

A Path to Critical Citizenship?

Evidence from a Panel Study among Chinese Students Studying in Taiwan

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Abstract

This study explores whether political socialization in Taiwan affects the political attitudes of Chinese students who study in Taiwan, transforming them into critical citizens. A panel study was conducted to examine the level of change in institutional trust in the Communist Party of China, the central government, and the military among Chinese students studying in Taiwan, and to explain change based on political socialization theory and social contact theory. This study found that, after living and studying in Taiwan for four months, Chinese students gradually became critical citizens. Their degree of trust in the institutions of China decreased an average of 0.37 (7.64 percent). Factors that led to a decrease in institutional trust among the Chinese students were visiting a local government agency in Taiwan, visiting the National Palace Museum, frequently interacting with Taiwanese friends, attending the flag-raising ceremony on New Year's Day, having a more negative evaluation of the CPC's performance, and having a decreased preference for the Chinese government. According to the study's findings, if we wish to change the level of trust toward Chinese institutions among Chinese students studying in Taiwan, the following four approaches may be effective: publicize government performance; encourage cross-Strait friendships; encourage discussions among peers; and avoid cross-Strait confrontations.

Keywords: Casual contact, institutional trust, lifelong openness model, political learning, true acquaintances.

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A dispute over sovereignty exists between Taiwan and China, and Taiwan's security is threatened by China.¹ In the *Report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*, Xi Jinping, the general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC), stated that the Chinese people resolutely oppose separatist forces advocating "Taiwan independence," and that the entire Chinese nation never will allow anyone to carry out separatist activities.² Under China's growing prosperity, John Mearsheimer predicted that China eventually would force reunification with Taiwan. Should this situation arise, Taiwan would have three recognized options: nuclear deterrence, conventional deterrence, or the "Hong Kong strategy."³ However, are these options the only three available to Taiwan?

Political socialization has shaped multiple identities among Chinese students.⁴ Chinese students who study in Taiwan can be divided into two categories: short-term exchange students, and matriculated students studying for a degree. From 2011 to 2018, the total number of exchange students from China was 188,263. In 2018, the total number of degree students was 9,006.⁵ There has been a yearly increase in the number of Chinese students studying in Taiwan, and study can change the political attitudes of Chinese students attending Taiwan's universities. The experience can transform them into critical citizens who will promote democratization in China,⁶ which, in turn, can lead to the protection of Taiwan's sovereignty. This outcome is a pursuit worthy of Taiwan's efforts.

"Critical citizens" refers to individuals who are skeptical about political institutions, yet firmly support democratic values and principles.⁷ From a theoretical viewpoint, "political trust" refers to the public's confidence in a government and can be used as a measure of whether the public believes that governmental actions are consistent with its expectations.⁸ Chinese with high

¹ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2017* (Arlington, VA: United States Department of Defense, 2017), 6.

² Xi Jinping, "Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects, and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era," *Xinhuanet*, October 18, 2017, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Xi_Jinping's_report_at_19th_CPC_National_Congress.pdf (accessed September 2, 2019).

³ John J. Mearsheimer, "Taiwan's Dire Straits," *National Interest* 130 (2014): 29-39.

⁴ Su-Yan Pan, "Multileveled Citizenship and Citizenship Education: Experiences of Students in China's Beijing," *Citizenship Studies* 15, no. 2 (2011): 283-306.

⁵ Ministry of Education, "Non-citizen Students in Universities, Colleges and Junior Colleges (2007-2018)," <http://depart.moe.edu.tw/ED4500/cp.aspx?n=1B58E0B736635285&s=D04C74553DB60CAD> (accessed September 2, 2019).

⁶ Yun-han Chu, "China and East Asian Democracy: The Taiwan Factor," *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 1 (2012): 42-56.

⁷ Pippa Norris, *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 10.

⁸ Marc Hetherington, *Why Trust Matters: Declining Political Trust and the Demise of American Liberalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 9.

levels of political trust have remained aligned with the authoritarian nature of the regime in China.⁹ Chinese with low political trust are akin to critical citizens,¹⁰ who could promote the democratization of China.¹¹ Accounts of Chinese students who have studied in Taiwan show a decrease in their political trust regarding China following their experience of studying abroad. The Taiwanese government's policies and actions effectively have stimulated these students to reflect on the appropriateness of governmental policy in China, and even to advocate that China should emulate Taiwan's political model.¹²

Because schools are a primary agent of political socialization, the experiences of Chinese students studying in Taiwan—whether for short-term research or for an academic degree—can be viewed as a process of political socialization.¹³ Formal education helps students to ascertain their political orientation and behavioral patterns by giving them an overview of political systems and social values.¹⁴ Thus, from a theoretical standpoint, we can expect the political attitudes of Chinese students studying in Taiwan to change in a direction that facilitates the democratization of China. However, experimental verification is required to confirm what the actual effects are and how they can be amplified. To fill this research gap, the researchers conducted a panel study to explore change in trust toward Mainland China regime institutions among Chinese students studying in Taiwan, and to explain observed changes based on political socialization theory and social contact theory.

⁹ Rong Hu, Ivan Y. Sun, and Yuning Wu, "Chinese Trust in the Police: The Impact of Political Efficacy and Participation," *Social Science Quarterly* 96, no. 4 (2015): 1012-1013.

¹⁰ Zhengxu Wang, "Citizens' Satisfaction with Government Performance in Six Asian-Pacific Giants," *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 11, no. 1 (2010): 58-59; Hsin-hao Huang, "Zaitan Taiwan minzhong de jhengjih sinren—jianyan 'pipan sing gongmin' jieshi" [The origins of political trust in Taiwan revisited: A test of the "critical citizens" explanation], *Taiwan Democracy Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (2014): 183.

¹¹ Gabriela Catterberg and Alejandro Moreno, "The Individual Bases of Political Trust: Trends in New and Established Democracies," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 18, no. 1 (2005): 31-48, and Pippa Norris, "Conclusions: The Growth of Critical Citizens and Its Consequences," in *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government*, ed. Pippa Norris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 269-270.

¹² Boyi Cai, *Wozai Taiwan, Wozheng Qingchun* [I am in Taiwan, I am young] (Taipei: Lin-king Publishing, 2012), 21-23, and Erdong Chen, *Cong Huachengdun dao Taibei: yiwei dalu nianqingren yanzhong de Taiwan* [From Washington to Taipei: Taiwan in the eyes of a young Mainlander] (Taipei: Showwe Information, 2010), 60-62.

¹³ Richard E. Dawson and Kenneth Prewitt, *Political Socialization: An Analytic Study* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), 147.

¹⁴ John James Kennedy, "Maintaining Popular Support for the Chinese Communist Party: The Influence of Education and the State-Controlled Media," *Political Studies* 57, no. 3 (2009): 524, and John J. Patrick, "Political Socialization and Political Education in School," in *Handbook of Political Socialization: Theory and Research*, ed. Stanley Allen Renshon (New York: Free Press, 1977), 204-206.

Literature Review

Political Trust

Political trust refers to the extent to which the people believe that government administration is in line with their expectations,¹⁵ which includes individuals' perceptions, emotions, and evaluations.¹⁶ The subject of political trust arose from David Easton's description of the targets of political support—the political community, the regime, or authorities.¹⁷ Based on this reasoning, regimes can be further subdivided into political institutions or norms.¹⁸ The targets of political support are divided differently, retaining the category of the political community, incorporating political actors as a new category, and subdividing the regime into regime principles, regime performance, and regime institutions.¹⁹ This categorization of the targets of trust can be simplified by dividing the assessment of political trust into measuring both the target and the substance of trust. The targets of trust include the political community, regime principles, and regime institutions; among these, trust in regime institutions is the most common indicator of political trust.²⁰ The essence of political trust specifically refers to policy formulation, integrity, and the reliability of political actors.²¹

Some studies used political trust as an indicator in an investigation of the factors influencing political attitudes among Chinese students studying in Taiwan. However, questionnaire items commonly used in Taiwan may be inappropriate for Chinese students because of cross-Strait differences between

¹⁵ Arthur H. Miller and Ola Listhaug, "Political Parties and Confidence in Government: A Comparison of Norway, Sweden and the United States," *British Journal of Political Science* 20, no. 3 (1990): 358, and Hetherington, *Why Trust Matters*, 9.

¹⁶ William Mishler and Richard Rose, "What Are the Origins of Political Trust? Testing Institutional and Cultural Theories in Post-Communist Societies," *Comparative Political Studies* 34, no. 1 (2001): 30-62.

¹⁷ David Easton, "A Re-assessment of the Concept of Political Support," *British Journal of Political Science* 5, no. 4 (1975): 435-457.

¹⁸ Russell J. Dalton, *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices: The Erosion of Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 60-61.

¹⁹ Pippa Norris, "Introduction: The Growth of Critical Citizens?" in *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government*, ed. Pippa Norris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1-3.

²⁰ Soo Juan Tan and Siok Kuan Tambyah, "Generalized Trust and Trust in Institutions in Confucian Asia," *Social Indicators Research* 103, no. 3 (2011): 347-348, and Zhengxu Wang, "Before the Emergence of Critical Citizens: Economic Development and Political Trust in China," *International Review of Sociology: Revue Internationale de Sociologie* 15, no.1 (2005): 158.

²¹ Lianjiang Li, "The Magnitude and Resilience of Trust in the Center: Evidence from Interviews with Petitioners in Beijing and a Local Survey in Rural China," *Modern China* 39, no. 1 (2013): 28-29, and Marc J. Hetherington, "The Political Relevance of Trust," *American Political Science Review* 92, no. 4 (1998): 804.

the corresponding political systems. For example, one of the items assessing the reliability of government officials was “Government officials often waste taxes paid by the people.” When Taiwanese citizens disagree with this statement, it can be interpreted as trust in the reliability of government officials. However, some students from China said that they “don’t think of taxes in that way” because “we’ve been taught in China that the Communist Party supports us, not that we support the government workers.”²² Furthermore, the “political actors” who are alluded to in political trust typically refer to the government or government officials. Because China is governed by the CPC, this definition does not reflect the true source of power in China. Finally, trust in regime institutions is the most commonly used indicator in intercountry comparisons of political trust.²³ Based on these three reasons, the study used regime institutions as the indicator in the assessment of political trust.

An operational definition of trust in regime institutions can be found in a study conducted in China, in which participants were interviewed regarding their level of trust in thirteen institutions.²⁴ Based on the principle of the separation of powers, it would be most appropriate to define these regime institutions as the central government, the National People’s Congress, and the Supreme People’s Court.²⁵ Adapting this definition to the power situation in China, which is governed by one party, the study defines regime institutions as the central government, the National People’s Congress, and the CPC.²⁶

Based on the CPC’s tradition that “political power grows out of the barrel of a gun,” and the view of the National People’s Congress as a rubber stamp for the CPC and various governmental departments, it is reasonable to substitute the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) for the National People’s Congress. Furthermore, the indicator of whether the power of each successor to China’s top leadership post has been secure—whether it has been Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, or Xi Jinping—is whether he also has held the position of general secretary of the CPC, president of the People’s Republic of China, and chairman of the Central Military Commission. Thus, the institutional trust analyzed in this study refers to one’s trust in the CPC, the central government, and the PLA.

²² Chia-Chou Wang, “Laitai Lusheng de Zhengzhi Taidu yu Taiwan Zhuquan Jieshou Chengdu” [The impacts of political attitudes on the acceptance of Taiwanese sovereignty by Mainland Chinese students studying in Taiwan], *Taiwanese Political Science Review* 15, no. 2 (2011): 85.

²³ Timothy Ka-ying Wong, Po-san Wan, and Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao, “The Bases of Political Trust in Six Asian Societies: Institutional and Cultural Explanations Compared,” *International Political Science Review* 32, no. 3 (2011): 269-270, and Eric C. C. Chang and Yun-han Chu, “Corruption and Trust: Exceptionalism in Asian Democracies,” *Journal of Politics* 68, no. 2 (2006): 263-264.

²⁴ Qing Yang and Wenfang Tang, “Exploring the Sources of Institutional Trust in China: Culture, Mobilization, or Performance?” *Asian Politics & Policy* 2, no. 3 (2010): 418-421.

²⁵ Wong et al., “The Bases of Political Trust in Six Asian Societies,” 268-270.

²⁶ Wang, “Before the Emergence of Critical Citizens,” 158.

Factors Affecting Institutional Trust

In China, factor affecting the public's political trust can be categorized into one of the following: modernization, political mobilization, cultural values, institutional performance,²⁷ or perceived social mobility.²⁸ These five categories can be simplified into two categories: cultural and institutional.²⁹ Cultural theorists have advocated that political trust is exogenous and is a personality characteristic formed by a person's life experiences. Institutional theorists also have advocated that political trust is endogenous and is a person's rational reaction in response to institutional performance.³⁰ Both cultural and institutional theorists value the effects of individual life experiences; the difference is that cultural theorists emphasize early life experiences, while institutional theorists emphasize later life experiences.³¹

In this essay, the changes in institutional trust among Chinese students studying in Taiwan are explored. Although significant importance is attached to the impact of their life experiences, the focus of the study is on changes due to the effects of the political learning process and cross-group contact. The concept of political learning originated from political socialization theory, while the concept of cross-group contact is based on social contact theory. Detailed analyses are included in the following paragraphs.

Political Socialization Theory

Change in institutional trust among Chinese students studying in Taiwan can be regarded as a result of political learning, which is considered a stage of political socialization. Political socialization is represented at both individual and societal levels. At the individual level, political socialization emphasizes individuals' specific growth processes, including political learning at various stages of life.³² At the societal level, political socialization refers to the process of passing down political culture to the next generation.³³ Since the Chinese students in this study were given the freedom to choose their courses and arrange their own trips and visits, the political socialization process originated mainly in the political learning process.

²⁷ Yang and Tang, "Exploring the Sources of Institutional Trust in China," 422-424.

²⁸ Zhenhua Su, Yang Cao, Jingkai He, and Waibin Huang, "Perceived Social Mobility and Political Trust in China," *African and Asian Studies* 14, no. 4 (2015): 315-336.

²⁹ H. Christoph Steinhardt, "How Is High Trust in China Possible? Comparing the Origins of Generalized Trust in Three Chinese Societies," *Political Studies* 60, no. 2 (2012): 436.

³⁰ Mishler and Rose, "What Are the Origins of Political Trust?" 31-34.

³¹ William Mishler and Richard Rose, "Trust, Distrust and Skepticism: Popular Evaluations of Civil and Political Institutions in Post-Communist Societies," *Journal of Politics* 59, no. 2 (1997): 434.

³² Fred Greenstein, "Political Socialization," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 14, ed. David L. Sills (New York: Macmillan and the Free Press, 1968), 551.

³³ Kenneth Langton, *Political Socialization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 4.

Political learning effects can be interpreted according to four models. The lifelong persistence model emphasizes that the specific political attitude that is acquired by an individual through learning is likely to remain unchanged for life. The life-cycle model suggests that an individual's political attitude is apt to change at various stages of life. The generational model implies that individuals born during the same generational period tend to be affected by the same political environment, therefore, their political attitudes are significantly different from those of other generations. The lifelong openness model argues that the political attitudes of individuals can be altered by absorbing new information.³⁴ In this study, the lifelong openness model was adopted to investigate the changes in the institutional trust of the research subjects, as it is the author's belief that individuals' political attitudes indeed change throughout their lives. However, the possibility of change does not necessarily imply that actual change will take place.³⁵ The key to the occurrence of change lies in the emergence of unexpected information and events.³⁶

Political socialization comes through four main agents: family, school, peers, and the public media.³⁷ Since the family plays the role of satisfying basic and innate needs, its influence lies at the center of shaping political character.³⁸ Through observation and interaction, children are inclined to inherit their parents' attitudes and opinions about politics.³⁹ Teachers play the role of conveying the overall image and social values of the political system⁴⁰ and instilling in students a sense of patriotism and respect toward the political system of their state.⁴¹ Individuals' social networks tend to influence their political attitudes and behaviors.⁴² When the homogeneity of the group is high, the members are likely to strengthen the original experience and values of one another. In a peer group with high heterogeneity, members of low and

³⁴ M. Kent Jennings and Richard G. Niemi, *Generations and Politics: A Panel Study of Youth Adults and Their Parents* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 19-21.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁶ Tom R. Tyler and Regina A. Schuller, "Aging and Attitude Change," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 61, no. 5 (1991): 689.

³⁷ Steven. H. Chaffee, L. Scott Ward, and Leonard P. Tipton, "Mass Communication and Political Socialization," *Journalism Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (1970): 649-659.

³⁸ James C. Davies, "The Family's Role in Political Socialization," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 361, no. 1 (1965): 10-19.

³⁹ Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Nancy Burns, "Family Ties: Understanding the Intergenerational Transmission of Participation," in *The Social Logic of Politics*, ed. Alan S. Zuckerman (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005), 95-114.

⁴⁰ John J. Patrick, "Political Socialization and Political Education in School," in *Handbook of Political Socialization: Theory and Research*, ed. Stanley Allen Renshon (New York: Free Press, 1977), 204-206.

⁴¹ Daniel Druckman, "Nationalism, Patriotism, and Group Loyalty: A Social Psychological Perspective," *Mershon International Studies Review* 38, no. 1 (1994): 45.

⁴² Jaime E. Settle, Robert Bond, and Justin Levitt, "The Social Origins of Adult Political Behavior," *American Politics Research* 39, no. 2 (2011): 239-263.

middle social status are likely to abandon their original attitudes and adopt the viewpoints of members of a higher social status.⁴³ Mass media stimulates the political interests and participation of individuals,⁴⁴ and thus may change people's political attitudes.⁴⁵ The government can enhance its legitimacy and minimize criticism through control of the educational system and the public media.⁴⁶

The political socialization effects of family, school, and peers are revealed through political discourse. Political discourse, from a narrow perspective, refers to the conscious exchange of opinions about public affairs by individuals. From a broad perspective, political discourse refers to any dialogue involving public affairs in everyday life.⁴⁷ The research subjects of this study were Chinese students who studied in Taiwan; hence, any political discourse in which they participated was more likely to be unintentional than preconceived. For that reason, the concept of broad political discourse was adopted in the study. Through political discourse, individuals are able to obtain information concerning political affairs and improve their understanding of political realities.⁴⁸ Other parties to the discourse become the key influencers of political preferences; the selection of such parties depends on the social environment.⁴⁹ Since the target students were separated from their families and teachers in Mainland China, they tended to discuss political affairs with fellow students who also had traveled to Taiwan, as well as with Taiwanese classmates and teachers.

Political socialization by school and peers also can be achieved through participation in various extracurricular activities. College students participating in extracurricular activities indicate the establishment of social relations and

⁴³ Kenneth P. Langton, "Peer Group and School and the Political Socialization Process," *American Political Science Review* 61, no. 3 (1967): 751-758.

⁴⁴ Lindita Camaj, "Media Use and Political Trust in an Emerging Democracy: Setting the Institutional Trust Agenda in Kosovo," *International Journal of Communication* 8 (2014): 188, and Wen-Chun Chang, "Media Use, Democratic Values, and Political Participation: Empirical Evidence from Taiwan," *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 18, no. 3 (2017): 394-399.

⁴⁵ Zhonglu Li and Shizheng Feng, "Overseas Study Experience and Students' Attitudes toward China: Evidence from the Beijing College Students Panel Survey," *Chinese Sociological Review* 50, no. 1 (2018): 35.

⁴⁶ Yang and Tang, "Exploring the Sources of Institutional Trust in China," 422.

⁴⁷ Tsong-jyi Lin, "Shehwei wangluo, jhengjih taolun yu toupiao canyu" [Social networks, political discussions, and voting participations], *Journal of Electoral Studies* 14, no. 2 (2007): 2-3.

⁴⁸ Casey A. Klofstad, Scott D. McClurg, and Meredith Rolfe, "Measurement of Political Discussion Networks: A Comparison of Two 'Name Generator' Procedures," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (2009): 462-463, and Steven E. Finkel, and Amy Erica Smith, "Civic Education, Political Discussion, and the Social Transmission of Democratic Knowledge and Values in a New Democracy: Kenya 2002," *American Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 2 (2011): 420.

⁴⁹ Robert Huckfeldt and John Sprague, "Discussant Effects on Vote Choice: Intimacy, Structure, and Interdependence," *Journal of Politics* 53, no.1 (1991): 156.

norms, which may include reciprocity, social trust, and different forms of social capital. By actively participating in extracurricular activities, which customarily includes contributing to and cooperating with other members to achieve group goals, students gain the opportunity to increase their self-confidence and self-control. It is expected, therefore, that their concepts of civic virtue and political participation will be enhanced.⁵⁰ In addition, participation in extracurricular activities demonstrates a willingness to change the surrounding environment; such participation is conducive to developing skills in leadership and social responsibility, establishing group status, and encouraging active citizenship.⁵¹ In summary, participating in extracurricular activities requires students to cooperate with others and to build social networks and trust. The result of such cooperation may develop confidence in and a sense of control over one's environment as well as facilitate active participation in public affairs. Previous studies of Taiwanese university students have shown that participation in extracurricular activities had no significant influence on their political efficacy; however, it had a significant positive relationship with participation in protest activities.⁵²

Social Contact Theory

Visits by Mainlanders to Taiwan provide an opportunity for the members of Chinese and Taiwanese societies, alike, to communicate with one another. Social contact theory indicates that the interaction among individuals from diverse groups affects the attitudes and behaviors of the groups' members. Social contact can be divided into two types: contacts among true acquaintances, and among casual contacts. The contacts among true acquaintances are conducive to eliminating existing biases, while casual contacts may reinforce original biases.⁵³ Friends and relatives are the main true acquaintances. Since true acquaintances know and trust one another, it is easier for them to eliminate preexisting prejudices.⁵⁴ Those who are able to experience goodwill through cross-Strait exchange are thereby afforded the opportunity to generate mutual trust and establish a more empathetic network

⁵⁰ Elizabeth S. Smith, "The Effects of Investments in the Social Capital of Youth on Political and Civic Behavior in Young Adulthood: A Longitudinal Analysis," *Political Psychology* 20, no. 3 (1999): 558.

⁵¹ David S. Crystal and Matthew DeBell, "Sources of Civic Orientation among American Youth: Trust, Religious Valuation, and Attribution of Responsibility," *Political Psychology* 23, no. 1 (2002): 115-116.

⁵² Lu-huei Chen and Hsin-hao Huang, "Shehueihua meijie, zaisyue jingyan yu Taiwan dasyuesheng de jhengjih gongsiao yishih he jhengjih canyu" [Socialization agents, college experience, political efficacy and political participation among college students in Taiwan], *East Asia Studies* 38, no. 1 (2007): 37.

⁵³ Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1954), 3-7.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 263-268.

of contacts.⁵⁵ Casual contacts may enhance individuals' intergroup anxiety and group-oriented perceived threats, rather than generate empathy;⁵⁶ hence, casual contacts are not conducive to eliminating prejudice. Contacts between individuals who are not familiar with one another, such as strangers and friends of relatives and friends, are generally considered casual contacts. Since little mutual trust and understanding exist between casual contacts, they are more likely to develop biased opinions toward one another.⁵⁷ Because of the biased reporting of the Taiwanese mass media, it is common for the Taiwanese to perceive individuals from Mainland China as having bad social habits, such as line-jumping, spitting, and speaking too loudly in public. Since Taiwan opened the tourism market to Mainland China, the behaviors of some tourists indeed have corresponded with the negative images portrayed by the media, serving to reinforce the negative stereotypes of people from Mainland China among the Taiwanese public.⁵⁸

Repeated social contact can reduce discrimination against individuals and ethnic groups.⁵⁹ Intergroup contact enhances individuals' knowledge about the outgroup, thereby reducing anxiety about intergroup contact, increasing empathy, and promoting the ability to see matters from the perspective of others.⁶⁰ Intergroup contact facilitates the establishment of friendship and further reduces the likelihood of discrimination and hostility. For that reason, individuals who have friends from various races and ethnicities are less likely to discriminate against others⁶¹ and thus are more likely to accept immigrants.⁶²

⁵⁵ Te-sheng Chen and Chin-chun Chen, "Liangyan syueshu jiaoliou jhengce yu yunzuo pinggu" [Assessment regarding the policy and practice of cross-Strait academic exchange], *Prospect Quarterly* 6, no. 2 (2005): 35-82.

⁵⁶ Miles Hewstone, Simon Lollot, Hermann Swart, Elissa Myers, Alberto Voci, Ananthi Al Ramiah, and Ed Cairns, "Intergroup Contact and Intergroup Conflict," *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 20, no. 1 (2014): 41-43.

⁵⁷ Chia-chou Wang, "Laitai lusheng tongyi taidu bianqian chutan—Zhengzhi shehuihua tujing yu dingqun zhuzongfa zhi fenxi" [A pilot study on attitude change toward unification of Chinese students studying in Taiwan], *Taiwan Democracy Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (2012): 92-93.

⁵⁸ Kai-huang Yang and Hsiang-te Liu, "Shehwei jiechu ji jhengjih taidu yingsiang Taiwan minjhong duei dalu yinsiang, renjih, jhengce pinggu jih fenxi" [The influence of social contact and political attitude on Mainland China's image, perception and policy evaluation], *Prospect Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (2011): 50.

⁵⁹ Daniel A. Powers and Christopher G. Ellison, "Interracial Contact and Black Racial Attitudes: The Contact Hypothesis and Selectivity Bias," *Social Forces* 74, no. 1 (1995): 205.

⁶⁰ Thomas F. Pettigrew and Linda R. Tropp, "How Does Intergroup Contact Reduce Prejudice? Meta-Analytic Tests of Three Mediators," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 38 (2008): 922-934.

⁶¹ Jürgen Hamberger and Miles Hewstone, "Inter-ethnic Contact as a Predictor of Prejudice: Tests of a Model in Four West European Nations," *British Journal of Social Psychology* 36, no. 2 (1997): 173.

⁶² Bernadette C. Hayes and Lizanne Dowds, "Social Contact, Cultural Marginality or Economic Self-Interest? Attitudes towards Immigrants in Northern Ireland," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 32, no. 3 (2006): 455-476.

The majority of existing studies have found that intergroup contact tends to lead to fewer prejudices.⁶³ Factors that contribute to positive contact outcomes include equal status, common goals, cross-group cooperation, official support, and potential friendship among interacting groups.⁶⁴ In addition, compared to the frequency of exchange, the willingness to exchange and interact with one another is more conducive to the enhancement of trust and cooperation.⁶⁵ The interaction and mutual help between students from Mainland China and Taiwan are in line with social contact theory, thus likely to weaken Chinese students' support for imposed unification of Taiwan by the CPC.⁶⁶

It has been shown that, worldwide, Chinese have the highest levels of trust in their political institutions.⁶⁷ Therefore, in this study, the biases of Chinese students refer to their high degree of trust in Chinese political institutions. The elimination of such biases implies the reduction of institutional trust, while an increase in institutional trust indicates the strengthening of such biases. Eliminating bias through social contact also can be understood as assimilation. Assimilation refers to the gradual minimization and elimination of ethnic, cultural, and social differences.⁶⁸ The assimilation of immigrants can be divided into four categories: cultural, structural, marital, and identification. Cultural assimilation, also known as acculturation, refers to integration into the mainstream culture of society. Structural assimilation refers to joining a mainstream extracurricular activity or forming a friendship with a local. Marital assimilation refers to the marriage of an immigrant to a local individual. Assimilation through identification refers to the development of member identity based on mainstream society.⁶⁹ The likely modes for Chinese students might include cultural, structural, and identity assimilation. Since the Chinese students in the study were in Taiwan for a short-term academic exchange, it is unlikely that they experienced marital assimilation.

An increase in the prejudice of Chinese students through social contact can be regarded as the promotion of their original social identity. Social identity refers to acknowledgement of belonging to a social group, and understanding the values and emotional significance of belonging to that

⁶³ Thomas F. Pettigrew and Linda R. Tropp, "A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 90, no. 5 (2006): 766.

⁶⁴ Thomas F. Pettigrew, "Intergroup Contact Theory," *Annual Review of Psychology* 49, no. 1 (1998): 80.

⁶⁵ Chung-li Wu, "Do Contacts Matter? Public Impressions of a Rising China in Taiwan," *Journal of Electoral Studies* 24, no. 1 (2017): 1-31.

⁶⁶ Wang, "Laitai lusheng tongyi taidu bianqian chutan—Zhengzhi shehuihua tujing yu dingqun zhuzongfa zhi fenxi," 85-118.

⁶⁷ Yang and Tang, "Exploring the Sources of Institutional Trust in China," 422-424.

⁶⁸ Richard Alba and Victor Nee, "Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration," *International Migration Review* 31, no. 4 (1997): 863.

⁶⁹ Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 70-71.

group.⁷⁰ Social identity theory emphasizes individuals' categorization, identification, and comparison of groups.⁷¹ Through social categorization, the systematic meanings of individuals and others can be identified, as well as the positions of the individuals in the social environments.⁷² When an individual perceives that he or she belongs to a specific group, the person has formed a corresponding social identity.⁷³ Individuals with strong social identities tend to actively promote the status of their groups to enhance their self-esteem.⁷⁴ Chinese students with deep group identity are more likely to develop greater Chinese identity and political trust when confronted with negative information in Taiwan regarding the Chinese government, because such criticism tends to challenge their sense of self-respect as well as their patriotism.⁷⁵

Research Hypotheses

Based on the above literature review, six hypotheses were proposed concerning the changes in institutional trust among Chinese students in Taiwan. These hypotheses address the influences of political learning, political performance evaluation, cultural assimilation, structural assimilation, identification assimilation, and social identity.

The political learning hypothesis, which stems from the lifelong openness model of political socialization theory, emphasizes the effect of unintended information and events on the changes in the institutional trust of students. Visiting local government agencies in Taiwan was used as a proxy variable. Chinese students who encounter local government agencies in Taiwan are surprised that “there are no security guards at the doors, interrogating visitors; the public is free to come and go.” The students' impressions of Taiwanese governmental agencies were unexpected. They described the agencies as modest, friendly, and restrained, and expressed agreement with the statement, “Government agencies are places that exist to meet public demand, and their main objective is to provide convenience for the public.”⁷⁶ After visiting

⁷⁰ Henri Tajfel, *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (London: Academic Press, 1978), 63.

⁷¹ Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 254-259.

⁷² Blake E. Ashforth and Fred Mael, “Social Identity Theory and the Organization,” *Academy of Management Review* 14, no. 1 (1989): 20-21.

⁷³ William B. Gudykunst, *Bridging Differences: Effective Intergroup Communication* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004), 77.

⁷⁴ John C. Turner, “Towards a Cognitive Redefinition of the Social Group,” in *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, ed. Henri Tajfel (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 17.

⁷⁵ Druckman, “Nationalism, Patriotism, and Group Loyalty,” 62-63.

⁷⁶ Zhi Li, “Qing Qinzi Lai Tingyiting Kanyikan” [Come see and hear for yourself], in *Taiwanren Kan Dalu Daluren Kan Taiwan: Liangan Zhengwen Xuancui 3* [The Taiwanese seeing the Mainland and Mainlanders seeing Taiwan: Selected cross-Strait essays 3], ed. Futian Rong (Taipei: Shangxun, 2012), 129-133, and Cai, *Wozai Taiwan, Wozheng Qingchun*, 174-185.

local government agencies, Chinese students who were impressed by their friendliness toward the public, compared to the detached bureaucracy and skepticism of Chinese regional governments,⁷⁷ tended to experience decreased trust in Mainland China's institutions. Thus, the study formulated Hypothesis 1 as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Chinese students who visit a local government agency in Taiwan are more likely to experience decreased trust in Mainland China's institutions than students who do not visit such agencies.

The political performance evaluation hypothesis, which stems from political socialization agents, emphasizes the influence of schools, peers, and the mass media. Evaluations of the performance of the Chinese government were used as a proxy variable. Both receiving information from foreign media and having overseas experience have been determined as changing individuals' evaluations of and trust in their own government.⁷⁸ After arriving in Taiwan, the Chinese students realized that they were able to obtain more news on China in Taiwan than they could back home, particularly negative news.⁷⁹ It was inevitable that the Chinese students would be involved in political discussions about cross-Straits relations with Taiwanese students and teachers as well as with students from Mainland China. Consequently, the Chinese students were able to see a different China through the eyes of the Taiwanese students and teachers, and had the opportunity to realize that the majority of Taiwanese retain a negative perception of Mainland China.⁸⁰ In addition, studying in Taiwan exposed Chinese students to negative information regarding the Chinese government. As a result, these students could develop a "Taiwanese identity." Indeed, more than half the students believed that the Chinese government should learn from the Taiwanese government.⁸¹ The information communicated by the media and the political discussions they encountered may have encouraged the Chinese students to adopt a more democratic standard when evaluating the performance of government. Therefore, it was expected that their satisfaction toward the Chinese government was likely to be reduced,

⁷⁷ Lianjiang Li, "Political Trust in Rural China," *Modern China* 30, no. 2 (2004): 230-234.

⁷⁸ Haifeng Huang, "International Knowledge and Domestic Evaluations in a Changing Society: The Case of China," *American Political Science Review* 109, no. 3 (2015): 613-632, and Li and Feng, "Overseas Study Experience and Students' Attitudes toward China," 27-52.

⁷⁹ Cai, *Wozai Taiwan, Wozheng Qingchun*, 21.

⁸⁰ Richard Sobel, William-Arthur Haynes, and Yu Zheng, "The Polls Trends—Taiwan Public Opinion Trends, 1992–2008: Exploring Attitudes on Cross-Straits Issues," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 74, no. 4 (2010): 785-803.

⁸¹ Chia-chou Wang, "Laitai Jiuxue dui Lusheng Zhengzhi Taidu zhi Yingxiang—Kaifangshi Wenjuan Diaochafa zhi Fenxi" [The impact of studying in Taiwan on the political attitude of Chinese students], *Studies on Chinese Communism* 47, no. 1 (2013): 80-81.

leading to a reduction of their trust in Mainland China's institutions. A second hypothesis was thus proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Chinese students whose evaluation of the CPC's performance becomes more negative are more likely to experience decreased trust in Mainland China's institutions than those whose evaluations are more positive.

The cultural assimilation hypothesis, which stems from social contact theory, emphasizes the effect on institutional trust of enhancing knowledge about the outgroup. Visiting the National Palace Museum in Taipei was used as a proxy variable. In cultural assimilation, culture can be viewed as a set of values and customs that are meaningful to members of the society in which such values and customs apply. Culture is generally divided into high culture and popular culture. Examples of high culture are literature and art, which typically are attractive to the elites of a society. By contrast, popular culture refers to activities that appeal to the masses.⁸² The National Palace Museum in Taipei, whose price of admission is affordable for the general public, houses the largest collection of artefacts that preserve Chinese cultural heritage. Thus, the National Palace Museum combines the characteristics of both high and popular culture. Chinese students who visit the National Palace Museum are likely to perceive a stark contrast between the destruction of artefacts during China's Cultural Revolution and the abundance of artefacts preserved by the Museum. This may further lead to the conclusion that authentic Chinese culture has survived in Taiwan. This difference in the treatment of artefacts may cause Chinese students to question the administration of the CPC, leading to decreased trust in the regime's institutions. Accordingly, the study formulated Hypothesis 3 as follows:

Hypothesis 3: Chinese students who visit the National Palace Museum are more likely to experience decreased trust in Mainland China's institutions than those who do not visit the museum.

The structural assimilation hypothesis stresses the influence of empathy developed from contact with true acquaintances. The frequency of interaction with Taiwanese friends was used as a proxy variable. Friends are considered the main true acquaintances. Individuals who have friends from ethnic groups other than their own are better able to understand the feelings of and empathize with other individuals; hence, their ethnic biases tend to be low.

⁸² Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books Group, 2004), 11.

The frequency of interaction between Chinese students and their Taiwanese friends facilitates interpersonal trust; hence, they are more likely to experience a value shift. Through interactions with such social capital, Chinese students are more likely to recognize the assessments of their Taiwanese friends of the Chinese government, thus reducing their trust in Mainland China's institutions. Accordingly, Hypothesis 4 was proposed:

Hypothesis 4: Chinese students studying in Taiwan who frequently interact with Taiwanese friends are more likely to experience decreased trust in Mainland China's institutions than students who do not interact with Taiwanese friends as frequently.

The identification assimilation hypothesis, which combines social contact and political socialization theories, focuses on the in-depth influences of political learning, political performance evaluation, cultural assimilation, and structural assimilation. Participation in the flag-raising ceremony on New Year's Day was used as a proxy variable. Individuals create their own identity based on varying degrees of pressure, incentive, and freedom.⁸³ When an individual accepts the influence of a given group to establish and maintain a satisfying self-defining relationship, his or her group identity is formed.⁸⁴ In most cases, individuals live happily with multiple group identities, and change their identities according to the needs of the environment.⁸⁵ Chinese students studying in Taiwan view the cross-Strait governments as governments in competition. Therefore, comparing the governing outcomes of the two governments is common among these students. The experiences of Chinese students can be summarized as follows: "Taiwan's literacy, freedom, and humane policies have not only impressed and attracted Chinese students, but have also made them reflect on Mainland Chinese society and policies. More than half of Chinese students [studying in Taiwan] would like to live in Taiwan."⁸⁶ When Chinese students have the desire to immigrate to Taiwan, their psychological attachment to the government of Taiwan comes from their approval of its performance and policies to the point of wishing to live under such governance. This identification with the Taiwanese government

⁸³ Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 22.

⁸⁴ Herbert C. Kelman, "Interests, Relationships, Identities: Three Central Issues for Individuals and Groups in Negotiating Their Social Environment," *Annual Review of Psychology* 57 (2006): 3-4.

⁸⁵ Anthony D. Smith, "National Identity and the Idea of European Unity," *International Affairs*, 68, no. 1 (1992): 59.

⁸⁶ Wang, "Laitai Jiuxue dui Lusheng Zhengzhi Taidu zhi Yingxiang—Kaifangshi Wenjuan Diaochafa zhi Fenxi," 75.

can be classified as an effect of government performance, and an example of an external manifestation of this identification is attending the flag-raising ceremony on the Founding Day of the Republic of China (New Year's Day). Thus, the study formulated Hypothesis 5:

Hypothesis 5: Chinese students who attend the flag-raising ceremony on New Year's Day in Taiwan are more likely to experience decreased trust in Mainland China's institutions than students who do not attend.

The social identity hypothesis, which also stems from social contact theory, demonstrates the impact of threat perception following casual contact. The preferences of the Chinese government were used as a proxy variable. Chinese students are required to receive political instruction at various stages of education, hence, official statements have infiltrated their intuitive responses.⁸⁷ The proportion of Chinese college students who feel close to the state was previously determined to be 95 percent;⁸⁸ the nationalistic sentiment of the Chinese people is thus considered to be the highest in the world.⁸⁹ Because the CPC claims that it will not abandon the use of force against Taiwan and the Chinese government restricts Taiwan's participation in international events as an independent state, Taiwanese students generally have a negative perception of Mainland China. If the Chinese students in the study possessed high group identity, they tended to promote China's status to improve their self-esteem. When such students are confronted with negative information regarding China, and when they lack trust in and understanding of the disseminators of this information, neither the Chinese students nor the disseminators of adverse information are likely to show empathy toward one another. As a result, their threat perception is likely to increase, stimulating self-respect and patriotism. For this reason, students who have a strong preference for the Chinese government are likely to embellish the image of the Chinese government, leading to greater trust in the CPC, the central government, and the PLA. Hence, Hypothesis 6 was proposed:

Hypothesis 6: Chinese students studying in Taiwan whose preference for the Chinese government increases, experience a corresponding increase of trust in Mainland China's institutions.

⁸⁷ Cheng-liang Lee, *Zhongguoke: Jishang Honglingjin de Zhongguo Shi Qingchun* [A Chinese lesson: Red-scarfed teenage years in China] (Taipei: Sunrise Press, 2012), 30-32.

⁸⁸ Elina Sinkkonen, "Nationalism, Patriotism and Foreign Policy Attitudes among Chinese University Students," *China Quarterly* 216 (2013): 1052.

⁸⁹ Wenfang Tang and Benjamin Darr, "Chinese Nationalism and Its Political and Social Origins," *Journal of Contemporary China* 21, no. 77 (2012): 815-816.

Data, Measurement, and Methods

The subjects of this study were short-term research exchange students from China who were enrolled in a single Taiwanese university between September 2010 and January 2011. The university was chosen primarily because the number and distribution of Chinese students were convenient for data collection: the university's 267 Chinese students originated from thirty-three distinct universities in China. Among them, 38.5 percent were from twelve "Project 985" elite universities,⁹⁰ 30.7 percent were from nine "Project 211" universities,⁹¹ and 30.7 percent were from twelve other universities.⁹² The distribution of differences thus was conducive to exploring the commonality among subjects of the study.

The first questionnaire was distributed on September 23, 2010, during an orientation seminar in the first week of school. The self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 267 students, and 206 responses were received. The second questionnaire was distributed on January 9, 2011, seventeen weeks after the beginning of the term. The questionnaire was distributed to 267 students, and 233 responses were received. The demographic data of the respondents was used to compare the two surveys in order to identify samples that could be used in the panel study. Initially, email addresses provided for the two surveys were examined; a match ensured that the two surveys were answered by the same respondent. However, some respondents did not provide an email address or provided different ones. In these situations, we examined responses to questions such as province in which their school is located, province of residence, sex, year of birth, years in school, and the college attended in Taiwan. Thus, only 115 questionnaires were valid for the panel study.

Among the 115 participants in the panel study, 96.4 percent were born between 1986 and 1991. Female and male students comprised 74.8 percent and 25.2 percent, respectively. A total of 98.3 percent were undergraduate students

⁹⁰ These twelve "Project 985" universities are Harbin Institute of Technology; Huazhong University of Science and Technology; Jilin University; Lanzhou University; Nanjing University; Northeastern University; Ocean University of China; Shandong University; University of Electronic Science and Technology of China; Wuhan University; Xiamen University; and Xi'an Jiaotong University.

⁹¹ The nine "Project 211" universities are Beijing Jiaotong University; Chang'an University; Communication University of China; Guangxi University; Guizhou University; Hefei University of Technology; Jinan University; Southwest Jiaotong University; and Southwest University.

⁹² The other twelve universities are Anhui Science and Technology University; Chengdu University of Traditional Chinese Medicine; China Three Gorges University; China West Normal University; Guangdong Communications Polytechnic; Guangdong University of Foreign Studies; Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine; Guangzhou University; Huaqiao University; Shantou University; Wenzhou Medical College; and Zhuhai College of Jilin University.

and 1.7 percent were postgraduate students. In terms of their household registration (or *hujū*), 79.1 percent were from urban areas and 19.1 percent were from rural areas.

Dependent Variable: Institutional Trust

The items used to measure institutional trust were as follows:

“How much trust do you have in the CPC?” (你對於中國共產黨的信任程度怎麼樣?)

“How much trust do you have in the central government?” (你對於中國中央政府的信任程度怎麼樣?)

“How much trust do you have in the PLA?” (你對於中國解放軍的信任程度怎麼樣?)

A six-point scale was used to measure the students' trust, with values ranging from 1 (absolute distrust) to 6 (absolute trust). The mean score of the three items was calculated. The higher the value, the higher the degree of institutional trust. The change in value was obtained by subtracting the value of the first set of data from the value of the second set of data. The maximal value was ± 5 . A larger value represented a greater increase in institutional trust in the CPC, the central government, and China's military following arrival in Taiwan.

In this study, exploratory factor analysis was employed to extract the factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1. Next, 0.5 was used as the threshold value of the factor loading cut-off to test the construction validity of the institutional trust scale. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of the scale was 0.62, and the chi-square value of Bartlett's test of sphericity was 140.41 ($df = 3, p < 0.001$), indicating that the three items had common factors and were suitable for factor analysis. The eigenvalues of the three items were all greater than 1; the factor loadings had a value of between 0.71 and 0.92; the commonalities were between 0.50 and 0.84; and the total explainable variation was 71.46 percent. Therefore, the three items belonged to the same factor. The Cronbach's α of the three items was 0.80, indicating that the internal consistency of the scale was satisfactory.

Independent Variables

Political Learning

The question used to measure political learning was: “Have you visited any local government agencies during your stay in Taiwan? Local government agencies include county (municipality) government and public offices at the township, town, city, and district levels.” (你來台期間是否有參觀地方行政機

關之經驗？地方行政機關包括縣、市政府與鄉、鎮、市、區公所。） Six options were provided: “never”; “once”; “twice”; “three times”; “four times”; and “five times or more.” During the analysis, the responses were divided into “with” and “without” corresponding experience.

Performance Evaluation

The study assessed the participants’ evaluations of the CPC’s performance by eliciting their views in seven dimensions: judicial independence; sovereignty of the people; separation of powers; right to equality; right to life; freedom of expression; and freedom of association. The questionnaire items that elicited these views were adopted from the Asian Barometer Survey.⁹³ Responses to each question were measured using a four-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). During the analysis, the responses to the sovereignty of the people and separation of powers items were reverse-coded. The average of the responses to the seven items was calculated. The lowest (highest) possible value was 1 (4). A larger value represents a more positive evaluation of the government’s performance. The Cronbach’s α value for the seven items was 0.84 for the first dataset and 0.85 for the second dataset. The change in value was obtained by subtracting the value of the first dataset from the value of the second dataset. The maximal theoretical value for this change was ± 3 . A larger value represents a more positive increase in the evaluation of the Chinese government’s performance.

Cultural Assimilation

The question used to measure cultural assimilation was, “Have you visited the National Palace Museum during your stay in Taiwan?” (你來台期間是否有參觀故宮博物院經驗？) Six options were provided: “never”; “once”; “twice”; “three times”; “four times”; and “five times or more.” During the analysis, the responses were divided into “with” and “without” corresponding experience.

Structural Assimilation

The Chinese students were asked how frequently they interacted with Taiwanese friends. The question was, “How often do you communicate with your Taiwanese friends (one-on-one communication, including verbal

⁹³ The items that assessed the seven dimensions are as follows: “Our current courts always punish the guilty even if they are high-ranking officials.” (法院一定會讓罪犯得到處罰，政府高級官員也不例外。) “Between elections, the people have no way of holding the government responsible for its actions.” (選舉結束後，人民沒有任何辦法約束政府的所作所為。) “When the government breaks the laws, there is nothing the legal system can do.” (當政府違法時，司法機關也無能為力。) “Everyone is treated equally by the government.” (人人皆可受到政府的公平對待。) “People have basic necessities like food, clothes, and shelter.” (人們都有東西吃、有衣服穿、有地方住等基本的生活必需品。) “People are free to speak what they think without fear.” (人們可以自由表達他們的想法不用擔心害怕。) “People can join any organization they like without fear.” (人們可以參加任何自己喜歡的組織不用擔心害怕。)

communication, by telephone, by writing letters, or through the Internet)?” (請問你與台灣朋友多久接觸一次？指一對一的接觸，包括講話、打電話、寫信、透過電腦網路等。) Students were given a choice of five responses: “once a week or more”; “once every five or six days”; “once every three or four days”; “once every day or two”; and “once a day.” The first three responses were encoded as *seldom* and the last two responses were encoded as *often*.

Identification Assimilation

The question used to measure identification assimilation was, “Did you watch the flag-raising ceremony on New Year’s Day during your stay in Taiwan?” (你來台期間是否有參與元旦升旗之經驗?) Four options were provided: “never”; “yes, but I stayed only for a short while”; “yes, I stayed for some time”; and “I watched the entire process.” During the analysis, the responses were divided into “with” and “without” corresponding experience.

Social Identity

The following question was employed to determine social identity: “How do you feel about the Chinese government? A response of 0 represents a strong dislike, and a response of 10 represents a strong liking.” (你對中國大陸政府的感覺是幾分？0分表示非常不喜歡，10分表示非常喜歡。) The change in value was obtained by subtracting the value of the first dataset from the value of the second dataset. The highest maximal value for this change was ± 10 . A larger value represents a greater increase in preference for the Chinese government after arriving in Taiwan and a higher degree of change in social identity.

Control Variables

Gender, *hujj* (household registration type), and participation in extracurricular activities were introduced as control variables in this study. Gender is the control variable most frequently used in demographic analyses. The question employed for assessing household registration type was the following: “Is your household registration in a rural or urban area?” (請問你的戶籍屬於農村或城市?) Students from rural areas are more likely to have received information from fewer sources, and to have more frequently encountered patriotism and loyalty to the CPC compared with students from urban areas. The study anticipated that this social identity caused rural students to be less likely than their urban counterparts to experience a decrease in institutional trust. The question to measure participation in extracurricular activities was, “How many days per week do you participate in extracurricular activities (including activities initiated by Chinese students)?” (請問您平均每週有幾天參加社團活動？含陸生自行發起的活動。) Five options were provided: “none”; “one to two days”; “three to four days”; “five to six days”; and “every day.” During the analysis, the responses were divided into “with” and “without” corresponding experience. Based on the political learning and peer influence concepts of political socialization theory, it was expected that the trust in Mainland China’s

institutions of students who participated in extracurricular activities was likely to be reduced following their visit to Taiwan.

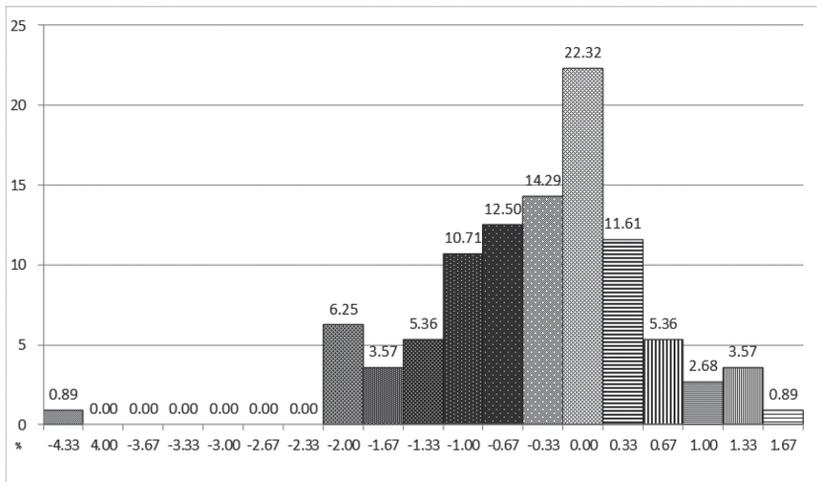
Data Analysis and Discussion

Change in Mainland China Institutional Trust among Chinese Students Studying in Taiwan

When the Chinese students first arrived in Taiwan, their average trust (standard deviation, *SD*) in the CPC, central government, and PLA was 4.57 (1.10), 4.72 (0.97), and 5.18 (0.83), respectively. Four months later, their average trust in these institutions had declined to 4.19 (1.11), 4.42 (1.01), and 4.81 (1.09), respectively. Performing a pairwise *t* test on the difference between these responses indicated a significant decrease in the average trust that the students had in the three institutions, by 8.75 percent ($p < .001$), 6.36 percent ($p < .01$), and 7.34 percent ($p < .001$), respectively.

When the Chinese students first arrived in Taiwan, their average institutional trust index was 4.84 ($SD = 0.82$). Four months later, their average institutional trust index was 4.47 ($SD = 0.95$). The average value of change in institutional trust was -0.37 ($SD = 0.90$). Performing a pairwise *t* test on the average values of the institutional trust index within this four-month period indicated that the students' average institutional trust had decreased significantly by 7.64 percent ($p < .001$). Figure 1 shows that 53.57 percent of the participants experienced a decrease in institutional trust, 24.11 percent experienced an increase, and

Figure 1. Change in Trust in Mainland China's Institutions among Chinese Students



Source: Author.

Note: Mean = -0.37, $SD = 0.90$, $N = 112$.

22.32 percent experienced no difference. Overall, 29.46 percent more of the participants experienced a decrease in institutional trust, signifying that the experiences of the Chinese students in Taiwan led more of the visiting students to experience a decrease in trust in the CPC, the central government, and China's military.

Regression Analysis of the Change in Institutional Trust among Chinese Students Studying in Taiwan

The following is a descriptive analysis of the control and independent variables investigated in this study (see appendix 1). Among the 115 Chinese students studying in Taiwan included in this panel study, 74.78 percent were female; 19.13 percent were from rural areas; 59.13 percent participated in extracurricular activities while studying in Taiwan; 29.57 percent visited a local government agency in Taiwan; 89.57 percent visited the National Palace Museum; 48.70 percent interacted frequently with their Taiwanese friends; and 6.96 percent attended the flag-raising ceremony in Taiwan on New Year's Day. The average value of change in the degree of preference for the Chinese government was -0.36 ($SD = 1.65$). This signifies that, after arriving in Taiwan, the Chinese students experienced an overall decrease in their preference for the Chinese government. The average value of change in evaluation of the CPC's performance was -0.12 ($SD = 0.50$). This signifies that, overall, after staying in Taiwan, the Chinese students held a more negative opinion of the CPC's performance than they held upon their arrival. The cross-tabulation analysis results of the dependent, independent, and control variables are shown in appendix 2.

The dependent variable in this study was the difference in institutional trust between the two datasets. This is a continuous variable; therefore, the ordinary least squares method was used in the linear regression model to determine the effects of the independent variables on the change in institutional trust. Table 1 shows the results. The F -test statistic of this regression model was 7.71 ($p < .001$), suggesting that the model had explanatory power for the dependent variable.

Only the responses of the 101 participants were included in the regression model; those of the other fourteen participants were excluded due to incomplete information. To test whether the sample attrition caused selection bias, the 115 participants were classified into two categories based on the inclusion of their responses into the model (both the included and the not-included groups). An independent sample t -test was conducted on the dependent variable (changes in institutional trust). The results showed no significant difference between the two groups. The mean of the included group was -0.37 ($SD = 0.92$) and that of the not-included group was -0.39 ($SD = 0.80$). The difference between the two groups was 0.02; however, the result was not statistically significant ($p = 0.92$). In addition, the independent sample t -test and chi-squared test of independence of the six independent variables and three control variables

showed no significant difference between the two groups, indicating that the sample attrition did not cause any bias. Due to the word count limitation, the detailed figures were not listed.

The regression model showed that, among the control variables, only participation in extracurricular activities had a significant effect on the dependent variable, while the six independent variables had significant effects on the dependent variable. The change in the institutional trust of students who participated in extracurricular activities was greater by 0.14 standard deviations than that of students who did not participate in any extracurricular activities. This result was contrary to the expectation of political socialization theory, which had suggested that participation in extracurricular activities during their stay in Taiwan would not facilitate students' political learning and that peer influence of Taiwanese students would be insignificant. Therefore, the influence of participation in extracurricular activities on the change in students' institutional trust may require explanation from the perspective of casual contact theory, with a greater focus on patriotism inspired by threat perception. Nevertheless, further exploration is needed to verify the above assumption.

In terms of the hypothesis of political learning, the change in institutional trust among the Chinese students who visited a local governmental agency in Taiwan was 0.17 standard deviations lower than that of the students who did not visit such an agency. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported. The Chinese students who visited a local governmental agency were impressed by the friendliness of staff toward the public compared to the detached bureaucracy of local officials in China, leading to a decrease in their trust in Mainland China's institutions. The results supported the expected outcomes from political socialization theory in terms of influence of unintended information and events.

Regarding the individual evaluation of performance hypothesis, every 1.0 standard deviation decrease in the CPC's performance corresponded to a 0.22 standard deviation decrease in institutional trust. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported. The experience gained from visiting Taiwan exposed the students to negative information related to the Chinese government. Some of the information even advocated that the Chinese government should learn from the Taiwanese government. Such information resulted in some of the students adopting more democratic standards to evaluate the political performance of the Chinese government, leading to a decline in satisfaction and thus reduced trust in Mainland China's institutions. This result supported the advocacy of political socialization theory in terms of the influences of school, peers, and the mass media.

Regarding the cultural assimilation hypothesis, the change in institutional trust among the Chinese students who visited the National Palace Museum was 0.17 standard deviations lower than that of the students who did not visit the museum. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is supported. The Chinese students who visited the National Palace Museum likely perceived the distinct contrast between the

destruction of artefacts during China's Cultural Revolution and the abundance of artefacts preserved by the National Palace Museum. This difference in treatment of artefacts may have caused the Chinese students to question the administration of the CPC, leading to decreased institutional trust. This result supported social contact theory in terms of the impact of understanding and knowledge of outgroups.

Regarding the structural assimilation hypothesis, the change in institutional trust among the Chinese students who frequently interacted with their Taiwanese friends was 0.21 standard deviations lower than that of the students who did not interact as frequently. Thus, Hypothesis 4 is supported. The interaction between the Chinese students and their Taiwanese counterparts can be classified as interactions with true acquaintances. The mutual understanding and trust that are generated from such interactions have caused the Chinese students to be more likely to agree with their Taiwanese friends' negative evaluations of the CPC, the central government, and China's military, leading to the decrease of trust in Mainland China's institutions. This result supported the advocacy of social contact theory in terms of the influence of empathy developed through contact with true acquaintances.

Regarding the identification assimilation hypothesis, the change in institutional trust among the Chinese students who attended the flag-raising ceremony on New Year's Day in Taiwan was 0.19 standard deviations lower than that of the students who did not attend the ceremony. Thus, Hypothesis 5 is supported. The psychological attachment of the students who attended the ceremony had extended beyond an approval of the Taiwanese government's performance to become a desire to be governed by the Taiwanese government. This represents a more thorough abandonment of the CPC, the central government, and China's military. This result supported the hypothesis on the in-depth influences of political learning, political performance evaluation, cultural assimilation, and structural assimilation.

Regarding the social identity hypothesis, every 1.0 standard deviation increase in preference for the Chinese government corresponded to a 0.36 standard deviation increase of trust in Mainland China's institutions. Thus, Hypothesis 6 is supported. Chinese students studying in Taiwan are likely to hear more negative information regarding China. This may challenge their self-esteem and stimulate patriotism, leading the students to have an improved image of the Chinese government, and, in turn, to increase their trust in Mainland China's institutions. This result supported social contact theory in terms of the effect of threat perception following casual contact.

Conclusion

Can political socialization in Taiwan change the political attitudes of Chinese students studying in Taiwan, transforming them into critical citizens? The results of the present study show that after four months of living and studying

Table 1. Ordinary Least Squares Regression Modeling of the Factors for Change in Trust in Mainland China's Institutions

		B Value	Standard Error	Beta Value
Visited a local government agency in Taiwan (<i>No</i> is the reference group)	Yes	-0.34	0.17*	-0.17
Change in level of satisfaction with the CPC's performance		0.39	0.16*	0.22
Visited the National Palace Museum (<i>No</i> is the reference group)	Yes	-0.52	0.25*	-0.17
Frequency of interactions with Taiwanese friends (<i>Seldom</i> is the reference group)	Often	-0.37	0.15*	-0.21
Attended the flag raising ceremony on New Year's Day (<i>No</i> is the reference group)	Yes	-0.68	0.29*	-0.19
Change in preference for the Chinese government		0.20	0.05***	0.36
Sex (<i>Male</i> is the reference group)	Female	-0.04	0.19	-0.02
Household registration (<i>Urban</i> is the reference group)	Rural	0.19	0.19	0.08
Participation in extracurricular activities (<i>No</i> is the reference group)	Yes	0.27	0.16 ⁺	0.14
Constant		0.27		0.32
Number of responses		101		
R^2		0.43		
Adj. R^2		0.38		
Standard Error of Estimate		0.72		
F		7.71***		

Source: Author.

Notes: ⁺: $p < .1$; *: $p < .05$; ***: $p < .001$.

in Taiwan, the Chinese students' trust in the Chinese institutions of the CPC, the central government, and the military decreased significantly by an average of 0.37 (7.64 percent). Among these students, 53.57 percent experienced a decrease in their trust in Mainland China's institutions. This can be viewed as their transformation into critical citizens, that is, people who are more likely to criticize government performance and resist authority. The academic and practical value of the present research findings are as follows.

First, an institutional trust scale with satisfactory reliability and validity was developed. The scale contained items to measure trust in the CPC, the

central government, and the PLA. The constructed items passed examination of the exploratory factor analysis and had an acceptable construct validity. In addition, the Cronbach's α of the scale was 0.80, indicating good internal consistency. Second, this study uncovered the factors that had a significant impact on the changes in the institutional trust of individuals. In addition to inheriting from existing studies the influence of life experiences on changes in individuals' institutional trust, this study focused on the effects of political learning processes and intergroup contact. Based on the theories of political socialization and social contact, and by integrating the theory of assimilation and social identity, this study proposed six hypotheses regarding the changes in the institutional trust of Chinese students who were studying in Taiwan. The empirical results supported all the hypotheses. Factors that led to a decrease in institutional trust among the Chinese students were visiting a local government agency in Taiwan, visiting the National Palace Museum, frequently interacting with Taiwanese friends, attending the flag-raising ceremony on New Year's Day, a more negative evaluation of the CPC's performance, and a decreased preference for the Chinese government.

The practical value of this study lies in its more accurate determination of the impact of cross-Strait civil exchanges than offered in previous research; political recommendations are proposed accordingly. Research on the political influence of Chinese students studying in Taiwan has tended to be limited to the levels of perception and identity. The viewpoints of the studies have differed noticeably due to the different political positions of the authors. The findings of this study reveal that the impact of such exchanges has expanded to the identity of the subjects. According to the study's findings, if we wish to change the level of trust in China's CPC, central government, and military among Chinese students studying in Taiwan, the following four approaches may be fruitful. First, publicize government performance. Taiwanese local governments and the National Palace Museum are excellent examples of the Taiwanese government's performance, but they were not visited by 70.43 percent and 10.43 percent of the Chinese students, respectively. Second, encourage cross-Strait friendships. Close friendships between the Chinese and Taiwanese students resulted in mutual understanding and trust, leading to empathy for Taiwan's political situation and allowing the Chinese students to achieve structural assimilation. However, only 48.70 percent of the Chinese students frequently interacted with their Taiwanese friends. Third, encourage discussions among peers. Political discussions among Chinese students, and the resulting exchange of experiences, can enhance the effects of assimilation with Taiwan, and can change the students' evaluation of the CPC's performance. Finally, avoid cross-Strait confrontations. Political discussions in which each party insists on his or her own viewpoint do nothing to promote assimilation and mutual understanding and instead stimulate each other's patriotism, leading to antagonism. Thus, we should bolster the understanding of Taiwanese students regarding cross-Strait relations and the current situation in China to help them

to engage in rational exchanges with Chinese students.

Based on the findings, future research should focus in two directions. First, the change in preference for the Chinese government among the Chinese students should be examined. After arriving in Taiwan, the Chinese students experienced an overall decrease in their preference for the Chinese government. The average change in preference was -0.36 (1.65). Second, the change in evaluation of the CPC's performance among the Chinese students should be examined. Overall, the Chinese students experienced a more negative evaluation of the CPC's performance after arriving in Taiwan. The average change in the students' evaluation was -0.12 (0.50). Examining these changes in political attitudes could expand academic knowledge and facilitate the development of policies that can promote the democratization of China.

These findings and recommendations are limited to Chinese students who participated in a short-term exchange program at one university in Taiwan and, therefore, cannot be generalized to all Chinese students studying in Taiwan. However, because of the lack of research in this area, and, as the topic is of great importance, this preliminary study was proposed to serve as a reference and basis for subsequent research. Future studies are recommended to expand the research subjects to students from Mainland China who arrive in Taiwan to study for academic degrees. In addition, although the findings of the study show that the experience of studying in Taiwan can facilitate Chinese students' transformation into critical citizens, it does not mean that a movement similar to the "anti-extradition bill" protests in Hong Kong will soon occur in China. In addition to the fact that the students who studied in Taiwan accounted for only a small proportion of all Chinese students, their political attitude could be reversed due to the influence of political socialization following their return to Mainland China. Nevertheless, the changes caused by the experience of studying in Taiwan has sown the seeds of democracy in China. If such a trend were maintained, China's democratic transformation could still be expected.

Appendix 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Concept	Variable	First Survey				Second Survey					
		Mean	Sd	Range	%	N	Mean	Sd	Range	%	N
Institutional Trust	Trust in the CPC	4.57	1.1	1 to 6	---	115	4.19	1.11	1 to 6	---	112
	Trust in the central government	4.72	0.97	1 to 6	---	115	4.42	1.01	1 to 6	---	114
	Trust in the PLA	5.18	0.83	1 to 6	---	115	4.81	1.09	1 to 6	---	113
Political Learning	Visited local government agencies	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	29.57	34
	Did not visit local government agencies	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	70.43	81
Political Performance Evaluation	Satisfaction with the governance of the CPC	2.64	0.57	1 to 4	---	112	2.51	0.53	1 to 4	---	111
Cultural Assimilation	Visited the National Palace Museum	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	89.57	103
	Did not visit the National Palace Museum	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	10.43	12
Structural Assimilation	Frequent interaction with Taiwanese friends	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	48.7	56
	Little interaction with Taiwanese friends	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	49.57	57
	Watched the flag-raising ceremony on New Year's Day	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	6.96	8
Identification Assimilation	Did not watch the flag-raising ceremony on New Year's Day	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	92.17	106
	Preference toward the Chinese government	7.2	1.81	0 to 10	---	115	6.84	1.9	0 to 10	---	114
Social Identity	Male	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	25.22	29
	Female	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	74.78	86
Household Registration	Urban	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	79.13	91
	Rural	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	19.13	22
Participation in Extracurricular Activities	Yes	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	59.13	68
	No	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	40.87	47

Source: Author.

Appendix 2. Cross Tabulation Analysis of the Dependent, Independent, and Control Variables

Independent and Control Variables		Changes in Institutional Trust			
		Reduced (%)	Unchanged (%)	Increased (%)	Total (%)
Visited a local government agency in Taiwan	No	66.67	80.00	70.37	70.54
	Yes	33.33	20.00	29.63	29.46
	N	60	25	27	112
Change in level of satisfaction with the CPC's performance	Reduced	66.67	45.45	37.04	54.72
	Unchanged	12.28	18.18	7.41	12.26
	Increased	21.05	36.36	55.56	33.02
	N	57	22	27	106
Visited the National Palace Museum	No	5.00	12.00	22.22	10.71
	Yes	95.00	88.00	77.78	89.29
	N	60	25	27	112
Frequency of interactions with Taiwanese friends	Seldom	45.76	60.00	53.85	50.91
	Often	54.24	40.00	46.15	49.09
	N	59	25	26	110
Attended the flag raising ceremony on New Year's Day	No	91.67	91.67	100.00	93.69
	Yes	8.33	8.33	0.00	6.31
	N	60	24	27	111
Change in preference for the Chinese government	Reduced	60.00	28.00	14.81	41.96
	Unchanged	25.00	44.00	51.85	35.71
	Increased	15.00	28.00	33.33	22.32
	N	60	25	27	112
Gender	Male	21.67	20.00	33.33	24.11
	Female	78.33	80.00	66.67	75.89
	N	60	25	27	112
Household registration	Urban	76.67	87.50	80.77	80.00
	Rural	23.33	12.50	19.23	20.00
	N	60	24	26	110
Participation in extracurricular activities	No	43.33	48.00	33.33	41.96
	Yes	56.67	52.00	66.67	58.04
	N	60	25	27	112

Source: Author.

Notes: The percentages in the table refer to the percentage of a given figure of the column total.

