

**THE TAIWANESE IDENTITIES:
DEVELOPMENT AND
CHALLENGES**

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Executive Summary

1. The Taiwanese identity has been singled as the underlying factor in social events such as the Sunflower Movement in March 2014 and the anti-textbook guideline revision protest in 2015. It is still evolving, reacting according to situational impacts.
2. Politics remains a weighing factor with varying influences in different periods. During the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party or KMT) authoritarian regime (1949 to late 1990), it dictated the process of identity construct.
3. After democratisation, the supremacy of “politics” in identity construct began to fade. It nevertheless remains a decisive factor.
4. In the 1990s, the unification-independence issue was in transformation and was often referred to as the China factor.
5. The budding consciousness of a new identity construct, wrought by economic achievement and democratic reform, became the foundation of an inclusive Taiwan consensus.
6. Due mainly to escalating tensions in the Taiwan Strait, the China factor has become a threat after the People’s Republic has amassed substantial national power.
7. Policy efforts by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, 2000-2008) government, such as history education, had also revived anti-Chinese theme in the identity construct. This manipulation has led to the mutilation of the Chinese cultural part in Taiwan’s education system.
8. Particularities of the Taiwanese identity are characterised by the gap between subjective aspiration (to become a sovereign state) and objective reality (the reality that it is impossible for this sovereign state to represent China in the international

community). This gap has driven the Taiwanese people to adopt varying approaches to different scenarios.

9. While “politics” has always played a weighing role, its relations with other non-political factors have entered a stage of incorporative symbiosis after 2008.
10. Major parties, the KMT and DPP, encountered challenges posed by this newly formed identity in various dimensions ranging from domestic governance, ruling legitimacy and the Taiwan issue.