



**Searching for Consensus in Cross-Strait Relations:  
Building Bridges among the Next Generation**

By Shiuan-Ju Chen

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## Executive Summary

The Taiwan Strait has been a flashpoint since World War II. China and Taiwan have gradually realized that maintaining peace and stability is a common interest after 50 years of confrontation. Generational changes also influence the two sides' perception of their relationship. Compared with their elders, young people have not experienced wars, have not lived in both Taiwan and China, and grew up under different political systems. On average, youth in China and Taiwan have grown up in better economic conditions and have a more forward-looking perspective. Their opinion will gradually become the major voices in both societies and governments. This study explores how young people from both sides see the cross-Strait relationship, examines their priorities and concerns, and identifies opportunities and challenges for confidence building measures.

Defining Taiwan's sovereignty and political status are the most difficult issues in the cross-Strait relationship. Reaching consensus on this issue requires both sides to first increase mutual understanding. It also requires creativity and flexibility in exploring new possibilities. The settlement of political issues is not the main focus of this report; instead it aims to build confidence and trust between the two sides. Therefore, this cross-Strait confidence building mechanism is designed to find space that will allow younger folks under the age of 30 in China and Taiwan to communicate and increase mutual understanding. This research project starts with observations about Chinese and Taiwanese youth and explores common interests and differences.

Key findings of the report include:

### *Concerning Taiwanese youth:*

- Major concerns are: Taiwan's economy, stability across the Strait, and Taiwan's international space. These three aspects are closely related to their future and require China's acceptance.
- Compared with the older generation, young Taiwanese possess stronger Taiwanese identity and weaker feelings of a "blood bond" with China.
- Their Taiwanese identity is not equated with anti-China sentiment or a preference for confrontation rather than peace. They see China as an economic opportunity.
- Young Taiwanese do not have more confidence and trust toward China than their elders, but they focus on pragmatic cooperation and the substantial benefits that Taiwan can get from the relationship.
- Young Taiwanese have a more pragmatic political perspective about cross-Strait relations. The majority prefer peaceful co-existence with China.
- They understand that the interests/benefits that the negotiation process creates can be more important than reaching a final resolution between Taiwan and China.

*Concerning Chinese youth:*

- They grew up watching China's rise and are confident about their future and that of China. Like Taiwanese youth, they are well educated and more internationalized than their parents. They are proud of being Chinese.
- They are not enthusiastic about political participation. They are more interested in economic success and a good life.
- Political stability is prized to safeguard economic prospects.
- Chinese youth possess strong nationalism that targets foreign relations and territorial disputes, which puts the issues of Taiwan, Tibet, and Japan under a spotlight.
- Chinese youth see recovering Taiwan as the final step in washing away the century of humiliation that began with foreign invasions in 1850.
- Chinese youth cling to the "one China" principle before negotiations with Taiwan.
- Young Chinese feel that China is getting stronger and will be able to take care of Taiwan. They respect Taiwanese identity as long as Taiwanese agree that they are part of the "greater China" family.

Compared with the older generation, young people from Taiwan and China share a lifestyle and value system. They are both confident and optimistic about their future. Peace, stability, and economic well-being are common goals in the cross-Strait relationship. However, rising Taiwanese identity and Chinese nationalism create a high risk of confrontation. History has a greater impact on Chinese youth and promotes nationalism. Generational change creates opportunities as well as challenges. To explore and properly handle them requires the building of trust, increased communication, and breaking down misperceptions.

To accomplish that, this report recommends:

- Establishing a nongovernmental cross-Strait Foundation to provide a platform for youth exchange and academic research. The foundation will be a space for Taiwanese and Chinese young professionals to work together in the same office and study the next generation.
- Organizing an observation group comprising Taiwan and Chinese doing six months to one year residency in international organizations to encourage them to expand their perspective and learn to work together on specific topics in an international setting.
- Setting up education programs that give opportunities for young political elites, experts, and the general public interested in the cross-Strait relationship to have more interaction and exchanges.
- Creating an online virtual reality environment to simulate future developments according to their personal goals and wishes.

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The Taiwan Strait has been a flashpoint since World War II. China and Taiwan have gradually realized that maintaining peace and stability is a common interest after 50 years of confrontation. Generational changes also influence the two sides' perception of their relationship. Compared with their elders, young people have not experienced wars, have not lived in both Taiwan and China, and grew up under different political systems. On average, youth in China and Taiwan have grown up in better economic conditions and have a more forward-looking perspective. Their opinion will gradually become the major voices in both societies and governments. This report explores how young people from both sides see the cross-Strait relationship, examines their priorities and concerns, and identifies opportunities and challenges for confidence building measures.

Defining Taiwan's sovereignty and political status are the most difficult issues in the cross-Strait relationship. This analysis is produced on the belief that reaching consensus on this issue requires both sides to first increase mutual understanding. It also requires creativity and flexibility in exploring new possibilities. The settlement of political issues is not the main focus of this report; instead it aims to build confidence and trust between the two sides. Therefore, this cross-Strait confidence building mechanism is designed to find space that will allow younger folks under the age of 30 in China and Taiwan to communicate and increase mutual understanding. We start with observations about Chinese and Taiwanese youth and explore common interests and differences.

## **A tangled history**

In 1895, Japan defeated the Qing Dynasty and Taiwan was ceded to Japan in the Treaty of Shimonoseki. When Japan lost World War II in 1945, Taiwan was returned to the Republic of China (ROC), which was founded by the Kuomintang (KMT, the Nationalist Party) after overthrowing the Qing Dynasty in 1911. In 1949, the KMT lost the civil war to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and moved the ROC government to Taiwan. At the same time, the CCP established the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the mainland and claimed that the ROC no longer existed. Both the PRC and the KMT insisted that there is "one China" including both Taiwan and the mainland, although they disputed which party was the rightful ruler of this China. Beijing insisted that it held all legal rights belonging to "China," including its seat in the United Nations and power over Taiwan. But without taking over Taiwan, the CCP couldn't declare complete victory in the civil war. The Taiwan issue is thus a critical interest of the CCP.<sup>1</sup>

Since 1949, the Communist regime has used four methods to handle Taiwan: isolating Taiwan from international society, increasing economic integration across the Strait, increasing cultural contact, and using military deterrence.<sup>2</sup> The isolation strategy brought significant results

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<sup>1</sup> Denny Roy, *Taiwan: a Political History*, Cornell University Press, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> David M. Lampton, *The Three Faces of Chinese Power*, University of California Press, 2008.

when China's economy took off in the 1980s. It has bested Taiwan in "money diplomacy" competition, which offers financial support to countries in exchange for diplomatic recognition of either the PRC or ROC.<sup>3</sup> After 1977, the number of countries recognizing Taiwan has fluctuated around 23.<sup>4</sup> During the '70s, China and the U.S. started to see each other as a strategic partner in dealing with the Soviet Union.<sup>5</sup> In 1971, China officially replaced Taiwan in the United Nations and the U.S. normalized its relations with China in 1978.<sup>6</sup> The U.S. Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) in 1979 as a promise to not neglect China's military threat to Taiwan's security, but there has been considerable ambiguity about how the U.S. would respond if a crisis occurred.<sup>7</sup>

China's economic reforms not only helped isolate Taiwan by squeezing Taipei's diplomatic space, but also led to an adjustment of Beijing's Taiwan policy. China's top leaders reached the consensus that their nation's fundamental interest is to maintain a stable and peaceful environment for the sake of economic modernization.<sup>8</sup> Deng Xiaoping set out two important principles in handling Taiwan: "one country, two systems," and peaceful reunification.<sup>9</sup> Taiwan-China economic exchanges were fostered in the '80s, when Taiwanese companies were losing international competitiveness because of rising labor costs, environmental protection requirements, and appreciation of the New Taiwanese Dollar.<sup>10</sup> China's cheap labor and a common language provided incentives for Taiwan businessmen to open factories on the mainland. Demands to expand trade and investment in China put growing pressure on Lee Deng-hui after he was elected as the president of Taiwan in 1990. Even though Lee did not agree with the "one country, two systems" model, he decided to pursue breakthroughs in the cross-Strait relationship and he opened communications with China.<sup>11</sup>

To facilitate cross-Strait negotiations, Taiwan set up the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) as a window to China in 1990; Goo Chen-fu was its first chairman. In 1991, the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS), the counterpart to SEF, was established under the lead of Wang Daohang. In 1992, SEF and ARATS met in Hong Kong and decided that each side would have its own interpretation of the "one China principle," the biggest issue in cross-Strait negotiations. Allowing for different interpretations basically shelved disagreements over "one China" and allowed the two sides to discuss nonpolitical fields such as

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<sup>3</sup> C. Fred Bergsten, Bates Gill, Nicholas R. Lardy, Derek Mitchell, *China: The Balance Sheet*, (Public Affairs: 2007), pp. 119-120.

<sup>4</sup> Ralph N. Clough, *Island China*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978, pp.153-154.

<sup>5</sup> Harry Harding, *The Fragile Relationship: The United States and China Since 1972*, Brookings Institution Press, 1992.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Resolution 2758, Oct. 25, 1971.

<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/327/74/IMG/NR032774.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>7</sup> John Franklin Copper, *Taiwan: National State or Province?* Westview Press, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Chu Yun-han, "The Evolution of Beijing's Policy toward Taiwan," in *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy*, edited by Yong Deng, Fei-Ling Wang, Rowman & Littlefield, 2004, pp. 245-278.

<sup>9</sup> The peaceful reunification principle and "one country, two systems" were created by Deng in 1978. "The formation and major content of the principles of peaceful reunification and one country, two systems," News of the Communist Party of China, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/BIG5/64107/65708/65722/4444475.html>

<sup>10</sup> Richard Bush, "Economic Cooperation, Political Deadlock," *Untying the Knot*, Brookings Institute Press, 2005, pp. 28.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 41.



technology and economics.<sup>12</sup> Secret negotiations from 1990 to 1992 led to the first high-level semiofficial talks between Goo and Wang in 1993. Jiang Zemin was encouraged by the progress and made his famous eight-point proposal in January 1995 asking both sides to end their hostility.<sup>13</sup> However, he didn't receive a positive response from Lee Deng-hui, and Jiang was criticized by his colleagues. He was forced to compromise with hawkish elements in his government to reconsolidate his status.<sup>14</sup>

### 1995-1996 missile crisis and Chen Shui-bian

Lee Deng-hui's visit to Cornell University in the summer of 1995 created a stalemate. China was angry that the U.S. gave Lee the visa to visit and make the speech. China saw it as Taiwan's attempt to pursue international recognition with U.S. help. Jiang Zemin showed greater determination to align himself with the military and allowed a more assertive PLA to launch a week of missile tests off Taiwan's northern coast as a warning to the U.S., Japan, and Taiwan against pursuing independence.<sup>15</sup> The second round of missile tests was launched around Taiwan's presidential election to send a message to Taiwan's voters against re-electing Lee. The U.S. sent the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet to the Strait to stabilize the situation. The intimidation failed: Lee won 54 percent of votes and the election.<sup>16</sup> The Taiwan identity and independence movement has been promoted since Lee's time in office. Jiang's military threats slowed this trend for a moment, but deepened anti-China sentiment among Taiwanese.<sup>17</sup> From the U.S. response in the crisis, China learned that U.S. support is a key factor in Taiwanese thinking and Beijing has to get its relations with the U.S. right. As a result, Jiang worked to improve the U.S.-China relationship during his visit to the U.S. in 1997. He asked the Clinton administration to reconfirm its "three no's" policy – no support for Taiwan's independence, no support for two Chinas (or one China, one Taiwan), and no support for Taiwan's membership in international organizations.<sup>18</sup> Clinton complied. From 1997-1998, Taiwan and China decided to resume dialogue by hosting the second Goo-Wang talks in China in October 1998.<sup>19</sup> Wang was invited to visit Taiwan in 1999 but the visit was postponed after Lee proposed his "two-states theory," describing Taiwan and China as a "special state-to-state" relationship.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Xu Shiquan, "The 1992 Consensus: A Review and Assessment of Consultations between the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait and the Straits Exchange Foundation," *American Foreign Policy Interest*, Vol. 23, 2001, pp. 121-140.

<sup>13</sup> "Jiang Zemin's Eight-point Proposal," Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council. Jan. 30, 1995.

[http://www.gwytb.gov.cn:8088/detail.asp?table=JiangEP&title=Jiang+Zemin's+Eight-point+Proposal&m\\_id=3](http://www.gwytb.gov.cn:8088/detail.asp?table=JiangEP&title=Jiang+Zemin's+Eight-point+Proposal&m_id=3)

<sup>14</sup> Zhao Suisheng, *Across the Taiwan Strait*, Routledge, 1999.

<sup>15</sup> Chu Yun-han, "The Evolution of Beijing's Policy toward Taiwan," in *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy*, edited by Yong Deng, Fei-Ling Wang, Rowman & Littlefield, 2004, pp. 245-278.

<sup>16</sup> Central Election Commission, "1996 Presidential Election,"

<http://210.69.23.140/vote3.asp?pass1=A1996A0000000000000aaa>

<sup>17</sup> Chu Yun-han, "The Evolution of Beijing's Policy toward Taiwan." in *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy*, edited by Yong Deng, Fei-Ling Wang, Rowman & Littlefield, 2004, pp. 245-278.

<sup>18</sup> "Clinton Publicly Reiterates U.S. 'Three No's' Principles on Taiwan," Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America. <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zmgx/zysj/kldfh/t36241.htm>

<sup>19</sup> Mainland Affairs Council, Cross-Strait Timeline, <http://www.mac.gov.tw/>

<sup>20</sup> For more information about Lee Deng-hui's idea of Taiwan, please see J. Bruce Jacobs and I-Hao Ben Liu, "Lee Teng-hui and the Idea of 'Taiwan'," *The China Quarterly*, Vol. 190, 2007, pp. 375-393.

In 2000, the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, “green” in Taiwanese politics; the KMT is blue) won the presidential election and Chen Shui-bian, a lawyer who was involved in Taiwan independence movements in the 1980s, was elected. Chen’s eight-year presidency brought Taiwan’s relationships with China and the U.S. to historic lows. Chen challenged Chinese and U.S. bottom lines by making pro-independence remarks, abolishing the National Unification Council, and holding two referendums in 2004 and 2008 that sought popular support for his pro-independence agenda. (Chart 1). The outbreak of SARS in 2003 put the issue of Taiwan’s international space in the spotlight again. China’s demand that all contacts between Taiwan and World Health Organization (WHO) or the World Health Assembly (WHA) be mediated through China angered Taiwanese and indirectly created the room for Chen to propose the first referendum in 2004.<sup>21</sup>

Chart 1: Referendum topics and result

<b>2004 March 20 Referendum Topics</b>	Yes	Referendum voter/ national voters*	Result
1. The People of Taiwan demand that the Taiwan Strait issue be resolved through peaceful means. Should Mainland China refuse to withdraw the missiles it has targeted at Taiwan and to openly renounce the use of force against us, would you agree that the Government should acquire more advanced anti-missile weapons to strengthen Taiwan’s self-defense capabilities?	91.80%	45.17%	Failed (less than 50% of voters cast ballots)
2. Would you agree that our Government should engage in negotiations with Mainland China on the establishment of a “peace and stability” framework for cross-Strait interactions in order to build consensus and for the welfare of the peoples on both sides?	92.05%	45.12	Failed
<b>2008 March 20 Referendum Topics</b>			
1. In 1971, the People’s Republic of China joined the United Nations, replacing the Republic of China and causing Taiwan to become an orphan in the world. To strongly express the will of the people of Taiwan to enhance Taiwan’s international status and participation in international affairs, do you agree that the government should apply for UN membership under the name “Taiwan”?	94.01%	35.82%	Failed
2. Do you agree that our nation should apply to return to the United Nations and join other international organizations based on pragmatic, flexible strategies with respect to the name [under which we apply to and participate in them]? That is: Do you approve of applying to return to the United Nations and to join other international organizations under the name “Republic of China,” or “Taiwan,” or other name that is conducive to success and preserves our nation’s dignity?	87.27%	35.74%	Failed

Source: “President Chen released the 320 referendum topics in English.” VOA news, Jan. 16, 2004, Government Information Office: [Referendum Proposal, 2008. http://www.gio.gov.tw/elect2008/kit\\_06.htm](http://www.gio.gov.tw/elect2008/kit_06.htm)  
Vote data: Central Election Commission. [http://www.cec.gov.tw/?Menu\\_id=1392](http://www.cec.gov.tw/?Menu_id=1392);  
[http://www.cec.gov.tw/files/20080328144905\\_rpt01.pdf](http://www.cec.gov.tw/files/20080328144905_rpt01.pdf)

\* This data represents the percentage of voters who voted in the referendum. For results to be valid, the law requires more than half of eligible voters cast referendum ballots. Both referendums failed because they didn’t meet the 50 percent threshold. (Government Information Office, Republic of China)  
<http://www.gio.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=35776&ctNode=2462>

<sup>21</sup> Lampton, op cit.

Labeling Chen a troublemaker, China denied or rejected almost everything that Chen and his administration did or said, and isolated Taiwan internationally as best it could. When George W. Bush became president in 2000, he said that the U.S. should do whatever it took “to help Taiwan defend itself.”<sup>22</sup> But after the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks, the U.S. saw China as an important partner in the fight against terrorism and actively pursued cooperation with Beijing. Given Chen’s provocations, Washington and Beijing worked to marginalize Taiwan to minimize the harm it could do to their bilateral relationship. In 2007, the U.S. openly opposed Taiwan holding a referendum and stated that “we do not recognize Taiwan as an independent state, and we do not accept the argument that provocative assertions of Taiwan independence are in any way conducive to maintenance of the status quo or peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.”<sup>23</sup>

China’s missile threats before the election and public sympathy and support following a failed assassination attempt gave Chen a second term as president in 2004. China learned that hardline measures alienated Taiwanese. Missiles are still deployed against Taiwan, but China has changed its approach to offer more economic incentives to Taiwan.<sup>24</sup> Beijing also approached the KMT to establish an alternative channel to Taiwan’s political parties, a gambit that was realized with the visit of Lien Chen, KMT honorary chairman, to China in 2007, and the meeting between Hsiao Wan-chang and Chinese President Hu Jintao at the Boao Forum in 2008.

### **Current developments in the cross-Strait relationship**

*Taiwan: no pursuit of radical independence, and creating social coherence*

On March 21, 2008, Taiwan held its fourth presidential election. KMT candidate Ma Ying-jeou was elected with 58.45 percent of the vote.<sup>25</sup> People voted for him hoping that Ma and the KMT could end Taiwan’s image as a troublemaker and improve relations with the U.S. and China. Ma’s China policy principles are “no reunification, no independence, and no use of force,”(不獨不統不武), which means that he will not negotiate reunification with China during his presidential term, nor will he declare Taiwan’s independence. He is also against the use of force by either side. In his inaugural address, he argued for the principle of “face reality, pioneer a new future, shelve controversies and pursue a win-win solution” (正視現實, 開創未來; 擱置爭議, 追求雙贏), as the response to President Hu’s call in 2007 for “building mutual trust, shelving controversies, finding commonalities despite differences, and creating together a win-win solution” (建立互信, 擱置爭議, 求同存異, 共創雙贏).<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> “Bush pledges whatever it takes to defend Taiwan,” CNN, April 25, 2001.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas J. Christensen, “A Strong and Moderate Taiwan,” U.S. Department of States, Sept. 11, 2007. <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2007/91979.htm>

<sup>24</sup> Hu Jintao, “Report on the 17<sup>th</sup> National People’s Congress,” Oct. 24, 2007. [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/24/content\\_6938749.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/24/content_6938749.htm)

<sup>25</sup> Central Election Commission, <http://210.69.23.140/Excel/chart54.xls>

<sup>26</sup> President Ma’s inauguration speech, May 20, 2008. <http://www.president.gov.tw/php-bin/prez/shownews.php?Rid=14000>, President Hu’s report on the 17<sup>th</sup> National People’s Congress. Oct. 24, 2007. [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/24/content\\_6938749.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/24/content_6938749.htm)

The two sides started negotiating and implementing social and economic cooperation in May 2008, which included regular charter flights and greater numbers of Chinese tourists to Taiwan. Both were realized in July 2008. Negotiations about Taiwanese recognition of China's higher-education diplomas, which would allow Chinese students to study in Taiwan, raising the investment cap in China, permitting Taiwan's financial service industry to do business on the mainland, avoiding double taxation, and other steps are expected in Ma's first term.<sup>27</sup> Although exchanges are expanding, the two sides have not agreed on a formula for international space, a diplomatic truce, or reducing the missiles deployed along the coast. There are still more than 1,000 missiles targeting Taiwan in 2008.<sup>28</sup>

Domestically, the global economic crisis has hurt Ma and made it difficult to maintain his support rate. Voters are losing confidence in Ma because of his failure to keep economic promises. He admitted that his "633 promise" – 6 percent annual economic growth, 3 percent unemployment rate, and \$30,000 per capita GDP – cannot be achieved in the next four years.<sup>29</sup> Not surprisingly, Ma's support rate has dropped from 60.5 percent to 28.6 percent from May 2008 to March 2009.<sup>30</sup> With the unemployment rate reaching 5.03 percent in December 2008,<sup>31</sup> nearly 90 percent (88.6 percent) of people think the government should focus on improving the domestic economy. Saving Taiwan's economy is the key to Ma's approval rate.

In general, people supported Ma's China policy when he became president. His efforts to break the stalemate with China received the highest approval rate, 27.2 percent, in his overall performance in September 2008.<sup>32</sup> More than half (56 percent) of respondents supported the visit of Chen Yunlin, chairman of ARATS, to Taiwan in early November and were happy to see agreements reached.<sup>33</sup> Over 40 percent of respondents didn't think the meeting hurt Taiwan's sovereignty and more than 43 percent thought cross-strait exchanges should be more frequent.<sup>34</sup> However, as the economy worsens, the number of people who have confidence in Ma and his

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<sup>27</sup> "Interview with President Ma Ying-jeou. Edited transcript by Taiwanese Government Information Office," *New York Times*, June 18, 2008.

<sup>28</sup> "China's missile: Mainland is a threat as well as an opportunity," *China Times*, July 3, 2008.

<http://chinatimes.com/2007Cti/2007Cti-News/2007Cti-News-Content/0.4521.110502+112008070300397.00.html>

<sup>29</sup> "Ma again denies breaking '633' promise," *The China Post*, Sept. 7, 2008.

<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national%20news/2008/09/07/173544/Ma-again.htm>

<sup>30</sup> "Survey on Cross-Strait Economic Cooperation Agreement and President Ma Ying-jeou's Approval Rating," Global Views Survey Research Center, Mar. 23, 2009.

[http://www.gvm.com.tw/gvsr/200903\\_GVSRC\\_others\\_E.pdf](http://www.gvm.com.tw/gvsr/200903_GVSRC_others_E.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> Director-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan, "Manpower Survey results in December 2008," Jan. 22, 2009. <http://www.dgbas.gov.tw/public/Attachment/912213595171.doc>

<sup>32</sup> "Poll, satisfaction about Ma Ying-jeou's new government and performance," Sept. 2008.

[http://www.gvm.com.tw/gvsr/200809\\_GVSRC\\_first100days\\_C.pdf](http://www.gvm.com.tw/gvsr/200809_GVSRC_first100days_C.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> "56% of people confirmed the Chiang-Chen meeting and ask for more cross-strait exchanges," *China Times*, Nov. 7, 2008. [news.chinatimes.com/2007Cti/2007Cti-News/2007Cti-News-Content/0.4521.110501+112008110700109.00.html](http://news.chinatimes.com/2007Cti/2007Cti-News/2007Cti-News-Content/0.4521.110501+112008110700109.00.html)

<sup>34</sup> "GVSRC Survey: Survey on Taiwanese people's attitudes toward economic agreements with China and cross-strait exchanges," Global Views Survey Research Center, Nov. 10, 2008.

[http://www.gvm.com.tw/gvsr/200811\\_GVSRC\\_otherissue\\_E1.pdf](http://www.gvm.com.tw/gvsr/200811_GVSRC_otherissue_E1.pdf)

policies is dropping.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, 45.3 percent think Ma can't reduce tension between the pan-blue and pan-green camps.<sup>36</sup>

Ma's China policy, however, has also aroused concern that he is leaning too close to China. This fear has radicalized pan-green support and intensified Taiwan's political divisions. The DPP thinks that Ma isn't doing enough to protect Taiwan's security and national interests from being compromised during negotiations with China.<sup>37</sup> To express their concerns, the DPP launched anti-Ma Ying-jeou protests on Aug. 30, 2008 and Oct. 25. The DPP explained that the 830 parade was to protest Ma's performance, calling his efforts to revive the economy a great disappointment.<sup>38</sup> The 1025 parade, with significantly increased attendance, questioned Ma for undermining Taiwan in cross-Strait negotiations and his passivity toward China.<sup>39</sup> Pan-green supporters also took radical actions against Chinese officials visiting Taiwan. In October 2008, Zhang Mingqing, vice chairman of ARATS, was attacked by a DPP legislator during his visit to a Confucian temple in Tainan.<sup>40</sup> In November, pan-green protestors besieged the Grand Formosa Regent Taipei where Chen Yunlin was staying to protest his visit and stop his meeting with Ma. College students started a "Wild Strawberries Movement" to protest Ma's control over dissidents and freedom of speech during Chen's visit.<sup>41</sup> The students argued Ma's use of the police to monitor peaceful protestors has damaged the Taiwanese people's human rights. In their statement, they said that the "historical moment with China" was built upon the sacrifice of Taiwan's freedom and dignity.<sup>42</sup> This student movement received wide attention among pan-green supporters, who expressed great disappointment at Ma's handling of the movement.<sup>43</sup> Even though more than 50 percent of people in Taiwan did not approve of the DPP's violence against Chinese officials, those events indicate that part of Taiwan is extremely anti-China and this represents a check on President Ma as he pushes the envelope with China.

Ma, a second-generation mainlander raised on the island, is seen as representative of the new generation of leadership in Taiwan. His China policy, in particular, is seen as breaking with former KMT presidents. Over the next decade, Taiwan's leadership is expected to take the same rational and pragmatic approach. This rising pragmatism in the government corresponds to social changes. However, Shelley Rigger argues that even though the next generation's leaders will be pragmatic, their approach to China will differ. The KMT will emphasize economic engagement

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<sup>35</sup> "GVSRC Survey: President Ma Ying-jeou's Approval Rating After Eight Months In Office." Global Views Survey Research Center, Jan. 17, 2009. [www.gvm.com.tw/gvsrc/200901\\_GVSRC\\_others\\_E.pdf](http://www.gvm.com.tw/gvsrc/200901_GVSRC_others_E.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> "Poll, satisfaction about Ma Ying-jeou's new government and performance," Sept. 2008. [http://www.gvm.com.tw/gvsrc/200809\\_GVSRC\\_first100days\\_C.pdf](http://www.gvm.com.tw/gvsrc/200809_GVSRC_first100days_C.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> Kelly Her, "Cross-Strait Relations," *Taiwan Review*, Oct. 2008, pp. 4-11.

<sup>38</sup> "People are unsatisfied with Ma," Aug. 12, 2008. Democratic Progressive Party, <http://www.dpp.org.tw/>

<sup>39</sup> "1025 green mobilization, three questions for Ma Ying-jeou," Oct. 22, 2008. Democratic Progressive Party, [www.dpp.org.tw/](http://www.dpp.org.tw/). Estimates of turnout depend range from 50,000-300,000 and from 300,000-500,000, and depend on who is counting. The only thing certain was that more people attended the 1025 parades.

<sup>40</sup> "ARATS man jostled, jeered at in Tainan," *Taipei Times*, Oct. 22, 2008.

<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2008/10/22/2003426598>

<sup>41</sup> Wide Strawberries Movement, Official website, <http://taiwanstudentmovement2008.blogspot.com/>

<sup>42</sup> Protest Statement, Wide Strawberries Movement, Official website, Nov. 10, 2008.

<http://taiwanstudentmovement2008.blogspot.com/2008/11/protest-statement.html>

<sup>43</sup> Author's interview with pan-green supporters in Taiwan and Hawaii, January, 2009.

while the DPP sees this strategy as costing Taiwan its autonomy.<sup>44</sup> The outcome of this clash will depend on whether ordinary Taiwanese feel they have benefited from interaction with the mainland over the next four years.

*China: flexibility at the top*

In 2003, Hu Jintao succeeded Jiang Zemin as president of China. During Chen Shui-bian's presidency, Jiang and Hu adopted a confrontational approach toward Taiwan. However, Hu's report to the 17<sup>th</sup> National Congress in 2007 revealed that China was considering revising its Taiwan policy to encourage more interaction with Taiwan. Compared with Jiang Zemin's report to the 16<sup>th</sup> National Congress, Hu's approach was less rigid and more accommodating toward Taiwan (Appendix 1 for comparison). He emphasized the following points in his speech: 1) maintaining peaceful development of the cross-Strait relationship; 2) stressing the possibility of negotiating with both parties in Taiwan (a more open position toward the DPP); and 3) Taiwan and China share the same history and the future should be decided by both sides together.<sup>45</sup> In his report, Hu also took out words about military intervention and stressed the need to promote peaceful coexistence and a solution across the Strait. Hu retained this soft tone toward Taiwan in his speech on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the "message to compatriots in Taiwan." Hu expected to see more cooperation across the Strait and to give Taiwan international space under the one China principle.<sup>46</sup> The same message was sent again by Premier Wen Jiabao's work report in the annual session of the 11<sup>th</sup> National People's Congress in March 2009.<sup>47</sup>

In supporting Ma Ying-jeou to be the new president, China showed a desire to pursue cooperation such as expanding business ties at the time of the campaign.<sup>48</sup> The meeting of Hsiao Wan-chang and Hu Jintao at the 2008 Boao Forum sent another signal to Taiwan that China would be happy to see more exchanges with Taiwan. Hu again stressed the importance of peaceful development of Taiwan and China and hoped both sides could work together to find a new road.<sup>49</sup> The dialogue between SEF and ARATS was resumed in June.<sup>50</sup> The visit of Chen Yunlin, chairman of ARATS, to Taiwan in November was an important step in the cross-Strait relationship. Although facing protests from the DPP, China agreed with the Ma government that the visit brought fruitful results and signaled that the cross-Strait relationship had entered a new

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<sup>44</sup> Shelley Rigger, "Rising Rationalists: The Next Generation of Leadership in Taiwan," *Emerging Leaders in East Asia: The Next Generation of Political Leadership in China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan*, National Bureau of Asian Research project report, Sept. 2008.

<sup>45</sup> Hu Jintao, "Report to the 17<sup>th</sup> National People's Congress," Oct. 24, 2007. [news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/24/content\\_6938749.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/24/content_6938749.htm)

<sup>46</sup> Hu Jintao, "Speech to commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the mainland's "Message to Compatriots in Taiwan," *Xinhua.com*, Dec. 31, 2008. [news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2008-12/31/content\\_10586495\\_1.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2008-12/31/content_10586495_1.htm)

<sup>47</sup> Wen Jiabao, "Report on the work of the Government," Mar. 14, 2009. [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/14/content\\_11009548\\_8.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/14/content_11009548_8.htm)

<sup>48</sup> "Chinese premier: Mainland to expand business ties and trade with Taiwan," *China view.com*, March 18, 2008. [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-03/18/content\\_7813436.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-03/18/content_7813436.htm)

<sup>49</sup> "Hu Jintao met with Hsiao Wan Ch,ang," *Xinhua News*, Apr. 12, 2008. [http://big5.xinhuanet.com/gate/big5/news.xinhuanet.com/tw/2008-04/12/content\\_7966253.htm](http://big5.xinhuanet.com/gate/big5/news.xinhuanet.com/tw/2008-04/12/content_7966253.htm)

<sup>50</sup> "Focusing on the first talk between Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) and Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS) after contact was restored," *People's Daily*, <http://tw.people.com.cn/BIG5/26741/124111/index.html>

phrase.<sup>51</sup> Throughout 2008, China's top leaders showed a willingness to put political differences asides and pursue a better relationship with Taiwan. However, they also have to consider rising Chinese nationalism, the CCP's legitimacy, the potential return of the DPP to power in Taiwan, and different factions and positions within the Chinese government as well.

Facing a friendly government in Taiwan, Beijing needs to adjust its policy.<sup>52</sup> After Chen Shui-bian's eight years in office, China is used to dealing with a hostile regime in Taiwan and merely denying anything it says or does. Facing a friendly government with which it shares a common goal – improving the cross-Strait relationship – Beijing has to change course. Ma's commitment to expand cross-Strait exchanges gives China an opportunity to draw Taiwan closer. However, the Chinese government is cautious about the possibility that any deals it makes with the Ma administration may be used against it if the DPP wins power in the future.<sup>53</sup> The radical image that the DPP sends out at protests deepens this Chinese fear.

Chinese leaders also have to worry about spurring Chinese nationalism during negotiations with Taiwan. Chinese public opinion about Taiwan is nationalistic, which pushes the CCP to take a tough stand. Chinese officials agreed that the government's legitimacy depends upon its ability to ride popular sentiment.<sup>54</sup> If the CCP negotiates with Taiwan about its sovereignty, there are also fears that other parts of China, such as Tibet, will make similar requests. This risks splitting China and no Chinese government could survive that.<sup>55</sup>

Another challenge for the Chinese leadership is finding internal consensus about Taiwan policy in the bureaucracy. In the post-Deng period, Taiwan policymaking is getting institutionalized. The policymaking structure is a more significant factor than individual leaders.<sup>56</sup> Even the top leader needs to go through this process to adjust policy toward a friendly Taiwanese government. Lower-ranking officials are uncertain about how flexible they can be and whether to emulate top leaders. To be safe, most choose to remain conservative before they see a clear policy change. This results in mixed signals to Taiwan. For example, in May, Hu Jintao said that the two sides should consult with each other about Taiwan's international space. The issue of participation in the World Health Assembly (WHA) would be a priority in this discussion.<sup>57</sup> During his visit to Japan, Wang Yi, the new chairman of the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, however, said that China would not agree to let Taiwan officially attend the World Health Organization (WHO). The Taiwan Affairs Office soon clarified that Wang was merely restating China's principles, which should not obscure China's goodwill on this issue.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> "Chen Yunlin's successful visit is a turning point in the cross-strait relationship," *People's Daily*, Nov. 10, 2008. <http://theory.people.com.cn/BIG5/49150/49152/8310540.html>

<sup>52</sup> Ralph A. Cossa, "Time to Seize the Cross-Strait Opportunity," *PacNet 30*, Pacific Forum CSIS, May 21, 2008.

<sup>53</sup> Brad Glosserman, Bonnie Glaser, "Promoting Confidence Building across the Taiwan Strait," A Report of the CSIS International Security Program and Pacific Forum, CSIS, Sept. 2008.

<sup>54</sup> Peter Hays Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004. Susan L. Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower*, Oxford University Press, 2007.

<sup>55</sup> Shirk, *China* pp. 180-211.

<sup>56</sup> Chu Yun-han, "The Evolution of Beijing's Policy toward Taiwan." in *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy*, edited by Yong Deng, Fei-Ling Wang, Rowman & Littlefield, 2004, pp. 245-278.

<sup>57</sup> "Hu Jintao: two sides consult with each other about how to solve the issue of Taiwan's international participation," *Chinanews.com*, May 28, 2008. <http://big5.chinanews.com.cn:89/gn/news/2008/05-28/1265356.shtml>

<sup>58</sup> "Taiwan Affairs Office clarified the doubt about Wang Yi's statement of refusing Taiwan's participation in WHO," *Epoch Times*, June 27, 2008. <http://news.epochtimes.com/b5/8/6/27/n2170269.htm>

Confusion about Beijing's position on Taiwan's international space will cause doubts about China's goodwill toward Taiwan. These contradictory reports provoked Taiwanese nationalism and triggered anti-China comments on political talk shows and in newspapers.

China's top leaders also realized that winning Taiwanese hearts is in China's interests. In addition to showing goodwill, they have to support Ma's China policy skillfully. Taiwanese who are not pan-green supporters have high expectations for Ma to increase cross-strait stability, improve the economy, preserve Taiwan's dignity, and expand its international space. To realize those expectations, Ma has to work with a more flexible and patient Chinese authority.<sup>59</sup> If no breakthrough occurs regarding international participation, DPP attacks on Ma and the KMT will become more effective.<sup>60</sup> The level of disappointment among Taiwanese will determine whether Ma is reelected in 2012. The prospect of a DPP return to power, the CCP's worst nightmare, means Beijing has to show flexibility in responding to Taiwan's requests.

In the cross-strait relationship, China's top leaders play the most important role, steering the direction and controlling the speed of developments. The situation might change as the next generation succeeds Hu Jintao in 2013. One Chinese scholar described the next generation's leaders as less ideological, more pragmatic, and confident to respond to foreign criticism. Their attention will focus on policies and foreign relations rather than ideology.<sup>61</sup> Rising pragmatism of Chinese leaders and populist nationalism toward Taiwan will be major factors shaping China's Taiwan policy.

#### *Generational change: the "80s generation" and their cross-strait perspectives*

Having provided a brief description of cross-strait relations in general, I now turn to the younger generation's perspective. After comparing both sides' views, I briefly note similarities and differences, which provides the foundation for the cross-strait confidence building mechanisms that follow.

### **Taiwan**

#### *What concerns Taiwanese youth?*

Young Taiwanese have three major concerns: Taiwan's economy, stability across the Strait, and Taiwan's international space. The relationship with China plays an important role in all three issues, which explains why the younger generation would support a strong and stable relationship with China.

Economic development is the top priority. Taiwan's growth rate has fluctuated between 4-5 percent during the past four years and was predicted to be as low as 2 percent in 2008 because

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<sup>59</sup> Fred Bergsten, Charles Freeman, Nicholas R. Lardy, Derek J. Mitchell, *China's Rise: Challenges and Opportunities*, Peterson Institute, 2008, pp. 170

<sup>60</sup> David G. Brown, "China-Taiwan Relations: Progress in the Face of Headwinds" *Comparative Connections*, Vol.10, No.3, October 2008.

<sup>61</sup> Cheng Li, "China's Fifth Generation: Is Diversity a Source of Strength or Weakness?" *Emerging Leaders in East Asia: The Next Generation of Political Leadership in China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan*, National Bureau of Asian Research project report, Sept. 2008.



of the global financial crisis. While Taiwan is in the doldrums, China's growth rate has averaged 9.8 percent for the last decade and it has been the primary market for Taiwan's trade-oriented economy.<sup>62</sup> From January to September 2008, trade with China reached \$85 billion, a 16 percent increase over the previous year. China now accounts for 21.4 percent of Taiwan's total foreign trade.<sup>63</sup>

China plays a huge role in Taiwan's economic future. Closer commercial links and direct flights with China will encourage foreign companies to establish headquarters in Taiwan and will create jobs.<sup>64</sup> Young Taiwanese possess a Taiwanese identity but they don't see that identity undermined by working in China. For them, political identity and job opportunities are separate. Indeed, working in China is a trend among the younger generation. According to a survey conducted by the biggest job hunting website in Taiwan, more than 60 percent of respondents said that they would consider working in China. The survey concludes that "do you want to work in China or not?" is no longer a pertinent question; rather the issue is "where are my opportunities in China and what can I do there?" The top three reasons young people consider working in China are: 1) China has huge potential. Work experience in China will be helpful for long-term career goals; 2) It is better to get a spot before the job competition gets too intense; 3) China is more international than Taiwan.<sup>65</sup> It should be noted that none of these reasons is related to politics, identity, or ideology. Rather, the issue is economic opportunities. Young Taiwanese are pragmatic when evaluating job opportunities in China.

According to the Mainland Affairs Office in Taiwan, the number of people traveling between China and Taiwan in 2008 decreased compared to 2007.<sup>66</sup> However, the number of Taiwanese studying in China continues to grow. From 1985-2000, 2,895 Taiwanese students went to college in China and 864 got MA or Ph D. degrees. From 2001-2005, the numbers grew to 2,875 and 2,766, respectively.<sup>67</sup> With mutual recognition of university diplomas, the number of educational exchanges will remain stable or will expand.

The second issue is the stability and security of the Taiwan Strait. During the past eight years, Taiwan's worsening relationships with China and the U.S. awakened many people from the dream of relying on the U.S. to protect Taiwan. Though U.S. support helps Taiwanese feel safe, more people realize that the best way to avoid a war with China is to build trust and a good relationship. Taiwanese, including young people, welcome the institutionalization of cross-Strait communication, which should be unaffected by domestic changes and would help reduce misperceptions when accidents occur. It is worth noting that youth are the age cohort that gives the most support to the idea of responding to China's military threat with political and diplomatic

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<sup>62</sup> "Economic growth rate of major countries," Department of Statistics, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Sept. 2008, <http://2k3dmz2.moea.gov.tw/GNWEB/Indicator/Indicator01.aspx?rptcod=A01>

<sup>63</sup> Bureau of Foreign Trade, Nov. 28, 2008. [http://ekm92.trade.gov.tw/BOFT/web/report\\_detail.jsp?data\\_base\\_id=DB009&category\\_id=CAT525&report\\_id=161798](http://ekm92.trade.gov.tw/BOFT/web/report_detail.jsp?data_base_id=DB009&category_id=CAT525&report_id=161798)

<sup>64</sup> "Cross-Strait Business Normalisation Impact Study," CLSA Asia-Pacific Markets in cooperation with the European Chamber of Commerce Taipei, 2006.

<sup>65</sup> 104 Human Resources, Feb. 29, 2008. <http://www.104.com.tw/cfdocs/2000/pressroom/104news970229.htm>

<sup>66</sup> "Preliminary statistics of cross-strait economic relations," Mainland Affairs Council, Sept. 2008. <http://www.mac.gov.tw/english/english/csexchan/economic/9709e.pdf>

<sup>67</sup> Taiwan Student Union (TWSU), <http://www.twsu.org.tw/modules/news/article.php?storyid=294>

engagement instead of increased military spending.<sup>68</sup> Withdrawing missiles along the coast is a symbolic gesture for young Taiwanese, but promises to not use force against Taiwan will do more to reduce the feeling of insecurity among Taiwanese.

The third issue is Taiwan’s international space. Most people in Taiwan feel that they have the right to participate in the international community. China’s suppression of this desire only strengthens this demand. A survey conducted by the Institute of International Relations at National Chengchi University (IIR) showed that 66.5 percent of respondents agreed that China’s hostility is the main reason why Taiwan faces a difficult diplomatic situation. More than one-third (36.4 percent) think that developing a relationship with China is important, but 63.7 percent will not trade this relationship for Taiwan’s international status. They support developing diplomatic relations with other countries even if it will complicate relations with China.<sup>69</sup> Taiwanese of all ages have very strong feelings about this issue. For example, when asked about Taiwan’s participation in the WHO, 61.4 percent of respondents strongly disagreed with China’s statement that “Taiwan is part of China, so it doesn’t have the qualification to participate in WHO.” And given China’s performance on the WHO issue, 50.7 percent do not think that China really wants to help Taiwan participate in international activities as it says.<sup>70</sup>

*Taiwanese identity*

Taiwanese identity is rising as a result of generational change and political promotion. According to a poll in June, 2008, 68 percent of respondents said they are Taiwanese when asked to choose between Taiwanese or Chinese. The rate is 10 percent higher than eight years ago. When breaking the results down by age groups, 20-29 year olds show the highest rate of people identifying themselves as Taiwanese (Chart 2). The result corresponds with a rising trend of Taiwanese identity across the island from 1992-2008. (see Appendix 2)

Chart 2: Poll on Nationalist identity before resuming dialogue between the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) and Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS). Conducted June 6-9, 2008. N=1015

*Do you think you are Chinese or Taiwanese? (pick only one).*

	Overall	Age				
		20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	Above 60
	(100%)	(21%)	(21%)	(22%)	(17%)	(18%)
Taiwanese	68	<b>76</b>	68	34	64	69
Chinese	18	13	24	22	16	14
Don’t know/ No comment	14	11	12	14	20	17

<sup>68</sup> Taiwan National Security Survey, 2005. in “Taiwan’s Rising Nationalism: Generations, Politics, and ‘Taiwanese Nationalism’,” *Policy Studies* 26, Shelley Rigger, East-West Center, 2006.

<sup>69</sup> Institute of International Relations, National Chengchi University, “Opinion about the current cross-strait relationship,” Aug. 2007. <http://www.rdec.gov.tw/public/Data/7959143171.pdf>

<sup>70</sup> Center for China Studies, National Chengchui University, “Taiwanese perspective about participation in WHO,” May 2005. [http://ics.nccu.edu.tw/document/newsletter/03\\_02.pdf](http://ics.nccu.edu.tw/document/newsletter/03_02.pdf)

*Do you think you are Chinese or Taiwanese (Can pick both)*

	Overall	Age				
		20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	Above 60
	(100%)	(21%)	(21%)	(22%)	(17%)	(18%)
Taiwanese	45	<b>50</b>	39	34	46	56
Chinese	4	3	5	6	3	4
Both	45	42	53	56	45	30
Don't know/ No comment	6	6	4	4	6	10

Sources: TVBS Poll Center

Downloaded from Research, Development, and Evaluation Commission, Executive Yuan.

<http://www.rdec.gov.tw/public/Data/87316452571.pdf>

Taiwanese identity should not be equated with an anti-China attitude or a preference for confrontation over peace. It means that people are proud of being Taiwanese. Fighting for Taiwan's international political rights or the pursuit of independence stems from the desire to be treated equally and respectfully, not simply because of "anti-China" sentiment. Shelley Rigger described how young Taiwanese feel about their identity in her studies of Taiwanese nationalism:

"For the older man, Taiwanese identity is a reaction against the KMT, its oppressive rule, its lies, and its enforced Chinese identity. For the young student, Taiwanese identity is a natural and self-evident... For the youth, being Taiwanese is a matter of fact, one that need not entail the wholesale denunciation of his Chinese heritage."<sup>71</sup>

This description correctly notes the Taiwanese identity of the younger generation is not based on rejection of or distinction from others. Therefore, they do not have to be "anti-China" to assert their identity. Most surveys reach the same conclusion: more than 50 percent of Taiwanese prefer to maintain the status quo, which means that China does not threaten Taiwan's security and Taiwan is not provocative in pursuing independence. Young Taiwanese want peaceful coexistence, closer economic exchanges, and postponement of the independence/reunification question with China. It is also worth noticing that among the minority views, twice as many people support independence rather than reunification (see Appendix 3). The growing proportion of young people who perceive themselves as Taiwanese shows that they do not feel much of a "blood bond" with Chinese. Compared with young Chinese and older Taiwanese, the younger generation sees the tangled history with China after 1949 from a greater distance and are less emotionally involved. They see what happened in 1949 between the KMT and CCP in historic and moral, not nationalist, terms.<sup>72</sup> Their thinking about cross-strait relations focuses more on the present and the future than on history.

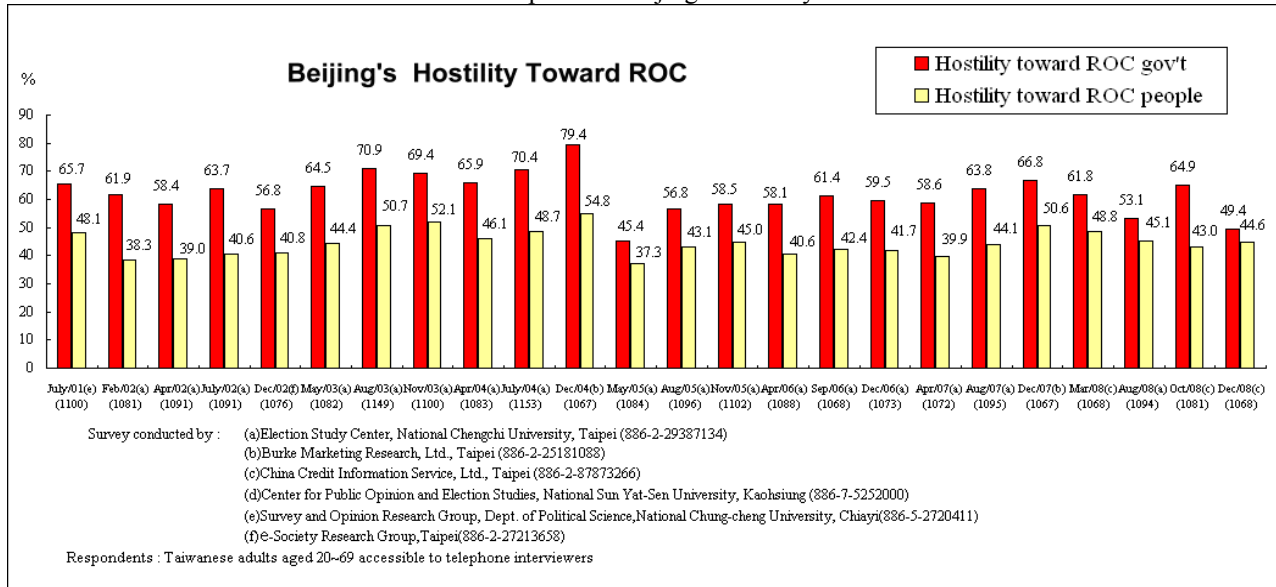
<sup>71</sup> Shelley Rigger, "Taiwan's Rising Nationalism," *Policy Studies* 26, East-West Center, 2006, pp. 9.

<sup>72</sup> Samia Ferhat, "China-Taiwan: Young People Confront Their History," *China Perspective*, No. 66, July-Aug. 2006.

*Hostility and trust*

Given the turbulent relationship between China and Taiwan since 1949, trust is hard to build. Taiwanese mistrust of China is not simply the result of political ideology, but also stems from a lack of mutual understanding. The Mainland Affairs Office has been tracking how Taiwanese perceive Beijing’s hostility toward the government and the people. (see Chart 3).

Chart 3: Taiwanese Perception of Beijing’s Hostility Toward the ROC



Source: Mainland Affairs Office, <http://www.mac.gov.tw/english/index1-e.htm> (December 2008).

The graph shows that most people think Beijing has been hostile to Taiwan. It also shows that this sentiment has diminished in 2008, probably because of the two governments’ efforts to improve their relationship. If they can create more tangible results or breakthroughs, it is possible that the rate can go lower still. Young Taiwanese do not have more confidence and trust toward China than does the older generation. But they focus on pragmatic cooperation and the substantial benefits that Taiwan can get from the relationship. In other words, they will be more willing to negotiate with China on issues that are beneficial for Taiwan.

Another survey asked how Taiwanese evaluate China’s hostility. Just under 40 percent see China’s restraint in its opposition to Taiwan’s membership in international organizations as the most important indicator. Slightly less than a quarter (23.3 percent) want the two sides to sign an agreement to end hostility.<sup>73</sup> The Chinese government, or at least Hu Jintao, has tried to reach out and showed friendship to Taiwan. However, for the general public in Taiwan, more tangible breakthroughs, such as granting membership in the WHO, will be required to change their perception of China’s hostility.

<sup>73</sup> Global Views Survey Research Center, “Survey on Taiwanese people’s attitudes toward economic agreements with China and cross-Strait exchanges,” Nov. 10, 2008. [http://www.gvm.com.tw/gvsr/200811\\_GVSRC\\_otherissue\\_E1.pdf](http://www.gvm.com.tw/gvsr/200811_GVSRC_otherissue_E1.pdf)

*Younger generation political attitudes and perspectives about cross-Strait relations*

The younger generation's political attitude is closely related to its identity and a sense of pragmatism. As Shelley Rigger points out, rising Taiwanese identity does not equate with nationalism in the younger generation. Their political views are more pragmatic and self-centered. They want good relations with China as well as political freedom and the autonomy they enjoy today.<sup>74</sup> There is less support for a hardline pro-independence position and partisanship; they prefer to maintain the status quo. From 2006 to 2008, more people in Taiwan said that they hold a neutral position when it comes to political parties (Appendix 4): 30 percent of the younger generation said that they do not have a party affiliation.<sup>75</sup> In the 2008 presidential election, people between the age 20 and 29 shifted positions significantly. This group used to have a higher support rate for the DPP. In 2004, 58 percent of young people voted for Chen Shui-bian. In 2008, 61 percent of young voters supported Ma while only 21 percent supported Frank Hsieh, according to a poll taken before the election.<sup>76</sup>

Voting for the KMT or the DPP does not imply party loyalty, nor does it equate with voting for reunification or independence. Young Taiwanese are tired of politicians who use ethnic and identity issues to divide society into mainlanders and Taiwanese, or pro-independence and pro-reunification groups.<sup>77</sup> "Both reunification and independence are extreme words," explained a second-generation Taiwanese from a mainland family.<sup>78</sup>

In the 2008 presidential election, Taiwan's economic situation created favorable conditions for Ma. Taiwan's economy declined while the DPP was in power and created the impression that the KMT was better at managing the economy. On foreign policy, Hsieh's moderate stand toward China and his charisma gave him widespread appeal, but there was also agreement that "regime change" was necessary at that point in time. U.S. thinking has always been an important factor in Taiwanese elections. Washington's criticism of Chen Shui-bian and the referendum worried many Taiwanese about the prospect of losing U.S. support.<sup>79</sup> Most voters think that electing a KMT president will change Taiwan's image and earn more trust from the U.S. and China. U.S. scholars argued that the U.S. government should give Ma credit for efforts to improve the cross-Strait relationship, which would encourage Taiwan to reduce tension with China and strengthen relations with the U.S.<sup>80</sup> Ma's emphasis on Taiwan's dignity also helped him win over some swing voters in the election: 64 percent of voters believed Ma's policy toward China preserves Taiwan's dignity and trust him to implement that policy.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Shelley Rigger, "Taiwan's Rising Nationalism," *Policy Studies* 26, East-West Center, 2006.

<sup>75</sup> Rigger identifies four Taiwanese generations: the first was born by 1931, the second generation was born between 1931-1953, and the fourth generation was born after 1968. Shelley Rigger, "Taiwan's Rising Nationalism," *Policy Studies* 26, East-West Center, 2006.

<sup>76</sup> "More than 60 percent of the younger generation support Ma," *United Daily News*, March 3, 2008.

[http://mag.udn.com/mag/vote2007-08/storypage.jsp?f\\_ART\\_ID=113242](http://mag.udn.com/mag/vote2007-08/storypage.jsp?f_ART_ID=113242)

<sup>77</sup> Samia Ferhat, op. cit.

<sup>78</sup> Kelvin Platt, "Sharply contrasting views of the future divide young from old in Taiwan," *Christian Science Monitor*, Vol. 89, Issue 177, Aug. 7, 1997, pp. 7.

<sup>79</sup> David G. Brown, "China-Taiwan Relations: Taiwan Voters Set a New Course," *Comparative Connections*, Pacific Forum, CSIS, Vol. 10, No. 1, April 2008.

<sup>80</sup> Paul Wolfowitz, "A Chance to Build On Taiwan's Progress," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 2008, pp. 26-29.

<sup>81</sup> "First poll after President Ma assumed office." *Yams News*, June 2, 2008.

Building a good relationship that is based on communication and mutual understanding is generally welcomed by young Taiwanese. In the 2005 Youth National Affairs Conference, discussion groups all over Taiwan shared several conclusions in their report about “democracy and the cross-Strait relationship.” They agree that the lack of mutual understanding between Taiwan and China is a serious problem that needs to be improved as soon as possible. People in Taiwan need to reach internal consensus about China. Young people support a good cross-Strait relationship as long as China respects Taiwanese identity.<sup>82</sup> Taiwanese youth would like to see closer interactions with China but they will not trade their Taiwanese identity or dignity.

## China

### *A generation with strong confidence*

Chinese under the age of 30 accounted for 39.88 percent of the population in 2006 and are the main beneficiary of China’s economic boom. Not surprisingly, they are confident about China and their future.<sup>83</sup> Like Taiwanese youth, they are well educated and grew up in a more materialistic environment than did their elders. They have witnessed China getting stronger. They are proud of China’s status as a world power and believe that it will become more influential in the future. The expanding economy provides them a promising career and future. According to a survey by Credit Suisse First Boston, the incomes of the age group from 20-29 has shown the biggest increase of any age group, growing 34 percent from 2005-2007.<sup>84</sup> The increasing salary and economic opportunities have given them confidence and a forward-looking attitude. Rao Jin, the young Chinese who constructed the Anti-CNN website after the Tibetan unrest in March 2008, described his generation as “typically forward-looking, putting forward constructive proposals and promoting progress” even though they are aware of China’s growing problems.<sup>85</sup>

This generation also tends to be more self-centered. A one-child policy was adopted in 1978. As the only child in each family, they are used to being the center of attention and are usually spoiled. This contributes to stronger senses of individualism, independence, and being self-centered.<sup>86</sup> As China becomes more developed and connects to the rest of the world, they have strong confidence in their ability to direct their lives and be successful. Members of this generation are also quick to express their opinion and pursue their goals. They are the first

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<http://news.yam.com/cnyes/politics/200806/20080602724487.html>

<sup>82</sup> Since 2004, the National Youth Commission under the Executive Yuan holds an annual Youth National Affairs Conference which uses a deliberative democracy model for youth to express their opinion about important issues. Some 700-800 youths between the ages of 18-30 convene as four sub-groups in northern, middle, southern, and eastern parts of Taiwan. Those who give excellent performances are elected from the sub-groups and gather for separate discussions. The regional and national groups submit a final report on the topics. The agenda and reports are at their website. Youth National Affairs Conference (Chinese).

<http://www.youthhub.net.tw/youthforum/index.php?act=page&id=38>; Youthhub., National Youth Commission, <http://youthhub.net.tw/>

<sup>83</sup> *China Statistical Yearbook 2007*, National Bureau of Statistics of China.

<http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2007/indexch.htm>

<sup>84</sup> Simon Elegant, “China’s Me Generation,” *Time*, Nov. 5, 2007, pp. 46-51.

<sup>85</sup> “An ‘Anti-CNN’ Campaigner: I am a typical post-1980 Patriot.” *News China* (Aug. 5, 2008), pp. 19.

<sup>86</sup> Yu Shuanghao, “Special overview: political enthusiasm exists side by side with political indifference,” *Chinese Education and Society*, No. 30(3), May/June, 2007, pp.65-72.

Chinese generation that has embraced high technology. The internet has become their major information resource; one-fourth of students and young office workers are bloggers.<sup>87</sup> They are quick to comment on topics of interest, exchange opinions, and share their views. The internet has become a social space for the younger generation and a public opinion source that the Chinese government pays attention to.<sup>88</sup>

### *Dual political attitudes: little political participation and strong nationalism*

At first sight, Chinese youth have contradictory political attitudes. They exhibit a low political participation rate and do not like to talk about politics. On the other hand, they show strong nationalism about certain issues, such as Taiwan, Japan, Tibet, and China's international reputation. Studying the context of these two attitudes reveals that these tendencies are not contradictory and can coexist successfully in the younger generation.

### **Political participation**

On a personal level, young Chinese care much more about economics than politics. They pay attention to China's foreign policies and international relations, which puts news about Taiwan, Japan, and the U.S. at the center.<sup>89</sup> Domestic politics are important, but most people stay away from this field. Most of their attention is on economic affairs.<sup>90</sup> Getting into a good school, having a good job, and earning a stable income are priorities. Compared with the older generation, young people do not remember political suppression. When the 1989 Tiananmen Incident occurred, most of the '80s generation was in elementary or middle school and was not involved in political unrest. However, their family education has taught them to avoid politics. The older generation witnessed dissidents being suppressed and experienced strict government control of every aspect of life. This taught them to stay away from politics and they taught their children to do the same. The lack of a channel for political participation strengthens this attitude. Most young people do not feel that they can influence China's politics. As one Chinese youth explained in an interview, "there is nothing we can do about policies, so there is no point in talking about it or getting involved."<sup>91</sup> From a pragmatic perspective, most young people do not believe political participation will bring them any benefits.<sup>92</sup> Pursuing economic success is more appealing since it guarantees a stable income and a good life.

Growing up amid affluence, the younger generation will not want to see political unrest that may damage their economic prospects. Eighty-eight percent of Chinese agree that their country is on the right track.<sup>93</sup> They prioritize stability as the basis of reform and development.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> "FactBox: The ABC's of China's post-1980s generation." Reuters, June 4, 2008.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/inDepthNews/idUST26422020080605>

<sup>88</sup> Shirk, *China Fragile Superpower*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Yu Shuanghao, "Special overview: political enthusiasm exists side by side with political indifference," *Chinese Education and Society*, No. 30(3), May/June, 2007, pp. 65-72.

<sup>91</sup> Simon Elegant, op.cit.

<sup>92</sup> Duan Gang, op. cit.

<sup>93</sup> Committee of 100, "Full Report of C-100's Survey on American and Chinese Attitudes Toward Each Other," Dec. 10, 2007.

Chinese youth demand better living conditions and expect to be more successful than their parents. They also see their best contribution to their country as helping China become an economic superpower. Changing politics is not one of their personal goals. A survey shows that for most Chinese, their top priority is to have a happy family and get rich. People age 18-29 are more concerned about social status, careers, and want to live as they like. (Chart 4)

Chart 4: Which of the following comes closest to your current personal goal in life?  
(2007 survey: General Public)

To have a happy family	54%
To get rich	42%
<b>To live as I like**</b>	28%
<b>To have a successful career**</b>	16%
<b>To enhance social status**</b>	16%
To work on behalf of society	10%
Not Sure	3%
Others	1%

\*Percentages total more than 100% as respondents were asked to select the top two responses.

Source: Committee 100, “2007 Parallel Survey: American and Chinese Attitudes Toward Each Other.” (2008)

\*\* Young people rank three aspects higher than other age groups.

## Nationalism and “angry youth” (愤青)

If the younger generation in China is not politically active, then how can we explain the high ratio of the general public identifying themselves as patriotic as well as the strong nationalism observed among the younger generation in 2008?

To answer this question, the causes and the targets of nationalist emotion and political participation need to be identified. Political participation involves more than domestic politics or even having a career related to politics, which carries high risks if individuals don't agree with the government. On the other hand, nationalism usually allows a country's people to see themselves as a single entity by distinguishing themselves from others. It targets foreign relations and seeks to defend the country's integrity regardless of the domestic situation. In China's case, Chinese stand with its government to reject foreign criticism and show others that they are an integral group that is capable of handling its own issues. One observer wrote, “it is among the more internationally engaged sections of China that the laments against Westerners have been loudest.” He notes that “they [Chinese youth] have lambasted the foreigners' supposed failure to understand China and their desire to drag the country down, chiefly out of a claimed economic jealousy.”<sup>95</sup> Even though young Chinese know China and its government have a lot of problems, they think it is their own business and they don't accept criticism by outsiders. A Chinese scholar argues that most of the younger generation will choose national pride over democracy when national pride is at stake.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Duan Gang, “The Political Participation of the Young People in the Cities of Modern China,” *Journal of Shanghai College for Youth Administrators*, Vol. 20, No.1, 2006.

<sup>95</sup> Rowan Callick, “Inflamed Passions,” *The Australian*, April 26, 2008.

<sup>96</sup> Zhao Suisheng, “The Olympics and Chinese Nationalism,” *China Security*, Vol. 4, No. 3, summer, 2008. pp. 49.



This perspective is closely related to the youth's perception of modern China and its history. The root of the younger generation's nationalism can be traced back to China's modern history and state-led patriotic education. Young Chinese learned and agreed that China had a great ancient past, but the modern history after the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was a century of humiliation. They have strong reactions to China being called "the Sick Man of East Asia" and issues about territorial sovereignty date back to that period.<sup>97</sup> After the Tiananmen incident, the government launched an extensive propaganda campaign to position itself as the defender of national pride against foreign criticism of and sanctions against China. They described foreign intervention in domestic issues like the Tiananmen incident, Tibetan unrest, and the Taiwan problem as attempts to stop China from becoming a great power. This rhetoric is well taken by young Chinese, most of whom remain suspicious about Western countries' intention to weaken China.<sup>98</sup> This occurs as China's economic success after the 1980s creates confidence among young Chinese about reviving China's status as a world power. They confirm the Communist government's leading economic role and are eager to contribute more to the world.<sup>99</sup> China has been active in international organizations and plays a growing role in the world economy. The government urges Chinese enterprises to "go global" and expand their foreign direct investment, which has grown 19 times from 2000 to 2008.<sup>100</sup> With more confidence, Chinese are more active in responding to outside criticism and participating in world affairs, which makes communication with other countries easier.

Consistent with this experience and mindset, most ethnic Chinese want a united and strong China. Young people supported their government's suppression of Tibetan unrest in March 2008. People who say anything against those actions or show sympathy to Tibetans are accused of being traitors not by the government, but by Chinese society and the media. A young female Chinese student studying in Duke University, North Carolina, was severely condemned because she cared about Tibetan human rights.<sup>101</sup> Hearing about the torch relay in France in April, young Chinese started a boycott of the French retailer Carrefours through an online forum, mop.com. According to Wu Hao, the man who launched this movement and co-produced a video on YouTube about Tibet, Tibet is a domestic dispute and he felt offended by international intervention in any form.<sup>102</sup> Rao Jin, who constructed the Anti-CNN website after the Tibetan unrest in March, explained that young Chinese were angry because they felt their country was misunderstood by outsiders.<sup>103</sup> He said that his website had a bigger mission to "eliminate deep-rooted bias and cultural clashes caused by a lack of knowledge and understanding."<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Samia Ferhat, op. cit.

<sup>98</sup> Zhao Suisheng, "The Olympics and Chinese Nationalism," pp. 48-57.

<sup>99</sup> Matthew Forney, "China's Loyal Youth," *New York Times*, April 13, 2008.

<sup>100</sup> "Chapter 3: China's outward direct investment," *OECD Investment Policy reviews: China 2008*, 2008.

<sup>101</sup> "New Freedom, and Peril, in Online Criticism of China," *Washington Post*, April 18, 2008.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/16/AR2008041603579.html>

<sup>102</sup> Wang Yan, "Patriotic Children: A story of a Young Patriot," *News China*, Vol. 001, Aug. 5, 2008, pp. 14-18; Wu Hao, "Tibet WAS, IS, and ALWAYS WILL BE a Part of China," *YouTube.com*,

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9QNK34cJo>

<sup>103</sup> The Anti-CNN website: <http://www.anti-cnn.com/>

<sup>104</sup> "An 'Anti-CNN' Campaigner: I am a typical post-1980 Patriot," *News China*, Aug. 5, 2008, pp. 19.

The younger generation's pride in China and the humiliation they feel about the past shape their feelings toward outsiders. The Taiwan issue is firmly placed in the middle of this popular nationalism because it is part of past humiliations and results from territorial concessions. They also see foreign intervention as the main cause of the current situation. Even if the younger generation chooses to not talk about corruption or legal reform within China, they cannot ignore the Taiwan problem.

### *Younger Chinese views of Taiwan*

Most young Chinese believe that Taiwan is part of China and reunification is destined. Reunification with Taiwan is more than just recovering territory, but also symbolizes a strong China. To most Chinese, recovering Taiwan means overcoming the humiliation of Western invasion from the late Qing dynasty to the 1950s. It shows China's national power as a country able to protect its territory.<sup>105</sup> The Taiwan issue is a vital concern as it involves national pride and unity. Chinese are also proud to think that they are capable of taking care of the extended Chinese "family," which includes Taiwan. The Committee of 100 survey pointed out that the top three concerns of the Chinese general public are jobs and the economy (35 percent), corruption (32 percent), and Taiwan (22 percent). Those aged 18-29 ranked Taiwan, the environment, energy consumption, education, crime, and social welfare higher than did other age groups.<sup>106</sup> Young people who embrace strong nationalism and confidence do not think separation is an option for Taiwan. They think that reunification with a strong China is economically and politically beneficial to Taiwan and the island has no reason to reject that future, especially after China promises to maintain Taiwan's democracy. They do not understand why Taiwanese are offended by this notion.<sup>107</sup>

This misunderstanding results from a single-minded focus that links the Taiwan question to one word: reunification. Chinese do not think of alternative solutions. To most Chinese, questioning Taiwan's status as part of China casts doubt on an individual's patriotism and love of country.<sup>108</sup> Just as the people who care about human rights in Tibet face social condemnation, people who question the need for reunification with Taiwan face the same group pressure. They do not see the need to think otherwise or to try to understand the will of the Taiwanese since they already agree that Taiwanese can keep their own identity. Chinese think that theirs is a country composed of diverse ethnicities and identities. The government and the people respect differences and will not force assimilation. Young Chinese apply the same logic to the case of Taiwan. They can respect the Taiwanese sense of identity as long as Taiwanese agree that the island is part of China, just as China's other minority ethnicities do. However, Taiwanese do not share the same view of the identity order. Taiwanese see their identity as parallel to their Chinese identity. The idea that Taiwanese identity is subordinated to Chinese identity, which is inherent in the idea of reunification, is offensive to most Taiwanese. Therefore, the discussion of identity issues should not focus on how different Taiwanese and Chinese identities are, but instead on their relationship.

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<sup>105</sup> Bergsten, op. cit. pp. 170.

<sup>106</sup> Committee of 100, "Full Report of C-100's Survey on American and Chinese Attitudes Toward Each Other," Dec. 10, 2007.

<sup>107</sup> Samia Ferhat, op. cit.

<sup>108</sup> Bergsten, op. cit. pp.170.

When asked about specific elements of Taiwan policy, most Chinese believe that the cross-Strait situation is getting better because of the closer economic relationship between Taiwan and China. Fifty-three percent of respondents think that the Taiwan issue is evolving toward peaceful resolution; only 12 percent think the issue is moving toward military conflict. Most Chinese believe that time is on their side because of Taiwan’s growing economic dependence on China. A majority of Chinese support expanding exchanges with Taiwan to deepen interdependence with China. (Chart 5)

Chart 5: Among the following measures that China can take to resolve the Taiwan problem, which one do you think will be more appropriate?

Eventually achieving unification by expanding cross-strait exchange	52%
Forcing Taiwan to return to China by exerting economic pressure	17%
Achieving unification by force	11%
Observing measures taken by Taiwanese authority	6%
Doing nothing	1%
Not sure	15%

Source: Committee of 100, “Full Report of C-100’s Survey on American and Chinese Attitudes Toward Each Other.” (December 10, 2007)

In addition to the nationalist perspective described, the internet and blogs reveal another aspect of younger Chinese views of Taiwan. On the internet, people may feel more comfortable speaking out without fear of being exposed. Most Chinese bloggers acknowledge that they have little understanding of Taiwan. They are also aware of deep misperceptions between the two sides of the Strait and would like to see more interaction. The youth are curious about life and society in Taiwan other than its politics. If they have the chance, they say they would like to visit Taiwan and see if what they have heard and seen on television is real. Some blogs have started a program to encourage young people to exchange views and thoughts. For example, one Chinese blog, Snappark, started a project called “Cities Talk,” which interviews young people on the street in Taipei and Beijing. They asked interviewees what questions they would like to have answered by young people from the other side.<sup>109</sup> Ninety percent of questions from each side are similar and concern people’s daily lives, living style, food, and their impressions of each other. Around 10-20 percent of the questions are related to politics or history. Another Chinese blog asked young Chinese to draw a map indicating their perception of the world and discuss their views of Taiwan.<sup>110</sup> By creating more social space online, the internet could be an effective tool that allows both sides to have a prompt discussion of issues and news.

### **Comparison of younger generations’ perspectives in China and Taiwan**

Building on my previous analysis, I now compare the younger generations’ perspectives on life, history, the nation, and cross-Strait relations. The comparison will help us understand where mutual misperceptions exist and where to start confidence building. It will serve as the foundation for suggestions to improve mutual trust.

<sup>109</sup> Interview records and photos. <http://www.snappark.com/theme/415>; <http://www.snappark.com/theme/171>

<sup>110</sup> “How Chinese perceive Taiwan?” May 11, 2008. <http://www.hecaitou.net/?p=2974>

- *Peaceful Resolution*: Young people from both sides prefer peace and stability to conflict. Even though more young Chinese support the use of force as a last resort to solve the situation than do young Taiwanese, a majority of young Chinese prefer a peaceful resolution to the cross-Strait situation. They both put political stability and economic well being as a priority in the cross-Strait relationship.
- *A Forward-Looking Attitude*: Both young Chinese and Taiwanese possess a forward looking attitude. They are confident about controlling their life and are motivated to pursue their goals, which can create a crisis for cross-Strait relations if either side is determined to pursue reunification or independence. However, if the two sides agree to work together for a peaceful resolution, their forward-looking attitude can help bring about a constructive resolution of the issue.
- *More Shared Values*: As China becomes more globalized, lifestyles and values of young Taiwanese and young Chinese are becoming similar. They are familiar with technology, pay attention to world trends, and study abroad in developed countries. This convergence makes communication easier.
- *Both Are Proud of Their Own National Identities*: Even with similar lifestyles, the two sides do not see themselves as alike because of different national identities. For young Taiwanese, China is not part of their maturation process, and growing numbers of Taiwanese find it hard to identify themselves as Chinese. China's attraction to Taiwan is economic interest, not shared political identity. Young Chinese see Taiwan through the prism of historic memory and nationalism. Taiwan is a sub-group of "Greater China," just like Tibet, Xinjiang, and Hong Kong. They feel that they have an obligation to recover this lost land and take care of the people who are part of China. Clearly, the two sides embrace different political identities and are proud of them.
- *Little Understanding of Each Other's Nationalism*: The nationalism of younger Chinese can be seen as arrogance by young Taiwanese.<sup>111</sup> Chinese don't understand why international recognition is so important to Taiwanese, especially after China has promised to give Taiwan autonomy and maintain its democracy. They don't understand why Taiwanese are annoyed by and unenthusiastic about a reunification project that brings Taiwan economic benefits and political protection from a powerful country.

Taiwanese feel that they have been separated for 50 years and Taiwan is a *de facto* independent country. They do not understand the symbolic significance of the recovery of Taiwan to young Chinese. Young Taiwanese don't know why Chinese are so nationalist and persistent in claiming title to Taiwan, since both live well without reunification. The gap in national identity has been widening, too. Young Taiwanese are proud of ancient Chinese culture, by that does not mean that they accept Chinese as their political identity.

- *Different Feelings about the "Century of Humiliation"*: Both young Chinese and Taiwanese have no memory of war, but their sense of bitterness toward the history from 1890-1950 is different. Taiwanese feeling evolves as generations change. Older generations who left the mainland feel that they "lost China" to the Communist Party. Their historical memory connects

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<sup>111</sup> Samia Ferhat, *op.cit.*

the past with current developments. Young Taiwanese, however, see the past more like history and do not see this as a reason for reunification. Their bitterness is less strong. They do not understand why Chinese insists in recovering Taiwan since Taiwan has been politically unrelated to China for more than 50 years. Young Chinese who have undergone patriotic education have a strong desire to wash away the humiliation. Taiwan is the last lost territory to recover.

Generational change does not change this mentality. What *has* changed is the strategy to achieve this goal.

- *Different Emphasis in Handling the Cross-Strait Relationship:* Young Chinese do not care about process as much as Taiwanese do because Taiwan has more to get out of the process. For example, the negotiation of trade cooperation will influence Taiwan's economy more significantly than China's. The process will also decide how much right Taiwan has to participate in international organizations. Therefore, Taiwan focuses more on how the process can bring benefits to Taiwan now, rather than how the process leads to final resolution. For Taiwan, the discussion of a final resolution can be postponed but keeping a productive process of negotiation is critical to Taiwan's survival. On China's side, the interest is less obvious. The biggest reason China has to negotiate with Taiwan is to show that it cares about the welfare of Taiwan and hopes to draw Taiwanese hearts closer to China. However, China has been cautious in promising Taiwan anything that may make the island more independent and stronger. It skillfully leads the process on aspects they prefer, such as cross-Strait economic links, and saves other issues like international space for later.

Since the negotiation does not affect young Chinese' daily life and they have more confidence than the older generation from China's rise, they hold the reunification principle more firmly than does the older generation. They cannot tolerate the possibility of separation since China has become a world power. They believe that "reunification" is the most important principle and that goal must be accepted before proceeding to negotiations. As long as Taiwan agrees that it is part of China, young Chinese are more open to respecting Taiwanese identity.

- *Different Sense of Urgency:* Following the previous point, since the development of the cross-Strait situation has greater influence on Taiwan than China, people in Taiwan have a stronger sense of urgency to push the process. Young Taiwanese think that agreement on pragmatic issues is more important than having a common vision of the final resolution. Realizing that neither independence nor reunification are acceptable answers for the final resolution, they expect to brainstorm with young Chinese to find a creative solution during the process of negotiation. They are eager to see a productive outcome from increased interactions that can help improve Taiwan's current situation such as international space and economic development.

On the other side, China can survive without Taiwan, but Taiwan's economy could not survive without China. As China's economy grows, Chinese feel time is on their side as Taiwan develops deeper reliance on China. Eventually, Taiwan will concede and this problem will be solved as China wishes. Young Chinese deeply believe in this and take a more passive attitude in thinking about this issue. They want cooperation with Taiwan that helps bring the island closer to China, but they do not feel it is a survival issue. Thus, China does not feel rushed to make agreement with Taiwan regarding to issues that are not important to Taiwan.

## Suggestions

The previous discussion shows that the younger generations in Taiwan and China have different views on history, identity, and the process to settle the cross-strait problem. Those perception gaps need to be overcome to reach any agreement or compromises. This section provides suggestion on ways to promote mutual understanding on critical issues and concepts between the youth. Shaping high politics or government policies are not the main focus.

- *Set up a foundation to study cross-strait youth and promote mutual understanding.* The foundation will be an unofficial organization co-funded and co-managed by Taiwanese and Chinese. Distinguished from the SEF and ARATS, the current nongovernmental counterparts, this foundation will define itself as a place that allows people from both sides to work together on the same projects and in the same space. It aims to do more than serve as a platform for information exchange, but also as a research organization for young scholars to work on youth-related projects and carry them out. All the projects need to be practicable and focus on younger generations. For example, the foundation can put together people from similar backgrounds and let them simulate future ways they want to co-exist with each other. Depending on conditions and results, the project can be expanded as a comparative study with diverse groups from Taiwan and China.

The foundation itself would not define the relationship between young people from Taiwan and China but would encourage them to seek agreement regarding their relationship. It would not assume that China will democratize one day and young Chinese will allow Taiwan to be independent. Neither would it assume that Taiwanese will change their identities to become more Chinese and agree to reunify under the one China principle. The foundation should be seen as a neutral area for research and discussion. It will assist young people to seek out their future together, but not impose a direction on them. The project results would be briefed to the government on a regular basis. Government officials could observe each proposal's process and outcome to shape policy considerations.

- *Create observation groups that mix young Taiwanese and young Chinese for residency in international organizations.* Qualification would be based on a candidate's expertise. For example, candidates interested in working at the World Health Organization should possess related backgrounds. All candidates should be between the ages of 22 and 35 and could not be government officials. They should serve for six months to one year. Funds for this project should come from both China and Taiwan and be coordinated under a nongovernmental organization.

This program would allow the young people from both sides to learn from global experts and expand their international perspective. It also aims to get young people from both sides to learn how to communicate with each other on concrete issues. Excluding government officials is designed to reduce political concerns to a minimum. At the end of their residency, those young people would make a final presentation about issues that concern Taiwan, China, or both, and how the two sides can cooperate to handle them. The long-term goal of the project would be to create basic connections among young leaders who can facilitate future interactions and stimulate creative thinking about solutions and resource mobilization.

- *Host an annual campaign for proposals drafted by Chinese or Taiwanese to foster mutual understanding and exchanges between the younger generations.* The proposal can focus on any community, topic, or aspect of the cross-Strait relationship as long as it is related to the younger generation. Different themes can be set for the campaign every year. The proposal that wins would then solicit support from nonprofit and non-official organizations.
- *Publish a youth journal with articles by young Taiwanese and Chinese discussing the same topics to help exchange views.* The topics could be about Taiwan, China, or international affairs. The purpose would not be to reach consensus, but to understand differences and stimulate thinking. The journal should be edited and published by a non-official organization, such as the previously mentioned cross-Strait foundation.
- *Create an annual leadership program for people below the age of 35.* The group should remain small, with less than 20 people, and target young professionals whose career is related to cross-Strait relations. The program would focus on discussion about communications, consensus building, and risk management between Taiwan and China. The program would have two parts. The first part would have classes and ask the participants to agree upon areas they perceive as potential risks. The second part would break the participants into groups with similar perception of those risks and ask them to present proposed resolutions for that risk. This program narrowly focuses on political aspects and risk management. The next suggestion will include broader topics ranging from social issues to agricultural products.
- *Provide a one-year, three-term advanced studies program for young government officials and experts from both sides to study/explore specialized areas such as financial systems, agricultural technology, disease control, piracy, etc.* Instructors should come from Taiwan, China, and the international community. This program would show how both governments implement policies and provide ideas about how the two sides can work together. This program should be hosted by the cross-Strait foundation with sponsorship from universities. Young government officials participating in this program should take one year of leave. All classes would take place in the cross-Strait Foundation with periodic visits to universities. Students would have to attend conferences related to topics they research. Students would break into small groups to work on a project proposal. At the end of the program, they would explain implementing of their ideas in a seminar.
- *Establish a one-month educational camp for people who have general interest in cross-Strait relations.* This would differ from the leadership program in that it would be designed for young Taiwanese and Chinese who have little understanding of politics and each other. It would aim to end misperceptions and stereotypes; the leadership program would target people who have experience in cross-Strait relations or are pursuing a career related to this field.
- *An online virtual reality environment could be designed based on cross-Strait relations.* Participants would not have to be Taiwanese or Chinese, but the character's life they assume should be closely related to Taiwan or China. The characters do not have to be political figures and players could design roles that correspond to their real life if they live or work in Taiwan or China. Real people would be added to the game and real news would influence the game. For example, the opening of direct flights would be added as it was realized. Each player could define her or her own goals and try to influence the political situation to maximize his or her own interests. For example, a participant could set the goal to become the most successful toy manufacturer and would push for a free trade agreement between Taiwan and China. The players

would have to interact with others to determine their influence on the development of the cross-Strait relationship. The purpose of this game would be to observe players' perceptions and expectations about cross-strait relations. It would also give youths an opportunity to directly express their wishes and actions by using virtual characters.

## **Conclusion**

With more than 50 years of tangled history, the development of the cross-Strait relationship is changing. From military conflict and confrontation to gradual cooperation, Taiwan and China are adopting different perspectives on how to peacefully co-exist. Society and policy makers are also undergoing generational change where young people mix modern thinking with the elder generation's perspective. Generational change brings new opportunities as well as new challenges to the cross-Strait relationship. With China's rising economic power and Taiwan's growing dependence on China, economic interest has played a more important role in cross-Strait negotiations. As China grows more globally, the two sides may share more similar values that can facilitate communication. However, rising nationalism and different identities are facts that both sides have to admit. The long-term suppression of Taiwan's international space will also become a more urgent issue that needs a new framework. Political leaders from both sides have to observe social trends and demonstrate flexibility in their policies.

Since 2008, Taiwan and China have started a series of negotiations. ARATS-SEF talks have resumed and mutual visits between government officials have increased. Leaders from both sides seem to agree that peace and stability are common interests. They are also more pragmatic in handling the relationship. Ma Ying-jeou's China policy so far is supported by the majority of society. But he is going to face pressure from the DPP and the expectation of improvements in Taiwan's economy and international space. He also has to be cautious when negotiations approach the borders of economic and political affairs. Issues of identity and Taiwan's dignity may offset efforts so far to improve the relationship if Taiwanese society is driven toward radical independence. On China's side, the top leaders are adopting a mild strategy of drawing Taiwan closer by supporting Ma's policies. Hu Jintao wants to see more interactions with Taiwan. The leader, however, also has to persuade the hawkish voices in his government to adjust policy toward a friendly Taiwan. Chinese growing confidence in their country enhances the young people's determination to stick to the one China principle and final reunification. Young people become more spontaneous in launching patriotic movements which may force the government to harden its position toward Taiwan. Moreover, the CCP's legitimacy and China's economic well-being remain primary concern before the Beijing government addresses handling the cross-Strait relationship.

The young generations in Taiwan and China have grown up in a more affluent environment than their parents. They possess more confidence and a forward-looking attitude about their future. More common values are shared because of similar social environments and globalization. Those similarities can be seen as opportunities to start communication and trust building. However, the two sides remain different in regards to identity and political views about the cross-Strait relationship. More Taiwanese youth feel it is difficult to identify themselves as both Taiwanese and Chinese. Choosing Chinese or Taiwanese identities become separate options for them. Young Chinese believe that Taiwanese identity is one kind of Chinese identity and that



they can tolerate its existence as long as Taiwanese agree that they are part of the “Greater China family.” For them, there is no contradiction between these two identities. Taiwanese and Chinese youth also embrace a different sense of urgency in handling the cross-Strait relationship. Young Taiwanese understand that their future and survival are closely related to China and are eager to see improvement in the relationship. Chinese also welcome improvement, but they are not rushed to negotiate issues that they think will potentially threaten the one China principle. They are also confident that time is on their side and that they can take a passive attitude in responding to Taiwanese anxieties.

Seeing that the ‘80s generation will soon represent major voices in the government and society, confidence building between this generation in Taiwan and China is necessary to increase mutual understanding and build a common ground for peacefully handling the cross-Strait relationship. Focusing on the younger generation has another purpose: to stimulate creative thinking and opportunities before they carry too many political burdens. Therefore, based upon my research, I suggest the following programs:

- Establishing a nongovernmental cross-Strait Foundation that would provide a platform for youth exchange and academic research. The Foundation would be a space for young professionals from Taiwan and China to work together in the same office and study the next generation.
- Organizing an observation group comprising Taiwanese and Chinese who would spend six months to one year in residence with international organizations to encourage them to expand their perspective and learn to work together on specific topics in an international setting.
- Setting up education programs so young political elites, experts, and general public interested in the cross-Strait relationship can have more interaction and exchanges.
- Creating an online virtual reality environment to simulate future developments according to their personal goals and wishes.



## About the Author

**Ms. Shiuan-Ju CHEN** is the 2008-2009 Pacific Forum Vasey Fellow from Taipei, Taiwan. She received her B.A. in Political Science from National Taiwan University in 2005 and her M.A. in International Affairs from the Elliott School of International Affairs, at the George Washington University in 2007. Prior to working at the Pacific Forum CSIS, Ms. Chen interned with CSIS in Washington D.C. and with the Institute for National Policy Research in Taiwan. Her research interests include Taiwan domestic politics, China's transition and reform, and cross-Strait relations. Currently, she is working for a cultural creativity competition cohosted by Taiwan and China, and is preparing to take the foreign service exam.



## Appendix A

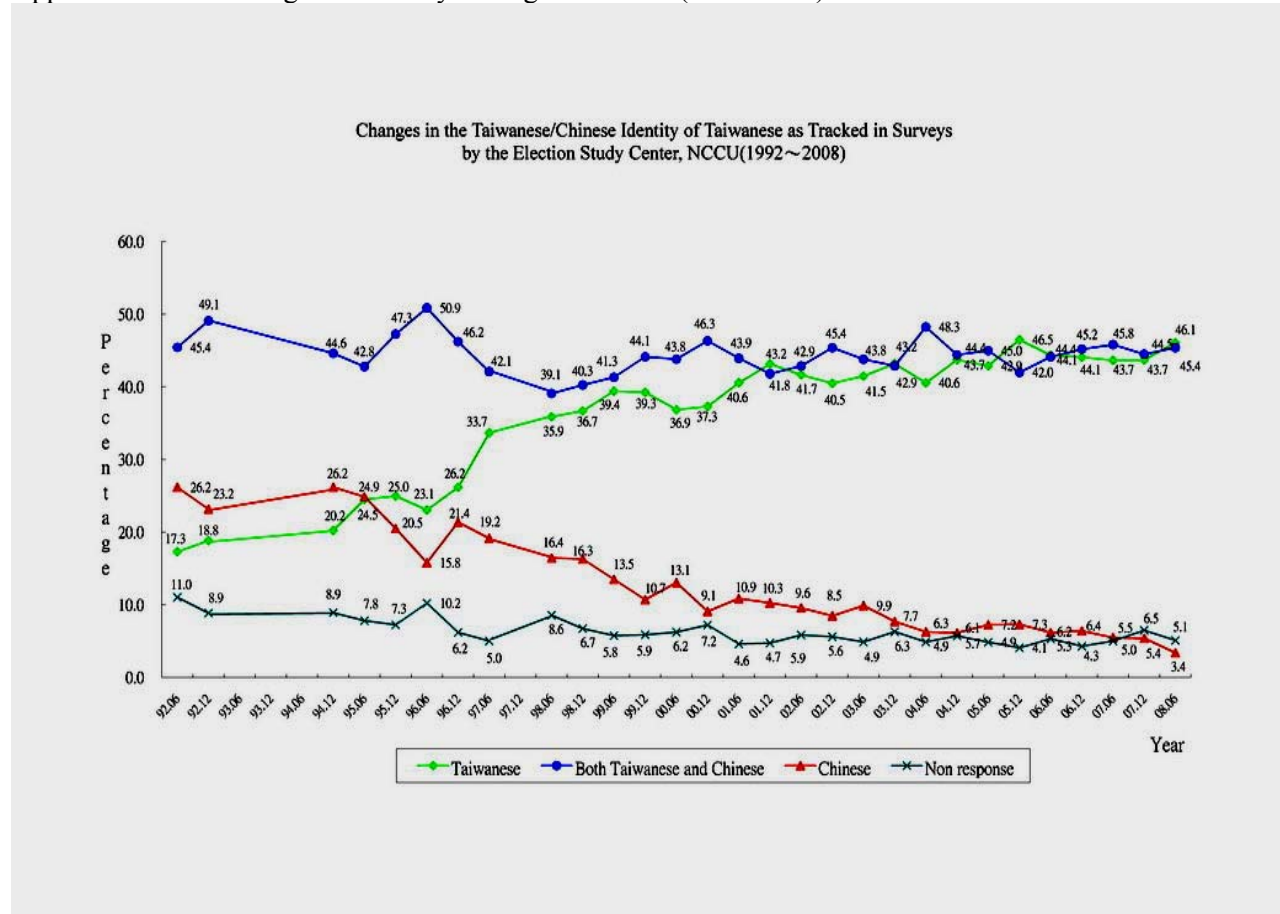
Appendix A: Differences in reports by Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao to the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> National Congress

<b>Terminology</b>	<b>Jiang (16<sup>th</sup>)</b>	<b>Hu (17<sup>th</sup>)</b>
Use of Force	Jiang stated that “China will never promise to give up the use of force....” (我们决不承诺放弃使用武力...)	Hu’s speech did not mention use of force.
Principles of peaceful reunification and “one country, two systems.”	Jiang only used the word “insist.” (我们坚持“和平统一、一国两制”的基本方针)  * official translation: adhere to: Adherence to the one-China principle	Hu used both “adhere to” and “insist.” : (我们将遵循和平统一、一国两制的方针...坚持一个中国原则)  * official translation: We will uphold the principle
Pre-conditions of One China	Under the pre-condition of one China (在一个中国的前提下)  * official translation: . On the premise of the one-China principle	Hu didn’t use “pre-condition”, but continued to use the word “basis”: On the basis of the one-China principle... (在一个中国原则的基础上)
Rival relationship between two sides	To conduct dialogue and hold negotiations on peaceful reunification has been our consistent position. (进行和平统一谈判)	“Discuss” a formal end to the state of hostility between the two sides ... (协商 (Consultation) 正式结束两岸敌对状态)
Peace Agreement	Did not mention.	Reach a peace agreement, construct a framework for peaceful development of cross-Strait relations, and thus usher in a new phase of peaceful development. (和平协议: 构建两岸关系和平发展框架, 开创两岸关系和平发展新局面)
Concerns about present issue “referendum”	Did not mention.	At present, the forces for "Taiwan independence" are stepping up their secessionist activities, seriously jeopardizing the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations. (当前, “台独”分裂势力加紧进行分裂活动, 严重危害两岸关系和平发展)
International Space	We may also discuss the international space in which the Taiwan region may conduct economic, cultural and social activities compatible with its status, or discuss the political status of the Taiwan authorities or other issues. (可以谈台湾地区在国际上与其身份相适应的经济文化社会活动空间问题, 也可以谈台湾当局的政治地位等问题.)	Did not mention.
Guarantee Taiwan’s status quo	Taiwan may keep its existing social system unchanged and enjoy a high degree of autonomy. Our Taiwan compatriots may keep their way of life unchanged, and their vital interests will be fully guaranteed. (台湾可以保持原有的社会制度不变, 高度自治。台湾同胞的生活方式不变, 他们的切身利益	Did not mention: protect their legitimate rights and interests in accordance with the law (依法保护台湾同胞的正当权益)

	将得到充分保障.)	
Deadline	<p>(striving for an early settlement of the question of Taiwan 早日解决台湾问题;</p> <p>- The Taiwan question must not be allowed to drag on indefinitely. (祖国的完全统一就一定能够早日实现)</p> <p>- the complete reunification of the motherland will be achieved at an early date. (台湾问题不能无限期地拖延下去)</p>	<p>Did not mention: the complete reunification of the motherland will surely be achieved.</p> <p>(祖国完全统一就一定能够实现)</p>

# Appendix B

Appendix B: The Changes of identity among Taiwanese (1992-2008)



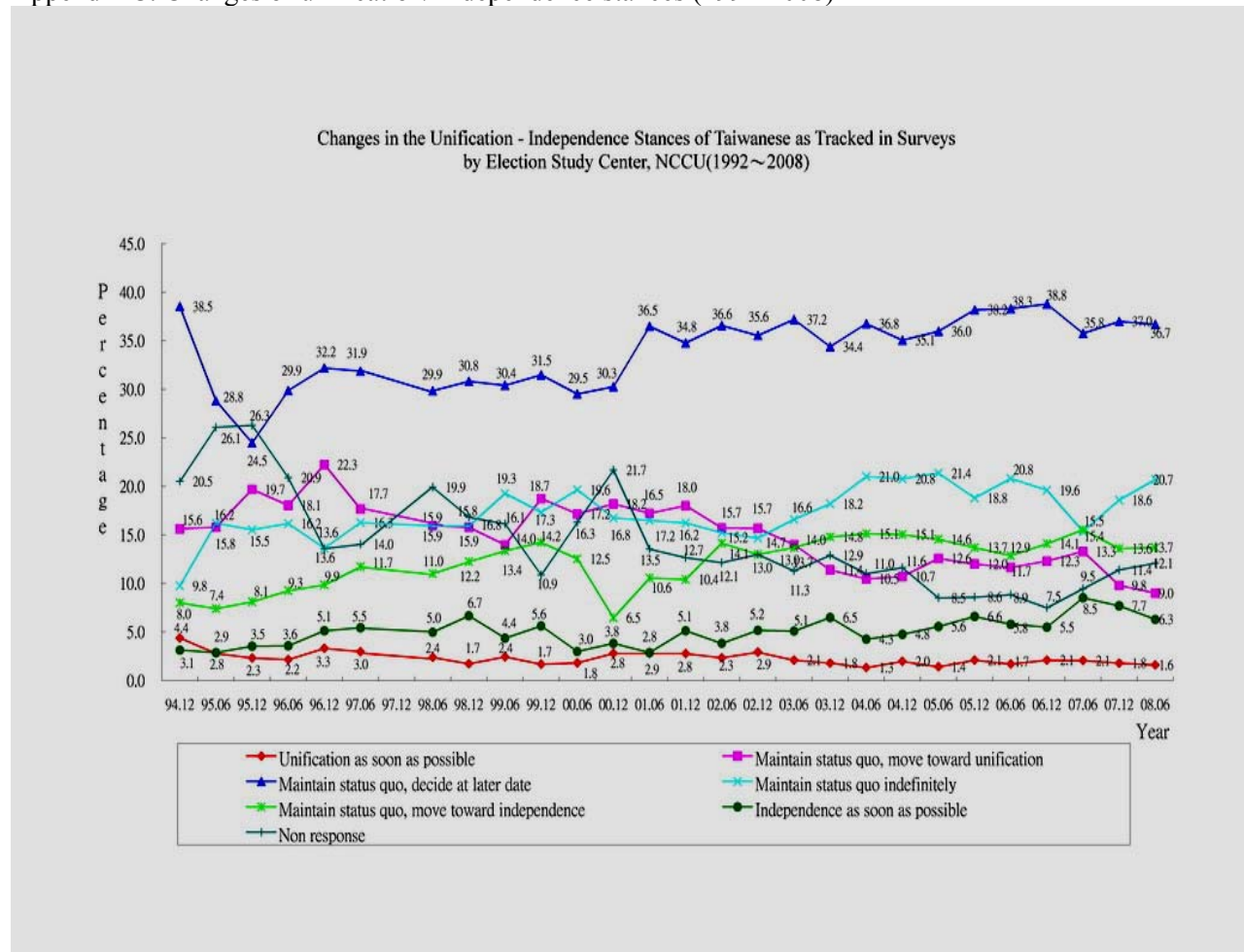
Sources: Election Study Center, N.C.C.U., important political attitude trend distribution, <http://esc.nccu.edu.tw/eng/data/data03-2.htm>





# Appendix C

Appendix C: Changes of unification/ independence stances (1992-2008)



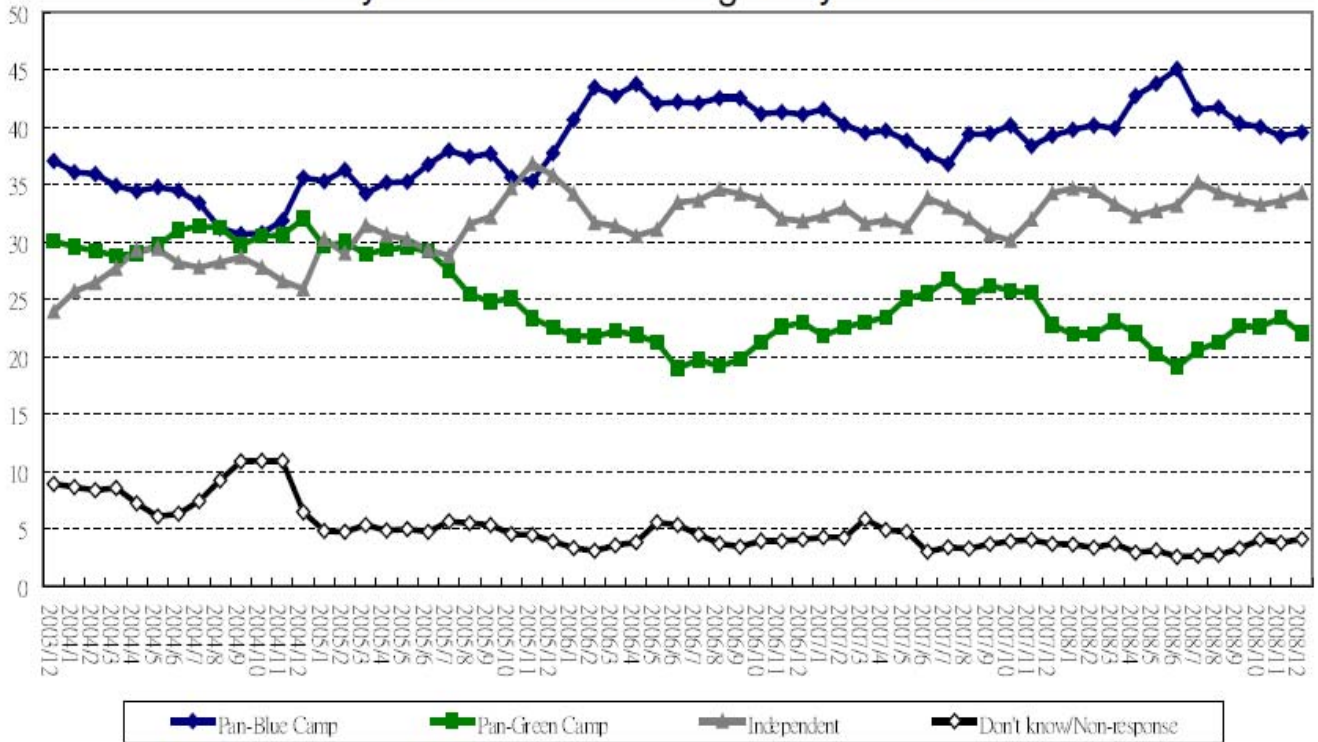
Sources: Election Study Center, N.C.C.U., important political attitude trend distribution, <http://esc.nccu.edu.tw/eng/data/data03-3.htm>



# Appendix D

Appendix D: "Party Identification Tracking Analysis in Taiwan" until October 2008

## Party Identification Tracking Analysis in Taiwan



Note: 1. Data before March 2006 released by FRA Survey Research Center, was conducted in same methodology and question wordings. There was no data available for November, 2004 and April, 2006, so none was entered for these months.

2. The figure for March, 2005 is the average of January, February and March 2005. Same for all other figures.

Source: Global Views, Survey Research Center, (January, 2009).

[http://www.gvm.com.tw/gvsrc/GVSRC\\_PID\\_200812\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.gvm.com.tw/gvsrc/GVSRC_PID_200812_Eng.pdf)

