 'real'. Now that the formerly emphasized Greater China ideology is hardly ever re-cited in education, in the news or in other daily encounters, students are starting to consider Taiwan as distinct from this previously advocated unit of national identity. In theoretical terms, the notion of a 'Greater China' relies on the ethnic version of nationalism, which argues that a political unit should be derived from a cultural unit, while the nation of Taiwan relies on civic nationalism, which attests an opposite relation. The students I interview all conform to the latter perspective on nationalism.

Derived from this it was interesting to observe how each interviewee pointedly referenced to the Mainland Chinese in the way they negotiated their national identity. My interview questions did not reference in that direction, but all describe the PRC as the antagonist against which they formulated their critical differences. Tolz (1998), whom I referenced to in my framework, claimed that 'a national identity presupposes an external alterity: there needs to be a 'constituting other' in opposition to which an identity can be produced', and for the students I interviewed this clearly is the PRC, and the Mainland Chinese - though all my interviewees were educated in the Greater China ideology. In fact, instead of belonging to the same group, the Mainland was considered *the* major obstacle in realising the option of an independent Taiwan. This decoupling of Taiwan from the concept of China shows a shifting 'Us vs. Them balance', as Elias proposed (in: Mennell 1994: 194). Through different laws and a different - democratic - political system, the line of inclusion has shifted. After 2000, when the DPP government came into power, much was done to change the way Taiwanese would judge 'us' and 'them' categories, through changing the words and expressions describing Taiwan (which was formerly known as Zhong and now as Tai) and the relations between Taiwan and the PRC. Now, the students are viewing the Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese as two separate communities, and for them it has become untenable to maintain that those living on Taiwan belong to the same nation as those living on the Mainland.

In combination, these two factors illustrate the notion of a national identity as a context sensitive process. Following Butler's theory designed to describe gendered

identities, being Taiwanese is something a person repeats rather than has been all along; and this very need of repeating a category opens a window for variations and change. In Taiwan a struggle is out in the open about the definition on the in-group and the out-group, which made the students I met especially sensitive to the notion that a nation is an imagined construction that they needed information about. In this case, her term of 'performativity' is especially relevant as all students were actively challenging the discourses they are presented with.

The students are annoyed by the biased way in which these discourses are circulated – through provoking ethnic tensions, strong emotions, and playing at feelings of insecurity about a possible war – and they find the hostility it incites between ordinary people objectionable. Through these strategies, talking politics has yet again become a sensitive topic to discuss in public; some students even made references to religious fanaticism. However, the students were all working to change the status quo. Supporting unification or independence is not necessarily linked to supporting the KMT or the DPP anymore, nor is the presupposition that supporting either party runs in the family. Especially in an Asian society, family linkages might be conceived as influential, but this seems not to be the case in negotiating a national identity in Taiwan. In fact, several students mentioned that when the older generation dies out, they would finally be able to overcome this charged topic, at least within Taiwan. Still though, if parents are outspoken supporters of one view or the other, their children are grouped accordingly. In practice this seems not reasonable anymore.

Additionally, the process from reciting a Chinese national identity to reciting a Taiwanese national identity has induced changes in subject positions; where anything Chinese was once synonym to superior, now the balance has shifted in favour of the eigenwaarde of a Taiwanese culture – at least with the students I have interviewed. Existing power relations have been subjected to challenges, and political and cultural reflections are more fluid than the rigid discourses imply. Several students mentioned that they considered this 'blurring' of the conventional conflicts between the Blue and Green discourses a step forward, and were themselves flexible and pragmatic in their political preferences. In fact, many of the students I have interviewed are looking forward to 'a focus on the reality, not the problem of ideology'. All were stressing the need to fully implement the possibilities a

democratic system offers for discussing solutions to the social, environmental and economical challenges Taiwan faces. This democratic experience is felt to have differentiated the Taiwanese in a fundamental way from all Chinese who are living on the Mainland, and the perceived lack of respect for human rights and democratic values in the PRC thus has become the main obstacle in any speculations on a voluntary fusion with Taiwan.

Except for the internal political struggle, the external diplomatic difficulties Taiwan faces also help to build the we-image the students were describing. The majority of students does not feel part of the Greater Chinese nation, and even feel repressed by the PRC government. Many students felt Taiwan is being tied to the diplomatic limits the PRC tends to set in advance of any negotiation – accepting the ‘One China’ policy. Furthermore, it is perceived that PRC interests prevail over those of Taiwan in agreements that have been reached. But most importantly, all interviewees were extremely concerned about directly answering to the authoritarian PRC regime, which could claim retribution from the Taiwanese renegade province should a unification come to materialize one day. These envisioned threats confirm Husmann’s theory that in these circumstances ‘an emotionally charged ‘we-image’ (ibid.) - or national identity - in relation to the survival unit’ materializes.

However, not only relations with the PRC are a source of contention, linkages in the international community are as well. It is strongly felt that in Taiwan’s efforts to built up official bilateral relations or to join international organizations, and to internally reach a consensus on the question whether Taiwan should be an independent country or not, they are being influenced by forces outside Taiwan as well, especially by the USA. This tug-of-war causes Taiwanese diplomacy to be very evasive (see figure 8.1).



Figure 8.1 Parody on Taiwanese diplomacy

Many political and juridical evaluations have been written about the question whether the PRC should belong to Taiwan, Taiwan should belong to the PRC, or if Taiwan should become independent. In this thesis, the view of the students has been a central concern; how do they judge the in- and out-group when they define the nation they feel they belong to? Although I have been unable to establish 'going abroad' as a crucial formative experience in the recreation of a national identity by Taiwanese students, I have been able to draw conclusions as to how the competing paths to a national consciousness are being reconciled.

Shared daily life experiences in a democratic order seem to be instrumental, while a common threat – the PRC, but economic hardship as well- serves to consolidate the in-group, Political discourses are being interpreted in a more flexible way, while resistance against divisive election strategies is growing. Though a Chinese identity is generally dismissed as a national identity, students described it as their cultural identity; thus assimilating these two apparently irreconcilable opposites into a single but ever developing 'unique society among the Chinese'.

9 | Discussion



The issue which caused me the most trouble in drawing a conclusion to this study has been that the outcomes did not match my expectations – at all. There were no significant differences in any relation between the samples of students having been on an exchange to the PRC, the USA, or having studied in Taiwan only. The same representation emerged from the information gathered through qualitative interviewing. Thus, this thesis has been an interesting exercise in analysing how individuals reclassify, reinterpret and recombine elements and can, in that way, merge seemingly opposite characteristics into a fluent and single identity; but I have not been able to justify one of the pillars on which the central research question rests. In fact, upon analysis a single population remained, Taiwanese students, while it is not certain whether this category would not dissolve in the same way.

Which leads me to discuss future possibilities for studying Taiwanese national identity. It could be insightful to learn whether higher educated individuals deal with this issue in a significantly different way from lower educated individuals. Shai-Ming (USA) hinted at this possibility when he considered voting patterns: according to him higher educated voters tend to think less dogmatically. Other students, such as Syng (PRC), Janice (USA.), Dax (USA) and Fai (USA) proposed age to be a significant boundary, considering ‘above 30’ and ‘below 30’ as different in the way they recreated their Taiwanese-ness. The topic of national identity currently provokes strong emotions and creates deep controversies between people; it would be interesting to find if, and how, these dividing lines are being translated into the future of Taiwan.

There was, however, a very practical and decisive argument for studying students only and leaving lower educated and elder people out of the picture: these groups tend to be unable to speak English. I was unable to consult persons in either Taiwanese or Mandarin, which restricted me from considering the samples indicated above. For a researcher with these language competencies, research along the lines indicated above could reap interesting results. The fact that I was an outsider to the issues related to national identity in Taiwan turned out to be an advantage. The persons I interviewed did not consider themselves to be judged by me, and several told me they were happy to be able to speak their mind to someone not directly involved.

In the light of the ‘One China’ policy so strongly advocated by the PRC, feelings and opinions of Taiwanese people on this principle of national belonging should remain a matter of study, balancing political manipulation by either party having a stake in this conflict.

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Appendix I

Interview Guide

-
- Is such a thing as a Taiwanese identity important to you? Why?
 - What are important elements in that identity?
 - What are you considering important sources in shaping a Taiwanese identity?
 - What role does Chinese culture play for you in the formation of a Taiwanese identity?
 - Which are important elements in Taiwanese history to you?
 - Has your way of identifying with Taiwan changed over time?
 - Do your (grand)parents' experiences influence your identification? How?
 - Is your Taiwanese identity most important, or are other identities such as student, child, the city you came from or your hobbies more important in describing who you are?

 - Do you think about Taiwanese identity by yourself?
 - Before you went abroad, were you actively thinking about Taiwanese identity?
 - All in all, has your stay abroad strengthened or weakened your sense of an independent Taiwanese identity? how?

 - What is your opinion on the contrasts between the Pan Blue and Pan Green coalition?
 - What is your interpretation of the unification / independence debate?
 - Has your interpretation of the independence / unification debate changed now you have lived abroad? In what sense?
 - Do you speak with other people about the way your experiences abroad are changing your views about Taiwan? With whom?
 - What are the most important issues you have developed a different view upon?

 - Why is it a problematic topic to speak about the values of Taiwan?

Appendix II

Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Thank you very much for participating in my research! I am gathering information now in order to write my Master thesis, and in that context I took an interest in Taiwanese political identity. Specifically, I am curious about the views of migrants, and the degree to which this migration has influenced ideas about this identity. The answers you will give in this questionnaire will remain strictly confidential, and will not be distributed further. The survey will start with some general questions.

If you are filling in this questionnaire on a computer, please mark the answers to multiple choice questions in yellow.

1. What is your year of birth?

....

2. In which country have you lived?

- China
- United States of America
- Other,
- I have not moved

3. In case you moved, how long have you been there?

....monthsyears

4. What are you majoring in?

.....

5. Are you a citizen of Taiwan?

- Yes •
- No •

6. From which country / countries did your parents and grandparents come?

- Taiwan •
- Japan •
- China •
- Other,

7. Where in Taiwan are you from?

8. Do you think of Taiwan as an independent country?

- Yes
- No

9. How proud are you of Taiwan in each of the following? Please, tick one box on each line.

	Very proud	Proud	Not very proud	Not proud at all	Can't choose
The way democracy works	•	•	•	•	•
The integrity of its political leaders	•	•	•	•	•
Taiwan's armed forces	•	•	•	•	•
Taiwan's colonial history	•	•	•	•	•

10. Is such a thing as an independent Taiwanese identity important to you?

- Yes
- No

11. Did your stay abroad influence your concerns about a Taiwanese identity?

- Yes, my concerns grew
- Yes, my concerns lessened
- No

12. Please rank the following symbols in order of their representative value for Taiwan. Give number 1 to the symbol you consider most appropriate, a 7 to the least appropriate one.



13. If you have moved, would you have given the same rank order before your experience abroad as you have now?

- Yes
- No, please specify:

14. How much do you agree with the following statements? Please, tick one box on each line.

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly
Taiwan should limit the import of Chinese products in order to protect its national economy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taiwan's interests in the world, including China, are based on mutual interest and not on competition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is good that ethnic minorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

are given government assistance
to preserve their traditions.

The symbols on Taiwanese
banknotes reassure the reality of
a Taiwanese unity

The animals, places and issues
depicted on the money
represent this nation very well.

Using Taiwanese money gives
me a feeling of being at home.

It is important to me that my
children will be able to speak
Taiwanese

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| • | • | • | • | • |
| • | • | • | • | • |
| • | • | • | • | • |
| • | • | • | • | • |
| • | • | • | • | • |

15. How proud are you of being Taiwanese?

- Very proud •
- Somewhat proud •
- Not very proud •
- Not proud at all •
- I am not Taiwanese •
- Can't choose •

16. What language do you speak with your family?

17. Which Taiwanese newspaper(s) do you read?

-
- online news paper,
- none

18. Do you think this nation should be referred to Taiwan or the Republic of China?

- Taiwan
- Republic of China
- It does not matter

19. How much do you agree with the following statements?

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly
The EU model of extended integration is a desirable projection of future relations between Taiwan and Mainland China	•	•	•	•	•
The issues of opposition between the Pan Green and Pan Blue coalitions are exaggerated	•	•	•	•	•
There is no fundamental difference between Chinese and Taiwanese people	•	•	•	•	•
In political and economical development, Taiwan leads the way for Mainland China	•	•	•	•	•
The Blue versus Green distinction is a concern of the earlier generations, not mine	•	•	•	•	•

20. Do you prefer the Blue or the Green Coalition?

- Green coalition
- Blue coalition

21. Do you vote in elections on Taiwan?

- Yes
- No

22. Which of these statements comes closer to your own view?

A. If, after Taiwan announced its independence, it could maintain peaceful relations with the Chinese Communist Government, then Taiwan should become an independent country. •

B. If mainland China and Taiwan were to become similar in economic, social and political conditions, then the two sides of the Strait should be united into one country. •

23. How do you feel about the following statements? Please, tick one box only.

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Dis- agree	Disagree strongly
Taiwan's history of the last century has made its inhabitants different from their Chinese counterparts	•	•	•	•	•
Political parties are the most important force in shaping a Taiwanese identity	•	•	•	•	•
Taiwan can only benefit from having greater interaction with China	•	•	•	•	•
The KMT should accept that it only exercises power over Taiwan, not over mainland China	•	•	•	•	•
It is important to show Chinese that Taiwan is different	•	•	•	•	•
The expansion of ties between China and Taiwan is going too fast.	•	•	•	•	•

24. Has your stay abroad strengthened or weakened your sense of a Taiwanese identity?

- It strengthened
- It weakened
- It did not change

25. What role does Chinese culture play for you in the formation of a Taiwanese identity?

- Chinese culture and Taiwanese culture are completely different
- Chinese culture is but a small part of the overall Taiwanese culture
- Chinese culture constitutes the major part of Taiwanese culture
- Taiwanese culture is Chinese culture

26. How do you feel about the following statements? Please, tick one box only.

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Dis- agree	Disagree strongly
As a result of my stay abroad, my understanding of the history of Taiwan has changed.	•	•	•	•	•
I think my experience abroad has changed my view on a Taiwanese identity from the view of persons who have only lived in Taiwan.	•	•	•	•	•
My identification with a Taiwanese people has nothing to do with monuments, commemorations or festivals.	•	•	•	•	•
Double Ten Day, Teacher's Day and Constitution day are important celebrations in shaping a distinct Taiwanese identity.	•	•	•	•	•

Taiwanese identity is a sensitive topic to discuss.	•	•	•	•	•
It is hard for me to have a clear picture in mind about a Taiwanese identity	•	•	•	•	•
I think about what elements are constructing a Taiwanese identity.	•	•	•	•	•

----- The end -----

Thank you very much for your effort, you have really helped me progress! As I have to conduct a number of interviews as well, please write down your e-mail address and phone number if you are willing to speak with me about this subject personally. I will contact you for a conversation then, and the drinks are on me!

e-mail :

phone number :