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## "Taiwanese identity": The Main Factors of its Shaping and Maintaining (1945 to date)

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# "Taiwanese identity": the main factors of its shaping and maintaining (1945 to date)

#### **Abstract**

The problem of the "Taiwanese identity" is one of the most discussed issues today, as it is not only crucial for the domestic politics of the Republic of China (Taiwan), but is also closely related to the development of Cross-Strait relations. But there are still some aspects of this problem, which demand further exploration. This article deals with the terminological peculiarities of the notion of the "Taiwanese identity" as it is put in the works of some Taiwanese and foreign scholars and the leaders of Taiwanese nationalism. It also provides an examination of the main historical factors which are considered to be crucial for the formation of the notion of the "Taiwanese identity".

*Key words*: "Taiwanese identity"/ "Taiwanese consciousness", state identity, national identity, ethnic identity, Taiwanese nationalism.

#### Introduction

The notion of the "Taiwanese identity" (*Taiwan rentong* or *Taiwanren rentong*) or "Taiwanese consciousness" (*Taiwan yishi* or *Taiwanren yishi*) is one of the most frequently used terms concerning the public life of the island. It can be seen in academic works, related to different aspects of the Republic of China (ROC)'s socio-political development, in the speeches of Taiwan's main political parties' leaders at the moments of the intensification of the political struggle, and in the Mass Media. However it is very difficult to find a clear definition of the very sense of the notion of the "Taiwanese identity". While analyzing sources and literature of different kind, one may come to a conclusion, that the Taiwanese themselves find it difficult to answer all at once the question "What is the "Taiwanese identity?"<sup>2</sup>. In the article, prepared for the Conference on Taiwan's history and culture at University of California at Los Angeles, Tricia Lin, a student from Taiwan put the island's habitants' general vision of the "Taiwanese

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Institute of Asian and African Studies, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> For example, one of the participants of a "focus group" discussion, held as a part of the research project by the Executive Yuan's National Science Council and National Chengchi University, Taipei, said that he didn't "up to this moment quite clearly understand the meaning of the notion of "origin and political sequences of the Taiwanese identity" (Chen, Geng, Zheng, You, Chen and Zhang 2009: 196).

identity" this way: "What is Taiwanese identity? For sure, Taiwanese culture has never been monocultural; hence, Taiwanese identity is never singular" (Lin 2000).

If we use the definition of "identity" given in general academic literature, then the "Taiwanese identity" should be understood as Taiwan people's self-identification as "Taiwanese", and taking the terminology of Benedict Anderson, their self-perception as a unique "imagined community", geographically limited within the island of Taiwan and several island groups under the jurisdiction of the ROC. The question is if it is possible to say that this "imagined community" is understood by its members as a separate nation, i.e. if the "Taiwanese identity" may be called "national identity", or it is just one of the regional identities existing both in China and in other countries of the world, as the "Taiwanese consciousness" is perceived by the People's Republic of China (PRC)'s authorities, standing for "one China principle" and permanently stressing, that "Taiwan is an inalienable part of China".

Academic works, related to the subject of the "Taiwanese identity", discuss it in view of different problems, such as "the national identity of Taiwan's people", the island habitants' "ethnic identity/consciousness", their relation to the question of Taiwan's unification with Mainland China or its independence etc. (Tien, Lin and Lai 2007: 348). It seems unfeasible to cover all the sides of the problem of the "Taiwanese identity" within one article. Thus it is very important in our opinion first make a short analysis of the content that Taiwanese and Western authors put into the notion of the "national" and "ethnic" identity in relation to Taiwan. After that we will switch to the main (from our point of view) factors of the "Taiwanese identity's" shaping and maintaining, such as the island's interethnic relations, the historical memory of the main ethnic groups and the ideological propaganda of the leading political forces of Taiwan, advocating for establishing an independent state on the island, mainly the Democratic Progressive Party (the DPP or *Minjindang*).

#### Taiwan's "national identity"

There are three ways of translating the English term "national identity" into the Chinese language: "guojia rentong" (where the word "guojia" is understood as a state), «minzu rentong» (in which «minzu» is a nation) and «guozu/zuguo rentong», which is the compilation of the previous two variants. The main reason for such a multiplicity of the translations is the polysemanticism of the English word "nation", which can mean such notions as both "nation" and "state", which are close but still different from each other. It is due to this, that English-speaking researchers of Nationalism have put into practice a term "nation-state", because according to the theories of the most prominent scholars, the main goal of any nationalistic movement is the formation of a national state, without which the existence of a nation is impossible.

Many Taiwanese scholars consider the terms "guojia rentong" and "minzu rentong" to be equal and use them often as interchangeable ones. They also put them together with some other notions, such as "tongdu wenti" (the problem of Taiwan's independence or unification with China) and "zuqun rentong" (ethnic identity). Thus, for example, in an article of Huang Zhaotang, the former President of World United Formosans for Independence (WUFI), the English word "national identity" is first presented as "guojia rentong", which, as the author puts it, can be divided into "Taiwanese identity" (Taiwanen de rentong) and «state identity» (guojia de rentong). However, on the next pages the "Taiwanese identity" is determined by the author as "ethnic identity" and the term "guojia rentong" is translated as "state identity" (Huang 2002: 11-42).

At the same time some other scholars, on the contrary, tend towards making difference between these terms and even affirm wrongfulness of one or another. Thus, for example, one of the most prominent researchers of the Taiwanese "national identity", the research fellow of the Institute of Sociology in Academia Sinica, Wu Naide (Wu Nai-the), in one of his articles insists that translating the notion of "guojia rentong" as "state identity" is not correct. For him "guojia rentong" is "national identity". Furthermore, developing his idea, Wu Naide comes to the conclusion, that the notion of "guojia rentong" is in concept impossible, because a state is "a ruling authority", a "system of political power", but not a "human community" (a group of people), which an individual may identify with. Thus, according to Wu Naide's logic, the existence of the "national identity" is possible only in the meaning of "minzu rentong", where "minzu" is a nation, i.e. "a group of people" (Wu 2005: 10-11).

Another eminent researcher of the problem of the "Taiwanese identity", Professor of political science in Taiwan State University and Vice-President of the Executive Yuan of the ROC, Jiang Yihua, in his monograph "Liberalism, Nationalism and State Identity" as opposed to the theory of Wu Naide defines the notion of "guojia rentong" as "state identity", because, in his opinion, the notion of "minzu" (nation) can not serve as the basis for "state identity", as far as there are no distinct figures of merit for the notion of "nation" until now<sup>3</sup>. The word "guojia" (state) is understood by Jiang as "any political community, possessing state power and independence". Jiang considers nation to be "a collective community, which does not necessarily have an intention to build a state,.... and a state does not always mean a unity on the national basis". That is the reason why there exist both "multinational states" and "different states, built by one and the same nation" in the world. Thus, in Jiang Yihua's opinion, "a state" is prior to "a nation", i.e. "a nation" is likely to be built on the basis of a "state" and not vice versa. Taking

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Such criteria as ethnic origin, historical myths, religion, language, customs and traditions are considered by Jiang Yihua not valid enough (Jiang 1998: 65).

into consideration all the above-stated facts, Jiang offers his definition of "state identity", according to which this notion means "intellectual activities of an individual", related to defining his own belonging to some state and what kind of state it is (Jiang 1998: 6-8, 12, 65).

Jiang Yihua's stressing a state's political component is preconditioned by the approach, that he considers to be most acceptable for studying the "state identity", i.e. the analysis of this problem from the standpoint of Lliberalism, and not Nationalism, which is used by the scholars' majority. Justifying his theory, Jiang distinguishes three levels in the "state identity": "ethnic", "cultural" and "system" identities. Each of them is correlated with a certain element, which a member of any community identifies with, i.e. "blood and ethnic ties", "historical and cultural traditions" and "political and socio-economical system". Jiang Yihua points out two fundamental differences the nationalistic and liberal conceptions of the "state identity". The first one lays in the fact, that according to the liberal position, a person has a right to choose a state (and a nation) to identify with, while Nationalism demands a person's loyalty towards the culture he was born in, and consequently towards the state (and the nation), representing this culture. The second difference is about Nationalism's emphasizing the importance of "historic and cultural traditions" and "blood and ethnic ties" for shaping a person's "state identity", in comparison with Liberalism's accentuating "political and socio-economic system". The author generally tends to the liberal approach to the problem of the "state identity", but at the same time he admits, that even with the leading role of political factors, history, culture and ethnic origins of a person also play a sufficient part for defining his "state identity". Thus while studying this problem, among others, in relation to Taiwan, using both approaches (which is defined by Jiang as "liberal nationalism") is desirable (Jiang 1998: 15, 191-193, 135).

Understanding the term "guojia rentong" as "state identity", many authors mix this problem with the so called "Taiwanese nationalism" or the problem of Taiwan's independence or its unification with Mainland China (Tien, Lin and Lai 2007; Wang 2002a: 10; Wang 2003: 7; Huang 2002: 28). A prominent American researcher of Taiwan, Shelley Rigger, notes that the current approach to the "Taiwanese problem" in the USA also tends to mix the notions of the "Taiwanese identity" and the "Taiwanese nationalism" (Rigger 2006: 5). However the most eminent scholars, while admitting a certain relation between these phenomena, put in doubt the appropriateness of mixing them (Chen, Geng, Zheng, You, Chen and Zhang 2009: 12; etc.). Above-cited Wu Naide in an attempt to justify the differentiation between these terms in addition to the notion of the "national identity", which is related to the "emotional sphere", also puts into practice a word "choice of state" (guojia xuanze) of "rational" character. The first one means the unconditional identification of an individual with some state, irrespective of its economic prosperity and political system. The second one infers to the readiness of a person to admit the

power of another state at any moment, if it can offer him better economic and political conditions of living (Wu 1993b: 44-45). Following this logic, Wu comes to the conclusion that "the position on independence/unification problem" may be called "choice of state", while the "national identity" is a kind of emotional belonging to some state (Wu 1993a: 40).

In addition to that Jiang Yihua also thinks that in spite of the "social custom" to mix Taiwan's "independence/unification problem" and "state identity", these notions should be regarded separately. But he doesn't share Wu Naide's approach to the form of this separation, thinking that there may be "emotional" and "rational" elements both in the island habitants' attitude to Taiwan's future status and in the ROC's people's "state identity". According to Jiang's opinion, the main difference between the two notions is that the first one answers a concrete political question, if Taiwan should declare the foundation of an independent state, thus closing sharply the conflict with the PRC on the island's sovereignty, while the second one is related to an intellectually philosophical sphere and is about such questions as "what is the "state identity's" essence, why it exist, if it is possible to be changed" etc. At the same time the author is right to note that studying Taiwan's "state identity" in isolation from the theories about "independence/unification problem" is impossible. It is just necessary to separate oneself ultimately from "declarative political manifestations" and concentrate on the "thinking forms, basing on which an individual defines his "state identity" (Jiang 1998: 4-5, 137).

Such a multiplicity of Taiwanese scholars' approaches towards the problems of the Taiwanese "national identity", on the one hand may make the study of this subject much more difficult, but on the other hand, it shows the relevance of this problem and the necessity of its further research. The author of this paper, taking into consideration all the stated above theories of respected Taiwanese scholars, is inclined to understand Taiwan people's "national identity" in the meaning of "minzu rentong" (national identity) but not "guojia rentong" (state identity), because in our opinion Taiwan's problem lies not in the choice of state (the state exists on Taiwan de-facto and the change of its name and symbols is unlikely to influence a lot its essence), but in the form of the island's settlers' self-perception as a unique community, which among other things will determine the policies of Taiwan's government in the practical and symbolic definition of Taiwan's status. We should admit that it is not possible to abstract totally away from the problem of the international position of Taiwan. As one of the "Taiwanese nationalism's" advocates, Shi Zhengfeng, notes, the importance of the "national identity" for Taiwan lies in the fact that "only under the condition of the concentration within Taiwan on the [problem of] the "national identity", it is possible to reach consensus on its position in relation to the rest of the world", and "the existence of the "national identity" is the only precondition for shaping a nation and maintaining a state" (Shi 2002: 182).

### Taiwanese "ethnic identity"/ "ethnic consciousness" and the island's interethnic relations

Practically every research on Taiwan people's "national identity" somehow touches upon the problem of the Taiwanese "ethnic identity"/ "ethnic consciousness" and the island's interethnic relations<sup>4</sup>. Besides that, if we look at the origins of the "Taiwanese identity", we will come to the conclusion that at the initial stage of its shaping it was of "ethnic" character. Some scholars separate the notions of the "ethnic identity" and the "ethnic consciousness". For example, Wu Naide considers the "ethnic identity" to be an individual's self-identification with a certain ethnic community and his "feeling of belonging on psychological level" towards this community. In Wu's opinion, the "ethnic identity" in Taiwan is a person's self-identification with Taiwanese, Chinese or both, while "national identity" demonstrates an individual's affiliation to the "Taiwanese nationalism", "Chinese nationalism" or "realism" (Wu 2002: 89-90)<sup>5</sup>. "Ethnic identity" is in its turn one of the elements of the "ethnic consciousness", the existence of which is not possible without realizing an ethnic group's "special interests" in its relations with other ethnic communities. In other words, so that the "ethnic consciousness" could emerge for a member of a certain ethnic group, he must realize that his ethnic group is impinged, or on contrary privileged, upon some common property resource (Wu 1993b: 29, 37, 39-40). In our opinion, such a terminological difference is to a certain extent conditional, because the researcher doesn't apply this difference to the notions of the "national identity"/ "national consciousness". Besides that, the definition of the "ethnic consciousness" by other eminent Taiwanese scholars doesn't differ a lot from that of the "ethnic identity" by Wu Naide. For example, Wang Fuchang, Academia Sinica's Institute of Sociology's research fellow and deputy director, defines the "ethnic consciousness" as "a certain ethnic group's member's realizing of this group's existence and specific features, and the individuals loyalty to this ethnic group". He further notes that "ethnic consciousness is a complex of imaginations about what are ethnic groups, why they exist and what kind of features possess" (Wang 2002b: 18). Above cited Shelley Rigger doesn't differentiate between these notions either, pointing out, that the "Taiwanese identity" is more often called the "Taiwanese consciousness" on the island (Rigger 2006: 5). However it is very difficult to neglect the opinion of Wu Naide and many other authors, who state that the "ethnic consciousness"/ "ethnic identity" is a very important basis for the "national identity", especially in the case of Taiwan (Wu 1993b: 48).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> For example, Wu Naide in one of his articles states that "the difference in national identity is the core of interethnic conflicts on contemporary Taiwan" (Wu 2002: 88).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Some other researchers also note that "ethnic identity"/ "ethnic consciousness" is a category, dealing with the people's answer to the question if they consider themselves to be Taiwanese, Chinese, or both (Rigger 2006: 6).

The theoretical framework of the researchers' discourse on Taiwan's "ethnic identity" is the notion of the so called "four main ethnic groups" (*si da zuqun*), i.e. *Hoklo* (or *Holo*, *Hokkien*, *Minnan* people), *Hakka*, *Waishengren*, and aboriginal tribes, that account for the ROC's total population's 72-76%, 10-12%, 12-14% and 1,7% respectively (Wang 2002b: 32-33). Dividing the island's habitants into "four main ethnic groups", and differences in the "images of one's ethnic group", "language and culture", "historical memory" and "political actions", related to each of the groups, are considered by scholars to be "inherent conceptions and knowledge instruments" while analyzing the interethnic relations on contemporary Taiwan (Wang 2002a: 6).

Aboriginal tribes (*Yuanzhumin*) – numerically the most insignificant group of Taiwan's population – are Austronesian (Malayan) peoples, that settled on the island more than 8 thousand years ago, but as *Han* Chinese immigration arose beginning from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, they were mostly eliminated or assimilated. Today there are about five hundred thousand aborigines on Taiwan, and their role in the political life of the island is not very substantial. *Hoklo* (*heluoren* or *fulaoren*) is Taiwan's most numerous group, consisting of ethnic Chinese (*Han* people), whose ancestors migrated to the island from the southern part of the Chinese province of Fujian before 1945. *Hakka* (*kejiaren*), like *Hoklo*, arrived on Taiwan mainly between the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, but they originate from the Chinese province of Guangdong. Both *Hoklo* and *Hakka* are together referred to as *Benshengren* (literally "people from this province"), as contrasted to *Waishengren* (literally "people from outer provinces"), who or whose ancestors moved to Taiwan after 1945.

Technically speaking, according to the position of Primordialism<sup>6</sup>, *Hoklo*, *Hakka* and *Waishengren* have common ethnic origins and all together are related to *Han* ethnic group (Shih and Chen 2010: 88)<sup>7</sup>. But dialects and special cultural traditions that each of these groups possesses, allow researchers divide them into separate sub-ethnic groups, and the term "four main ethnic groups" has already deeply rooted in the Taiwanese historiography.

However arguably the most substantial factor of dividing Taiwan's population into different ethnic communities and the basis for studying Taiwan's "ethnic identity", related to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Primordialism is one of the oldest conceptions of the ethnicity and ethnic identity's origins. It argues that the ethnic identity is an inherited category, the main features of which include blood ties, common traditions, language and culture. Primordialism is challenged by Instrumentalism and Constructivism (Structuralism). The first one regards the ethnic identity as an individual's conscious choice, while Constructivism defines ethnos as an artificially constructed category, firstly by power elites. In this point the main features of ethnos besides common origins and culture also include myths and historical memory, shared by all the members of a certain community. Constructivist approach towards ethnicity is supported by most eminent researchers of Nationalism, i.e. Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson etc.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> However there are some absolutely unexpected statements, like that *Hoklo* and *Hakka* constitute one of the branches of Austronesian tribes (like Taiwanese aborigines), which is said to be confirmed by these groups' human leukocyte antigen researches. Such statements are usually made by the most radical advocates of Taiwan independence and are not widely supported in the academic world (Huang 2002: 41).

problem of the "Taiwanese identity" as a whole, is the history of the relations between different groups of the island's habitants after 1945 and the historical memory of each of these groups<sup>8</sup>.

On September, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1945 Japan signed Instrument of Surrender in World War II. The announcement about the metropolitan country's defeat on Taiwan, that had become Japan's colony according to the Treaty of Shimonoseki, signed after China's defeat in Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), had been made earlier on August, 14<sup>th</sup>. As authors of numerous memoirs testify, this piece of news was met by the island's habitants with extreme joy<sup>9</sup>. In accordance with the Cairo Declaration, signed in 1943 by the leaders of the USA, Great Britain and the ROC, which was reaffirmed in the Potsdam Declaration of July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1945, Taiwan and the Pescadores (Penghu liedao) together with other territories taken from China by Japan, should be restored to the ROC. The Taiwanese were looking forward to the arrival of the new administration, hoping to "become masters of their own home". But the landing in Taiwan of the KMT army, undisciplined and poorly equipped, the image of which was far from that of the victor state, became the first disappointment of the island's habitants, followed by many others. The Taiwanese were mainly displeased with the new administration's contemptuous attitude and distrust towards them as recent subjects of Japan. The new government consisted of Mainlanders solely - there were practically no Benshengren in new provincial authorities. Most of the people's standard of living, which had grown incredibly as a result of economic reforms during the colonial period, was rapidly falling in consequence of the new administration's ineffective and absolutely corruptive management, runaway inflation etc. As many authors point out in their memoirs, the Taiwanese felt intensely their colonial position of second-class people again. The difference was just that "dogs had left and pigs have come" 10. Mutual discontent between the Taiwanese and Waishengren developed into an open conflict known as the 228 Incident, 1947, that led to the murder of about 30 thousand Benshengren by the KMT troops (Lai 1994: 262).

Most researchers while analyzing the Taiwanese people's "ethnic identity" use the constructivist approach to the question of the ethnicity's shaping, considering the thesis that the "ethnic identity" is not only inherited, but can also shape/ be acquired in response to external environment (Wu 1993b: 30). Thus the main factor of Taiwan's "ethnic identity's" shaping is the monopolization of power by the KMT and her efforts to assure the population minority

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> According to numerous sources, interethnic tension on Taiwan historically exists at several levels: between 1) aborigines and *Han* people; 2) *Hoklo* and *Hakka*; 3) *Benshengren* and *Waishengren*. But scholars usually pay the greatest attention to the last one. Thus, Wu Naide uses the phrase "Taiwan's two main ethnic groups" in his works, wondering if a new ethnicity is under construction on the island, and if it is, then on the basis of one of them or through assimilating one by another (Wu 1993b: 36).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> See, for example, Peng Ming-min, 1994. *A Taste of Freedom*. Upland, CA.// http://www.romanization.com/books/peng/chap03.html

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> "Dogs" and "pigs" mean the Japanese and the Chinese administrations respectively.

(Waishengren)'s right to rule the population majority (Benshengren) using political methods. That led to the majority's realizing their low position, self-perceiving as "disadvantaged ethnic group", shaping common interests in the form of obtaining access to political power and forming this majority's special "ethnic consciousness". The authors of the research project on the origins of the "Taiwanese identity" put this thesis in the following way: the KMT's authoritarian rule  $\rightarrow$  realizing different/low position  $\rightarrow$  consciousness of [one's destiny's] tragicalness  $\rightarrow$  ethnic identity (Chen, Geng, Zheng, You, Chen and Zhang 2009: 11).

Many scholars note that interethnic tensions of political character during the authoritarian period developed into interethnic conflicts at socio-domestic level. But as far as socio-political life of Taiwan began to democratize and the leading party started to localize (i.e. bringing more and more *Benshengren* in the KMT and in the leading positions in the government) in the 1970s, the interethnic tension of both social and political character gradually came to naught, transforming into the "identity conflict", as increasingly more Taiwanese do not consider themselves to be Chinese and are suspicious of Mainlanders, most of whom do identify with China (Wu 2002: 80)<sup>11</sup>.

We may come to the conclusion that a very substantial, if not the most important, factor for the "Taiwanese identity's" shaping is the authoritarian rule of the KMT and the uneven distribution of the power resource between Taiwan's two main population groups, which highlighted their existing differences and led to the formation of *Benshengren*'s special consciousness. Thus from the very beginning the "Taiwanese identity" was peculiar to a part of the island's population (even if this part is overwhelming)<sup>12</sup>.

But we should admit that in spite of *Benshengren*'s special consciousness, it is feasible to speak about the "Taiwanese identity's" spread among considerable number of population not earlier than since the end of the 1970s – beginning of the 1980s, after the ROC and the KMT had gone through several ordeals extremely important for Taiwan's history and international position,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> This statement is not absolutely true about totally all of *Benshengren* or for each *Waishengren* without exception. There are a lot of researches that testify, that there is a considerable number of the "Taiwanese identity's" advocates among Mainlanders, while many Taiwanese consider themselves to be Chinese, or at least both Taiwanese and Chinese. But generally we should admit the fact that *Waishengren* (especially those of the first generation), possess indeed a very important historical memory, i.e. longing for the Motherland (Mainland China) they lost, which can not be shared with *Benshengren*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> We argue, that one of the main problems of the "Taiwanese identity" at present is that in the form of its initial shaping it can not correspond the mission that the ROC government faces today for consolidating the whole population of Taiwan to define its international status. An attempt to overcome interethnic contradictions and propose an identity common for Taiwan's all habitants was made by one of the ROC's previous presidents Li Denghui (1988-2000, the first *Benshengren* president of the ROC, who is considered to be not only "the Father of Taiwan's democracy" due to a series of political reforms undertaken during his presidential term, such as the first direct presidential elections in 1996 etc., but also the creator of the island's socio-political life's "Taiwanization", that contributed a lot to the "Taiwanese identity's" spread) by his "New Taiwanese theory", according to which each person living on Taiwan, loving Taiwan and identifying himself with Taiwan may be considered to be Taiwanese, regardless of his/her place of birth.

such as the ROC's loss of its place in the United Nations Security Council, which was taken by the PRC as the only legal government of China since that moment, breaking of diplomatic ties with the USA and a series of other countries, pressing on the KMT government from the world democratic community, firstly the US, demanding the liberalization of the island's socio-political life etc. It is exactly this period that is called by many scholars watershed in developing and spreading of the "Taiwanese identity". Xiao Aqin (Hsiau A-chin), Deputy Director and Research Fellow at Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, points out that exactly from this period of time the island's progressive people started to revalue both collective and individual past of the Taiwanese people, that played a substantial role in the process of their "national identity's" changing (Hsiau 2007: 141).

Speaking about the historical memory as one of the leading factors of ethnicity and nation's shaping is common for the constructivist approach to this problem. The importance of this phenomenon was pointed out by such eminent researchers of Nationalism as Ernest Renan, Benedict Anderson, Anthony D. Smith etc. It is especially true for Taiwan, taking into consideration the fact that demands for "Taiwanization" (taiwanhua or bentuhua) of the island's socio-political life included the revision of the KMT's approaches to Taiwan studies, in which the history and culture of the island were analyzed as just a part of the Chinese history. In our opinion, the main units of Taiwan's population's historical memory, that are differently perceived by Benshengren and Waishengren and are closely related to the "ethnic" and "national identities" of these groups, are the 228 Incident, the period of the "White Terror" and the appraisal of Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo's role in the history of the island. There have been recently published a considerable number of works on these subjects, the contents of which can not be comprised in this article. So we will restrict ourselves to a brief description of the above mentioned historical phenomena and an analysis of their perception by the Taiwanese society.

The 228 Incident, 1947. This event is one of the key units of Benshengren's collective historical memory and is considered both a reason and a consequence of the interethnic tension between the native Taiwanese and Waishengren. It was strictly prohibited from mentioning this event during the period of the Martial Law on Taiwan (1948-1987). But the memory about 228 (as it is usually called in Taiwan) was vivid among the members of the Taiwan Independence Movement, existing outside the island. And as far as socio-political life of the ROC democratized demands for thorough investigation of this incident and the KMT's admitting the responsibility for its too cruel suppression appeared increasingly often on the island itself beginning from the end of the 1980s. A serious research of the Incident was conducted under surveillance of the ROC's Executive Yuan and published in 1994. In 1995 President Li Denghui

tendered a public apology to the victims of 228 and their relatives on behalf of the ROC Government. One year later Memorial Foundation of 228 was established. Museums and memorials dedicated to the Incident were founded throughout the island. It seems that all these measures must have diminished the acuity of this problem. But the subject of the KMT and its leaders' responsibility for 228 is constantly raised by the advocates of Taiwan independence. The memory of the Incident is maintained by means of a huge number of articles, published in the mass media during celebrating its anniversary every year, and the DPP, which is in the opposition today, constantly uses it as a trump card in its political struggle with the KMT. For the Taiwan Independence Movement activists, who include the most radical representatives of the DPP, 228 is first of all the massacre of Benshengren by the KMT government. The fact that the Nationalist army's actions were still the suppression of one of China's province's rebellion against its legal government, is usually neglected by the Taiwanese nationalists. However it should be noted that there are some alternative views of 228 in the Taiwanese society. The author of this paper in the conversation with some Taiwanese people used to hear an opinion stressing also the fact that a certain number of "innocent Waishengren", who had nothing in common with the KMT government's corruptive policies (ordinary teachers, workers etc.) had also been harmed in the Incident<sup>13</sup>.

The notion of the "White Terror" is not so widely known on Taiwan as the 228 Incident. But after lifting of the Martial Law a big number of works dedicated to this historical period came out on the island. These works also often stress the interethnic relations and the problem of Taiwan's population's "national identity". Different valuations of this phenomenon originate from its different periodizations. Many authors by the term "white terror on Taiwan" mean the repressions by the ROC government of all the political opponents towards the regime during the whole period of the Martial law (1948-87). But we argue that it is more true to use the word "white terror" while talking about the period of the 1950s-the beginning of the 1960s, because taking into consideration the origins of this word combination 14, it is in this time that the victims of the repressions were "left elements", i.e. sympathizing to communist ideas and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Besides that most of the death sentences on political trials were signed in this period of time. Indeed, like in many other authoritarian regimes, the authorities on the ground of "communist infiltration" often eliminated political undesirables, who had nothing to deal with "left ideas", but taking into consideration the peculiarities of the KMT government's position on Taiwan and its absolute anticommunist ideology, the secret service's actions are

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> For more information about 228's meaning for spreading the idea of the "Taiwanese identity", mainly among the members of the Taiwan Independence Movement, see Fleischauer 2007: 373-401.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Initially the term "white terror" was used for repressions against the CCP members, that the KMT started in April, 1927 after the break of the first "united front" of these parties, and continued until the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese war in 1937, when the second "United front" was founded to resist the Japanese aggression.

quite comprehensible, though their cruelty can't be excused. As for the period of the 1960-80s, the secret service's suppression of the Taiwan Independence Movement came to the fore (that is also quite understandable from the point of view of the KMT's adherence to the idea of the future unification of China under the flag of the ROC), but there were practically no death sentences it this period. Taking into consideration all the stated above, we think, that the opinion, widely spread in Taiwan, according to which the essence of the "white terror" is the suppression of *Benshengren*'s rights by *Waishengren*, is not anything more than a stock phrase of political rhetoric. If we look at the statistical data of the political repressions of the 1950-60s, we will see that *Waishengren* comprised a considerable number of political prisoners in this period 15.

Political repressions, undertaken on Taiwan after the KMT government's evacuation, have a close relation to the appraisals of the main state and party leaders, i.e. "Chiang family father and son" (Jiangshi fuzi). Before 1987, when the Martial Law was lifted, anyone who dared to criticize them could forfeit not only one's liberty, but life. Chiang Kai-shek was worshiped as the great leader of the Chinese nation. But it should be noted that in spite of many symbols of his worship, existing on the island, today his name is inseparable from the notion of "dictatorship" for most of the Taiwanese. The image of Chiang Ching-kuo in the after-war history of Taiwan is dual. His popularity among the island's population is considerably higher than that of his father. For many Taiwanese his name is related to the economic and political success of the ROC in the 1970-80s. But on the other hand, it is Chiang Ching-kuo who was the head of secret services during the most intensive repressions. Some authors lay on him the whole responsibility for the "white terror", and explain the fact that initial measures for democratizing socio-political life of the island were undertaken in the years of Chiang's presidency mainly in the terms of the diplomatic crisis, that the ROC faced in the beginning of the 1970s, and by the pressure that the KMT confronted from the principal guarantor of Taiwan's security – the US, where demands for democratizing the KMT regime emerged in increasing frequency (Sun; Wu 2003: 1-25).

The importance of "Chiang family father and son's" appraisal in the historical memory of Taiwan's population is affirmed by the DPP's actions after its candidate Chen Shuibian had become President of the ROC in 2000. Among other measures on "desinicization" (*quzhongguohua*) of Taiwan's society and spread of the "Taiwanese identity" desacralization

<sup>15</sup>According to the data of 1951-53, among 3070 persons charged for "communist rebellion" there were 2061 Benshengren and 1002 Waishengren. See Taiwan diqu jieyan shiqi wuling niandai zhengzhi anjian shiliao huibian (Collected historical resources on political trials of 1950s during the period of Martial Law in Taiwan (in 5 vol.), 1998. Vol. 1. Nantou. P. 46, 59, 124.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> In the names of many agencies and corporations the word "Taiwan" changed "China". For example such state companies as Chinese Petroleum Corporation, China Shipbuilding Corporation, Chunghwa Post changed their names. All of them became "Taiwanese".

of Chiang Kai-shek and revision of Chiang family's role in Taiwan's history played a very important role. Many streets and agencies with the name of Chiang Kai-shek were renamed<sup>17</sup>. Chiang's portrait is no longer on currency notes of the ROC. Memorials in honor of Generalissimo were dismantled throughout the island. In spring 2007 one of the news, that set Taiwanese society in turmoil and led to numerous discussions in Mass Media, was the decision of the government to rename Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall – one of Taipei's main sightseeing attractions – into National Taiwan Democracy Memorial Hall<sup>18</sup>.

Besides the above listed, **the DPP's policy on spreading the "Taiwanese identity", which is in our opinion one of the crucial factors of its maintaining** today, included active propagation of the Taiwanese' using their "native language" (*muyu*)<sup>19</sup>. A number of programs and even channels in Southern Fujian dialect, and also in *Hakka* dialect and aborigines' languages has increased<sup>20</sup>.

A critical survey of the ruling party's actions in 2000-2008, leads to a conclusion, that the DPP, traditionally criticizing the KMT's authoritarianism, while undertaking its policy also used methods very close to authoritarian ones. "Non-identification with Taiwan" (*bu rentong Taiwan*) or "betrayal of Taiwan" (*chumai Taiwan*) became main accuses that the DPP used relating to its political rivals. People, suspected of such "sins", were criticized as "betrayers of Taiwan" (*taijian*) (Xu 1993: 73). It is particularly remarkable, that some researchers call the processes in the Taiwanese society and the DPP's policy on "desinicization" of the social sphere "cultural revolution" on Taiwan (Lee 2004).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> For example, Chieh-shou Road in front of the President Palace in Taipei was renamed into Ketagalan Boulevard, in honor of one of the aborigine tribes, that used to live in the area of Taipei, and the biggest airport of the island – Chiang Kai-shek International Airport – is now called Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>This decision was cancelled after the candidate of the KMT Ma Ying-jeou came into the office of the ROC president in May 2008.

This refers to the so called "Taiwanese language" (taiyu or taiwanhua), which in fact is Southern Fujian's dialect (minnanhua), spoken by Hoklo. During the presidential term of Chen Shuibian fluency in this dialect became a kind of unofficial criteria for dividing into ins and outs. Carrying historical baggage of "original sin", many Waishengren politics had to prove their "Taiwanness" by demonstrating their "taiyu" skills for earning electors' votes. Otherwise they could be accused by the Pan-green camp's activists of "indifference towards Taiwanization trends" or even of "unpatriotism" (Lee 2004). Mainlanders were widely charged for "eating Taiwanese rice, drinking Taiwanese water, living on Taiwanese ground, but not speaking Taiwanese language" (Zuqun wenti de tichu yu "si da zuqun" huafen problem "four groups")// (Ethnic statement and definition main ethnic of http://www.njtb.gov.cn/cps/site/njtw/2006/zlhb mb a2006011842815.htm). Thus, today's President of the ROC Ma Ying-jeou, early in the 1990s already started to learn Southern Fujian dialect and often used it in the conversations with the population during his trips throughout the island (Murakami 2012).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>However, in spite of the efforts of the DPP's politicians to popularize dialects in the society, the general trend is that the younger generation practically doesn't speak the ancestors' languages. Almost all the participants of the conversations in focus groups, held as a part of the above mentioned Executive Yuan's National Science Council's research project, said that they used one of the dialects at home while speaking to the older family members, but mainly "National language" (*guoyu*) is used to talk with the younger generation (Chen, Geng, Zheng, You, Chen and Zhang 2009: 206-208, 258-259, 286). As for the political sphere, during the telephone opinion survey, held for the above-mentioned research project, 61,9% of respondents answered negatively to the question if "to love Taiwan means to speak native language" (Chen, Geng, Zheng, You, Chen and Zhang 2009: 103).

However in spite of a considerable number of academic works on the Taiwanese "national" and "ethnic identities", many practical researches, such as social opinion surveys and focus groups discussions, show, that many respondents do not consider the "Taiwanese identity" and rhetoric about the island's independence or its unification with Mainland China related to it to be "real problems". They are just "political instruments" for most of the ordinary Taiwanese (Rigger 2006: 53).

Noting this trend in the Taiwanese society, Shelley Rigger mainly refers it to the younger generation of the island's population, who were born after 1968 and became mature when the process of the ROC's socio-political life's democratization had already been over. She argues that these people are mainly preoccupied by urgent problems of economy, education and employment, and are irritated by the political elites' permanent discussions of the "Taiwanese identity" question (Rigger 2006: 31-32).

However the analysis of the above-mentioned focus groups discussions shows that such feelings are shared also by the older generation Taiwanese. Many participants of these discussions over 50 years old note that prejudices of different ethnic groups based on the memory about *the 228 Incident*, are mainly backed by the DPP's propaganda and become extremely sharp during election campaigns<sup>21</sup>. One of the participants of a focus group for *Hoklo* over 50 years old, who had worked at a middle school in southern Taiwan, said that many teachers of this school indoctrinated "wrong ideas" to the students, that had become widely spread after Tu Cheng-sheng had become Minister of education<sup>22</sup>. He admits that in Southern Taiwan the memory about the 228 Incident really exists, but when he was a student there were a lot of *Waishengren* children among his classmates, but there were practically no conflicts of "ethnic" nature (Chen, Geng, Zheng, You, Chen and Zhang 2009: 276-277).

But the above stated facts don't mean that the DPP's members insincerely manipulate the Taiwanese people's feelings and historical memory and stoke controversy between different ethnic groups just to achieve their up-to-the-minute political goals. In reality, as Shelley Rigger argues, the DPP's leaders (especially those who played a key role in Taiwan's politics in 2000-2008) belong to the generation born between 1931 and 1953 and "have a strong, almost instinctual, impulse to view politics in ethnic terms". Most of them are "Taiwanese both in their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> These feelings are especially notable, taking into consideration the fact that there were only *Benshengren* (*Hoklo* and *Hakka*) among the focus groups' participants (Chen, Geng, Zheng, You, Chen and Zhang 2009: 196, 216, 238-239, 262-264, 282).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Tu Cheng-sheng – Minister of Education in the ROC in 2004-2008. During his term he became known for numerous statements and actions within the framework of the Taiwan Independence Movement, such as advocating for changing the contents of student-books on history and geography by stressing the history and geography of Taiwan itself, advocating for using the Chinese language transcription elaborated by a research fellow of Academia Sinica's Institute of ethnology Yu Bor-chuan in 1998 (the so called "tongyong pinyin"), instead of "hanyu pinyin", that is used all over the world etc.

provincial origin and in their ethnic consciousness". Political views, that they represent, are the reflection of their whole political career, built in "fighting against the KMT and all that it represents" (Rigger 2006: 42). The fact that such political views are not shared by the island's whole population is admitted within the DPP as well, which is testified by efforts of the party's leaders to avoid to the greatest possible extent the "ethnic" subject in their political rhetoric. But the final disappearance (or at least alleviation) of this question in the political struggle is possible only after a new generation of the Taiwanese entering the party.

The fact that the question of the "Taiwanese identity" is not just a subject of the DPP's rhetoric, but a real social phenomenon, that should be taken into consideration by any political force on Taiwan, is affirmed by the KMT's leader, the current President of the ROC, Ma Yingjeou's speeches and actions during his election campaigns of 2008 and 2012. President Ma, born in Hong Kong in the family, originating from the Chinese province of Hunan, under the DPP's pressure is forced to prove permanently his "love" towards Taiwan. For example, in November 2011, several months before his victory in presidential elections, in response to the accusation of "betraying Taiwan" from the DPP, he published the following statement at Facebook: "I am Ma Ying-jeou, I love Taiwan, I'm Taiwanese to the very roots of my being, I will protect Taiwan for my whole life, it is beyond anyone's doubt". During the ceremony of the KMT's campaign headqurters' opening in Taipei at the end of October 2011, Ma also gave a speech and declared, that all of his relatives "are on Taiwan, are Taiwanese, and what is more important all the passed relatives are buried on Taiwan". The President added as well, that "all of them here [on Taiwan] want [him] to love Taiwan, teach and help [him] to love Taiwan".

#### **Conclusion**

In spite of the existence of several classifications of world nationalisms, given by the most eminent researchers of this social phenomenon, we think that the development of nationalist movement in different regions should be studied separately, on the assumption of its emergence's historical preconditions. The Taiwan Independence Movement and the "Taiwanese identity" propagated by it is not an exclusion. The very opportunity of its rising is closely related to the island's development throughout its history, i.e. such periods as Qing rule, Japanese colonial rule, and Taiwan's position as the base for the KMT's counterattack on the Mainland. We argue, that it is the last-named period that played a key role in the process of shaping and

<sup>23</sup>Ma Yingjiu zai Facebook fawen: wo shao cheng hui dou shi Taiwanren! (Ma Ying-jeou published at Facebook: I'm Taiwanese to the very roots of my being), Ifeng news, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011//http://news.ifeng.com/taiwan/1/detail\_2011\_11/05/10438913\_0.shtml

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Ma Yingjiu: wo de jiaren dou shi Taiwanren (Ma Ying-jeou: my whole family are Taiwanese), China Review News,

October

30<sup>th</sup>,

2011//

http://www.zhgpl.com/doc/1018/8/7/3/101887311.html?coluid=7&kindid=0&docid=101887311

argumentation of the "Taiwanese identity". On the one hand, certain features of the contemporary Taiwanese society testify to the successfulness of the KMT government's "sinicization" policy. But on the other hand, the island's absolute isolation from the Mainland throughout almost 40 years contributed to the alienation of Taiwan strait's two sides' cultures and created conditions for both Benshengren and Waishengren's special consciousness's forming. China, existing in the memory of the latter (especially of their descendants), differs a lot from real China<sup>25</sup>. But most of the bearers of the idea of the "Taiwanese identity" in the form of its initial shaping, are still Benshengren, that is explained as well by certain historical circumstances and peculiarities of the KMT's rule during the period of the Martial Law. Benshengren's lack of access to political power led to the forming of the idea of the "common destiny's tragicalness" (based on the common historical memory) and their wish to change this situation, that began at the end one of the program points of the so called *Tangwai* (literally "outside the party") movement by the beginning of the 1980s, further developing into the DPP, formed in 1986, that posed a real opposition for the KMT and after displacing it in 2000 conducted the policy of maintaining and further spreading the "Taiwanese identity". The necessity of such a policy is explained by the fact, that in spite of the considerable increase of those who identify themselves as Taiwanese, amount of the people, defining themselves as "both Chinese and Taiwanese" is also quite large. This identity conflict, generated by many factors of historical, ethnic, cultural and economic nature is one of the pressing problems of contemporary Taiwan, resolving of which may influence directly the future of the relations between the two sides of Taiwan Strait, which in its turn is one of the major problems of Asia-Pacific region.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Some *Waishengren* acquainted to the author of this article in the personal conversation said that they had felt a kind of "cultural shock" when they could visit their relatives in Mainland China after the prohibition for such visits had been lifted at the end of the 1980s.

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