

**Unification, Independence, or Status Quo: A Case Study on the
Political Preferences of Taiwanese on the Cross-Strait Issue**

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Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages, 2022

Abstract

According to an opinion poll made back in 1991 by the Taiwan public opinion foundation, which was trying to find out whether Taiwanese citizens would like to be unified, become independent, or status quo, back when 45% of Taiwanese would like unification. However, only 12% want to become independent, and 25% for the status quo; as for January 26, 2021, another opinion poll was made. Over 50 percent of people prefer independence. On the other hand, only 14% of people would like to be unified, as for status quo consists of 24%, and we can see that as time goes by, people are identifying themselves as Taiwanese, not Chinese. So this research aims to find out whether the Taiwanese have shifted their standpoint or remain the same? To find out I've create my own opinion poll with 471 respondents, with this data I can then compared with other opinion polls to see that if there's any alteration and what factors would affect the respondents' preference. And the findings are that the Taiwanese's preference on the issue has close to set, since there isn't a significant change for 10 years.

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Since the ROC government retreated from China to Taiwan in 1949, the issue of the relationship between Taiwan and China; and will both sides be unified as a country or will Taiwan become an independent country, has always been a critical issue for both sides, According to an opinion poll that was made back in 1991 by the Taiwan Public Opinion Foundation¹ which was trying to find out whether Taiwanese citizens would like to be unified, become independent or accept a status quo, we found back when 45% of Taiwanese would like both countries to be unified as one. But Only 12% wanted to become independent, and 25% were for the status quo; as for January 26, 2021, another opinion poll was made, with over 1000 respondents, over 50 percent of people would like to see Taiwan becoming an independent country. Only 14% of people would like to be unified, and 24% for Status-Quo, and we can see that as time goes by, people are identifying themselves as Taiwanese, not Chinese. But this is only the Taiwanese viewpoint on the issue, and there are also other factors that would affect the issue; for example, what will the CCP(Chinese Communist Party) do? During this period of time they would like both sides to be unified peacefully. As for the U.S., they hope that both sides can remain in the current situation. But the Biden

¹ "台灣民意基金會民調》台獨分子激增！從 30 年前 12.5%漲到今年 50.2%." (01-27 2021).

administration has affirmed its support for Taiwan in case it is attacked by the CCP government. It is interesting to find out what the Taiwanese think about their situation now.

Motivation

As a Taiwanese living in this land that I love, enjoying the democracy and the freedom of speech that we have, I'm afraid that one day this kind of lifestyle will be gone because of China, the country that had always wanted Taiwan to become part of their country, and this is the reason that motivates me to try and find out what the Taiwanese wants is it Taiwan become part of China, or we will just become an independent country in the future. And if none of the above happened, will the situation nowadays remain the same.

Research Purpose

The study aims to understand the Taiwanese political preferences on the cross-strait issue whether Taiwan will become an independent country or be unified with China, or maybe the situation will remain the same for a long time. During this process, I can also find out what most Taiwanese identify themselves as Chinese or Taiwanese. And with the result, I've got it might be helpful for the government since it is what people would like to see in the future, and with that, the government would have a better understanding of what they should do to benefit its people.

Research Questions

1. What is the identity of the Taiwanese?
2. What the Taiwanese would like for Taiwan in the future?
3. What will affect the Taiwanese' preference on the Unification-Independence issue?
4. Is it possible to change the preference of the respondents?
5. Has the Taiwanese' preference on the Unification-Independence issue changed or not?

Research hypothesis

1. Most Taiwanese would still support Taiwan independence.
2. Under a specific condition, most Taiwanese who support Taiwan independence may change their preferences.

My hypothesis before the research started is that since most Taiwanese nowadays would like to see Taiwan become an independent country. And let's say that really happened. Will Taiwan gain a lot of pressure from the CCP? For example, China will declare war on Taiwan. I think there's a good chance of that happening.

And with that, it might frighten the people who support Taiwan independence because this may affect their lives, which may change their political preferences on

the cross-strait issue from supporting independence to status quo.

Contribution

I hope that my findings can be helpful for the field of political science and Taiwan, and to let the political decision-makers of Taiwan know what the Taiwanese want in the future if it's unification, what can they do to prevent it if it's independence, what they will have to do to let Taiwan become stronger without China, and if the situation remains what should they do to maintain the relationship between both sides?

Limits

The limitation of this research is that I am not trying to predict what will happen in the future.

The second is while getting the data from the opinion poll; the main population will be the people from Taiwan since it is a study focusing on Taiwan

Delimits

In my study, I will only focus on Unification, Independence, or Status Quo.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Historical Background

The island of Taiwan has a history of being colonized by other powers, from the Dutch and the Spanish from the 17th century, the Qing, the Japanese, and now to the ROC government; from this, we can find out that as a person living in Taiwan it seems hard to find our own identity. But since the KMT lost the Chinese civil war and the CCP gained control of the mainland then founded the People's Republic of China which makes the KMT retreats from China to Taiwan in 1949, most people that comes with the government are primarily Chinese and they still identify themselves as a Chinese, back when the KMT enact the martial law for almost 40 years, during that period of time the government were monitoring it's people making sure there's no communism spread on the island and organized a plan to regain power in the mainland and people are waiting for the government to beat the communist China and returned back to their homes, so in that era both the KMT and the CCP's primary goal is the make both sides unified as one with only one question of who is in charge, with time goes by and the martial had ended on 1987 people started to lose hope and had already started their own family here in Taiwan, as newer generations are born and raised here in Taiwan, and the economy had grown significantly, and that can be

proven by a survey conducted by National Chengchi University's Election Study Center², the survey has been conducting since 1992 to 2020, so back in 1992, the result shows that 46.4 percent of people identify themselves as both Chinese and Taiwanese, 25.5 percent identified as Chinese, 17.6 percent identified as Taiwanese, and the rest with no respond, which shows a confusion of self identity of the people in Taiwan, but until 2020 the people who identify themselves as Taiwanese has increased significantly from 17.6 percent to 67 percent, with 27.5 percent both and 2.4 percent Chinese. And with that, Taiwan's democracy had become healthier, which then lead to the first transition of power in the year 2000 from the KMT to the DPP (Democratic Progressive Party), which is a party that advocates independence for Taiwan, after then the identity of being a Taiwanese had become stronger and stronger, and that is the reason why people here in Taiwan nowadays try so hard to fight for independence, although there are still people in Taiwan agree to be unified with China, but throughout the years the number of these people has decreased we can see this in the opinion poll made by the Taiwan public opinion foundation mentioned above.

²Wu Po-hsuan and William Hetherington. "Record Number Identify as 'Taiwanese,' Poll Finds." (2020).

1992 consensus

The reason that I put this part as an individual part is because that this term will appear in every event about the cross-strait issue. The term 1992 consensus³ (九二共識) is a term is first introduced by the president of 中國大陸海峽兩岸關係協會 (Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits ARATS) back in the year 2000, which is describing the semiofficial meeting represented by the 海峽交流基金會 (Straits Exchange Foundation) for the ROC and the ARATS for the PRC, starting from 1991, Hong Kong, which is known as 九二香港會談(, the initial issue of the meeting is to “deal with the process of both straits fighting the maritime crime” and Beijing wanted to deal with this problem as an nation affairs instead of an international affairs, therefore they hope that the meeting can be based on the consensus of 一個中國 ‘One China’, which is trying to make Taiwan admit that there is only one China, the People’s Republic of China, and that the meeting did not end well because that the Straits Exchange Foundation which can be understood as the ROC disagrees, later in 1992 there was a second meeting on different issue ended in the same way and after that, and in the following month the National Unification Council of the ROC defined ‘One China’ as both sides of the strait stands on the same side on the principal of ‘One China’ but interprets the idea in a different ways, the

³陳明通. "「九二香港會談」與「九二共識」.

PRC defines it as the China of 'One China' is the People's Republic of China and after unification Taiwan will become a special administrative region of China, as for the ROC defines it as China is the Republic of China that established in 1912 until now, which has sovereignty among the territory of China, but under the current situation it only has power to manage 臺澎金馬(The free area of the Republic of China), so that Taiwan is part of China and the mainland is part of China as well. This statement is after known as 一中各表 "one China, different interpretations" and the ROC uses this statement in the next negotiation. Still, both side only meets a consensus on the "one China policy" verbally without any signed documents and interpretations so that until now, both sides still viewed the term differently. And that is why some people will doubt that whether the 1992 consensus reached a consensus or not.

Taiwan for Independence

First, we have to know what independent means. To put it simply is that most countries recognize Taiwan as a country and eventually let Taiwan become a member of the United Nations. So what makes a Taiwanese wanted Taiwan to become an independent country instead of unified with China? In the book, *TAIWAN National Identity and Democratization*⁴, mentioned nationalism plays an essential role with

⁴ Alan M. Wachman. *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization*. 1994.

most of us shared the same identity and living here on this island, another is that the government on both sides of the strait each have a distinct political ideology, one being democratic and the other being communist, people here in Taiwan enjoys the freedom that democracy brings us, which are the freedom of speech and the right to vote these are the main components that Taiwanese enjoys living in a democratic society, and that is also an important part that makes Taiwanese refuses both sides to be unified, this is because the Taiwanese feared that if unified, all these freedom will be gone.

One Country Two Systems

Although the CCP had offered a system called the “一國兩制” (One Country Two System first introduced by 鄧小平⁵(Deng Xiaoping) back in 1981, to deal with the cross-strait issue, the system’s main idea is to maintain the current situation and political system of Taiwan, but the area will turn into a special administrative region of China, which sounded good, but the former president 李登輝(Lee Ting-Hui) did not accept the offer and proposed 一國良制⁶ (One country Better System), which is to choose the best system for china that is democracy and to avoid being ruled by the communist, and after that comes an example of Hong Kong⁷.

⁵ "歷史上的今天／鄧小平提出一國兩制." (2020).

⁶ 倪振金. "一國良制." (2019).

⁷ "香港回歸中國之後，這 20 年發生了什麼事？." (2017).

After the British government handover Hong Kong back to the Chinese government back in 1997, back when the Chinese guaranteed that they would not change Hong Kong's current system and made a statement that Hong Kong won't change in the next 50 years, and uses the one country two systems, which means that Hong Kong will have their own system of managing the place while being a Chinese citizen and that the main goal is to make Hong Kong a fully democratic society, but we can see that the Chinese government doesn't fulfill what they promised just by observing these 23 years after the handover with numerous protests on getting an actual election and other political demands.

Eagerness for Independence and Evidence

With an example of China unifying with another country and how the CCP operates one country two systems makes Taiwanese feared even more, and that is why independence means so much for Taiwanese. The eagerness to become independent had grown throughout the time. To prove this, we can take a look at the opinion poll made by the Taiwan's Election and Democratization Study from 2004 to 2020⁸; we can see that people who wanted Taiwan to become independent peacefully had grown from 56.3 percent to 63.4 percent as for becoming independent with military force increased from 29.8 percent to 44.2 percent and the poll also asked the people who

⁸ "台灣人真支持「台獨」？一張圖曝 16 年來驚人變化." (2020).

chosen the peace option: if there's a possibility of war occurring will they still agree on becoming independent? In 2004, 45.3 percent of people agreed while 48.6 percent disagree; in 2020, the majority changed to 57.8 percent agree while 36.3 percent disagree.

China for Unification

So what is the Chinese government's standpoint on insisting Taiwan to become part of them? The very reason is that we shared the same blood and flesh; we are like brothers and sisters, which we can't be separated by using these kinds of statements to persuade Taiwan returned to the so-called motherland (祖國). All this can be found in the 告台灣同胞書 (Message to Compatriots in Taiwan), which is a critical document that shows the PRC's policy towards the cross-strait issue and its goal. The document has been published for six times, of which the fifth and sixth versions are the most representative ones; the former was published on January 1, 1979⁹, the same day the U.S. broke its diplomatic ties with the ROC and established diplomatic relations with the PRC. The main idea of the document I think can be divided into four parts, the first is to insist on the one-China principle and go against the independence of Taiwan, and that will be the foundation for both sides to cooperate with each other; the second is while dealing with unification the PRC should take the Taiwanese and Taiwan's

⁹ "《告台湾同胞书》(双语全文)." (2019).

current situation into account, respect the opinion of Taiwanese and conduct a reasonable policy in order not to cause the loss of Taiwanese, third is to stop the attack of Quemoy (金門) which means the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis (八二三炮戰) has come to an end. However, there is still a military standoff between the strait, so the PRC hopes that both sides can have a discussion on the issue to create a peaceful environment for further connection. The last one is to expect the Taiwanese government to open the transportations between both sides and economic exchange.

The latter version¹⁰, which is the most recent one was a speech made by the current leader of China Xi Jinping (習近平) in January 2, 2019 to celebrate the 40th anniversary on the publication of “Message to Compatriots in Taiwan” the main ideas of the original document mostly remains the same, but since 40 years had gone by, with the increase on Taiwanese identity, and the eagerness of independence for Taiwan, Xi had added 5 points to back up the original document, and after reading the speech I think that there are three central ideas of these five points, first being the 1992 consensus, which is the one China principal and the China being the People’s Republic of China and wanted the Taiwanese to acknowledge that, second is the one country two system, hoping that Taiwan can conduct this system, saying that the plan

¹⁰ "告台灣同胞書 40 週年 習近平談話全文." (2019).

is to take care of Taiwan's current situation and the benefits of Taiwanese and with that both sides can be unified peacefully, and the last is the opposition of Taiwan independent(台獨), saying that Taiwan independence is not the dead end and that we have to know the independent of Taiwan will only cause great destruction to the Taiwanese society, Xi also mentioned that Chinese people won't fight against Chinese people and the CCP sincerely hope for a peaceful unification, BUT the CCP will not promise to give up using military force and any other necessary measures to achieve unification. And just for this speech by itself, I think can conclude mostly every position for China unifying Taiwan from a political standpoint, because that whenever I see a report about the cross-strait issue, these are what the PRC government always said, which means that they firmly insist on their position especially the "One China" principal

Status Quo

With the tension between the strait has come somewhat relieved the question of whether both sides should remain the current situation becomes important, since Taiwan has a lot of economic connection with China, and the purpose of this is to prevent more tension, in the independence paragraph where most Taiwanese lean towards independent is under the circumstance that CCP will not take action of the

event whether it's military or economically, but if take this into consideration the preference of remain current situation has increased, we can see that in the opinion poll made by the Mainland Affairs Council in March, 2021¹¹, the poll shows that 85.8 percent of Taiwanese agreed on a generalized status quo which means to remain current situation and wait for the next step, that are independence, unification or remain current situation forever.

The reason of this outcome is because that Taiwanese had already been used to the current situation, some even thinks that Taiwan is already an independent country, and that Taiwanese citizen haven't really be threatened by the CCP on unification, people nowadays who lives in Taiwan had already formed a style of living under the current system, but if Taiwan suddenly claims to become independent, all of these might be gone that is because that the CCP would use military force to attack Taiwan since Xi Jinping said that they will use it if possible, and we all know that thing won't turn out well with war, and I don't think Taiwanese would like to see this kind of outcome, and even if the CCP didn't use military force they still can interrupt the Taiwanese economy diplomacy for example during the current Tsai Ing-Wen administrative after Xi Jinping gave the 40th anniversary on the publication of "Message to Compatriots in Taiwan" speech Tsai respond ¹² that Taiwan doesn't

¹¹ "陸委會民調：主張「廣義維持現狀」的民眾仍占絕大多數." (2021).

¹² "【全文】蔡英文回應習近平：我身為中華民國總統 終未接受九二共識." (2019).

recognize the 1992 consensus and doesn't accept the one country two system in 2019, right after that, the Chinese government made a law to banned Chinese tourist to visit Taiwan freely, which caused a significant loss of income for Taiwan, since the tourism industry is one of Taiwan's most important industry, and the main tourist are consist of Chinese, not only that within Tsai Ing-Wen's administrative there has been 7 countries that broke diplomatic ties with Taiwan affecting Taiwan's position on the international stage , for that we can see that it isn't the best time for Taiwan to Become independence.

Then how about unification? Will it be a better option? My answer is no, because, under current circumstances, Taiwanese are used to and enjoyed the things that democracy brings us; if the government changes into a communist, they losses the freedom that they've got, and it will result in a bad situation for Taiwanese, then how about the "One Country System"? Unify with China while our system can remain, most Taiwanese did not support this idea, and this can be proved by the opinion poll made by the Mainland Affairs Council the result showed that 88.2 percent of Taiwanese go against the "One Country System" the best idea on explaining this phenomenon is with the example of Hong Kong. There is a slogan that says 今日香港，明日臺灣(Today's Hong Kong tomorrow's Taiwan) saying that the

“One Country System” had failed in Hong Kong and hoping that the Taiwanese make the right decision and avoid walking on the path of Hong Kong.

So with the high possibility of both independence and unification ended in a bad situation, maybe that status quo will be the best option for Taiwan nowadays, and we can see that many Taiwan presidents has noticed the importance of status quo, for example during Ma Ying-jeou’s (馬英九) presidency he conducted a policy which stated “No unification, No independence and No use of force” in 2008¹³ and the idea is to put politics aside and focus on economy between the strait which has been passed and operating by current president Tsai Ing-Wen.

Taiwan’s Future, Who Says What?

With the development of globalization, the cross-strait issue isn’t just a problem between Taiwan and China because the outcome of this issue will affect the whole world, so it is important to consider other nations' words. Still, for a nation, we have to look for one that holds actual power.

For instance the U.S., which is the most powerful country in the world, the United State’s relations between the strait is quite complicated, since the U.S. broke its diplomatic ties with the ROC and establish ties with the PRC, and after that the

¹³中華民國大陸委員會. "政府推動「鞏固和平、維持現狀」的政策路線，符合主流民意並創造臺灣最大利益." (2016).

U.S. enacted the “Taiwan Relations Act”, their position is kind of neutral, but from time to time its position may shift from one side to another depending on the international situation.

Take the most recent event that I’ve seen in a journal article¹⁴ as an example. After Joe Biden was elected for the president of the United State, Biden continued the tough economy policy from former president Donald Trump. Moreover, the U.S. has crossed Beijing’s “red line” for multiple times with Biden saying that China is a competitor to the U.S instead of a cooperator, frequent military activity on the South China Sea, criticizing the Hong Kong issue, also stated that the United State strongly supports Taiwan.

By this we can see that during this time the position of the U.S between the strait is leaning towards Taiwan, but it doesn’t mean that the U.S. hope to see Taiwan become an independent country , instead the U.S. hopes that both Taiwan and China can remain its current situation that is status quo¹⁵, hoping that both sides can remain the idea of “No unification, No independence and No use of force” and restart an official conversation that has stopped for five years since Tsai Ing-Wen get elected as president of ROC, and with that conversation both sides of the Taiwan strait can remain a constructive relations.

¹⁴ BBC. "拜登上台後，中美、兩岸關係將如何變局？專訪美國智庫專家葛來儀." (2021).

¹⁵ "陸學者：拜登台灣牌 基調「維持現狀」." (2021).

What I Think About the Issue

As a Taiwanese myself pursuing a fully independent would be great, and I think that most Taiwanese nowadays will agree on that as well, but as Taiwan holds little power on the international stage and only a few countries recognized Taiwan as a country, with that to achieve independence seems far away, and with either the government, the Taiwanese's citizens and the U.S. hopes that both sides between the strait should remain its current situation for a little longer and I'm convinced with that idea as well, because at this moment, both independent and unification isn't a good option since it will greatly impact our living standards and our love ones, and when we take that into consideration independent doesn't seem that necessary after all, what I think at this moment of time for Taiwan to do is to connect with China more often to reduce tension in order to maintain status quo for a while and see if there's a better option for us to decide what the next step is.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design of this research will be using quantitative approach in order to get the final result. The data will be collected with two methods, first is to gather data from news articles and books, to understand what issue Taiwan is facing in this current situation, how the government deal with them and the prediction made by other experts, the other will be creating an opinion poll to understand what Taiwanese citizens think about the issue and the question that I will be asking will be based on what other researchers had asked before, since the answer of these question will shift from time to time and I would like to find out what are the Taiwanese's opinion nowadays

Sources of Data

The data that I have collect are form various news reports with some of it providing reliable opinion poll, to let me understand what Taiwanese's preference are in different times, and some providing what had happened before and what is happening now. And what is also an important source of data for this research is to understand what the Taiwanese citizens' opinions are so I will be sending an opinion poll that I've created online via social media to the targeted group, which is the Taiwanese.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The opinion poll that I've created can be separate into two parts; the first part will be the respondents' background to understand will a person's background affect what they think about the issue for example, people who support the DPP might have a preference of hoping Taiwan becoming a independent country as for the supporter of the KMT may have a higher percentage of people that would like unification to happen, the second part is the options for the Taiwan's future that is "Unification, Independence and Status Quo" and under what circumstance will a respondent change their answer to another option, for instance, when a respondent choose the option of independent can I change the respondent's answer by adding a scenario saying that if the independent of Taiwan means open conflict with the PRC will the respondent still insist on the answer that they initially choose or will they change the answer to another option. For data collection I will transfer my question online using Survey cake and post it on the Internet for people to fill out.

Data Analysis

After the data collection is over, I will then use Stata to analyze the data for the readers to understand the result easier, after that I will compare my data with another opinion poll made by other scholars to see whether the Taiwanese's preference had

change or does it remain the same, and the last will be explaining why my data will result like this in my research.

DATA ANALYSIS

Research Questions

Here are the questions that I will like to find out after the data analysis. Most of the question will be compared with a survey conducted by National Chengchi University's Election Study Center in 2011 in order to see if there's any change over the last 10 years; and that all of the comparison will be using this particular research since my opinion poll is made based on this survey.

Question 1(Q1): The identity of Taiwanese? What does a respondents identify once self as, is it Taiwanese, Chinese or both? Has it changed or not? To answer this question I will then compare my data to the survey made by National Chengchi University's Election Study Center in 2011

Question 2(Q2): What the Taiwanese would like for Taiwan in the future? To answer this question I have conduct some methods in my opinion poll to understand what the respondents really prefer, independence or reunification? Then I will describe the result.

Question 3(Q3): What will affect the Taiwanese's preference on the Unification-Independence issue? To answer this question I will be using "Oprobit Statics" to analyze the data, to find out what factors would affect the respondents'

preference

Question 4(Q4): Is it possible to change the preference of the respondents? To answer this question I have set up multiple question with a scenario added to see will the respondent changed their standpoint or not.

Question 5(Q5): Has the Taiwanese's preference on the Unification-Independence issue changed or not? For this question I will also compare my data with to the survey made by National Chengchi University's Election Study Center to find out that has anything changed in the past 10 years.

Descriptive Statistics

After one month of collecting data from surveycake for one month, I've collected 471 respondents, of which 298(63.2%) were female, and 173(36.7%) were male

Table 1: The amount of Gender from the questionnaire

Gender	Amount
Male	298(63.2%)
Female	173(36.7%)

As for the age, most of the respondents are above 51 years old, which has 263(55.8%) of them; 90(19.1%) respondents are 41-50 years old; 84(17.8%) respondents are 31-40 years old; 30(6.3%) respondents are 21-30 years old, and there were 4(0.8%) respondents that are under 20 years old (including 20 years old).

Table 2: The age distribution from the questionnaire

Age	Amount
above 51 years old	263(55.8%)
41-50 years old	90(19.1%)
31-40 years	84(17.8%)
21-30 years old	30(6.3%)
under 20 years old (including 20 years old)	4(0.8%)

Next is the monthly income. Most of the respondents' monthly income is above 51k NTD, and the number is 203(43%); 88(18.6%) respondents earns 31k-40k NTD; 76(16.1%) respondents are having 41k-50k NTD; 52(11%) earns under 20k NTD(including 20k NTD); and 52(11%) earns 21k-30k NTD.

Table3: Respondents' monthly income

Monthly Income	Amount
Above 51k	203(43%)
41k-50k	76(16.1%)
31k-40k	88(18.6%)
21k-30k	52(11%)
under 20k(including 20k)	52(11%)

About the education level, most of the respondents have a bachelor's degree or even higher, and the number is 312(66.2%); 75(15.9%) respondents with a senior high school/vocational high school diploma; 75(15.9%) respondents with a five/two-year junior college diploma; 5(1%) respondents with a junior high school diploma, and 4(0.8%) respondents with a primary school diploma or even lower.

Table 4: Respondents' Education Level

Education Level	Amount
Bachelor's Degrees or even higher	312(66.2%)
Five/Two-year junior college	75(15.9%)
Senior High school/Vocational	75(15.9%)
Junior High school	5(1%)
Primary school	4(0.8%)

About self-identity, this result can answer the research **question number1(Q1)**, the identity of Taiwanese and we can see that most of the respondents identify themselves as Taiwanese, and the number is 265(56.2%); 185(39.2%) respondents identify themselves as both Taiwanese and Chinese, and that only 21(4.4%) identify themselves as Chinese. So has anything changed in the last 10 years? Here is the data form National Chengchi University's Election Study Center and what their results are 1087(50.6%) respondents identify themselves as Taiwanese; 908(42.3%) respondents identify themselves as both Taiwanese and Chinese; 94(4.4%) respondents identify themselves as Chinese, and 59(2.8%) with no response.

Table 5: Respondents' Self-Identity

Self-Identity	Amount
Taiwanese	265(56.2%)
Chinese	21(4.4%)
Both	185(39.2%)

Figure 1: National Chengchi University's Election Study Center's Data

在我們社會上，有人說自己是「台灣人」，也有人說自己是「中國人」，也有人說都是。請問您認為自己是「台灣人」、「中國人」，或者都是？					
		次數	百分比	有效百分比	累積百分比
有效的	台灣人	1087	50.6	50.6	50.6
	都是	908	42.3	42.3	92.9
	中國人	94	4.4	4.4	97.2
	無反應	59	2.8	2.8	100.0
	總和	2149	100.0	100.0	

Although my sample size isn't as big as their survey, but if we look at the percentage we can see that the result of both survey are nearly the same, only that in my questionnaire the percentage of respondents that identify themselves as Taiwanese are slightly higher. So with that The Answer of question 1(Q1) is that there isn't a significant change on the identity of Taiwanese.

About political party preference I've only pick two major parties, which are KMT and the DPP since the KMT are often related with reunification and the DPP with independence. And the results are that 176(37.3%) respondents support the KMT; 169(35.8%) respondents didn't support both of them, and that 126(26.7%) respondents support the DPP

Table 6: Respondents' Political Party Preference

Political Party Preference	Amount
KMT	176(37.3%)
DPP	126(26.7%)
None	169(35.8%)

(Q2) Respondents' preference on the unification/independence issue

I have found a lot of opinion polls asking this question, which is called (統獨六分) by using this method can efficiently avoid respondents to choose the neutral option, which is Status-Quo, and to prove that this method is effective, I have asked another question with only three options, and the results will later be compared to validate. According to the data that I've collected, there are 114(24.2%) respondents that prefer status-quo first and then see whether to become independent or reunify with China; 113(23.9%) respondents prefer status-quo first then become independent; 104(22%) respondents prefer status-quo forever; 67(14.2%) respondents prefer status-quo first then reunify with China; 55(11.6%) respondents want Taiwan to become independent immediately, and 18(3.8%) respondents want to reunify with China immediately.

Table7: Respondents' preference on the unification/independence issue using (統獨六分) method.

Table7: Respondents' Preference Using (統獨六分) method.

Preferences	Amount
Independent Immediately	55(11.6%)
Status-quo first then become independent	113(23.9%)
Status-quo first and then see whether to become independent or reunify	114(24.2%)
Status-Quo Forever	104(22%)
Status-Quo first, then reunify	67(14.2%)
Reunify with China immediately	18(3.8%)

So can this method find out the respondents' real preference without most of them responding only Status-Quo? To find out, I've created another question with only three options, which are reunification, independence, Status-Quo, and other. And the results are 264(56%) respondents vote for Status-Quo; 106(22.5%) respondents for reunification; 91(19.3%) for independence, and 10(2.1%) respondents reply with other answers; some of the replies are interesting such as the ROC is already a country so that whether to become independent isn't an issue and the other is to conduct a federal system with China.

Table8: Respondents' Preference without any method

Preferences	Amount
Reunification	106(22.5%)
Independence	91(19.3%)
Status-Quo	264(56%)
Others	10(2.1%)

According to the result, by using this way to ask the respondents' preference have 274(58.1%) of respondents chose the Status-Quo option, including other replies, which means that these responses can be viewed as a "recessive" preference. And that by using the (統獨六分) method, two answers can be viewed as a "recessive" preference, which are (Status-quo first and then see whether to become independent or reunify) and (Status-Quo Forever) 218(46.2%) respondents have chosen one of

them. We can see that by using the (統獨六分) method, the respondents with a “recessive” preference had only dropped like 10%, and that isn’t enough.

And that is why I ask the same question once again, but this time I’ve taken out the option of “Status-Quo.” And the reason is to find out what the respondents really thinks when there isn’t a neutral option. Surprisingly there isn’t a massive gap between independence and reunification; there are 195(41.4%) respondents that support independence, and that 80(16.9%) respondents highly support independence, which the total of respondents that prefer independence will be 275(58.3%); as for reunification, 169(35.8%) respondents support reunification, and 27(5.7%) respondents highly support reunification, which sums up to 196(41.5%).

Table9: Respondents’ Preferences without the Status-Quo option

Preferences without Status-Quo	Amount
Highly Support Reunification	27(5.7%)
Support Reunification	169(35.8%)
Support Independence	195(41.4%)
Highly Support Independence	80(16.9%)

(Q3) What will affect the Taiwanese’s preference on the

Unification-Independence issue?

Self-Identity

In my questionnaire I’ve asked the respondents how they identify themselves as, Taiwanese, Chinese or both. And that I’m trying to find out that if a respondent identify themselves as a Taiwanese will they prefer independence? Which means the independent variable I’ve testes was “people who identify themselves as Taiwanese” After the regression, I found out that people who identify themselves as Taiwanese will support Taiwan independence. This shows that “self-identity” can be one of the factors that affect the respondents’ preference.

Figure2: Oprobit Regression Analysis of respondents’ preference (Self-identity)

Coefficient	P Value	Significance
+1.607046	0.000	***

Dependent Variable: Preferences without Status-Quo

Political Party Preference

The second factors that will affect the respondents’ preference is the political party preference, so that the second independent variable I’ve testes was “people who supports the KMT” After the regression I found out that people who support the KMT will prefer reunification.

Figure3: Oprobit Regression Analysis of respondents' preference (Supporters of the KMT)

Coefficient	P Value	Significance
-1.183434	0.000	***

Dependent Variable: Preferences without Status-Quo

After that I've tested people who supports the DPP to find out is it true that the supporters of these two different political parties has different standpoints on the unification/independence issue, which means that the third independent variable I've tested was "people who supports the DPP" After the regression I found out that people who support the DPP strongly support Taiwan independence

Figure4: Oprobit Regression Analysis of respondents' preference (Supporters of the DPP)

Coefficient	P Value	Significance
+1.260012	0.000	***

Dependent Variable: Preferences without Status-Quo

From the above result we can see that, what political party the respondents supports has a significant influence on the respondents' preference.

(Q4) Respondents' preference under an alternative scenario

In the questionnaire I have added a lot of scenarios to find out under certain circumstances what will the respondents react, will they change what they originally choose or will they remain the same? And here are some questions that I've found interesting.

First is that if Taiwan declares to be an independent country will lead to China attacking Taiwan will the respondents still supports Taiwan independence? Data shows that 283(60%) respondents choose not to support Taiwan independence and 188(39.9%) respondents will support Taiwan independence.

Preferences	Amount
Support independence	188(39.9%)
Don't Support independence	283(60%)

Second is that if China and Taiwan can still maintain a peaceful relationship, will the respondents supports Taiwan independence? Data shows that 363(77%) respondents will support Taiwan independence and 108(22.9%) respondents will not support Taiwan independence,

Preferences	Amount
Support independence	363(77%)
Don't Support independence	108(22.9%)

From these data we can see that China and fear are the main factors to affect the respondents' preference, some of the respondents who support Taiwan independence will change their answers to not support Taiwan independence fearing that China will attack Taiwan, and that if China won't attack Taiwan after independence most of the respondents choose to become independent since there is no fear that a war might happen.

Third is that if China conducts the democratic system will the respondents support reunification? 278(58.9%) respondents will support reunification with China and 193(40.9) respondents will not support reunification, as the result we can see that democracy plays an important role for Taiwanese so that over 50% of respondents can accept reunification with China if China conducts the democratic system.

Preferences	Amount
Support Reunification	278(58.9%)
Don't Support Reunification	193(40.9)

And the last is income; if Taiwan declares to be an independent country will reduce your income will you still support Taiwan independence? 302(64.1%) respondents will not support Taiwan independence 169(35.8%) respondents will still support Taiwan independence

Preferences	Amount
Support independence	169(35.8%)
Don't Support independence	302(64.1%)

From this we can see that income also will affect the respondents' preference, because if Taiwan independence will affect the respondents' standards of living then independent doesn't seem all that important anymore for some of the respondents, yet still for those who highly supports Taiwan independence earning less money won't be an issue.

Another question regarding of income is that if reunifying with China will increase your income will the respondents support reunification? 256(54.3%) respondents support reunification, and 215(45.5%) respondents won't support reunification

Preferences	Amount
Support Reunification	256(54.3%)
Don't Support Reunification	215(45.5%)

After seeing some of the questions we can find out that it is possible to change respondents' response, under certain circumstances most of the respondents will change their preferences, but for those who insists on what they prefer, their answer won't change no matter what the circumstances are.

(Q5) Has the Taiwanese's Preference on the Unification-Independence Issue

Changed or Not?

To answer this question we have to first look at National Chengchi University's Election Study Center's data. The data shows that 866(40.3%) respondents status-quo first and then see whether to become independent or reunify with China; 379(17.6%) respondents prefer status-quo first then become independent; 369(17.2%) respondents prefer status-quo forever; 260(12.1%) respondents prefer status-quo first then reunify with China; 149(6.9%) respondents want Taiwan to become independent immediately; 15(0.7%) respondents want to reunify with China immediately, and 112(5.2%) respondents with no response.

Figure 5: National Chengchi University's Election Study Center's Data

關於未來台灣和大陸的關係，有下面幾種不同的看法：1. 儘快統一 2. 儘快宣布獨立 3. 維持現狀，以後走向統一 4. 維持現狀，以後走向獨立 5. 維持現狀，看情形再決定獨立或統一 6. 永遠維持現狀。請問您比較偏向哪一種？					
		次數	百分比	有效百分比	累積百分比
有效的	儘快統一	15	.7	.7	.7
	維持現狀，以後走向統一	260	12.1	12.1	12.8
	維持現狀，看情形再決定獨立或統一	866	40.3	40.3	53.1
	永遠維持現狀	369	17.2	17.2	70.2
	維持現狀，以後走向獨立	379	17.6	17.6	87.8
	儘快獨立	149	6.9	6.9	94.8
	無反應	112	5.2	5.2	100.0
	總和	2149	100.0	100.0	

Preferences	Amount
Independent Immediately	55(11.6%)
Status-quo first then become independent	113(23.9%)
Status-quo first and then see whether to become independent or reunify	114(24.2%)
Status-Quo Forever	104(22%)
Status-Quo first, then reunify	67(14.2%)
Reunify with China immediately	18(3.8%)

And compare this with my data, we can see that both result looks similar with most of the respondents prefer status-quo first and then see whether to become independent or reunify with China, then the second most is status-quo first then become independent, but we can see that in my result the amount of people who chooses both answers are equally distributed not like the other result where a lot of respondent choose the answer of status-quo first and then see whether to become independent or reunify with China, from this we can see that people are starting to shift their preference to independence and not the answer that provides no preference at all.

As for other questions the results are much more similar, with Status-Quo forever in the third place; Status-Quo first, and then reunify in the fourth place; Independent Immediately in the fifth and Reunify with China immediately in the last.

After the comparison I found out that there isn't a significant change with Taiwanese's preference on the Unification-Independence issue, which means that the Taiwanese's preference on the Unification-Independence issue is already set, since after 10 years nothing really changes.

CONCLUSIONS

The cross-strait issue isn't an issue that can be solved in a short period of time, because that there are so many factors that will affect it, for example what China would like to benefit them the most, what America thinks that would be the best for them, but since this research focus mainly on the Taiwanese's viewpoint, so that the whole research are surrounding on Taiwanese. And after the research I've found five major findings. The first is that since the ROC government retreats to Taiwan the Taiwanese identity has become stronger and stronger, from 17% back in 1992 to over 50% now in 2021, and that during this 10 years the amount of people who identify themselves as Taiwanese is close to set, but that there is a big chance for it to increase in the future. Second is that the overall preference most Taiwanese would like will be Status-Quo and when there isn't a Status-Quo option for the respondents to choose, 58.3% of respondents will prefer independence on the other hand 41.5% prefers reunification according to my survey. The third is that the main factors that will affect the Taiwanese's preference are "Self-Identity" and "Political party", fourth is that it is possible to change the Taiwanese's preference by adding a scenario, for example, if China will attack Taiwan after Taiwan independence, the respondents who originally supports Taiwan independence will have a big chance to shift their opinion to the

opposite option. The last is that after comparing my survey to another survey I found out that the preference of Taiwanese on the independence/unification issue hasn't changed significantly just like self-identity. So I think that the research can fit its purpose, to let the government understand what that Taiwanese prefers the most, which is Status-Quo, so what they should do is to try their best to remain the current situation, and not to let the relationship between the strait getting worse but getting better, and the second important issue is to increase to amount of people to identify themselves as a Taiwanese. If both of these things can be achieve maybe one day the independence/unification issue can be solve.

APPENDIX

台灣人民統獨傾向民意調查

先生/小姐:

您好我是文藻外語大學國際事務系的學生，目前正在研究一項有關台灣人民統獨傾向的學術研究。希望您能夠用個幾分鐘的時間填答以下問卷，此調查採匿名方式且您的回答僅會用在此學術研究，不會對外公開，請放心填寫。

文藻外語大學國際事務系

指導教授：Philip Fluri

學生：林耿毅

一、基本調查：

1. 性別： 男 女
2. 年齡： 20 歲以下(含 20 歲) 21-30 歲 31-40 歲 41-50 歲 51 歲以上
3. 您月收入大約是(新台幣)： 兩萬元以下(含兩萬元) 兩萬一千元-三萬元
 三萬一千元-四萬 四萬一千元-五萬 五萬一千元以上
4. 教育程度： 小學以下(含小學) 國、初中 高中、職 專科 大學以上
(含大學)
5. 您目前居住在台灣哪個部分?: 北部 中部 南部 東部
6. 您平時關注兩岸議題的程度?: 非常注意 注意 普通 不注意 非常不注意
7. 請問您認為自己是?: 台灣人 中國人 兩者都是

8. 請問您支持九二共識(一個中國)嗎? 非常支持 支持 普通 不支持
非常不支持
9. 請問您支持以下哪個觀點?: 統一 獨立 維持現狀 其他
10. 請問您對中國大陸的印象是?: 非常好 好 普通 不好 非常不好
11. 請問您比較支持以下哪個政黨: 國民黨 民進黨 台灣民眾黨 時代
力量 中立 其他
12. 請問國民黨與民進黨哪一個政黨的主張比較接近您的想法?: 國民黨
民進黨 無
13. 政黨認同: 泛藍政黨 泛綠政黨 中立

1. 請問您比較偏向以下哪種看法：

- 獨立 先維持現狀，再走向獨立 先維持現狀，再看要統一還是獨立
永遠維持現狀 先維持現狀，再走向統一統一

2. 如果無法維持現狀您支持統一還是獨立：

- 非常支持統一 支持統一 支持獨立 非常支持獨立

3. 如果台灣和大陸的經濟水準相當，您會支持統一還是獨立？：

- 非常支持統一 支持統一 維持現狀 支持獨立 非常支持獨立

4. 如果大陸和台灣在經濟、社會、政治各方面的條件相當，您會支持統一還是獨立？：

- 非常支持統一 支持統一 維持現狀 支持獨立 非常支持獨立

5. 如果大陸和台灣在經濟、社會、政治各方面的條件相距甚遠，您會支持統一還是獨立？：

- 非常支持統一 支持統一 維持現狀 支持獨立 非常支持獨立

6. 如果台灣和大陸人民的生活習慣接近，您會支持統一還是獨立？：

- 非常支持統一 支持統一 維持現狀 支持獨立 非常支持獨立

7. 在看到香港與澳門實施一國兩制後，您會支持統一還是獨立？：

- 非常支持統一 支持統一 維持現狀 支持獨立 非常支持獨立

8. 如果台灣獨立後會引起中國大陸攻打台灣您會支持獨立嗎？：

- 非常支持 支持 不支持 非常不支持

9. 如果台灣獨立後還能與中國維持和平關係您會支持獨立嗎？：

- 非常支持 支持 不支持 非常不支持

10. 如果台灣獨立後，會使台灣在國際上受到孤立，您會支持獨立嗎？：

- 非常支持 支持 不支持 非常不支持

11. 如果台灣獨立後會造成經濟及生活水平下滑您會支持獨立嗎?:

非常支持 支持 不支持 非常不支持

12. 如果台灣獨立後會造成您的收入減少，您會支持獨立嗎?:

非常支持 支持 不支持 非常不支持

13. 如果中國大陸人民的思想與台灣人相同您會支持統一嗎?:

非常支持 支持 不支持 非常不支持

14. 如果和大陸統一之後會改變您現在的生活(例如許多網站像是 IG 不再能夠使用)，您會支持統一嗎?:

非常支持 支持 不支持 非常不支持

15. 如果中國大陸和台灣一樣都是民主制度您會支持統一嗎?:

非常支持 支持 不支持 非常不支持

16. 如果和中國大陸統一能夠提升生活水平您會支持統一嗎?:

非常支持 支持 不支持 非常不支持

17. 如果和中國大陸統一能夠使您的收入增加，您會支持統一嗎?:

非常支持 支持 不支持 非常不支持

A SENIOR PAPER PROPOSAL

To the

Department of International Affairs
Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages

Submitted by

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1107209020

Title: Unification, Independence, or Status Quo: A case study on the political preferences of Taiwanese on the cross-strait issue

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