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## **Class or Identity Matters? The Social Assimilation of Taiwanese Sojourners in China**

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**Class or Identity Matters?**  
**The Social Assimilation of Taiwanese Sojourners in China**

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## **Abstract**

Most analyses addressing the cross-Strait relations stay at the macro-level and few really touches upon micro-level personal contacts and attitudinal changes. Yet it is normally difficult to predict macro-level consequences without referring to micro-level changes. The aim of this paper thus is to clarify whether the Taiwanese have been assimilated into local society after getting along with Chinese for years. If they did, then what factors lead to those changes? To know the answers, we interviewed more than 200 Taiwanese settling in greater Shanghai and Dongguan in the summer of 2009. With this most extensive survey ever done, I find that class and identity work together to determine Taiwanese's assimilation, but the former facilitates the mix-up of Taiwanese with local people while the later shape the close relationships and psychological acceptance.

Keywords: social assimilation, class, identity, Taiwanese/Taiwanese businessmen, cross-Strait relations

## I. Introduction

Most of the existing publications addressing cross-Strait issues are macro-level analyses. Most of them project cross-Strait futures based on structural features or changes, say, in political conflicts, economic interdependence or triangular relations.<sup>1</sup> Although these macro-level analyses are much enough for making sense the decisions of policy elites, they seem quite limited in analyzing the attitude of ordinary citizens involved in cross-Strait contacts. How do they treat each other? Do they adjust their categorization of us-them in these contacts? Because more and more people believe that these contacts are gradually but constantly reshaping the current status of cross-Strait relations, micro-level analyses of these attitudinal changes thus set a more reliable foundation for us to make long-term forecasts of the future of cross-Strait relations.

Some of the micro-analyses target the Taiwanese businesspeople in China (thereafter referred to as Taishang). After Taiwan's lifting of political bans and driven by restructured global production networks, these businessmen started moving to China in the later 1980s and early 1990s and became the first wave of Taiwanese have the China experiences.<sup>2</sup> Even today, these Taishang still constitute the lion's

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<sup>1</sup> Hsin-hsing Wu, "The Political Economy of ROC-PRC Relations," *Issues & Studies*, Vol. 31, No 1, 1995, pp. 51-62; Jean-Pierre Cabestan, "The Cross-Strait Relationship in the Post-Cold War Era: Neither Re-unification Nor 'Win-Win' Game." *Issues & Studies*, Vol.31, No 1, 1995, pp. 27-50; Cal Clark, "Prospects for Taiwan-China Economic Relations under the Chen Shui-bian Administration." *American Asian Review*, Vol.19, No. 1, 2001, pp. 27-53; Cal Clark, "The China-Taiwan Relationship: Growing Cross-Strait Economic Integration." *Orbits*, Vol. 46, No. 4, 2002, pp. 753-766; Cal Clark, "Does European Integration Provide a Model for Moderating Cross-Strait Relations?" *Asian Affairs*, Vol. 29, No. 4, 2003, pp. 195-215; Shu Keng and Ruihua Lin, "Integrating From Below: Observing the "Linkage Communities" across the Taiwan Strait." In Baogang Guo and Chung-chian Teng eds., *China's Quiet Rise: Peace Through Integration*(Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Suzanne Berger and Richard K. Lester, "Globalization and the Future of the Taiwan Miracle," in Suzanne Berger and Richard K. Lester, eds., *Global Taiwan: Building competitive Strengths in a New International Economy*( Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), pp. 3-32; Douglas B. Fuller, "Moving

share of the Taiwanese in the mainland. But as cross-Strait exchanges get more diversified, Taiwanese come to China for a variety of reasons, such as for retired life, for family reasons (couple and kids of Taishang), for cross-Strait marriage, for further studies, and among others. These Taiwanese in China, because of their close contacts with mainland Chinese, become the target of the study, which aims to observe the attitudinal changes of Taiwanese after getting in touch with local Chinese.

The paper seeks to make sense of the assimilation of the Taiwanese in China, that is, the transformation from settling down to redefined identity, with an emphasis on whether they would also consider themselves as residents of the places they stay and local residents as their “we-group.” Originally, I was interested in the identity of these Taiwanese sojourners in China. But without an appropriate conceptual framework and targeting a sensitive (it is politically incorrect to admit their identical changes), it is difficult to deal with that issue more directly. And also, it is still be too early for a Taiwanese to really consider themselves as Chinese. This study thus focuses on the vary stages of social assimilation, ranging from family arrangement, social relations to destined home of these Taiwanese settled in China.

And in addition to tracing the social assimilation of the Taiwanese in China, the paper also seeks to clarify the influences form factors mentioned first by Shu Keng, with an emphasis on the hypotheses of class relationships and primordial ties. The former refers to the class distance between Taiwanese and local Chinese, measured by the price of the real estate of the communities they settled. And the later refers to the identity distance of the Taiwanese and local Chinese, measured by the personal

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along the electronics value chain: Taiwan in the global economy,” in Suzanne Berger and Richard K. Lester eds., *Global Taiwan: Building competitive Strengths in a New International Economy*(Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), pp. 137-165; Marcos Ancelovici and Sara Jane McCaffrey, "From NAFTA to China? Production Shifts and Their Implications for Taiwanese Firms. " in Suzanne Berger and Richard K. Lester, eds., *Global Taiwan: Building competitive Strengths in a New International Economy*( Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), pp. 166-193.

identify of the Taiwanese people, whether they are Taiwanese, Chinese or both. The findings based on my survey suggest that “class factors” have more influences on the assimilation of Taiwanese in their family arrangements while “identity factors” claim more impacts on their social relations and destined home.

In addition, previous studies are mostly qualitative research with rather small sample size, the survey collaborated by University of Hong Kong and National Chengchi University, offers this study the chance to combine both qualitative and quantitative approach to deal with the issue. In that survey, we interviewed Taiwanese settled in greater Shanghai and cities neighboring Dongguan for more than a year, with semi-structured questionnaire and in-depth interviewing. With 12 researchers for about six-week field research, we collected 214 completed samples and made that the largest ever systematic survey of the Taiwanese staying in China. With this, we can finally explore that the status of the Taiwanese in China.

Follow this section is a brief review of the theories accounting for social assimilation. After that, Section Three place emphases on the significance of “identity factors” and “class factors.” Following that, Section Four and Five will describe my research methods and present our research findings. And, Section Six is the conclusion of the paper.

## **II. Social Assimilation: Conceptual Tool to Observe the Taiwanese Sojourners in China**

Previous studies on cross-Strait relations often involve observation and comments on the identity and identical changes of the Taiwanese, some referring to

the Taiwanese settling in China. Among these studies, however, few would treat these Taiwanese sojourners as immigrants and thus borrow the socio-psychological approach to help make sense the identity and changes of these Taiwanese. And this is the somewhat path-breaking approach of this study: it deals with the identity of the Taiwanese in light of the assimilation theory.

Assimilation refers to the breaking or crossing the boundary when the members of the two social/cultural groups get in touch with each other.<sup>3</sup> Assimilation thus happens at dimensions such as biological, cultural, social and finally, psychological.<sup>4</sup> These dimensions are though interdependent but conceptually separate. But in the case of Taiwanese in China, with similar ethnicity and shared culture, we just need to look at the social and psychological aspects. In this research, I choose to focus on the following three issues (1) family arrangements, (2) social relations and (3) destined home. I believe that we shall be able to observe the changes in the assimilation of the Taiwanese in China because of following reasons.

First, I rely on the family arrangements to indicate how these Taiwanese are really settling down and beginning living (*an'sheng-li'ming*) in China. And among most of aspects of family arrangements such as whether these Taiwanese bring their families with them and whether they purchase homes in places they settled, I pick the arrangement for kid's education as the indicator for that is the one with different choices, such as (1) left in Taiwan, (2) sending to Taishang schools, (3) sending to international schools, (4) sending to the international division of local schools, and (5) sending to local schools, and thus can tell us most about the plan of the Taiwanese

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<sup>3</sup> John Milton Yinger, "Toward a Theory of Assimilation and Dissimilation," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.4, 1981, p. 249.

<sup>4</sup> Martin Marger, *Race and ethnic relations : American and global perspectives*( Belmont, Calif. : Wadsworth Pub. Co, 1991); Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*(Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

being interviewed. Likewise, I also check on social relations of the Taiwanese being interviewed, to see who have been often hanging around with these Taiwanese. Finally, the sense of “home” is also one of the main aspects in distinguishing the level of assimilation of these Taiwanese. But the idea of “home” is very vague that could cause lots of confusions. After trying many indicators, I finally decide to use the life after retirement, which catches the ideal of “place to return to”(luo'ye guigen) to indicate the “sense of home.” After years of field experiences, I believe that these three aspects could be the base proxies for the concept of social assimilation of the Taiwanese sojourners in China.

### **III. Competing Hypotheses of Social Assimilation**

Then what factors affect the social assimilation of the Taiwanese in China. Based on my previous research, I believe the “class factors” and “identify factors” are most significant. The reasons to include them are as follows.

#### **A. The Class Hypothesis**

The significance of class factors in shaping social relations is widely accepted. Class,” however, has been taken different meaning in various theoretical contexts. For example, Marx tends to treat class mainly as economic or market-based status<sup>5</sup> while Weber takes it more diversified and multi-dimensional status groups. More

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<sup>5</sup> Max Weber, “Class, Status and Party,” in Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset eds., *Class, Status and Power: Social Stratification in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Free Press, 1966); Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984); Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institution* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1918).



recently, scholars such as Bourdieu and cultural theorists lay emphasis of tastes, especially on consumption and life style.<sup>6</sup> To put these together and apply them to the study of inter-group relations, I would like to include both “life chances” and “life style” dimensions to observe how the members of different groups may have the chance to get along with each other and, while hanging around, also be able to eliminate the prejudices each group hold towards others.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, class factors in this study would be conceptualized as status groups settled in different kinds of gated communities: those who living in high-priced communities must be able to afford the real estate and then automatically have the chances to meet and contacts with the people with similar consuming power and tastes.<sup>8</sup> With these reasons and also because of the availability of real estate prices, in this study, I treat class distance mainly as the price difference in the community Taiwanese live.

## **B. The Identity Hypothesis**

In addition to class factors, the significance of “identity” in shaping the social relations among the members of different social groups is also widely acknowledged. Identity here means to the recognition of belonging to some specific social groups and

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<sup>6</sup> Max Weber, “Class, Status and Party,” in Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset eds., *Class, Status and Power: Social Stratification in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Free Press, 1966); Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984); Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institution* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1918).

<sup>7</sup> David B Grusky, *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective* (Boulder, Color. ; Oxford, U.K. : Westview Press, 2001).

<sup>8</sup> Min Zhou, "Segmented Assimilation: Issues, Controversies, and Recent Research on the New Second Generation," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 31, No. 4, 1997, pp. 825-858; Victor Nee and Jimmy M. Sanders, "The Road to Parity: Determinants of the Socioeconomic Achievements of Asian Americans," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.8, 1985, pp. 75-93; Richard Alba and Victor Nee, "Rethinking assimilation theory for a new era of immigration," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 31, Winter 1997, pp. 826-92.

the assumption of the feelings and meanings associated with such belonging.<sup>9</sup> In other words, more specifically, identity refers to the relations between social groups and their members: the later identify themselves as members of the former, whether they are nation-states, ethnicities, professional groups, or gender groups.<sup>10</sup>

From this point of view, the identification of the Taiwanese can be best observed from how they identify themselves: whether they identify themselves as Taiwanese, Chinese or both Taiwanese and Chinese? Because of Taiwan's identity politics in the 90s and early 2000s, those who claim themselves are Taiwanese tend to assume the precondition that Chinese and Taiwanese are different and they themselves are not the Chinese. While those who identify themselves as "both," they tend to treat Taiwanese as a sub-category of the Chinese and themselves always as Taiwanese and Chinese simultaneously.

After some descriptive characterization of the status of the social assimilation of the Taiwanese sojourners in China, I would like to examine the factors determining the level of assimilation of these Taiwanese. In this section, I try to show that the "class factors" and "identify factors" are most critical in determining the progress in the assimilation and also the community these Taiwanese settled and the self-identification of these sojourners are the best available proxies to check the influences of these two factors.

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<sup>9</sup> Henri Tajfel, *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (London: Academic Press, 1978), p.63.

<sup>10</sup> John C. Turner, "Towards a cognitive redefinition of the social group," in Henri Tajfel ed., *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 15-40. John C. Turner, "A Self-Categorization Theory." in John C. Turner, M. A. Hogg, P. J. Oakes, S. D. Reicher and M.S. Wetherell eds., *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory* ( Oxford: Blackwell 1987.); Henri Tajfel, "Social psychology of intergroup relations," *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 33, 1982, pp. 1-39; Marilynn B. Brewer, "Ingroup bias in the minimal intergroup situations: A cognitive motivational analysis," *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 86, 1979, pp. 307-324.

## **IV. Data and Analysis**

I will describe the source of data and the methods for analyzing the data to be presented and discussed in the next section.

### **A. Source of the Data: The 2009 Taishang Survey**

The data of the study draws from a collaborated project between the University of Hong Kong and the National Chengchi University, named “Lives and Attitudes of the Taiwanese in China,” carried out in the summer of 2009. In that survey, the 12 researchers or six research teams spend a total of six-week interviewing Taiwanese settling in both greater Shanghai and cities surrounding Dongguan. During the interview, we first ask the interviewees the questions on our semi-structured questionnaire. After filling them out, the interviewers would ask further questions surrounding previous questions and start more casual talks on related issues. And the dialogues were recorded and turned into transcripts for the researcher to keep track of the attitudes and thoughts of the Taiwanese sojourners being interviewed.

Since we have little information about the Taiwanese communities in China, the population of our sampling, it is difficult for us to design any forms of random sampling on the basis of pre-existed information. What we did while snowballing for interviewees, we always follow the rule of “maximum variation” to diversify our source of information. As a result, our interviewees include both Taiwanese businessmen, their families, and Taiwanese students, the first and second generation Taiwanese, employees from both labor-intensive and high-tech manufacturers, working for Taiwanese firms, joint-ventures, foreign firms (European, American, Japanese, Korean and among others) and Chinese firms, Taiwanese sojourners with

different educational status, ranging from primary school to Ph.D.s, Taiwanese affiliated with different political camps and different ethnic origins. As a result, we collected 214 completed samples and that made this the largest systematic survey of the Taiwanese in China. With this, we can finally explore that the status of the Taiwanese in China.

## B. Models and Analysis

The descriptive results of the survey are presented at Table One. From the table, we can get a rough idea about the assimilation of the Taiwanese in three primary dimensions. Among these aspects, we know that about a half of the Taiwanese sojourners tend to let their kids staying in Taiwan for education. And, with a 59% choose to hang around with Taiwanese and another 20% mainly with Taiwanese. And for the plan after retirement, a bit less than a half vow to go back to Taiwan while only 11% decide to stay in China. In other words, the overall progresses of the social assimilation of the Taiwanese sojourners are still quite limited, even though they have been staying in China for years.

**Table One The Assimilation of Taiwanese Sojourners in China**

<b>Kids Education</b>			<b>Personal Ties</b>			<b>Retirement Plan</b>		
Categories	No.	%	Categories	No.	%	Categories	No.	%
Left in Taiwan	100	51.02	Almost All Taiwanese	126	58.88	Definitely Going Back	96	45.93
Taishang Schools	13	6.63	Mostly Taiwanese	43	20.09	Probably Going Back	32	15.31

International Schools	19	9.69	Both Chinese & Taiwanese	30	14.02	Haven't Decided	57	27.27
Int'l Division of Local Schools	16	8.16	Mostly Chinese	13	6.07	Probably Staying On	15	7.18
Local Schools	48	24.49	Almost All Chinese	2	0.93	Definitely Staying on	9	4.31
	196	100.00		214	100.00		209	100.00

**Source:** "Lives and Attitudes of the Taiwanese in China," Joint Research Project of University of Hong Kong and National Chengchi University, 2009.

Going beyond these descriptive statistics, I also want to clarify the factors that determine the progresses in the assimilation of these Taiwan sojourners. Thus I put there relevant variables in three regression models. In these models, I set the three dimensions of social assimilation as dependent variables, namely, kids education, personal ties, and retirement plan. And, "social class" and "national identity" are the primary concerns of the research: they are the independent variables in these models. The former conceptualized in terms of real estate prices in comparisons with local residents while the later conceptualized as the self-identification of the nationality. In addition, I introduce ethnic origins, party identification, time stayed in China, profits reaped in China, employment sector and some other demographic features such as generation, education, gender as controlled variables, in case that they would make confounding effects on the level of social assimilation of the respondents. And due the nature of the variables introduced (measured as ordinal level), the methods to for measuring coefficients in these models are multivariate log-liner regression analysis.

## V. Research Findings and Discussions

The results of the regression analyses are presented at Table Two: among them, the dependent variable of model one being kids education, model two personal ties, and model three retirement plan.

**Table Two Factors Affecting the Assimilation of Taiwanese Sojourners in China**

	<b>Model One</b>		<b>Model Two</b>		<b>Model Three</b>	
	<b>Kids Education</b>		<b>Personal Ties</b>		<b>Retirement Plan</b>	
	Coefficient	S.D.	Coefficient	S.D.	Coefficient	S.D.
<b>Constant</b>	1.429	0.973	0.765	0.464	1.284	0.598
<b>Ethnic Origins</b> (cf. Mainlanders)						
Heklo (Hokkien)	-0.350	0.430	0.155	0.203	-0.576*	0.264
Hakka	-0.893	0.537	0.388	0.266	-0.298	0.349
<b>Party Identification</b> (cf. Pro-DPP Id)						
Pro-KMT	0.615	0.386	-0.117	0.186	0.282	0.242
Neutral	0.511	0.360	-0.182	0.178	0.330	0.232
<b>Social Class</b>						
	0.287*	0.130	0.011	0.066	0.056	0.085
<b>Personal Identity</b> (cf. Self-identified Taiwanese)						
Self-identified Chinese	0.522	0.783	1.021*	0.395	1.530**	0.507
Self-identified as Both	0.485	0.336	0.365*	0.162	0.063	0.214
<b>Time Stayed</b> (in China)						
	0.028	0.031	0.029	0.015	0.047*	0.019
<b>Profits Reaped</b> (in China)						
	-0.145	0.109	0.076	0.053	0.078	0.069
<b>Generation</b> (cf. Born after 1977)						
Born before 1956	-0.220	0.506	-0.472	0.243	-0.548	0.320

Born between 1957-76	0.326	0.375	-0.131	0.184	-0.185	0.242
<b>Education</b> (cf. Below High School)						
Graduated and Higher	0.542	0.529	-0.050	0.257	0.052	0.333
Undergraduate	0.117	0.380	0.035	0.190	-0.121	0.245
College	0.249	0.405	-0.217	0.204	-0.099	0.262
<b>Gender</b> (cf. Female)						
Male	-0.370	0.309	0.258	0.152	0.323	0.201
<b>Employment Sector</b> (cf. Manufacturing Sector)						
Service	-0.223	0.302	0.566***	0.145	0.320	0.190
Simple Size		196		214		209
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>		0.065		0.146		0.147
<i>p</i>		< .05		< .001		< .001
S.E.E		1.652		0.837		1.076
Conditional Index		24.122		23.590		23.357

Source: "Lives and Attitudes of the Taiwanese in China," Joint Research Project of University of Hong Kong and National Chengchi University, 2009.

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$  .

### A. Social Assimilation in Kid Arrangement

From model one, the class factor is the only factor that exerts significant influences on the social assimilation in terms of the kids education. This suggest that whether these Taiwanese choose to bring over their families and settled in China, and whether they would like their kids to mix up with local Chinese are all dependent their class status: the higher their status the more likely they would send their kids to stay with local Chinese. This finding seems to be the opposite of our expectation: it was the different living standard that blocks Taiwanese from getting along with local Chinese.

From the interviews, however, I find the reasons to account for such perplexing finding. The Chinese society is a highly stratified society: for those with higher economic status, they would hang around with local Chinese elites and thus tend to not to look down on the local people, reflecting on their decisions to bring over their families and send their kids to stay with local kids. But please noted that those local kids are mostly coming from best family backgrounds. On the other hand, those without the chance to get in touch with those local elites tend to leave their kids in Taiwan or send them to Taishang schools. For them, local Chinese are just a bunch of peasant workers from rural areas or poorer provinces. In other words, the Taiwanese with better economic condition have been able to move around and find a nice living environment. They also have the chance to meet Chinese elites and properly evaluate the potentials of this rising economic power. These Taiwanese or transnational elites are without doubt the more influential in Taiwanese politics. From this study, I can get a rough idea of what kind of influences they would probably exert.

## **B. Social Assimilation in Personal Ties**

As for the factors affecting the social relations of the Taiwanese sojourners in China, the model two of Table Two tell us that only the national identity and employment sector are relevant. For the former, those who identify themselves as “Chinese” or “both” have a higher propensity to hang around with local Chinese. Other related factors such as ethnic origins and party identification, if not associated with self-proclaimed identification, would exert little influences on the personal relations of the Taiwanese sojourners. In addition, the manufacturing vs. service sector is also significant. This is probably because people employed at service sector has to serve their customers, no matter they are Taiwanese or Chinese while those



employed at manufacturing sector normally meet either Taiwanese as their colleagues or Chinese as labor workers. The sector factor thus affects the chances of the daily contacts of these Taiwanese. In other words, the structure of social relations among the Taiwanese in China is partly shaped by subject/identity factors and partly by objective/necessity factors.

### **C. Social Assimilation in Retirement Plan**

Finally, for factors affecting the meaning of the destined home, measure by respondents' retirement plan are reported at the model three of Table Two. Three factors, national identity, ethnic origins and time stayed in China are significant in shaping the idea of home among the Taiwanese sojourners. This seems similar to the pattern of social relations but in different degrees. The meanings of home seem more deeply involved with more sensitive side of the human decisions: this has to do with how people choose the final destination of their entire journey. Among all the factors, without doubt, self-proclaimed identity matters. The ethnic origin also matters because these involves the true meaning of hometown (*lao'jia*). And, finally, the time stayed in China matters, for that may shape how people look at the place they stay. It is without any surprises that these factors would be relevant. Again, other factors such as party identification, profits reaped in China, employment sector and demographic features such as generation, education, gender are all irrelevant.

Comparing the three dimensions of social assimilation of the Taiwanese sojourners in China, we can find that class factors determine whether they would live and mix with local Chinese in daily lives. But when turning to the dimensions such as social relations and meanings of home, class factors then lose all its significance. Instead, factors such as personal identity, ethnic origin, and time staying in China all

become critical. In other words, it is the level of assimilation still demonstrates two separate dimensions and determined by different series of factors: class facilitates the mix-up of Taiwanese with local people while identity shapes the close relationships and psychological acceptance.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The cross-Strait relations are jointly decided by at least China and Taiwan, with an equally important role of the US. Since late 1980s, Taiwan started its democratic transition and that completely changes the nature of cross-Strait relations on the Taiwan side. Ever since, nationalist sentiments have been widespread and Taiwan identity greatly uphold. Also, periodical elections give the common citizens a say in shaping Taiwan's China policy. As a consequence, the study of cross-Strait relations cannot be limited on earlier approaches, laying all the attention on structural factors or the ideas of policy elites. When analyzing the dynamics of or forecasting the future of cross-Strait relations, we need to take into account of the public opinion of Taiwanese people.

One approach to grasp the attitudes of the Taiwanese people is to analyze the survey data.<sup>11</sup> But in that case, the Taiwanese settled in China would be systematically left out of our survey. But since late 1990s, these Taiwanese have been

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<sup>11</sup> For example, Shu Keng, Lu-huei Chen & Kuan-bo Huang, "Sense, Sensitivity, and Sophistication in Shaping the Future of Cross-Strait Relations," *Issues & Studies*, 42: 4 (Dec. 2006), pp. 23-66; T. Y. Wang, Luhuei Chen & Shu Keng, "Symbolic Politics, Self-interests and Threat Perceptions: An Analysis of Taiwan Citizens' Views on Cross-Strait Economic Exchanges," in *Sound and Fury: Taiwan's Political Development in the 21st Century*, Wei-chin Lee ed., Singapore: World Scientific, 2010, 159-184.

playing a very significant role in shaping cross-Strait relations.<sup>12</sup> But, due to difficulties to study this group of people, up to now, we have not been able to present a systematic study of these Taiwanese in China, showing us what do they think, how do they get along with Chinese, and whether they still insist their Taiwanese identity? Thanks to “The Lives and Attitudes of the Taiwanese in China” Project, for the first time, I can present a systematic survey of the personal identity and social assimilation of these Taiwanese sojourners.

From the survey, we can easily find that the assimilation of Taiwanese demonstrates two separate dimensions and thus is determined by different series of factors: class may help Taiwanese getting along with local Chinese. And this suggest that, as China grows richer, more Taiwanese would probably maintain a stable and friendly working relations with local Chinese. But this does not mean that their relationships would be very close and Taiwanese would easily treat Chinese as their fellow countrymen. It takes time for their identity to be transformed, as indicated in the case of the factors shaping their idea about their destined homes. Other critical factors, such as ethnic origins and personal identity all suggest that cross-Strait unification cannot be that easily achieved simply by frequent contacts or interest alignments. Change in identity lies in the center of unification issue and, as the study suggests, that is more complicated than economic transactions and social interactions. China or anyone prefer national unification muse offer more efforts or innovative approach to achieve that goal.

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<sup>12</sup> Shu Keng, “Understanding the Political Consequences of People-to-People Relations across the Taiwan Strait: Towards an Analytical Framework,” *Chinese History and Society*, No. 32 (Jun. 2007), pp. 63-80; Shu Keng & Gunter Schubert, “Agents of Unification? The Political Role of Taiwanese Businessmen in the Process of Cross-Strait Integration,” *Asian Survey*, Mar./Apr. 2010 (50: 2), pp. 287-310.

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