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## Options Outside Unification through Military Force

### *The Case of Xi Jinping's Cross-Strait Integration Policy*

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**ABSTRACT** As there is no academic consensus on the effectiveness of the cross-strait integration policy, the panel study approach was adopted to present an empirical analysis. A scale to measure willingness for cross-strait integration was created based on the theory of ethnic group assimilation. Four hypotheses were derived from the social contact, social identity, and rational choice theories. The results show that cross-strait integration policy is effective. The Taiwanese students' willingness for cross-strait integration had increased significantly after visiting Mainland China. Following their visit to the mainland, if the Taiwanese students had a better impression of China, lower perceived hostility, higher evaluation of the Chinese employment market, and weaker stand on Taiwanese independence, their willingness for cross-strait integration was considered to have increased. This study makes an academic contribution by presenting an accurate evaluation of the effects of the CPC's Taiwan policy.

**KEYWORDS** cross-strait relations, social identity, social contact, rational choice, ethnic group assimilation

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The possible use of force against Taiwan by the Communist Party of China (CPC) has become a matter of global concern. The COVID-19 epidemic first broke out in Wuhan, in China, and developed into a global pandemic in 2020. This fueled anti-China sentiments in various countries. Taiwan fulfilled its responsibilities in pandemic prevention internationally by donating surgical masks to support more than 80 countries that were affected by COVID-19 (Department of Policy Planning 2022). The successive visits to Taiwan by US officials like Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar II and Under Secretary of State Keith Krach highlight Taiwan's increasingly important role in US-China relations (Qin 2020a, 2020b). The CPC branded Taiwan's cooperation in pandemic prevention with other countries as "attempting to seek independence by exploiting the issue of vaccines" (Li 2020). The People's Liberation Army (PLA) continues to conduct live ammunition exercises. Fighter jets continue to either cross the median line of the Taiwan Strait or enter the airspace to the southeast of Taiwan, which constitutes gray zone warfare against Taiwan (Lee, Lague, and Blanchard 2020). Even if the US intervenes, CPC leaders are confident that they will achieve unification of Taiwan and China through military force (Mastro 2021), and that it may happen within the next six years (Shelbourne 2021). US think tanks and the UK media have warned that Taiwan is the most dangerous flashpoint in the world (Blackwill and Zelikow 2021; *The Economist* 2021). The CPC has always adopted a carrot-and-stick approach toward

Taiwan (Keng and Schubert 2010; Tan 2014). It is worth examining whether it has abandoned the options outside unification through military force.

Cross-strait integration is a path to achieving Xi's scheme of unification. In contrast to the unease generated by the abovementioned international opinions, the Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee recommended promoting the development of cross-strait integration and supporting Fujian Province in its exploration of new paths to this end (Xinhua 2020b). In 2014, Xi proposed to promote the development of cross-strait integration, and hoped to achieve unification through economic and social integration against a backdrop of mutual admiration (Li 2017). Xi's (2017) report to the 19th CPC National Congress introduced specific measures for cross-strait integration, which involved providing the people of Taiwan with the same treatment as local people when they pursue their studies, start businesses, seek jobs, or live on the mainland. This has been implemented in the measures designed for Taiwan, including the "31 measures," which were announced and implemented in 2018 (Taiwan Affairs Office of the CPC and State Council 2018), the "26 measures" in 2019 (*People's Daily* 2019), the "11 measures" in 2020 (Xinhua 2020a), and the "22 Measures on Agriculture and Forestry" in 2021 (Xinhua 2021). When Xi visited Fujian in March 2021, he recommended the enhancement of integration with connections, benefits, and affection in the development of cross-strait integration (Cha, Shi, and Chen 2021). As Chinese military capabilities catch up with those of the US, will Xi choose to unify Taiwan by force within the next 10 years, to secure a historical status higher than that of Mao Zedong (Rudd 2021)? Or will he wait for the policy of cross-strait integration to blossom and bear fruit?

The effectiveness of Xi's policy of cross-strait integration must be empirically evaluated. The resistance of Taiwanese youth to integration with the Chinese economy developed into the "Sunflower Student Movement" in 2014 (Ho 2015; Wang 2017). Since the student movement, Taiwanese youths generally have been considered anti-China in the political sense (Liu and Li 2017), and their support for Taiwanese independence has been significantly higher than that of other generations (Huang 2019). Therefore, the Taiwanese youth have become a priority target in Xi's policy of cross-strait integration (Wang 2022). Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the CPC has sought to attract Taiwanese youth to study in the mainland by promoting the global recognition of its pandemic prevention and control measures, and has summarized seven preferential treatments and development aids (*Global Times* 2020). Academic research has showed that the "31 measures" contributed toward increasing the willingness of Taiwanese youth to gain employment or start businesses in the mainland (Wang and Lee 2020). However, other studies have showed that, although the Chinese leaders affirm the success of these exchanges in supporting cross-strait integration, the possibility of peaceful unification has become slimmer (Mastro 2021).

To evaluate whether the CPC has turned to favor unification through military force, the effectiveness of the policy of cross-strait integration should first be examined. Two unanswered questions are raised in this study: Do the experiences of visiting the mainland change the willingness of Taiwanese youth to engage in cross-strait integration? What

factors influence these changes? These questions have attracted the attention of the governments on both sides of the strait. However, both the media and academia are yet to provide answers. To answer these questions, the views of 538 Taiwanese youth who visited the mainland from 2016 to 2019 were investigated using the panel study approach. Four hypotheses, which were derived through the social contact, social identity, and rational choice theories, were tested using a regression model.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

### The Theoretical Basis for Cross-Strait Integration

“Cross-strait integration” is a political term that means the same thing as ethnic group assimilation in an academic context. It refers to the phenomenon by which people from different societies meet and narrow the racial, cultural, and social gaps and differences between them, thus erasing the boundaries between the groups (Alba and Nee 1997; Yinger 1981). The ethnic group assimilation of immigrants can be cultural, structural, marital, identification, attitude and behavior reception, and civic in nature (Gordon 1964; Williams and Ortega 1990).

According to the discourse and policy content of Chinese leaders, the key components of the CPC’s cross-strait integration program cover schooling, work, life, and intermarriage. These four key points connect to cultural, structural, marital, and identification assimilation. Cultural assimilation refers to integrating into the cultural pattern of the mainstream society. Structural assimilation refers to joining a mainstream society or making friends with locals. Marriage assimilation implies the intermarriage of immigrants and locals. Identification assimilation refers to fostering a sense of community pertaining to the mainstream society (Gordon 1964, 1978). As ethnic group assimilation usually takes time, we may focus on the changes in willingness in order to examine the effects of short-term visits to the mainland using this concept. Based on the four forms of ethnic group assimilation mentioned above, the willingness for cross-strait integration can be measured using the following indicators: the willingness to study, work, and settle in the mainland, and for cross-strait romance and marriage. The theoretical basis for the selection of each of these indicators is as follows.

*Cultural assimilation* can be measured by the willingness to study in the mainland. Culture is a set of values and customs that can create meaning for society. It can be divided into high culture, such as literature and art, and popular culture (Nye 2004). Taiwanese students may be immersed in both kinds of culture while visiting the mainland. If a Taiwanese student has a higher willingness to study in the mainland after participating in the exchange activities, their willingness to integrate into local culture will be higher, which also indicates a higher willingness for cultural assimilation.

*Structural assimilation* can be measured by the willingness for cross-strait romance. As Taiwanese students make friends with locals in the mainland, new acquaintances are mostly students of the same age. There are possibilities of engaging in cross-strait romance. As one’s social network expands, the degree of diversity increases and more unexpected information is conveyed; this can have a great influence on one’s political

attitudes and behavior (Settle, Bond, and Levitt 2011). Following the exchange activities in the mainland, a Taiwanese student's higher willingness to develop cross-strait romance indicates a higher integration into social interactions with the locals, which also means a higher willingness for structural assimilation (Chen, He, and Li 2020).

*Marital assimilation* can be measured by the willingness for cross-strait marriage. It is an important component for the observation of immigrants' adaptation (Qian 2001). It is an inevitable by-product of structural assimilation (Gordon 1964). Its influence extends to intermarried individuals, their families, and even the home and host societies. Ethnic intermarriages dilute the boundaries between ethnic groups and affect cultural and identification assimilation (Stephan 1991). After the exchange activities, if a Taiwanese student is willing to marry someone across the strait, it indicates a higher willingness for marital assimilation.

*Identification assimilation* can be measured by the willingness to work and settle in the mainland. With identification assimilation, immigrants will consider the local area their homeland and the central object of loyalty, and will be more willing to stay in the local area to fulfill their ambitions (Wilkie 1977). If a Taiwanese student has a higher willingness to work or live in the mainland after participating in the exchange activities, their willingness to settle there will be higher, which indicates a higher willingness for identification assimilation.

### Factors Influencing the Willingness for Cross-Strait Integration

The most prominent activities in the united front work of the CPC designed for Taiwanese youth are the annual winter and summer camps that attract Taiwanese students to visit the mainland during their winter and summer vacations. Taiwanese students can join the visiting groups voluntarily. They are received by the CPC when they arrive in the mainland. They only need to pay the airfare and visa fees. In the 2019 Shanghai Summer Camp on Chinese Culture, the students visited Shanghai, Yangzhou, and Suzhou for nine days. The airfare fee for each participant was just 17,900 NTD. Taiwanese students are usually involved in three kinds of activities during their trips to the mainland: exchange events on campuses and seminars, visits to scenic spots, and solo travel.

Consider, for example, the 2019 Summer Chinese Culture Study Camp, Shanghai Group. During their campus interaction, students visited Fudan University and engaged in dialogues with its students. Four thematic lectures were organized within the university, shedding light on topics such as "Navigating New Media in the Age of Convergent Media," "Fostering Innovation and Entrepreneurship among Youth at Fudan University School of Innovation and Entrepreneurship," "The Interplay of Chinese Family Names, Ink, Paper, and Printing," and "Unraveling Shanghai's Essence—Haipai Culture, Jiangnan Culture, and the Red Culture."

The group toured five attractions in Shanghai, including a river cruise along the Huangpu River and visits to the Yu Garden, the Oriental Pearl Tower, the Shanghai City History Development Exhibition Hall, and the Sun Yat-Sen Former Residence Memorial. In Yangzhou, they visited six attractions, including He Garden, Slender West

Lake, Dongguan Street, the Yangzhou China Block Printing Museum, Zhu Ziqing's Former Residence, and the Marco Polo Memorial. In Suzhou, they visited seven attractions, including the Suzhou Cultural and Art Center, Eslite Bookstore, Moon Harbor, Suzhou Museum, Humble Administrator's Garden, Pingjiang Historical Culture Block, and enjoyed a performance of Suzhou Pingtan.

For the day of free activities, the organizers offered an optional self-paid trip to Shanghai Disneyland, providing shuttle service for convenience. However, students who were not interested in Disneyland could explore the local area on their own. My students mentioned that they visited six attractions, which included experiencing the Maglev Train, visiting the China Pavilion at the Expo, exploring the Shanghai History Museum, observing the Shanghai Ocean Aquarium, strolling along Nanjing Road Pedestrian Street, and shopping at the New World Daimaru Department Store in Shanghai.

The students gain a lot of new information and new experiences through these activities, which have the potential to help them renew their cognitions and attitudes and influence their willingness for cross-strait integration. Liberalism contends that cross-border contact helps lower perceived threats and fosters shared awareness among members of the international community. However, realism believes that cross-border contact can enhance nationalism (Jones 2014; Stoeckel 2016). Based on these theories of international relations, this study expects the impression and perceived threat of Mainland China among Taiwanese students, their evaluation of the development of Mainland Chinese society, and their choices concerning the future development of cross-strait relations to change after visiting the mainland. The theoretical basis for the three changes includes the social contact, social identity, and rational choice theories. The basic propositions of the three theories are explained in the following section, after which the hypotheses are deduced in order to explain the changes in the willingness for cross-strait integration.

*Social Contact and Changes in the Willingness for Cross-Strait Integration.* Taiwanese students' visits to the mainland can result in two different kinds of contact between members of society. Intergroup contact is closely related to social integration (O'Donnell et al. 2021). Face-to-face interactions between opposing groups can reduce prejudice and increase social inclusion and trust (Herrera and Kydd 2022; Hewstone et al. 2005). However, social contact does not necessarily eliminate existing prejudices. In contrast, it may deepen them. The former is the result of true acquaintance, whereas the latter is that of casual contact (Allport 1954).

True acquaintance refers to having trust and understanding between each other, as one does with their friends and relatives (Allport 1954). Contact between groups can increase the cognition of external groups, reduce the anxiety caused by intergroup contact, and strengthen feelings of empathy and willingness to accept comments (Pettigrew and Tropp 2008). Therefore, it is easier to eliminate prejudice. Repeated social contact allows people to foster friendship and reduce their personal prejudices (Pettigrew 1998; Powers and Ellison 1995). People who have friends from different racial backgrounds are less likely to engage in ethnic discrimination (Hamberger and Hewstone 1997), and

show greater willingness to accept immigrants (Hayes and Dowds 2006). Many studies have found a significant negative correlation between intergroup contact and ethnic prejudice (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). There are five major elements that contribute to good contact results: equal status among groups during interactions, common goals, cooperation among group members, official support, and potential friendship (Pettigrew 1998). Compared to an increase in the number of exchanges, an increase in the willingness to communicate and interact can produce greater positive effects of trust and cooperation (Wu 2017).

True acquaintance can be evaluated using the impression of China as a measure (Wang 2020). Many scandals in the mainland involving adulterated milk, fake vaccines, gutter oil, polluted air, expensive medication, wolf culture, the United Front strategy toward Taiwan, and the suppression of human rights have created an unfavorable impression of China in Taiwan, as reported in the Taiwanese media (Taiwan Foundation for Democracy 2019; Wang and Lee 2020). However, such an unfavorable impression may change after the Taiwanese students visit the mainland. The CPC provides free accommodation, meals, and transportation when Taiwanese students visit the mainland. People in charge of receiving the students work hard to make them feel at home, and even arrange birthday celebrations for them. Such interactions facilitate true acquaintance, with the foundation of friendship and goodwill. Thus, the Taiwanese students will have a good impression of the mainland. The negative stereotypes they have had as a result of media influence may be altered after their visit to the mainland, as they will witness the reality firsthand. They may even be surprised by the advancements in Mainland China. People on both sides of the strait use the same language and have similar cultures; therefore, the experience of visiting the mainland will also highlight their shared historical memories (Wang 2020).

As they will have a better impression of China, the prejudice and discrimination against Mainland China among Taiwanese students will change. They may even experience a sense of shared honor. Their willingness to engage with the mainland for education, work, friendship, and marriage with locals, and to settle down, may increase. Thus, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

**H1 A better impression of China leads to higher willingness for cross-strait integration**

Casual contact refers to a situation in which there is a lack of trust and understanding among individuals, and contact may aggravate an individual's intergroup anxiety or group-oriented perceived threats (Hewstone et al. 2014). Political propaganda on both sides of the strait is antagonistic. Thus, exchanges between both sides may lead to situations that typically constitute casual contact. People in Mainland China generally believe that the People's Republic of China is the great motherland and that Taiwan is a part of it. As China's national power gains strength, more and more people in Mainland China advocate for the unification of the mainland and Taiwan as soon as possible, and even support the use of force (Pan, Wu, and Chang 2017). However, the people of Taiwan generally have a bad impression of Mainland China (Sobel, Haynes, and Zheng

2010), because the CPC has not promised to abandon the use of force against Taiwan, and prevents Taiwan from participating in both international organizations and regional economic integration mechanisms (Wang, Lee, and Yu 2011).

Casual contact can be evaluated using perceived hostility as a measure. Sovereignty disputes and security threats lie at the core of cross-strait political disputes (Bush 2021). Since Tsai Ing-wen of the Democratic Progressive Party won Taiwan's presidential elections in 2016, the CPC has taken a tougher stance against Taiwan (Templeman 2020). When Taiwanese students visit the mainland, they may hear the locals say, "Taiwan is part of China" or "Taiwan must be unified as soon as possible." This lack of trust, understanding, and empathy on both sides can increase the perceived threat for the Taiwanese students, while also targeting their self-esteem and patriotism (Druckman 1994). They may sense greater hostility from the CPC during their visit to the mainland. This may, in turn, decrease their willingness to engage with the mainland through education, work, friendship, marriage, and by settling down. Thus, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

**H2 A stronger sense of perceived hostility leads to a lower willingness for cross-strait integration**

*Rational Choice and Changes in Willingness for Cross-Strait Integration.* The supporters of the rational choice theory believe that willingness for cross-strait integration is affected by benefits, and is a carefully considered choice (Bobo and Kluegel 1993). Self-interest is the most rational motivation in individualistic cultures (Miller 1999), and is the core concept in the theory, which holds that rational choices affect policy propositions (Lau and Heldman 2009). The rational choice theory assumes that all actors rank and trade off among their preferences (Riker 1977). The preferences are formed in the system and social structure that the actors settle in (Dowding and King 1995). The goal of the actor is to maximize the utility corresponding to their preferences. To achieve the goal, the actor will act strategically and consider various possibilities, before finally choosing the plan that can bring the greatest benefit (Hall and Taylor 1996). Self-interest emphasizes self-centeredness and is related to the material level, which will determine personal behavior in the short to medium term (Sears et al. 1980).

Self-interest can be evaluated using the Chinese employment market as a measure. The legitimacy of the CPC's rule does not come from democracy, but from the continuous economic development that is made possible by the maintenance of social stability (Yang 2016). With Mainland China getting richer and stronger, it is considered the most representative example of authoritarianism (Ambrosio 2010; Kolodko 2020). In 2010, China's gross domestic product (GDP) surpassed that of Japan and it became the second largest economy after the US. Given that GDP is calculated using purchasing power parity, China surpassed the US in 2014 to become the world's largest economy. Apart from being the largest consumer of most products, China has also become the world's manufacturing powerhouse. Since the 2008 financial crisis, it has continued to act as the main engine of global economic growth (Allison 2017; Wen 2016). To attract Taiwanese youth to work in Mainland China, the CPC provides policy incentives that

can be broken down into nine categories, including salary subsidies, housing allowances, venture capital, assistance in daily life, air tickets to return to Taiwan, entrepreneurship courses, entrepreneurial consultation, and arrangements for further study. If a person fails to start a business, they can also get help finding a job (Wang and Lee 2020).

During their visit to the mainland, Taiwanese students can also reassess the benefits they can get from the preferential policies. By calculating their material gains and losses and evaluating the mobility perceptions of individuals and society (Su et al. 2015), if a Taiwanese student believes that the employment market in Mainland China is more favorable to them, their willingness for cross-strait integration may increase. Thus, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

**H3 A higher evaluation of the employment market leads to a higher willingness for cross-strait integration**

*Social Identity and Changes in the Willingness for Cross-Strait Integration.* Supporters of the social identity theory have highlighted the resistance emerging from local affection to ethnic integration. Social identity refers to how an individual identifies with a social group and understands the values and affective meanings of the group identity (Tajfel 1978). The theory emphasizes that an individual would distinguish, identify, and compare groups (Tajfel 1981). Through social classification, the systemic meaning of the individual and others can be determined, and the individual can obtain a position in the social environment (Ashforth and Mael 1989). When an individual perceives that he belongs to a certain group, social identity is formed (Gudykunst 2004). People with high degrees of social identity will seek to promote the status of the groups they belong to, thus increasing their self-esteem (Turner 1982). Therefore, it is less likely for them to accept outsiders (Curley 2009).

The degree of social identity can be evaluated using the stance on Taiwanese independence as a measure. The view on the independence-unification issue presents a social identity that is most frequently mentioned in the context of cross-strait relations (Niou 2005; Wang 2022). Although an individual may obtain many different social identities, some will be particularly prominent and dominate their choices and behaviors under certain circumstances (Harwood, Giles, and Palomares 2005). The independence-unification issue has been a dominant argument in cross-strait relations (Wu and Lin 2019). Since 1999, Taiwanese high schools have intensified the education on local culture, and as a result, the stance of Taiwanese youth on the independence-unification issue is biased toward maintaining the status quo and supporting Taiwanese independence (Huang 2019). The Taiwanese government uses “six categories of independence-unification preferences” to evaluate the stance on the independence-unification issue (Niou 2004). The more biased an individual is toward the speedy declaration of independence, the more attached he is to Taiwan in terms of social identity. However, the CPC enacted the Anti-Secession Law in 2005 to deter the people of Taiwan from demanding independence, and has explicitly stated that non-peaceful means will be adopted to prevent Taiwanese independence (Lin 2008). Xi (2017) vowed to “smash any ‘Taiwan independence’ plots.” As China gains wealth and strength, Xi



(2019) believes that any Taiwanese people who visit the mainland and witness the “development of the motherland” will show greater willingness to reunify.

The Taiwanese students will get to compare the two societies when they visit the mainland, and their social identities may change because of a change in the “reference point” (Huang 2015). Taiwanese students who visit the mainland may refrain from supporting Taiwanese independence when they learn about the risks of war and appreciate the newfound prosperity and power of China. If their stance on Taiwanese independence weakens, they will be more willing to accept China and integration. Accordingly, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

**H4 A weaker stance on Taiwanese independence leads to higher willingness for cross-strait integration**

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

**Data Source**

The views of 538 Taiwanese youth who visited the mainland from 2016 to 2019 were examined in this study. They filled out two questionnaires: once after they got onto the aircraft in Taiwan and before arriving in Mainland China, and once again after the exchange activities in the mainland ended and before returning to Taiwan. By comparing their answers in both tests, the changes in their attitudes were inferred. The 538 samples for the panel study came from 13 different tour groups, among which 4 traveled to the mainland in 2016, and 3 each in 2017, 2018, and 2019.

As the survey focused on the sensitive issue of cross-strait politics, some respondents may have been cautious in their answers or may have refused to answer. To ensure respondents’ comfort, the survey did not require name registration. The questionnaires were not marked with numbers or names. For the panel study, the email accounts of each respondent were compared to make sure that the two sets of questionnaires were filled out by the same person. A small number of respondents filled in different email accounts in both sets of questionnaires. By comparing the year of birth, gender, education level, county/city of residence, and ethnicity, the two sets of questionnaires that were filled out by the same person were matched. However, there were still questionnaires that could not be matched because of incomplete information. Therefore, although the two sets of questionnaires of 594 people were collected, only those of 541 were used for the panel analysis. One respondent was aged 14 years and two were aged over 30 years. These individuals fell outside the normal age range of undergraduate and graduate students and were thus excluded. Therefore, the data of 538 respondents were analyzed.

In Table A1, this study provides an overview of the basic characteristics of the 538 respondents. The subjects were between 17 and 29 years old. As many as 51.12% of them traveled to the mainland for the first time. Of the total, 30.67% were male and 69.33% were female. Further, 74.91% were college students, 20.26% were master’s students, 2.60% were enrolled in other courses, and 2.23% were recent graduates. As many as 74.91% were Hoklo Taiwanese, 11.52% were Hakka Taiwanese, and 7.43% were people from other provinces of the mainland or their descendants. The household registrations

covered 21 cities/counties, where 36.25% were in Northern Taiwan (Keelung, Taipei, New Taipei, Taoyuan, Hsinchu, and Miaoli), 17.66% were in Central Taiwan (Taichung, Changhua, Nantou, Yunlin, and Chiayi), 41.64% were in Southern Taiwan (Tainan, Kaohsiung, and Pingtung), 1.30% were in Eastern Taiwan (Yilan, Hualien, and Taitung), and 2.42% were in the outlying islands (Penghu and Kinmen).

To ensure the sample accurately represents Taiwanese youth, this study compared respondents aged 20 to 29 years from the “2019 Taiwan National Security Survey” as a comparison group. Additionally, the study conducted a homogeneity test to examine their stance on reunification or independence. The results can be found in Table 2A. The attitudes toward reunification or independence were categorized into three groups: pro-unification, pro-status quo, and pro-independence. The Pearson  $\chi^2$  from this test was 5.61, with a  $p$ -value of 0.06, which did not reach the 0.05 significance level. These findings suggest that there is no significant difference in attitudes toward reunification or independence between the study subjects and Taiwanese youth, thus confirming their representativeness.

### Variable Measurement

*Changes in the Willingness for Cross-Strait Integration.* To evaluate willingness for cross-strait integration, the respondents were asked whether they were willing to fall in love with and/or marry a mainlander, study, work, or do business, and/or settle in the mainland. The respondents indicated their answers on a scale with a range of “1 = very unwilling,” “2 = unwilling,” “3 = willing,” and “4 = very willing.” This study utilized exploratory factor analysis, specifically principal component analysis, to identify factors that have eigenvalues exceeding 1. A factor loading of 0.5 was used as a critical value to determine whether a question should be deleted and to assess the validity of a scale measuring willingness for cross-strait integration. The scale’s Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure was 0.70, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity yielded a chi-square value of 1293.74 ( $df = 10$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that the five questions share a common factor and are appropriate for factor analysis. All five questions had eigenvalues greater than 1, with factor loadings ranging from 0.68 to 0.82. The communalities ranged from 0.59 to 0.93, collectively explaining 57.24% of the variance and affirming that these questions belong to the same factor. The Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  value for the five questions was 0.81 for the first wave ( $N = 532$ ) and increased to 0.87 for the second wave ( $N = 535$ ). The values of the five answers were summed up, and the mean value was taken as the willingness for cross-strait integration. By subtracting the mean value of the first survey from that of the second, the change in the willingness for cross-strait integration was obtained.

*Changes in the Impression of China.* The questions that sought to evaluate the impression of China required the respondents to rate their overall impression of the ordinary people and leaders of Mainland China, and Mainland China on the whole. The respondents indicated their answers on a scale with a range of “1 = very bad,” “2 = bad,” “3 = good,” and “4 = very good.” The Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  value of the three questions was 0.68

( $N = 535$ ). The values of the three answers were summed up, and the mean value was taken as the impression of China. By subtracting the mean value of the first survey from that of the second, the change in the impression of China was obtained.

*Changes in Perceived Hostility.* The questions that evaluated perceived hostility were “How would you describe the attitude of the Mainland Chinese government toward the Taiwanese government? Is it friendly or unfriendly?” and “How would you describe the attitude of the Mainland Chinese government toward Taiwanese people? Is it friendly or unfriendly?” The options had a range of “1 = very friendly,” “2 = friendly,” “3 = unfriendly,” and “4 = very unfriendly.” The higher the value, the higher the perceived hostility. The Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  value of the two questions was 0.65 ( $N = 534$ ). The values of the two answers were summed up and the mean value was taken as the perceived hostility. By subtracting the mean value of the first survey from that of the second, the change in the perceived hostility was obtained.

*Changes in Employment Market Evaluation.* To identify changes in employment market evaluation, respondents were asked to indicate if they agreed with the following statements: “The prospects in the mainland market are promising,” “I can give full play to my strengths when I work in the mainland,” “I have better chances of being promoted when I work in the mainland,” “I can draw higher salaries when I work in the mainland,” and “I can sharpen my competitive edge when I work in the mainland.” The respondents indicated their answers on a scale with a range of “1 = strongly disagree,” “2 = disagree,” “3 = agree,” and “4 = strongly agree.” The Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  value of the five questions was 0.80 ( $N = 538$ ). The values of the five answers were summed up, and the mean value was taken as the employment market evaluation. By subtracting the mean value of the first survey from that of the second, the change in the employment market evaluation was obtained.

*Changes in Stance on Taiwanese Independence.* To understand the stance on the independence-unification issue, the following question was asked: “There are several views on the relationship between Taiwan and the mainland: 1. Unify as soon as possible; 2. Declare independence as soon as possible; 3. Maintain the status quo and move toward unification in the future; 4. Maintain the status quo and move toward independence in the future; 5. Maintain the status quo and choose between independence and unification depending on the situation; and 6. Maintain the status quo forever. Which option do you prefer?” The six options were re-coded to construct a spectrum that recorded the stances on the independence-unification issue. Option 1 was re-coded as 1 and represented “rapid unification.” Option 3 was re-coded as 2 and represented “slow unification.” Option 5 was re-coded as 3 and represented “maintain the status quo for now.” Option 6 was re-coded as 4 and represented “maintain the status quo forever.” Option 4 was re-coded as 5 and represented “slow independence.” Option 2 was re-coded as 6 and represented “rapid independence.” By subtracting the value of the stance on the independence-unification issue for the first survey answer from that of the second, the change in the stance on Taiwanese independence was obtained.

**Control Variables.** Gender, age, household registrations, ethnic backgrounds, education, experience visiting the mainland, and the time of visit were the control variables in this study. They were relied on to eliminate the influence of the demographic background, time, and location. Gender was divided into male and female. This study categorized household registrations into Southern Taiwan and non-Southern Taiwan. For ethnic backgrounds, this study has distinguished between Hoklo Taiwanese and non-Hoklo Taiwanese. Education has been divided into university students and non-university students. Lastly, this study separated the experience of visiting the mainland into two groups: those who have visited and those who have never visited. For the time of visit, the number of days between the departure date of the tour group and the inauguration day of President Tsai Ing-wen (May 20, 2016) was counted. The number of days was divided by 30 to convert it into months for statistical analysis.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### Descriptive Statistics of Dependent Variables

The changes in the five indicators of the willingness for cross-strait integration before and after the Taiwanese students traveled to the mainland are summarized in Figure 1. As many as 69.53% ( $N = 535$ ) stated that their willingness to study in the mainland had not changed, whereas 17.45% reported increased willingness and 12.9% reported reduced willingness, indicating a difference of 4.67 percentage points. The mean value of change was 0.06 ( $p = .03$ ) and the standard deviation (SD) was 0.61. Further, 75.89% ( $N = 535$ ) reported that their willingness to engage in cross-strait romance had not changed, whereas 13.27% reported increased willingness, and 10.84% reported decreased willingness, indicating a difference of 2.43 percentage points. The mean value of change was

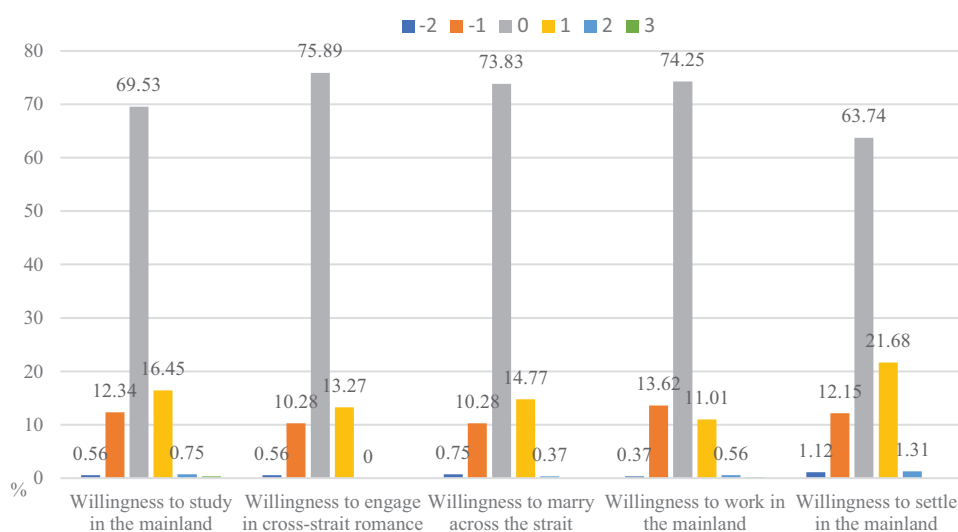


FIGURE 1. Changes in the five indicators of the willingness for cross-strait integration before and after the Taiwanese students visited the mainland. Source: Compiled by the current study.

0.02 ( $p = .40$ ) and the SD was 0.51. As many as 73.83% ( $N = 535$ ) indicated that their willingness to marry across the strait had not changed, whereas 15.14% reported increased willingness and 11.03% reported decreased willingness, showing a difference of 4.11 percentage points. The mean value of change was 0.04 ( $p = .11$ ) and the SD was 0.54. Next, 74.25% ( $N = 536$ ) indicated that their willingness to work in the mainland had not changed, whereas 11.76% reported increased willingness and 13.99% reported decreased willingness, indicating a difference of 2.23 percentage points. The mean value of change was -0.02 ( $p = .48$ ) and the SD was 0.55. Finally, 63.74% ( $N = 535$ ) reported that their willingness to settle in the mainland had not changed, whereas 22.99% reported increased willingness and 13.27% reported decreased willingness, indicating a difference of 9.72%. The mean value of change was 0.1 ( $p < .001$ ) and the SD was 0.65.

The five indicators were combined to constitute the willingness for cross-strait integration. The mean values of willingness for cross-strait integration and SD before the Taiwanese students traveled to the mainland were 2.56 and 0.47, respectively. After they visited the mainland, the values changed to 2.60 and 0.54, respectively. The mean differences between both sets of willingness for cross-strait integration were compared using a paired sample t-test. The mean value of the willingness for cross-strait integration of the Taiwanese students after they traveled to the mainland increased significantly by 0.04 ( $p = 0.019$ ).

The changes in the willingness for cross-strait integration of the Taiwanese students are presented in Figure 2. The mean value was 0.04 and the SD was 0.38. The theoretical value of the changes ranged between -3 and 3, whereas the actual value ranged between -1.4 and 2. Figure 2 shows that 28.30% of the Taiwanese students had a lower degree of willingness for cross-strait integration, and 35.66% had a higher degree of willingness. The proportion of unchanged instances varies between 63.74% and 75.89% for the five indicators shown in Figure 1. However, when calculating the

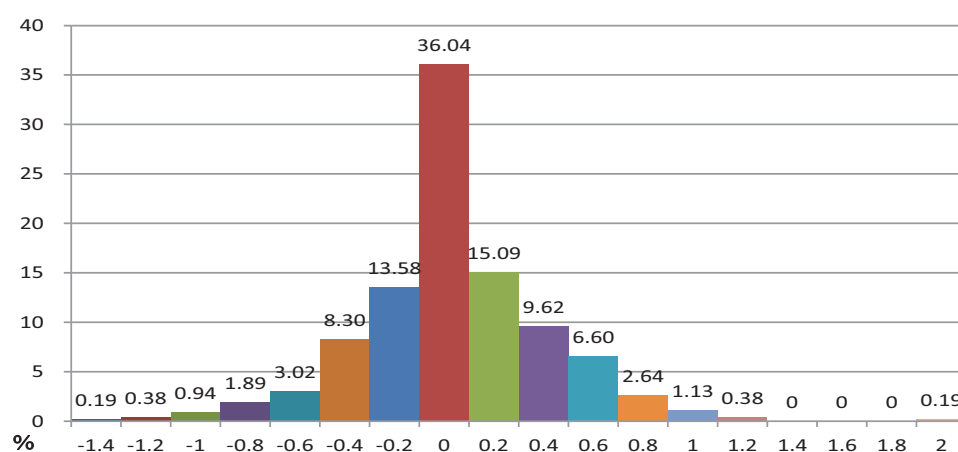


FIGURE 2. Changes in the willingness for cross-strait integration among students who visited Mainland China. Source: Compiled by the current study. Note:  $N = 530$ .

cross-strait integration index, only 36.04% of instances remain unchanged. Overall, after their visit to the mainland, those with a higher willingness for cross-strait integration exceeded those with a lower willingness by 7.36%.

### Descriptive Statistics of Independent Variables

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the four independent variables. The absolute values of skewness for all variables were lower than 3, whereas those of kurtosis were lower than 10, indicating that the data for each variable conformed to the normal distribution. As many as 38.8% reported that their impression of China had not changed (Figure 1A), whereas 32.51% reported a better impression and 29.11% reported a poorer impression, indicating a difference of 3.4 percentage points. The mean value of change was 0.03 ( $p = .24$ ) and the SD was 0.49. Further, whereas the level of perceived hostility did not change for 50.57% of the respondents (Figure 2A), 15.09% reported an increase and 34.34% reported a reduction, indicating a difference of 19.25 percentage points. The mean value of change was  $-0.15$  ( $p < .001$ ) and the SD was 0.47. Next, 42.19% reported that their employment market evaluation had not changed (Figure 3A), whereas 29.74% reported an improvement and 28.07% reported a decline in their employment market evaluation, indicating a difference of 1.67 percentage points. The mean value of change was 0.01 ( $p = .58$ ) and the SD was 0.39. Finally, as many as 66.54% reported that their stance on Taiwanese independence had not changed (Figure 4A), whereas 15.89% reported that they had a stronger stance, and 17.57% reported that they had a weaker stance, indicating a difference of 1.68 percentage points. The mean value of change was  $-0.05$  ( $p = .24$ ) and the SD was 0.96.

TABLE 1. Descriptive Statistics of Four Independent Variables

	Changes in Impression of China	Changes in Perceived Hostility	Changes in Employment Market Evaluation	Changes in Stance on Taiwanese Independence
Mean value	0.03	-0.15	0.01	-0.05
SD	0.49	0.47	0.39	0.96
Min. (actual /theoretical)	-2.33/-3	-2/-3	-1.4/-3	-4/-5
Max. (actual /theoretical)	1.67/3	1.5/3	1.2/3	5/5
Skewness	-0.10	-0.34	-0.15	-0.13
Kurtosis	1.79	1.07	1.31	3.16
Positive change (%)	32.51	15.09	29.74	15.89
Unchanged (%)	38.38	50.57	42.19	66.54
Negative change (%)	29.11	34.34	28.07	17.57
Number of samples	529	530	538	535

Source: Compiled by the current study.

## Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

The dependent variable in this study was the difference between the willingness for cross-strait integration between the two sets of questionnaires. The ordinary least squares (OLS) regression method was used to examine the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable. The results are shown in Table 2. The regression models used yearly data ranging from Model 1 (2016) to Model 4 (2019). Model 5 combined data from 2016 to 2019. In Model 5, all four independent variables significantly influenced the dependent variable. However, this significance was not consistent across the four models segmented by year. When comparing the sample sizes and the significance of the independent variables in Models 1 to 4, it becomes apparent that the main difference was not due to sample size but rather sampling error. To minimize the impact of sampling error, this study utilized Model 5, which included four years of survey data, to verify the research hypotheses.

The regression model passed the F test ( $F = 8.11, p < .001$ ), indicating that the model has explanatory power for the dependent variable. The regression equation can explain the 13.67% variation in the degree of change in the Taiwanese students' willingness for cross-strait integration. The four hypotheses were empirically supported. Among the seven control variables—gender, age, household registrations, ethnic backgrounds, education, and experience visiting the mainland—had no significant effect on the dependent variable, whereas the time of visit had significant effects on the dependent variable. For every 1.0 SD increase in the duration of visit, the willingness for cross-strait integration decreased significantly by 0.08 SD ( $p < .1$ ). This decrease could potentially be attributed to the growing tensions between Taiwan and mainland China since the Democratic Progressive Party regained power in 2016. These tensions may have diluted the unifying effects of visits to the mainland. Additionally, the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 resulted in a suspension of student exchange programs to the mainland, which only resumed in July 2023. During this interruption, events like Taiwan's presidential elections and the anti-extradition protests in Hong Kong shaped a prevailing narrative among Taiwanese youth that focused on resisting China and protecting Taiwan. Therefore, it would be interesting to investigate in future research whether the resumption of student visits to the mainland will effectively enhance their willingness for cross-strait integration.

For every 1.0 standard deviation (SD) increase in change in the Taiwanese students' impression of China, the willingness for cross-strait integration increased significantly by 0.19 SD ( $p < .001$ ), supporting Hypothesis 1. Taiwanese students enjoyed marvelous reception when they arrived in Mainland China. In addition to feeling the goodwill from the other side, trust was also built while a network of contacts was established. The students also witnessed the actual state of China's development, and their negative impression of China changed. As their impression of China improved and as they immersed in the similar language and culture in the mainland, the Taiwanese students' prejudice against Mainland China decreased. They may have felt like they were sharing an honor, which may have resulted in higher willingness to travel to China and participate in the integration. The result justifies the effect of true acquaintance proposed by the social contact theory.

TABLE 2. OLS Regression Model of Factors Influencing Changes in Taiwanese Students' Willingness for Cross-Strait Integration

	Model 1 (2016)	Model 2 (2017)	Model 3 (2018)	Model 4 (2019)	Model 5 (2016~2019)
	Beta Value (Standard Error)	Beta Value (Standard Error)	Beta Value (Standard Error)	Beta Value (Standard Error)	Beta Value (Standard Error)
Change in impression of China	0.37 (0.09)**	-0.06 (0.06)	0.24 (0.09)*	0.23 (0.06)*	0.19 (0.04)***
Change in perceived hostility	0.03 (0.10)	-0.05 (0.07)	-0.27 (0.09)**	-0.15 (0.06) <sup>+</sup>	-0.13 (0.04)**
Change in employment market evaluation	0.18 (0.10) <sup>+</sup>	0.16 (0.07)*	-0.02 (0.10)	0.29 (0.08)***	0.16 (0.04)***
Change in stance on Taiwanese independence	-0.12 (0.04)	-0.21 (0.03)**	-0.06 (0.04)	0.07 (0.03)	-0.11 (0.02)*
Gender (female = 0)					
Male	0.09 (0.09)	0.20 (0.06)*	0.05 (0.08)	0.01 (0.06)	0.06 (0.04)
Experience visiting mainland (have never visited = 0)					
Have visited	-0.004 (0.08)	0.06 (0.06)	0.15 (0.07)	0.16 (0.06) <sup>+</sup>	0.08 (0.03)
Time of visiting mainland	-0.19 (0.02) <sup>+</sup>	-0.09 (0.01)	-0.09 (0.01)	-0.23 (0.01)**	-0.08 (0.001) <sup>+</sup>
Age	0.03 (0.02)	-0.15 (0.02)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.001 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.1)
Household registrations (non-southern Taiwan = 0)					
Southern Taiwan	-0.03 (0.08)	-0.01 (0.06)	0.02 (0.07)	-0.01 (0.06)	0.01 (0.03)
Ethnic backgrounds (non-Hoklo Taiwanese = 0)					
Hoklo Taiwanese	-0.05 (0.12)	0.05 (0.07)	-0.05 (0.08)	0.13 (0.07)	0 (0.04)
Education (non-college students = 0)					
college students	-0.03 (0.09)	-0.26 (0.08)*	-0.08 (0.11)	0.13 (0.10)	-0.03 (0.04)

(continued)



TABLE 2. (continued)

	Model 1 (2016)	Model 2 (2017)	Model 3 (2018)	Model 4 (2019)	Model 5 (2016~2019)
	Beta Value (Standard Error)	Beta Value (Standard Error)	Beta Value (Standard Error)	Beta Value (Standard Error)	Beta Value (Standard Error)
Constant	(0.48)	(0.48)	(0.81)	(0.55)	(0.23)
Number of questionnaires	97	156	119	123	495
$R^2$	0.31	0.16	0.23	0.35	0.16
Adj. $R^2$	0.22	0.09	0.15	0.28	0.14
S. E. E.	0.37	0.33	0.37	0.30	0.35
F	3.38**	2.41**	2.95**	5.37***	8.11***

Source: Compiled by the current study.

Note: \* $p < .1$ ; \*\* $p < .05$ ; \*\*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*\* $p < .001$  (two-tail tests).

For every 1.0 SD increase in change in the Taiwanese students' perceived hostility, the willingness for cross-strait integration decreased significantly by 0.13 SD ( $p < .01$ ), supporting Hypothesis 2. Sovereignty disputes and security threats have always affected the cross-strait relationship. Political propaganda on both sides have remained antagonistic. While Taiwanese students believe that Taiwan is a sovereign and independent country, Chinese people consider it a part of China. Most of them advocate the unification of Taiwan as soon as possible and even support the use of military force. The Taiwanese students who heard such statements when they visited China, may have perceived this as a threat. Thus, their perceived hostility may have increased. The Taiwanese students' self-esteem and patriotism may have been stimulated, as they may have believed that Taiwan had developed more than Mainland China. This may have reduced their willingness to travel to China and participate in the integration. This result justifies the effect of casual contact as proposed by the social contact theory.

For every 1.0 SD increase in Taiwanese students' employment market evaluation, the willingness for cross-strait integration increased significantly by 0.16 unit ( $p < .001$ ), supporting Hypothesis 3. Apart from being the largest consumer of most products, China is also the world's manufacturing powerhouse. In its policies, the CPC provides many incentives to attract Taiwanese youth to travel to China for their advancement. When the Taiwanese students visited Mainland China, they had a chance to evaluate the development status and the preferential policies in detail. If the Taiwanese students believed that the employment market in Mainland China was more favorable to them, for various reasons such as promising prospects, giving full play to one's strengths, having better chances of promotion, pursuing higher salaries, and sharpening one's competitive edge, their willingness for cross-strait integration would have increased as they would have maximized their self-interest. This justifies the assumption of self-interest as proposed by the rational choice theory.

For every 1.0 SD increase in the Taiwanese students' stance on Taiwanese independence, the willingness for cross-strait integration increased significantly by 0.11 SD ( $p < .01$ ), supporting Hypothesis 4. As Taiwanese high schools intensified education on local culture, the students gained a stronger social identity and were biased toward declaring independence as soon as possible. However, the CPC has always attempted to deter the people of Taiwan from choosing independence by adopting a carrot-and-stick approach. The Taiwanese students had a chance to compare both societies when they visited the mainland and to understand the risks of war and appreciate the newfound prosperity and power of China. Thus, they were likely to refrain from supporting Taiwanese independence and be more willing to accept both China and cross-strait integration. This justifies the claim of the social identity theory that people with low social identity are more likely to accept outsiders.

The willingness for cross-strait integration was measured using five indicators. This study considered the changes in each indicator as dependent variables to assess the explanatory power of the four hypotheses. The findings are presented in Table A3. The impression of the China hypothesis significantly influenced four models: changes in willingness to study on the mainland (Model A), changes in willingness to engage in

cross-strait romance (Model B), changes in willingness to marry across the strait (Model C), and changes in willingness to settle on the mainland (Model E). However, it did not significantly influence the changes in willingness to work on the mainland (Model D). The perceived hostility hypothesis had a significant impact on Models A and E, but it did not significantly influence Models B, C, and D. The employment market evaluation hypothesis significantly influenced Models A, B, D, and E, but it did not significantly influence Model C. Lastly, the stance on the Taiwanese independence hypothesis significantly influenced Models B, C, and E but not Models A and D.

## CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 epidemic developed into a global pandemic in 2020. The CPC branded Taiwan's cooperation in epidemic prevention with other countries as "attempting to seek independence by exploiting the issue of vaccines." The possible use of force against Taiwan by the CPC has become an issue of global concern. However, the CPC has always adopted a carrot-and-stick approach toward Taiwan. It is thus worth questioning whether the CPC has abandoned the options outside unification through military force, and whether the cross-strait integration policy promoted by Xi is actually effective. To examine whether the CPC has turned to favor unification through military force, the effectiveness of the policy of cross-strait integration should first be examined. As there is no academic consensus on the effectiveness of the cross-strait integration policy, the panel study approach was adopted to present an empirical analysis. The results explaining the effectiveness of relevant policies are convincing.

This study's academic contribution lies in the construction of a reliable and valid scale to evaluate willingness for cross-strait integration. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value of the scale was 0.81, indicating high reliability. Based on policy objectives and theoretical inferences, willingness for cross-strait integration should be positively correlated with that for unification. This study adopted the willingness for unification as the criterion and tested its validity. It found that the correlation coefficient  $r$  between the two variables was 0.37 ( $p < .001$ ,  $N = 528$ ), indicating that the scale showed significant validity. The CPC's Taiwan policy aims for cross-strait unification, but it recognizes that achieving this goal takes time. The attainability of cross-strait integration and unification as policy objectives varies. This study introduced a scale to assess the willingness for cross-strait integration, which serves as a benchmark for evaluating the effectiveness of the CPC's Taiwan policy. This approach aligns with the main thrust of policy propagation and provides a more accurate measure of changes, leading to innovative academic insights.

The second academic contribution lies in its identification of the factors that can significantly affect the changes in the willingness for cross-strait integration. With due consideration of the social contact, social identity and rational choice theories, the regression equation constructed in this study was able to explain a variation of 14.61% in the willingness for cross-strait integration. After the tour to the mainland, if the Taiwanese students had a better impression of China, lower perceived hostility, higher evaluation of the Chinese employment market, and a weaker stand on

Taiwanese independence, their willingness for cross-strait integration was considered to have increased.

This study makes a practical contribution by presenting an accurate evaluation of the effects of CPC's Taiwan policy. The mainstream view in US academia is that Xi's cross-strait integration policy has failed (Mastro 2021). Nonetheless, this study found that the policy is effective. When the CPC invites Taiwanese students to visit the mainland, their willingness for cross-strait integration will significantly increase. Based on the theory of ethnic group assimilation, this study divided cross-strait integration into four aspects and focused on changes in willingness to examine the effectiveness of the integration policy. Among the five indicators of willingness for cross-strait integration, the mean values of willingness to study and settle in the mainland increased significantly by 0.06 and 0.1, respectively. The changes in the willingness related to the other three indicators did not reach significant levels. The mean values of the willingness for cross-strait integration before and after visiting the mainland were 2.56 and 2.60, respectively. On a scale of 1 to 4, the mean value significantly increased by 0.04. When interpreting the above research conclusions, it is essential to consider three key limitations: First, cross-strait integration is not the same as cross-strait reunification. Second, the changes observed in Taiwanese youth participating in mainland exchanges may not reflect the overall changes in the entire population of Taiwanese youth. Third, even though there is a positive average change among Taiwanese youth engaging in mainland exchanges, it does not guarantee that the individual changes for each participant are also positive.

Those who are worried that the CPC will unify Taiwan using military force should use the findings of this study as evidence to encourage the CPC to continue its efforts toward promoting unification through such exchanges. If the Taiwanese government and academia are concerned about their youth being brainwashed by the CPC's exchange activities, they should conduct in-depth studies to examine the political impact of such activities and formulate response strategies based on the results. Notably, the mean value of perceived hostility, which is one of the independent variables in this study, decreased by 0.15 after the exchange program. Does this show that without cross-strait exchanges, there is insufficient trust and understanding on both sides? Does this mean that the perceived threat has increased? If the problem is not resolved, in an era in which the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the sense of nationalism, will the threat of war escalate? What impact will the decrease in perceived hostility have on political attitudes and behavior? These questions must be answered by future research. ■

### Financial Support

This study was supported by Taiwan's Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST 107-2410-H-214-005-MY3; MOST 110-2410-H-214-001-SS3).

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*Published online: March 12, 2024*

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## APPENDIX

TABLE A1. Distribution of Basic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Items	Number	%
Gender	Male	165	30.67
	Female	373	69.33
Experience visiting mainland	No	275	51.12
	Yes	260	48.32
	unanswered	3	0.56
Age	17	1	0.19
	18	19	3.53
	19	49	9.11
	20	89	16.54
	21	114	21.19
	22	118	21.93
	23	75	13.94
	24	39	7.25
	25	9	1.67

(continued)

TABLE A1. (continued)

Variables	Items	Number	%
	26	6	1.12
	27	2	0.37
	28	6	1.12
	29	2	0.37
	unanswered	9	1.67
Education	college students	403	74.91
	master's students	109	20.26
	fresh graduates	12	2.23
	enrolled in other courses	14	2.60
Ethnic backgrounds	Hoklo Taiwanese	403	74.91
	Hakka Taiwanese	62	11.52
	from other provinces of mainland or their descendants	40	7.43
	others	26	4.84
	unanswered	7	1.30
Household registrations	Northern Taiwan	195	36.25
	Central Taiwan	95	17.66
	Southern Taiwan	224	41.64
	Eastern Taiwan	7	1.30
	outlying islands	13	2.42
	unanswered	4	0.74

Note:  $N = 538$ .

TABLE A2. Attitudes of Taiwanese Students Visiting Mainland China toward Reunification or Independence: Test of Representativeness

	Taiwanese Students		Test Results
	Visiting Mainland, No. (%)	Taiwanese Youth, No. (%)	
Pro-unification	53 (9.91)	6 (4.51)	$\chi^2 = 5.61$
Pro-status quo	304 (56.82)	88 (66.17)	$df = 2$
Pro-independence	178 (32.49)	39 (29.32)	$p > 0.05$
Total	535 (100)	133 (100)	

Source: This study's calculations and compilations; original data for Taiwanese youth gathered from Niou (2019).

TABLE A3. OLS Regression Model of the Factors Influencing Changes in Five Indicators of Willingness for Cross-Strait Integration

	Willingness to Study in Mainland (Model A)	Willingness to Engage in Cross-strait Romance (Model B)	Willingness to Marry across Strait (Model C)	Willingness to Work in Mainland (Model D)	Willingness to Settle in Mainland (Model E)
	Beta Value (Standard Error)	Beta Value (Standard Error)	Beta Value (Standard Error)	Beta Value (Standard Error)	Beta Value (Standard Error)
Change in impression of China	0.14 (0.06)**	0.12 (0.05)*	0.18 (0.05)***	0.08 (0.06)	0.14 (0.06)**
Change in perceived hostility	-0.16 (0.06)**	-0.06 (0.05)	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.07 (0.06)	-0.08 (0.07) <sup>+</sup>
Change in employment market evaluation	0.12 (0.07)**	0.08 (0.06) <sup>+</sup>	0.06 (0.06)	0.13 (0.06)**	0.13 (0.07)**
Change in stance on Taiwanese independence	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.12 (0.02)**	-0.10 (0.03)*	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.08 (0.03) <sup>+</sup>
Gender (female = 0)					
Male	0.10 (0.06)*	0.06 (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)	-0.02 (0.05)	0.07 (0.06)
Experience visiting mainland (have never visited = 0)					
Have visited	0.05 (0.05)	0.07 (0.05)	0.06 (0.05)	0.04 (0.05)	0.04 (0.06)
Time of visiting the mainland	-0.03 (0.002)	-0.01 (0.002)	0.01 (0.002)	-0.14 (0.002)**	-0.09 (0.002)*
Age	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.01)	-0.04 (0.02)	-0.04 (0.02)	0.08 (0.02)
Household registrations (non-southern Taiwan = 0)					
Southern Taiwan	-0.06 (0.05)	0.02 (0.05)	0.02 (0.05)	0.03 (0.05)	0.04 (0.06)
Ethnic backgrounds (non-Hoklo Taiwanese = 0)					
Hoklo Taiwanese	-0.002 (0.06)	0.01 (0.05)	0.02 (0.06)	-0.006 (0.06)	-0.03 (0.07)

(continued)

TABLE A3. (continued)

	Willingness to Study in Mainland (Model A)	Willingness to Engage in Cross-strait Romance (Model B)	Willingness to Marry across Strait (Model C)	Willingness to Work in Mainland (Model D)	Willingness to Settle in Mainland (Model E)
	Beta Value (Standard Error)	Beta Value (Standard Error)	Beta Value (Standard Error)	Beta Value (Standard Error)	Beta Value (Standard Error)
Education (non-college students = 0) college students	-0.13 (0.07) (0.37)*	-0.004 (0.06) (0.33)	-0.01 (0.06) (0.34)	0.007 (0.07) (0.35)	0.06 (0.08) (0.42)
Constant	499	499	500	500	499
Number of questionnaires	0.11	0.06	0.07	0.07	0.10
R <sup>2</sup>	0.09	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.08
S. E. E.	0.57	0.51	0.53	0.54	0.63
F	5.72***	2.98**	3.01**	3.26***	4.84***

Source: Compiled by the current study.

Note: †p < .1; \*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001 (two-tail tests).

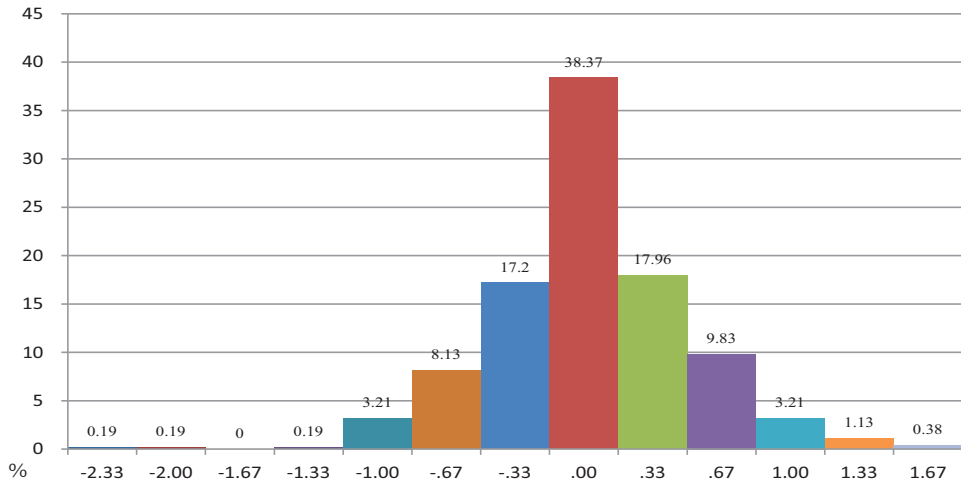


FIGURE 1A. Changes in the impression of China among students who visited Mainland China. Source: Compiled by the current study. Note:  $N = 529$ .

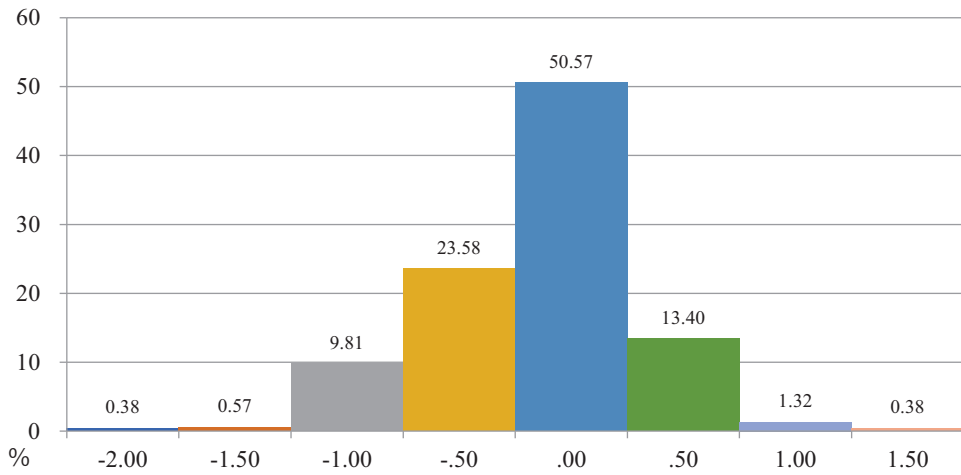


FIGURE 2A. Changes in perceived hostility among students who visited Mainland China. Source: Compiled by the current study. Note:  $N = 530$ .

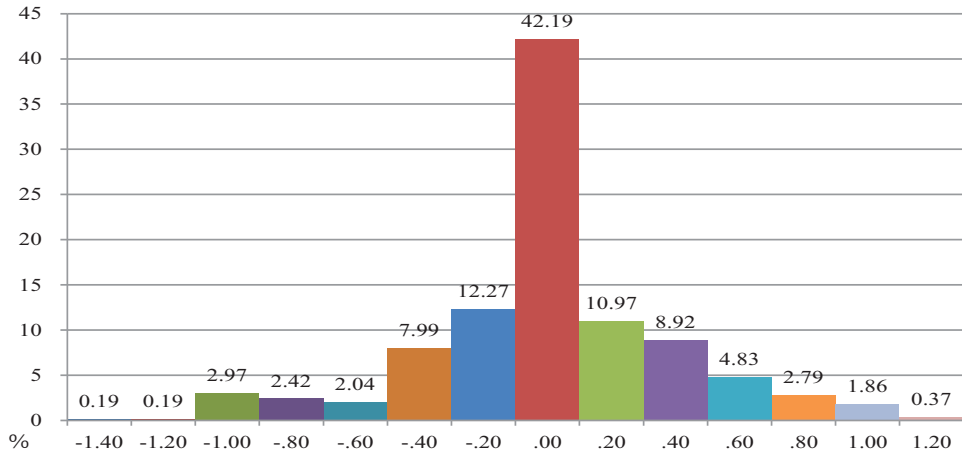


FIGURE 3A. Changes in employment market evaluation among students who visited Mainland China. Source: Compiled by the current study. Note:  $N = 538$ .

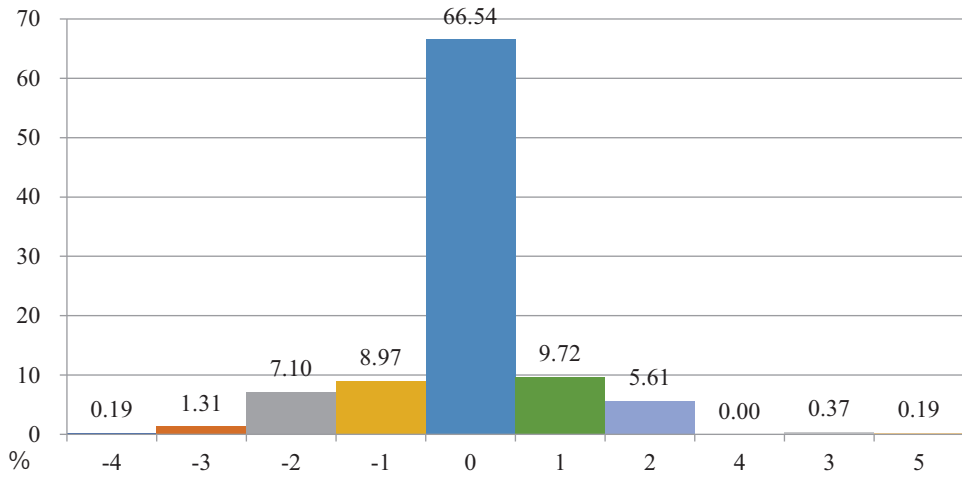


FIGURE 4A. Changes in the stance on Taiwanese independence among students who visited Mainland China. Source: Compiled by the current study. Note:  $N = 535$ .