**Taiwanese Nationalism in the Age of Cross-Strait Integration– Predominance and Pragmatism in the Ma Ying-jiou Era**

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**Introduction**

Cross-Strait relations are generally believed to have progressed greatly under the eight years of Ma Ying-jiou’s presidency (2008-2016), and Ma is extremely proud of the more than twenty agreements he has signed during his term. In particular, because of the understanding between China and Taiwan to ease tensions created by diplomatic competition, Taiwan was not only able to maintain diplomatic relations with 22 countries, but also reached visa waver agreements with 163 nations, which made Taiwanese passports a hot item on the black market. However, despite the outward appearance of amicability, peace and close ties between the two regions, the people of Taiwan do not appear grateful, as surveys indicate they seemingly support “indefinitely maintaining the status quo” or “future independence” more than in the past.[[1]](#endnote-1) Furthermore, they believe more strongly than before that they are Taiwanese and not Chinese.[[2]](#endnote-2) What is more, the Sunflower Movement’s protest against the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement made the continued signing of agreements with the Mainland Chinese government practically impossible during Ma’s term of office.[[3]](#endnote-3)

The assessments of scholars who have interpreted this development have pointed at three causal factors: . The first is the formation of economic nationalism within Taiwan. The economic dividends of Cross-Strait interactions have not benefitted the majority of Taiwanese. On the contrary, young Taiwanese, the lower middle class, and those in central and southern Taiwan feel these interactions have worsened their economic situation. This has solidified anti-Chinese nationalist sentiment (Qi, 2013; Li, 2014). The second is the fact that Taiwan is a politically free and democratic society with a lifestyle and established institutions completely distinct from Mainland China. In addition, the younger generation is better-educated, and has a greater sense of autonomy.[[4]](#endnote-4) The textbooks used in history and civics courses for the young cohort conveyed the theme of Taiwanese consciousness.[[5]](#endnote-5) Education, which was geared toward the individual student, took the creation of a collective Taiwanese identity as its goal. Therefore, scholars have stated that greater democratization in Taiwan, as well as its greater autonomy, created a clear distinction between Taiwan’s political system and that of Mainland China, which led to political nationalism (Qi, 2013; Economist, 2011). The third is the large number of Mainland Chinese tourists visiting Taiwan,[[6]](#endnote-6) as their direct contact with the Taiwanese public has created tension. For example, when asked about their overall impressions concerning Mainland tourists coming to Taiwan in a 2009 poll, 40 percent of Taiwanese had an unfavorable impression, while 42 percent had a positive one (Taiwan Public Opinion Studies Association, 2009). When asked the same question in 2013, respondents who saw Mainland tourists unfavorably increased to 65 percent, while only 14 percent saw them favorably. A high 90 percent of respondents between the ages of 20 and 29 had an unfavorable view of Mainland tourists (TVBS, 2013). This consciousness of a distinction between the “we group” and “the other” derived through everyday interaction may be described as cultural nationalism (Huntington, 2004; Anderson, 1991).

One common focal point of these three factors is the younger generation of Taiwanese under 30 years of age, who are described as being “natural advocates of Taiwanese independence” (Tsai, 2014). During the Sunflower Movement, they sang *Dao yu tian guang* [Island’s Sunrise] and chanted the slogan “our country, our destiny.” These students utilized crowdsourcing to occupy the Legislative Yuan for 24 days (Liao, et al., 2014). Not only did they put a halt to the signing of cross-strait agreements and cause the defeat of the KMT in the 2014 local elections but, to add insult to injury, made the KMT a lame duck party before the 2016 presidential election. These phenomena seem to indicate that Taiwanese identity, and/or nationalism, has become even more prominent within the trend of cross-strait integration witnessed during Ma Ying-jiou administration. However, Tsai Ying-wen, who won the 2016 presidential election, has broken with the DPP’s tradition and participated in the last National Day of the Republic of China ceremony of Ma Ying-jiou’s presidency (10/10/2015). She also called for maintaining the status quo and has avoided themes related to the island’s autonomy (such as whether Taiwan is a country, whether the Republic of China is a foreign government, etc). If Taiwanese identity/nationalism has been truly prominent, why has not Tsai, the winner of the election, been strongly asserting Taiwan’s status as a sovereign nation? This study then explores Taiwanese nationalism not to pursue its causes or explain its apparent thriving, but rather to investigate its theoretical underpinnings and existence, both in terms of predominance and preservation.

The notion of Taiwanese nationalism is an ambiguous one. On the one hand, it has often been interchangeably used with Taiwanese identity. On the other hand, its meaning per se has not been seriously discussed and empirically tested in academic studies. This study then employs two theoretical perspectives to shed light on and provide insight into Taiwanese nationalism. The first is so-called primordialism, in which nationality is determined by identification with a common ancestry. In the case of Taiwan, a prevalent survey question that asks respondents whether they consider themselves Taiwanese, Chinese or both, exemplifies a primordial way of thinking or perspective. Respondents are divided into categories of “Taiwanese/Chinese identity” based on how they answer this question. However, recent schools of thought regarding nationalism prefer a relatively complex constructivist view, which produces imagined communities (such as the previously mentioned economic, political, and cultural ones). From this theoretical perspective, a question like “who are you?” which may refer to one’s primordial origin, can be answered in accordance with either one’s socialization background or politically constructed identity. In other words, primordialism can be socially constructed and does not necessarily mean an objectively verifiable kinship tie. Furthermore, the so-called imagined community cannot grow in a social vacuum. That is, the emergence of an imagined “we-group” definitely needs some social and political soil. While these two theoretical discourses have often been discussed to promote the assertion of Taiwanese independence, as well as nationalism,[[7]](#endnote-7) there are few academic works[[8]](#endnote-8) that apply these two theoretical perspectives to provide insight into so-called Taiwanese nationalism (TN, hereafter), not to mention providing a detailed conceptual distinction between Taiwanese identity and nationalism. Furthermore, since there is no serious discussion of TN’s substance, there is certainly no academic exploration of the TN concept at the empirical level.

Based on the lack of such research in the literature, this study starts by constructing and operationalizing the theoretical concept of Taiwanese nationalism. It then verifies the validity of the new TN theoretical construct through empirical data stemming from a survey conducted by Frank Liu, one of this chapter’s authors, in April, 2015, and explores whether the developments witnessed in the last year of Ma Ying-jiou’s presidency correspond with our general impression that the young have been nurtured toward Taiwanese independence, or as Tainan Mayor Willian Lai (Lai Ching-te) more bluntly stated, “Taiwanese independence is a social consensus.”[[9]](#endnote-9) While it is unclear what the implied meaning of “Taiwanese independence” is here, the term indicates that a form of Taiwanese nationalism or consciousness is on the rise and has become predominant. This study builds its first hypothesis on this phenomenon and tries to examine whether or not this commonly held impression substantially exists in most people’s minds.

The second hypothesis this study formulates relates to so-called Taiwanese pragmatism. It explores whether Taiwanese nationalists are extremists who pursue the exclusive goal of establishing a Taiwanese state that enjoys de jure independence. If not, can they be pragmatic concerning the reality of Taiwan? Can they be flexible so as to avoid extremism in facing an international environment mainly dominated by the United States and China (Wu, 2004)? This question has received attention in previous research (Rigger, 2006; Lin et al., 2004). However, such research has not provided empirical or theoretical evidence for the existence of pragmatism on the part of strong nationalists.[[10]](#endnote-10) This study thus attempts to utilize empirical data to analyze the pragmatic tendencies of Taiwanese nationalists.

This chapter has five parts. Followed by this introduction, the second part gives an overview of the relevant literature and explains the research design of this study, including the construction of the concept of Taiwanese nationalism. It takes the consanguinity of primordialism and the nationalism that emphasizes a political domain, the state, within constructivism as its framework (Tan and Chen, 2013). By utilizing these two theoretical constructs, this study distinguishes four groups with progressively higher levels of Taiwanese nationalism (see the next part below). The concepts of “Taiwanese consciousness” and “pragmatism,” the dependent variables of this study, as well as its data, will be introduced together. The third part presents the validity test for the construction of the four types representing different levels of nationalism, and provides a profile of these groups based on gender, age, education level and political position. In the fourth part we delve into Taiwanese nationalism in its existing form. In particular, we ask whether it is possible that the type classified as having the lowest level of TN still possesses Taiwanese consciousness to a certain extent, and whether it is vastly different from other types which display greater levels of TN. Next, we provide an analysis of whether Taiwanese nationalists are sufficiently pragmatic in dealing with circumstances and would accept the “Republic of China” instead of pursuing de jure Taiwanese independence or creating a “Republic of Taiwan.” In particular, are those from the type with the strongest TN level really completely different from the others with respect to their views on pragmatism? The fifth part, the conclusion, summarizes our findings and explains their implications for future research.

**Literature Review and Research Design**

**Taiwanese Identity and Nationalism**

There has been much research dedicated to Taiwanese identity and nationalism. However, the distinction between the two has not been clearly defined in prior literature. For instance, Wu Yu-shan’s conception of Taiwanese nationalism is that it “treats China as an alien entity and asserts that there is nothing essentially Chinese about Taiwan.” (Wu, 2004: 614-615). In the same article, he often intermingles the term of “Taiwanese identity” with that of “Taiwanese nationalism,” and conducts no empirical survey of the two terms (Wu, 2004: 614-625). Wu Nai-teh (2005) then explores Taiwan’s national identity through empirical data, though he does not directly tackle the issue of Taiwanese nationalism, but seems to suggest that “identity” is more culturally and ethnically based. Nationalism, then, involves both ethnic (or cultural) and political aspects (Wu, 2005: 5-39). This seems to be a quite acceptable distinction between the two terms. Other research that focuses primarily on issues of Taiwanese/Chinese identity approaches the question of “identity,” or “who we are” (i.e. Taiwanese, Chinese, or both) from an ethnic perspective (Ho and Liu, 2002; Huang, 2006; Liu and Ho, 1999; Wu, 2001; Liao, et al., 2012). Research that discusses the issue of Taiwanese national identity also treats the question of who we are as one of its main building blocks (Wu, 2005; Liao, 2015; Chang, 2000; Lynch, 2004; Hsu, 2010). This approach often includes an issue dimension with the choices of support for unification of China vs. Taiwanese independence in constructing the concept of national identity. However, is Taiwanese nationalism based on the unification vs. independence spectrum? Theoretical and related empirical studies do not confirm this.

Theoretically, nationalism can be generally divided into two schools of thought. One is primordialism, or essentialism, which considers kinship ties as the nexus of nationalism (Shih, 2003). The other, then, derives from a constructed perspective and emphasizes some common political or social experiences that give rise to a “we-group” sentiment or identity, in contrast to feelings or perceptions of “the other” (Shih, 2003). One definition of the nation often cited is the “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991). In such a view, all kinds of nationalism can be derived from a sense of community that has been inculcated through education or experience. Therefore, economic class distinctions, politics as defined by regimes, and lifestyles delineated by culture may all be sources of different imagined communities. However, among these plausible sources, politics may be more fundamental than the other two in framing people’s imagination of the community to which they belong, since the government has legitimate power over educational or communication channels in a regime. Politics, then, is often concretely conceptualized as a “state” or a “political regime” in the current literature regarding the identity components of nationalism (Harris, 1997; Tan and Chen, 2013; Shih, 2003; Checkel et al., 2009; Brubaker, 2006). Choices on the unification/independence spectrum may indicate a policy preference or desire for a future direction, but do not shed much light on the current state of Taiwanese nationalism as discussed in the aforementioned theoretical explanations.

It seems the concept of Taiwanese nationalism (TN) has not been sufficiently addressed empirically in the previous literature. In particular, the measurement of TN in existing studies does not follow the above-mentioned theoretical logic. For instance, in defining TN, Qi (2013) states that it is both political and economic: “Political nationalism aims at Taiwan’s de jure independence from China, in which the objective of economic nationalism is to protect the welfare of less affluent or advantaged Taiwanese through a restrained China policy.” (p. 1026). However, Qi still uses recognition as Taiwanese, or strength of tendency to choose policies favoring Taiwanese independence, as variables in operationalizing TN (p. 1029). He does not give further consideration to, or link the rationale of nationalism with, the logic behind the construction of indicators. On the other hand, Rigger (2006) broadly states that Taiwanese nationalism is Taiwanese identity, support for independence, and antipathy toward the PRC in her definition (p. viii). However, she does not attempt to quantitatively measure this concept, but primarily explores variations and changes in Taiwanese identity, as well as other issues, over different generations.

Because of the absence of measurements for TN in the literary discourse, this study brings together the implicit concepts of primordialism and constructivism to develop indicators and types for such a measurement (see below). Even though primordialism can also be constructed, people’s perception of their kinship connection should be an independent perspective from that of politically constructed stateness perception.

**Taiwanese Consciousness**

Simply put, “Taiwanese consciousness” refers to a Taiwanese perspective or point of view (Lin Yang-min, 1988: 55), or “consciousness whereby someone feels he or she is Taiwanese” (Shih Cheng-feng, 1999). This was initially proposed approximately during the 1980’s with the commencement of the debate between the “Taiwan Complex” and the “China Complex” (Wang Fu-chang, 1996). The notion of Taiwan as an autonomous entity did not exist during the KMT authoritarian rule of this period. However, Taiwanese consciousness reared its head in the debates of the 1980’s (Shih Min-hui, 1985; Chen Shu-hong, 1985; Tsai Du-jian, 1996). Participants in these debates critically pondered identification as “Chinese,” as well as the Chinese national identity and history presented in KMT education policies. They explored Taiwan’s own history, geography, political experiences and Taiwan as an entity, and also promoted Taiwan as autonomous and distinct. It could be said that there was only a thin line between their notions of Taiwanese consciousness and that of Taiwanese nationalism. Because of the many impediments to directly promoting de jure independence for Taiwan, its advocates used Taiwanese consciousness to indirectly construct a community sentiment which attempted to connect the future fate of Taiwan’s geographic area and people with its present democratic institutions.

Taiwanese consciousness was promoted over many years, and it became standard for school curriculums to inculcate the sense of being Taiwanese. According to a survey conducted by National Chengchi University’s Election Study Center in 2015, close to 60 percent percent identify as Taiwanese, while 34 percent percent state they are both Taiwanese and Chinese, and a mere three percent identify as only Chinese.[[11]](#endnote-11) From this we can perceive that Taiwanese consciousness may have attained a position of dominance (Liao et al., 2013). However, a political perspective that involves both understanding of Taiwan’s political experience and acceptance of Taiwan as a political entity is seldomly addressed in the literature or empirical studies. Therefore, in addition to utilizing primordialism and constructivism in creating our measurement indicators and types of TN, as indicated above, we also take Taiwanese consciousness as a dependent variable in exploring how prevalent Taiwanese consciousness has been. We develop a scale for measuring Taiwanese consciousness on the ground of perceptions of political experience and Taiwan as a polity in order to examine whether the type with the least Taiwanese nationalist sentiment possesses little Taiwanese consciousness or, like the other types, has also been permeated through daily life so as to bear quite high levels of Taiwanese consciousness.

**Taiwanese Pragmatism**

The Taiwanese people have pragmatic tendencies, a view that much of the literature supports (Taiwan Competitiveness Forum, 2014; Rigger, 2006; Hsu Tsung-mao, 1995; Shu Keng et al., 2009; Niou, 2004; Lin et al., 2004; Wu, 2005b). Here, pragmatism refers to the ability to compromise one’s nationalist identity with the conditions that may threaten one’s vested interest (Taiwan Competitiveness Forum, 2014, Keng Shu et al. 2009). For example, regarding doing business with China as most important (Rigger, 2006, Hsu Tsung-mao, 1995) and believing it is not necessary to fight a war in the pursuit of de jure Taiwan independence (Niou, 2004; Wu, 2005b) may be called pragmatist stances. Only approximately 15 percent of the public was willing to fight a war for Taiwanese independence, a posture seen as symbolic politics in past research (Lin Tse-min et al., 2004). However, in recent years National Chengchi University Election Study Center surveys have produced results which differ from those of the past. For example, a 2013 poll asked respondents the following conditional question concerning Taiwanese independence: Should the Taiwanese establish their own country even if a declaration of independence would cause Mainland China to attack? 38.9 percent percent (N=795) of respondents supported declaring independence, while 61.1 percent percent (N=1240, total N=2044) opposed.[[12]](#endnote-12) Almost 40 percent of respondents believed that Taiwan should declare independence even under the premise that China would attack the island, an unprecedentedly high ratio. Has the fervor for Taiwanese nationalism made its people less pragmatic and willing to go to war? However, 60 percent still do not approve of going to war according to this survey. Pragmatism may still be common among the Taiwanese people. Yet, we must still inquire as to whether those with the strongest Taiwanese nationalist sentiments will take extreme views. Is it actually the case that pragmatism is still pervasive, as this study hypothesizes? In the next section we explain the operationalization of our variables, the methods we employ for measurement, and the source of our data.

**Research Design**

In addressing primordialism, one of the two aspects of Taiwanese nationalism utilized for creating our measurement in this study, we do not utilize the traditional identity choices of “Taiwanese/Chinese/both.” It has been pointed out that these choices are often circumstantial. That is, the respondent may change his or her answer because of the situation. This is also referred to as strategic identity (Gao Ge-fu, 2004; Lin Rui-hua, Keng Shu, 2008; Ke Tsai-Pei, 2014). Unlike these studies, we base our investigation on primordialism as applied by promoters of Taiwanese nationalism such as Shih Ming (1993), Wu Nai-teh (1996; 2005), and Shih Cheng-feng (1998; 2000; 2003; 2005) and pose indirect survey questions such as “Some people say the people of Mainland China are our compatriots. Do you agree with this statement?” During its single party authoritarian rule (1949-87), the Kuomintang (KMT) disseminated the belief that the people of Mainland China were naturally compatriots of Taiwanese through its education system, a concept often referred to as the Greater China doctrine. On the contrary, fundamentalist adherents of Taiwan independence, such as Shih Ming, argued that the ancestry of the Taiwanese people was distinct from that of Mainland China (1992). However, later promoters of independence, such as Wu Nai teh and others, emphasized that Taiwan’s people were born and raised on the island and shared a common way of life and culture different from that of Mainland China. Thus, they were Taiwanese and not Mainland Chinese. These different notions underwent an interdiscursive process in Taiwanese society.[[13]](#endnote-13) Therefore, it is possible, from a primordialist perspective, to compare the number of respondents who believe Mainland Chinese are compatriots with the number of those who do not, with those answering “yes” possessing lower levels of Taiwanese nationalist sentiments , while those responding “no” having stronger Taiwanese nationalist sentiments.

As previously mentioned, from the perspective of constructivism we primarily focus on the political domain of nationalism, which provides discourses for the concept of the state. We then ask: “In your estimation, does Taiwan’s status quo constitute independence?” Promoters of Taiwanese nationalism (Shih, Wu, Shih, etc.) all want Taiwan to establish its own country (Shih Cheng-feng, 2003: 3). However, China will not allow de jure independence and the United States, with its own considerations of national interest, does not support it. For the above stated reasons, those involved in day to day politics, such as the Democratic Progressive Party’s (DPP) Lin Cho-shui, Hsieh Chang-ting, Chen Shui-bian, and others, either implicitly or explicitly state that Taiwan is an independent country. It seems at present that Tsai Ying-wen is more willing to make statements like “the name of this country is the Republic of China.” However, traditional members of the Taiwan independence movement, such as Shih Ming, believe that Taiwan currently is not independent yet, and insist on its de jure independence. Also, they do not accept the “Republic of China” (ROC) as the name of their country. They are still pursuing the birth of a new independent country under a name different from the ROC, such as the Republic of Taiwan, for instance. This dispute provides another facet in distinguishing the depth of Taiwanese nationalism from a political perspective.

This facet is nevertheless not as simple as that of primordialism. Theoretically and empirically it is indisputable that selecting “Mainland Chinese are compatriots” indicates weaker Taiwanese nationalism. However, the use of the question “Is Taiwan independent by your estimation?” is empirically complicated. As previously stated, several important proponents of Taiwanese nationalism no longer state that “Taiwan is not an independent country,” but tend to acknowledge that it is. We may conclude from this that those who “estimate that Taiwan is independent” take a softer stance with respect to Taiwanese nationalism than those who do not, such as Shih Ming. On the other hand, the educational system of the KMT period of authoritarian rule did not assert that Taiwan was an independent country. Ma Ying-jiou attempted to implicitly uphold the legitimacy of the Republic of China by stating Taiwan “would not reunite, declare independence, or fight” in his declarations on cross-strait policy, in addition to advocating the ‘1992 consensus’. This seems to signal that “Taiwan is not an independent country.” If, based on KMT standards, a respondent “estimates Taiwan is not independent” he or she likely possesses a low TN level. This is because what this respondent means when choosing this response is completely different from what Shih Ming means when he emphatically states that “Taiwan is not an independent country.” How do we distinguish people representing two different types who choose the same answer, but in fact seem to possess TN levels at different ends of the spectrum?

After assessing the differences between the theoretical intent of primordialism and political constructivism, as well as the practical development of Taiwanese nationalism,[[14]](#endnote-14) we decided to weight perception that is derived from primordialism heavier than that of political constructivism in measuring the degree of TN. In other words, we follow ethnonationalism’s line of thinking that views the kinship concern as the core element of nationalism (Connor,1994; O’Leary, 1997). Below we present a cross-table analysis of the two questions and the four types we created. The significance of primordialism as a heavier weighted factor is as follows:

**Table 1： Typology of Taiwanese Nationalism**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Primordialism  Constructivism | Mainland Chinese are compatriots | Mainland Chinese not compatriots |
| (Estimates that) Taiwan is Not Independent | I | IV |
| (Estimates that) Taiwan is Independent | II | III |

Source: the authors.

This study, guided by primordialism, sequentially orders the types in table 1 from I to IV according to ascending levels of Taiwanese nationalism (TN). Those in type I believe Mainland Chinese are compatriots and estimate that Taiwan is not independent. They are supposed to possess the lowest level of TN sentiment. We may also say that they may not possess a Taiwanese nationalist identity Type II has greater TN than I; those in this type believe Mainland Chinese are compatriots but estimate Taiwan is independent. Since members in these two types perceive “Mainland Chinese are compatriots,“ their TN sentiments are evaluated as lower than that of the next two types. This is because we weight this factor heavier than the other one (whether Taiwan is independent) and therefore it decides the sequential orders of the four types first.

Members of type III then do not acknowledge Mainland Chinese as compatriots but estimate Taiwan is an independent country. They are supposed to possess the third highest level of TN sentiment. Finally, those of type IV, who do not see Mainland Chinese as compatriots and do not believe Taiwan is independent, should possess the highest TN sentiment and closely resemble the most fundamentalist supporters of Taiwan independence.

These four TN level types, based on the two aforementioned theoretical aspects, were created with the goal of addressing of the gap in the existing literature concerning the empirical measurement of TN. We further desire to undertake a more empirically based investigation of the apparent rise of Taiwanese nationalism during the eight years of Ma’s presidency and answer the following questions: Is it the case that those who show the lowest degree of TN (type I) possess no Taiwanese consciousness (for example, do not want the official name of the country to be Taiwan)? If this is not the case, is this group, which may have been infected with a strong desire for Taiwan being the master of its own destiny, not so different from the other three? In addition, as stated previously, this study desires to understand the pragmatism of Taiwanese nationalists. Are those from the strongest TN sentiment type IV completely opposed to cross-strait economic and trade exchanges, as well as the use of “Republic of China” as the country’s name? Otherwise, is this type not alarmingly or significantly different from the other three with respect to pragmatism?

As stated previously, the operationalization of “Taiwanese consciousness” focuses on the cognition and recognition of “Taiwan’s own political experience and Taiwan as a political entity.” Based on these concepts Professor Liu Cheng-shan created a questionnaire with six questions suitable for the operationalization of “Taiwanese consciousness”:

1. Do you believe a trip to Shanghai constitutes travel abroad?
2. Do you agree with that the official name of our country should be “Taiwan?”
3. In your estimation, do the people of Taiwan already have their own country?
4. Do you believe “Taiwan” is the name of a region, or both the name of a region and our country?
5. Which view do you tend toward?
6. China and Taiwan are part of one China
7. China and Taiwan constitute two Chinas (PRC and ROC)
8. there are two different countries on each side of the strait (PRC, Taiwan)
9. does not know/no opinion/no response
10. Would you like for our country to be officially referred to as Taiwan?

Our study is informed by the considerations of cross-strait economic and trade exchanges and the avoidance of war based on the operationalization of Rigger (2006), Lin et al. (2004), and Niou (2004) in measuring pragmatism. In addition, we reference Tsai Ying-wen’s willingness to use the name Republic of China as expressing a pragmatist stance. We choose the following three questions from Liu Cheng-shan’s questionnaire.

* 1. Do you believe our government should more proactively pursue economic and trade relations with Mainland China or have fewer interactions?
  2. According to some people, avoiding war is most important in cross-strait relations and everything else can be discussed. Do you agree with this statement?
  3. Do you desire that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) acknowledge the ROC?

The data utilized for analysis in this study is taken from the results of a telephone survey performed by an April 2015 Taiwan Indicators Survey Research Poll commissioned by Professor Liu Cheng-shan.[[15]](#endnote-15)

**Validity Test and Profile of Taiwanese Nationalists**

**Validity Test**

As stated previously, the concept of Taiwanese nationalism we utilize is derived from the theoretical perspectives of primordialism and political constructivism. We take two beliefs held by respondents: Whether or not Mainland Chinese are compatriots, and whether or not they estimate that Taiwan is independent. We perform cross-table analysis to create the four types (I, II, III, IV) representing progressively higher levels of TN. We must also examine the validity of these four types.

In order to test the validity, this study first analyzes the two above-mentioned variables through a χ2 examination in order to make sure that the two do not correlate. As table 2 shows below, the significance level is p>0.05. This means that the two variables that are used to classify the types of TN are effective, since they don’t relate to each other.

**Table 2：** **Four Types of Taiwanese Nationalists**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Are Mainland Chinese compatriots?  Is Taiwan independent? | Compatriots | | Not compatriots | | Total | |
| Type | N/ percent | Type | N/ percent | N\* | percent |
| Not Independent | I | 165/18 | IV | 155/16.9 | 320 | 34.9 |
| Independent | II | 333/36.4 | III | 263/28.7 | 596 | 65.1 |
| Total | 498/54.4 | | 418/45.6 | | 916 | 100 |

Source: Liu Cheng-shan (2015). χ2=0.212 d.f. =1 p>0.05

\*N: Missing data, such as “Does not know/no opinion/no response,” is excluded.

Table 2 shows that more than half of the Taiwanese public believes Mainland Chinese are compatriots (54.4 percent) while as many as six in ten estimate that Taiwan is independent. In order, the levels of TN for the four types we have constructed are as follows:

1. The group with the lowest level of TN, which sees Mainland Chinese as compatriots and does not estimate Taiwan to be independent, comprises 18 percent of the sample group;[[16]](#endnote-16)
2. The group with a slightly higher level of TN sees Mainland Chinese as compatriots but does estimate Taiwan to be independent, comprises 36.4 percent of the total sample, twice that of type I.
3. The group with the third highest TN level, whose members do not see Mainland Chinese as compatriots and estimates Taiwan to be independent, comprises 28.7 percent, slightly less than members in type II.
4. According to our definition this group possesses the highest degree of TN. Its members do not see Mainland Chinese as compatriots and estimate Taiwan is not (yet?) independent. Those in this group represent close to 17 percent of the total sample, the smallest of the four.

This is just an initial examination of validity. We can make inferences concerning the TN levels of these four typologies based on theory, logic, and practical experience. For the next step we must further ask if the differences between these typologies are as we anticipated. Or is it the case that the real world is much more complicated than our simple theoretical inference and that the TN internalized by these four groups manifests itself in different forms and cannot be captured by quantified sequencing? In order to further confirm the validity of the four TN types, this study utilizes the following variables: identification as “Taiwanese/Chinese/both” and preference concerning “unification/independence choice spectrum” to perform cross-table analyses.

Based on the understanding and classification practices of the present literature, most with high levels of TN will choose “Taiwanese,” while those with lower levels will choose “Chinese” and those with median levels will choose “both.” Will we find that the four types are sequentially distributed from weakest to strongest with respect to Taiwanese identity for the four types with varying levels of absorbed TN ( table 3). Likewise, we can surmise that it is possible to test the validity of the four types in ascending order of TN strength by asking our respondents on their preferences concerning the unification/independence issue. In particular, we expect respondents with higher levels of TN to be more likely to choose “Taiwanese independence.” Do the results, which are presented in table 4, prove that this is the case?

**Table 3:** **Level of TN and Taiwanese/Chinese/Both Options**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Identity selection  Level of TN | Taiwanese | | Chinese | | Both | | Total | |
| N | percent | N | percent | N | percent | N\* | percent |
| I | 57 | 35.2 | 11 | 6.8 | 94 | 58 | 162 | 100 |
| II | 139 | 43 | 12 | 3.7 | 172 | 53.3 | 323 | 100 |
| III | 207 | 79.9 | 1 | 0.4 | 51 | 19.7 | 259 | 100 |
| IV | 129 | 85.4 | 0 | 0 | 22 | 14.6 | 151 | 100 |
| Total | 532 | 59.4 | 24 | 2.7 | 339 | 37.9 | 895 | 100 |

Source: Liu Cheng-shan (2015). χ2=170.369 d.f. =9 p=.000 (two tails)

\*N: Missing data, such as “Does not know/no opinion/no response,” is excluded.

Table 3 clearly shows that type I has the smallest percentage of members who identify as Taiwanese (only 35.2 percent). The percentage for types II, III, and IV ascend uniformly in order (43 percent, 79.9 percent, and 85.4 percent), while the percentages for those who identify as Chinese descend in order, at 6.8 percent, 3.7 percent, 0.4 percent and 0 percent respectively. More specifically, the questions we ask, i.e., are Mainlanders compatriots or not, and do respondents estimate Taiwan to be independent or not effectively reflect the progressive levels of Taiwanese nationalist consciousness from the perspective of Taiwanese identification.

**Table 4:** **Level of TN and Unification/Independence Preferences**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Uni./Ind.  Level of TN | Ind. | | Status Qua., Future Ind. | | Status Qua., Future depends. | | Permanent Status Qua. | | Status Qua., Future Uni. | | Uni. | | Total | |
| N | percent | N | percent | N | percent | N | percent | N | percent | N | percent | N\* | percent |
| I | 21 | 13.6 | 6 | 3.9 | 55 | 35.7 | 38 | 24.7 | 17 | 11 | 17 | 11 | 154 | 100 |
| II | 33 | 10.2 | 28 | 8.7 | 135 | 41.9 | 69 | 21.4 | 36 | 11.2 | 21 | 6.5 | 322 | 100 |
| III | 105 | 40.5 | 37 | 14.3 | 75 | 29 | 32 | 12.4 | 6 | 2.3 | 4 | 1.5 | 259 | 100 |
| IV | 64 | 42.4 | 22 | 14.6 | 41 | 27.2 | 18 | 11.9 | 5 | 3.3 | 1 | 0.7 | 151 | 100 |
| Total | 223 | 25.2 | 93 | 10.5 | 306 | 34.5 | 157 | 17.7 | 64 | 7.2 | 43 | 4.9 | 886 | 100 |

Source: Liu Cheng-shan (2015). χ2=162.886 d.f. =15 p=.000 (two tails)

\*N: Missing data, such as “Does not know/no opinion/no response,” is excluded.

The six items shown in table 4 present a complicated picture. Since our goal is to further confirm the validity of the four Taiwanese nationalism measures, we choose to primarily observe the two choices of “Independence” and “Unification” among the six options. The percentages for those who support “Independence” for I, II, III and IV are 13.6 percent,10.2 percent, 40.5 percent and 42.4 percent respectively. There is no significant difference between I and II per the Scheffe test. Similarly, while the order of III and IV adheres to our expectations, the difference between them is not significant. In contrast, the difference between I, II, and III, IV is approximately 30 percent, an extremely clear significant difference (table 4 χ2, p=.000). However, this does not essentially disprove the view that there is orderly difference between the four different TN level types. This becomes more evident in examining the percentages for “unification,” which are as follows for I through IV: 11 percent, 6.5 percent, 1.5 percent and 0.7 percent. Based on the assumptions derived from our definitions for these types, those with lower TN levels (such as type I) will be more likely to choose “unification” (11 percent), and vice versa. Table 4 confirms the validity of the orderly differences for the four TN level types we have constructed. From the trends presented in tables 3 and 4 we can confidently say the deductions we make in creating the four TN level types derived from primordialism and political constructivism are valid. Based on this construction we further examine who has the highest and lowest levels of TN. Below we present an analysis of who the Taiwanese nationalists are.

**Profile of Taiwanese Nationalists**

This study utilizes four sociodemographic variables of gender, age, education, and political position to examine the background distribution of the four types with varying TN levels. We only utilize these four variables, as the relevant literature indicates that they have a substantial impact on political attitudes. In particular, age is one variable this study pays special attention to (Rigger, 2006, 2016; Liao et al., 2013). In addition, other variables often used for political attitudes, such as province of origin, or occupation, are not important to our analysis, as the central focus of this study is the predominance and pragmatism of Taiwanese nationalism, and not how individual background influences voting or national identity (Huang, 2006; Ho and Liu, 2002; Chang, 2012).We treat each sociodemographic variable as a categorical one: Gender is divided into male and female for age groups of 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, and to above 70; education divided into elementary and lower, middle school, high school and vocational high school, junior college, and university and higher; political position divided into pan-blue, pan-green, and neutral/depending on candidates’ characteristics or others.

We have done χ2 examination for our four TN types on gender, age, education level and political position respectively. The results all reach a statistically significant levels of difference.[[17]](#endnote-17) Among the four sociodemographic variables, age and political position have more influence on the TN types than gender and education do. Then what are the exact differences among the four TN types in their composition of the four background variables? Table 5 presents the summarized profile for each TN type.

**Table 5: Profile of Four Types of Taiwanese Nationalists**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Type I | 1. no major difference with respect to gender 2. the largest age group is 50-59 3. education level most fall in “elementary school or lower 4. more “neutral” or “Pan-Blue” with respect to political position |
| Type II | 1. a much higher ratio of males 2. the largest age group is “40-49” 3. most have attained the education level of “junior college” or “university or higher” 4. more “neutral” or “Pan-Blue” for political position |
| Type III | 1. males and females are similarly represented; 2. the largest number are in the “30-39” age group; respondents in the18-29 years age group come second; 3. most have received high school education or higher; 4. more “Pan-Green” supporters for political position. |
| Type IV | 1. possesses a higher percentage of females 2. most are in the age group “18-29” 3. education level is evenly distributed with the exception of the the “junior college” group comprising only few respondents 4. more “Pan-Green” supporters with respect to political position |

Source: Authors.

Table 5 indicates that each of the four TN level types demonstrates a quite unique profile with respect to the four background variables. In sum, types I and II have more males, senior citizens, and pan-blue supporters, but they do differ on their education backgrounds since type II has more university educated and type I has more elementary educated. Types III and IV then have more females, members of the younger generation especially under 30, pan-green supporters, but also differ on education by the former having more high school educated and the latter having fewer junior college educated.

Is there a clear difference between these four types with varying levels of TN and unique profiles with respect to Taiwanese consciousness and pragmatism? As explained in our previous descriptions and hypotheses, Taiwanese consciousness has dramatically increased during Ma Ying-jiou’s eight years in office. Tainan Mayor Lai even says that “Taiwanese independence is the consensus.”[[18]](#endnote-18) If this is the case, do both those with lower and higher TN possess Taiwanese consciousness? Furthermore, the literature has pointed out Taiwanese pragmatist tendencies. Hence, is there a correlation between levels of TN and pragmatism? Are the most ardent Taiwanese nationalists radical enough so as to be willing to sever economic and trade ties with Mainland China? Moreover, are they willing to go to war with China?

**Predominant Phenomena and Pragmatic Orientation**

**Predominant Phenomena of Taiwanese Consciousness**

This chapter attempts to verify how common Taiwanese consciousness is and to what extent it has risen among groups displaying different levels of TN. In order to test for correlation between strength of Taiwanese consciousness and level of TN, this study quantitatively measures the answers for the selected six questions (see the second part) in order to calculate responses. For example, the coding for the question “In your estimation, does travelling to Shanghai constitute a trip abroad?” is 1 for “yes”. -1 for “no,” and 0 for “does not know/no opinion/no response”. This method is largely used for recording answers for the other five questions. For a detailed account of the recorded values, see appendix 1.[[19]](#endnote-19)

We divide the following analysis into two parts. The first part presents overall frequency and percentages for the six questions. This gives us an initial explanation of the predominant phenomena of Taiwanese consciousness, while the second part takes the quantitative measurements of Taiwanese consciousness provided by these six questions, and the four types representing different levels of TN, to perform linear regression analysis. Furthermore, it examines the effects of regression analysis both with and without background variables in order to verify this study’s first hypothesis concerning the predominance of Taiwanese consciousness: In fact, there is little difference between type I that has the lowest level of TN, and type IV with the highest, with respect to the inculcation of Taiwanese consciousness.

Comprehensive results for responses to the six questions on Taiwanese consciousness are presented in table 6.

**Table 6: Overall trends for “Taiwanese consciousness”**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Questions | Options | N | percent | Total N |
|  | In your estimation, does travel to Shanghai constitute a trip abroad? | Yes | 935 | 85.0 | 1100 |
| No | 117 | 10.6 |
| Unknown\* | 48 | 4.4 |
|  | Should the official name of our nation be Taiwan? | Agree | 800 | 72.8 | 1100 |
| Disagree | 195 | 17.7 |
| Unknown\* | 104 | 9.5 |
|  | In your estimation, do the people of Taiwan have their own country? | Yes | 852 | 77.5 | 1100 |
| No | 170 | 15.4 |
| Unknown\* | 78 | 7.1 |
|  | Do you consider “Taiwan” to be the name of a region, or both the name of a region and a country? | Name of a region | 173 | 15.8 | 1100 |
| Name of region and of country | 796 | 72.4 |
| Unknown\* | 130 | 11.8 |
|  | Which of the following statements below are you more inclined to agree with?  Taiwan and Mainland China can best be described as | One China | 75 | 6.8 | 1100 |
| Two Chinas | 114 | 10.4 |
| One China, One Taiwan | 822 | 74.7 |
| Unknown\* | 89 | 8.1 |
|  | Should the official name of our country be “Taiwan”? | Yes | 777 | 70.6 | 1100 |
| No | 214 | 19.4 |
| Unknown\* | 109 | 9.9 |

Source: Liu Cheng-shan (2015). \*: “unknown” includes “no opinions” and “no responses.”

Table 6 indicates that answers for the six questions all showed great support for Taiwanese consciousness. Even the least supporting rate among the six questions reaches 70.6 percent. This result further confirms that Taiwanese consciousness has clearly been a predominant feature of cross-strait integration during the Ma presidency, as indicated by various surveys and the existing literature. However, does the predominance of Taiwanese consciousness also strongly affect the least nationalist type I?

This study transforms the answers for the six questionnaire items into scores (see appendix 1) and performs calculations to produce a Taiwanese consciousness scale ranging from 7 to -6. The overall average is 4.5 which is also high (average of scope is 0.5).[[20]](#endnote-20) The averages for the four TN types in order are 3.5, 4.0, 5.7 and 4.5. While III and IV are clearly higher than I and II, IV is much lower than III. With respect to the strength of Taiwanese consciousness for respondents of type 4, the most nationalistic, seemingly possesses less Taiwanese consciousness than we had anticipated.

In the TN group background profile presented above we indicate that age, education level, gender and political position are all strongly correlated with TN. Age and political position are of particular significance. Therefore, this study undertakes further analysis concerning the correlation between levels of TN and strength of Taiwanese consciousness. We perform linear regression first without the background variables in model I to examine the difference between type I, with the lowest level of TN, and the other three types with higher levels of TN. Hereafter, we add the four background factors as control variables to observe the difference between type I and the other three types with respect to Taiwanese consciousness in model II. The results of the two regression analyses are presented in table 7.

**Table 7:** **Taiwanese Nationalism and Taiwanese Consciousness**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Independent variable** | **Model I** | | **Model II** | |
| **Regression coefficient** | **(standard error)** | **Regression coefficient** | **(standard error)** |
| **Constant** | 3.491\*\*\* | (.210) | 6.330\*\*\* | (.415) |
| **Gender (female as reference group)**  Male |  |  | -.503\*\* | (.166) |
| **Age** |  |  | -.251\*\*\* | (.034) |
| **Education level** |  |  | -.323\*\*\* | (.072) |
| **Political position (no political party affiliation as reference group)** |  |  |  |  |
| Pan-blue tendencies |  |  | -1.315\*\*\* | (.220) |
| Pan-Green Tendencies |  |  | 1.189\*\*\* | (.191) |
| **4 TN types with type I as reference group (Chinese are compatriots/Taiwan not independent)** |  |  |  |  |
| Mainland Chinese are compatriots/Taiwan is independent (II) | .503\* | (.257) | .834\*\*\* | (.236) |
| Chinese not compatriots/Taiwan independent (III) | 2.159\*\*\* | (.268) | 1.797\*\*\* | (.249) |
| Chinese not compatriots/Taiwan not independent (IV) | .987\*\*\* | (.301) | .332 | (.280) |
| N | 900 | | 900 | |
| Adjusted R2 | .080 | | .244 | |

Source: Liu Cheng-shan (2015). \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001。

From model I in table 7 we clearly see that, before background variables are added, significant difference is reached when we compare the lowest degree of TN in type I with types II, III, and IV which possess progressively higher levels of TN, with respect to Taiwanese consciousness (at least p<0.05). Significant difference between I and II (p<0.05) is smaller than between I and III, or IV (p<0.001). However, after adding the four background variables for control in model II we see an interesting change in the results.

As expected, in model II significant correlation is shown for Taiwanese consciousness and all background variables (at least p<0.01). The major trends are as follows: correlation is lower for males in comparison to females(-0.503\*\*); lower age is correlated with stronger Taiwanese consciousness (ordinal variables) (-0.251\*\*\*); higher education is correlated with lower levels of Taiwanese consciousness (ordinal variables) (-0.323\*\*\*); there is weaker correlation for “Pan-Blue,” than for “neutral,” with Taiwanese consciousness (-1.315\*\*\*); however, it is stronger for “Pan-Green” than for “neutral” (1.189\*\*\*). With these background variables controlled in model II, in comparing lowest TN in type I with type II, which has the second lowest level, and III, with a higher level of TN, we find significant differences with respect to Taiwanese consciousness. The most interesting change concerns type IV with the highest level of TN. There is a significant difference for this group in model I (p<0.001), while significance is not reached in model II. While Taiwanese consciousness for type IV is a little higher than for I (0.332), this difference does not even reach the significance level of p<0.1.

The above findings suggest the following: 1.This study hypothesized that there should be little difference between type I, with the lowest TN, and the other types in regard to Taiwanese consciousness. We find from model II in table 7 that, after controlling for background variables, there is indeed no significant difference between the weakest TN type I and the strongest TN type IV in their inculcation of Taiwanese consciousness. This partially verifies our first hypothesis. 2. However, in table 7 of model I, which does not control for background variables, there is still a slight difference between type I and the other three types with respect to Taiwanese consciousness. 3. Background variables including gender, age, education level and political position all influence TN levels and strength of Taiwanese consciousness.

**Pragmatic Orientation**

While we might say there has been a rise in Taiwanese consciousness during Ma’s presidency, as stated above, it is not clear how this has influenced pragmatism. While people want cross-strait economic and trade integration and the dividends of political peace, they also desire Taiwan independence. A TEDS survey (08/2013) once suggested that four in ten Taiwanese could accept war with China.[[21]](#endnote-21) Exactly how pragmatic are Taiwanese nationalists with varying levels of TN? This study measures pragmatism with questions concerning economic and trade interactions, respondents’ willingness to go to war, and the CCP’s acknowledgement of the ROC. For each of these questions the coding manner for answers is similar to that of Taiwanese consciousness. For instance, “Do you believe our government should be more proactive in its pursuit of economic and trade interactions with Mainland China? Or should it have fewer interactions?” If the answer is “more proactive,” it is coded +2; “less proactive” as -1; “maintain status quo” as +1;[[22]](#endnote-22) and “does not know” as 0 (see appendix 2).[[23]](#endnote-23) This study then presents the overall trends for pragmatism below, and examines whether those in type IV, with the highest TN level, will not be pragmatic and pursue their ideal of Taiwanese independence, or if there is no clear difference between them and the other three TN types, through regression analysis. Overall trends for pragmatism are presented in table 8.

**Table 8:** **Pragmatic Orientation**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Questions | Options | N | percent | Total |
| 1. Should Taiwan be more proactive in its economic and trade interactions with China? | should be more proactive | 573 | 52.1 | 1100 |
| should have fewer interactions | 193 | 17.6 |
| maintain status quo | 30 | 2.7 |
| Unknown\* | 303 | 27.6 |
| 1. According to some people, avoiding war is most important in cross-strait relations and everything else can be discussed. | Agree | 940 | 85.5 | 1100 |
| Disagree | 109 | 9.9 |
| Unknown\* | 51 | 4.6 |
| 1. Do you want the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to acknowledge the ROC? | Yes | 814 | 74.0 | 1100 |
| No | 136 | 12.4 |
| Unknown\* | 150 | 13.6 |

Source: Liu Cheng shan (2015). \*: “unknown” includes “no opinions” and “no responses.”

Table 8 indicates that, while only slightly more than half of all respondents desire more proactive interaction with respect to cross-strait economic and trade exchanges (52.1 percent), respondents show clearly high levels of pragmatism for the other 2 questions. In particular, 85.5 percent support not going to war, while 74 percent hope the CCP will acknowledge the ROC. Overall, the Taiwanese are clearly pragmatic in facing reality. Another question regards whether or not there is great difference between the four types with varying levels of TN with respect to pragmatism. Based on the aforementioned encoding method (see appendix 2), we obtain a comprehensive pragmatism scale with a scope of +4 to -3 with an average of 2.34 after calculation, which was also high (average of scope is 0.5).[[24]](#endnote-24) In order, the scores for the four types with different TN levels are as follows: 2.56, 3.07, 1.67 and 1.69. The most pragmatic group is type II (3.07) while the least pragmatic is type III (1.67). Two regression models are further presented in table 9. The first does not introduce the background variables while the second does.

**Table 9:** **Taiwanese Nationalists and Pragmatic Orientation**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Predictors** | **Pragmatism Model 1** | | **Pragmatism Model 2** | |
| **B Coefficients** | **(Std. Error)** | **B Coefficients** | **(Std. Error)** |
| **(Constant)** | 1.658\*\*\* | (.133) | 1.865\*\*\* | (.266) |
| **Gender (female as reference group)**  Male |  |  | -.191 | (.107) |
| **Age** |  |  | -.083\*\*\* | (.022) |
| **Education level** |  |  | .142\*\* | (.046) |
| **Political position (no political party affiliation as reference group)** |  |  |  |  |
| Pan-blue tendencies |  |  | .741\*\*\* | (.141) |
| Pan-Green Tendencies |  |  | -.476\*\*\* | (.122) |
| **4 typologies of TN (Chinese are not compatriots/Taiwan not independent (IV) as reference group)** |  |  |  |  |
| Chinese are compatriots/Taiwan not independent (I) | .887\*\*\* | (.185) | .742\*\*\* | (.179) |
| Chinese are compatriots/Taiwan independent (II) | 1.396\*\*\* | (.161) | 1.189\*\*\* | (.159) |
| Chinese not compatriots/Taiwan independent (III) | .034 | (.167) | .000 | (.160) |
| N | 900 | | 900 | |
| Adjusted R2 | .123 | | .224 | |

Source: Liu Cheng shan (2015). \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001。

Table 9 shows that pragmatism for the four TN types is not impacted by the background variables for models I and II. Model I that does not introduce background variables, takes type IV, with the highest TN, as a baseline, and pairs it with the three other types, one at a time to obtain results. There was no significant difference between types IV and III. Significant difference was arrived at in comparisons between types IV and I, as well as IV and II. However, under no circumstance did there appear to be a discernible difference between type IV, the most nationalist group, and III, the second most nationalist, with respect to pragmatism. Furthermore, one could say both display high levels of pragmatism (with mean value standing at roughly 1.7). However, they are slightly less pragmatic when compared to types I and II with lower levels of TN.

This does not change when the four background variables are introduced. We can see from model 2 that the four background variables have the anticipated impact on pragmatism with the following results: While men are slightly less pragmatic than women, this does not reach significance (-0.191); younger age groups were significantly more pragmatic (-0.083\*\*\*); there is a significant positive correlation between education level and pragmatism (0.142\*\*); “Pan-Blue” is significantly more pragmatic than “neutral” (0.741\*\*\*), while “Pan-Green” is significantly less pragmatic than “neutral” (-0.476\*\*\*). After controlling for the four background variables, there is still no significant difference between types III with second highest TN and IV with highest one.

These findings suggest that even those with the highest level of TN may not become extreme. Furthermore, they show similar pragmatism as those who are less nationalistic. Similarity in pragmatism is not influenced by differences in the backgrounds of the members which comprised the two types. This result confirms our second hypothesis: as Taiwanese people are known for their pragmatism, even with the rise in TN, those with the highest level of TN are not so radical as to prefer war, and there is no major difference between those showing strong TN (type IV) and all other respondents (types). In addition, while the four background variables influence pragmatism, they do not change the impact of the various levels of TN on their pragmatic tendencies. This indicates that the degree of TN is directly related to pragmatism, and not influenced by background factors. However, a difference in degree of pragmatism can still be seen in comparing type IV with types I and II.

**Conclusion and Implications**

This study examines the phenomenon of rising Taiwanese nationalism within the trend of cross-strait economic and trade integration during the eight years in which Ma Ying-jiou has been in power. In light of the fact that previous studies rarely developed quantitative indexes for measuring TN, our study takes primordialism and political constructivism as its starting point and performs cross-table analysis on the two indices of whether or not Mainland Chinese are compatriots, and whether or not Taiwan is independent, to create our four TN types: Type I with the lowest TN (are compatriots/not independent), type II with slightly higher TN (are compatriots/independent), type III with the third highest TN (not compatriots/independent), and type IV with the highest TN (not compatriots/not independent). The order of these four types from lowest to highest TN is confirmed through the “Chinese/Taiwanese/both” choice and “unification/independence” choice spectrum. This is the first contribution of this study.

We then utilize empirical data provided by survey conducted in April 2015 to carry out our analysis. Our study presents the background composition for the four TN types, and also verifies the two hypotheses derived from the theoretical literature and actual developments: One is that we can determine that the level of Taiwanese consciousness for the lowest TN type I is not vastly different from the levels of Taiwanese consciousness levels of all other respondents. Another finding is that there is not a great difference between the group with the highest level of TN (type IV) and the others concerning pragmatic issues such as the continuation of economic and trade ties across the Taiwan strait and the unwillingness to go to war.

Overall, the results of this study verify our hypotheses. However, we revise our hypothesis concerning the predominant phenomenon of Taiwanese consciousness: There is no significant difference with respect to Taiwanese consciousness in comparing the lowest TN type I to the highest TN type IV after controlling for background variables such as gender, age, education and political position. There is significant difference between type I and the three others if these are not controlled for. This indicates that these four background variables are critical and predominant factors with respect to Taiwanese consciousness and nationalism. The hypothesis concerning pragmatism is not affected by these background variables. Regardless of whether or not they are included in the regression model the highest TN type IV and the second highest TN type III demonstrate no significant difference with respect to pragmatism. Both show high levels. However, there is significant difference when type IV is compared with type I and II.

What are the implications of the above findings? First, based on political constructivism’s theoretical logic, the promotion of nationalism within the Taiwanese polity as a core concern of advocates of Taiwanese independence has been successful. Type I, the group with the lowest level of nationalism, still possesses high levels of Taiwanese consciousness. Secondly, education plays an essential role in the construction of political nationalism. Course texts for history and civic education for elementary and middle schools were revised to include content related to Taiwanese consciousness starting in 1998. As a result, young people under 29 years of age (those born after 1986) were exposed to those materials growing up. This age group is more represented in types III and IV and possesses the highest TN among all age groups (table 5). It is no surprise if some people say that this age group is comprised of “natural born advocates of Taiwanese independence.” Third, even if there was a rise in Taiwanese nationalism or Taiwanese consciousness during Ma Ying-jiou’s presidency, we should not be pessimistic concerning peace and stability of cross-strait relations, or its future development, as those in the highest TN type IV are still quite pragmatic. This is not affected by background factors. In addition, those under 29 years of age display higher levels of more pragmatism than the other groups (table 9). Though these “natural advocates of Taiwanese independence” do not see Mainland Chinese as compatriots, and nearly half of them do not estimate that Taiwan is independent (table 5), they do not demand that Taiwan should have fewer economic ties with China, nor are they willing to go to war. A large percentage wants Mainland China to acknowledge the Republic of China. Fourth, this study weights primordialism heavier than political constructivism in configuring the four types of TN. We rely on whether or not the respondent believes Mainland Chinese are compatriots as the primary factor for arranging the orders of the four TN level types. If a respondent chooses “Mainland Chinese are not compatriots,” we can make assessments concerning the political constructivist elements highlighted in the question “In your estimation, is Taiwan an independent country,” to which an answer of “no” then denotes strong nationalism. Weighting the primordial factor heavier than the political constructivist one proves to be valid in our study. It can be said that there are both conceptual and empirical distinction between the nationalisms of primordialism and political constructivism, although primordialism possesses elements of constructivism. However, the integration of the theories derived from primordialism, and that from constructivism, could be very fruitful. This insight may encourage scholars, who are interested in the theoretical and empirical study of nationalism, do explore this integration further in future research.

Finally, we must address the limitations of our research. Our operationalization, classification and quantitative measurement of Taiwanese nationalism, as well as the construction of our scale for Taiwanese consciousness, all represent initial attempts to complement the existing literature. While this study performs tests for reliability and validity for our classifications and scale, there is still room for methodological improvement, such as the scale for measuring pragmatism. This will be addressed in our future endeavors.

**Appendix 1:**

**Methods for recording answers of six questions on Taiwanese consciousness**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Questions | options | coding |
|  | In your estimation, does a trip to Shanghai constitute traveling abroad? | Yes | +1 |
| No | -1 |
| Unknown\* | 0 |
|  | Should the official name of our nation be Taiwan? | Agree | +1 |
| Disagree | -1 |
| Unknown\* | 0 |
|  | In your estimation, do the people of Taiwan already have their own country? | Yes | +1 |
| No | -1 |
| Unknown\* | 0 |
|  | Do you believe “Taiwan” is the name of a region, or both the name of a region and a country? | Name of a region | -1 |
| Name of region and of country | +1 |
| Unknown\* | 0 |
|  | 15. Which of the following statements below are you more inclined to agree with?  The relationship between Mainland China and Taiwan is best described as | One China | -1 |
| Two Chinas | +1 |
| One China, One Taiwan | 2 |
| Unknown\* | 0 |
|  | Would you like for our country to be officially referred to as Taiwan? | yes | +1 |
| no | -1 |
| Unknown\* | 0 |

Source: Authors.

\*: “unknown” includes “no opinion” and “no response.”

**Appendix 2: Coding Scheme for Pragmatic Tendencies**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Questions | options | Coding |
| 1. Do you believe or government should be more proactive in its pursuit of economic and trade interactions with Mainland China? Or should it have fewer interactions? | should be more proactive | +2 |
| should have fewer interactions | -1 |
| maintain status quo | +1 |
| Unknown\* | 0 |
| 1. According to some people, avoiding war is utmost in cross-strait relations and everything else can be discussed. Do you agree with this statement? | Agree | +1 |
| Disagree | -1 |
| Unknown\* | 0 |
| 1. Do you want the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to acknowledge the ROC? | yes | +1 |
| no | -1 |
| Unknown\* | 0 |

Source: Authors.

\*: “unknown” includes “no opinions” and “no responses.”

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**Notes**

1. According to a longitudinal survey done by the Election Study Center at National Chengchi University, in 2008, the ratio for Taiwanese to support “Maintain status quo indefinitely” was 16 percent but that increased to 24.9 percent in 2015. As for the option of “Maintain status quo, move toward independence,” its average supporting rate from 2000 to 2007 was around 13 percent and it then increased to around 16 percent during Ma’s era. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. According to the same survey, the ratio for identifying oneself as Taiwanese was only around 48 percent in 2008, but increased to 60 percent in 2015. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. The agreement has been awaiting the passage of an initial review by the Cross-Strait Agreement Supervisory Act. (Liao, and Chen, 2014) However, the Act had not been reviewed by the Legislative Yuan before the end of Ma’s term (05/20/2016). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. According to a survey done by Liu Cheng shan in 2015, around 68 percent of respondents between 18 and 29 attend schools at university or higher levels (what does ‘higher levels’ mean here?). [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. “Taiwanese Consciousness” commonly refers to the adoption of a Taiwanese perspective or viewpoint to examine oneself or the world. As for a brief history of Taiwanese textbook guidelines that embody the idea of Taiwanese consciousness, see *United Daily News*, 5 August 2015. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. In 2008 there were 29,204 Mainland Chinese tourists. That number increased to 972,123 in 2009. By 2014 there were 3,987,152, a threefold increase. See Tourism Bureau, M.O.T.C. Republic of China Annual statistics: http://recreation.tbroc.gov.tw/asp1/statistics/year/INIT.ASP (accessed 6/1/2016) [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. For instance, one important advocate of Taiwanese nationalism, Dr. Shih Cheng-feng, often mentions these two theoretical concepts in his works. See Shih (2003). [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Shih Cheng-feng (2003, 2005) may be the most prominent one in utilizing these two theoretical discourses to promote Taiwanese Nationalism. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. In 2014 Lai was reelected with over 70 percent of the vote. It was in a discussion with students and teachers at Fudan University during his first visit to China that he expressed this view. See Chen Fang yu, 2014/6/12, “Taiwan tongdu de minyi fenbu: taidu shi gongshi ma?” (Public Opinion Distribution for Question of Taiwanese Independence: Is Independence the Consensus?) Cai shi chang zheng zhi xue (WhoGovernstw) http://whogovernstw.org/2014/06/12/fangyuchen2/ (accessed 6/1/2016) [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. The possibility for nationalist extremism has been widely discussed in academic theories. Many thinkers who oppose nationalism, such as Hannah Arendt, who expressed opposition to nationalist sentiment centering on the Jewish nation, emphasized a return to thought based on humanity. See Eichmann in Jerusalem, *The New Yorker* (March 9, 1963, p. 48). The actions of the Nazis during World War II serve as an empirical example for those extreme nationalists who are not pragmatic. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Most often a unification/independence spectrum, or choices along this spectrum with certain conditions added, is presented in surveys. See National Chengchi University Election Study Center’s Taiwan Election and Democratization Survey (TEDS) Database. (http://esc.nccu.edu.tw/main.php (accessed 6/1/2016)). [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. This data is derived from the TEDS (Taiwanese Election and Democratization Survey), which conducted interviews from June to August of 2013. Random sampling of the entire Taiwanese public was adopted with an effective sample size of 2292. Data cited here are reprinted from Chen Fang-yu 2014. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Identity that has been created through interdiscursivity in the EU’s integration processes. See Checkel, et al. 2009. *European Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Few of the present theories concerning nationalism discuss the relationship between primordialism and constructivism. Instead, one major school of thought views that the development of nationalism is along a linear line underlying the modernization process, and moves from a primordial concern to a constructive mode of imagined communities. For example, Gellner (1983) believes modernization has contributed to elites in various countries creating common languages, cultures, and education to maintain control, in addition to putting the human networks of agrarian societies broken up by industrialization back together to construct the imagined community of national identification. However, this theory has been widely criticized (See O’Leary, 1997), and many scholars insist ethnonationalism is more fundamental (Connor, 1994). After examining the Taiwanese experience, this study chooses the explanation provided by primordialism as the core element of Taiwanese nationalism. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. The questionnaire was designed by Liu with sampling taken from the Taiwan-Fukien Residential Area Computer Assisted Telephone Interview System comprehensive directory with random sampling used. The valid sample size is 1.100 respondents. The largest sampling error for a 95 percent confidence level is . [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. In the classification validity test below we find that even 90 percent of those belonging to type I identify themselves as “Taiwanese” or “both Taiwanese and Chinese.” (see table 3) [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. The p-value for gender, age, education and political position respectively is: 0.092, 0.011, 0.076, and 0.000; these numbers all reach a significant level at least at p<0.1. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. See note 9. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. The construction of this scale undergoes reliability analysis and Cronbach’s Alpha value is 0.624. After factor analysis, the total variance explained exceeds 50 percent, (54.78 percent), an acceptable scale. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Calculations were performed as follows: 〔7+(-6)〕/2=0.5。 [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. See note 12. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Since “maintain status quo” means to keep up with the current pattern of interaction which has already been quite strong during Ma’s term of office, it therefore is coded as “+1.” “Less proactive” then means reducing interaction frequency from the current one; it therefore is coded as -1 because 0 needs to be reserved for “does not know.” [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. This coding scheme is submitted to a reliability test and factor analysis. Reliability per Cronbach’s alpha value is 0.327, and total variance explained for factor analysis is 44 percent. The two values do not reach 0.5, thus it is not a good scale. However, on average the Pearson r for the three questions attained p<0.01(2 tailed) significance. Therefore, the scale is acceptable. Calculations were performed as follows: 4+(-3)〕/2=0.5。 [↑](#endnote-ref-24)