The London School of Economics and Political Science

Mediating Democracy: The Generations of Soft Authoritarianism and Democratic Consolidation in Taiwan

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Abstract

Among all the ways in which Taiwan's transition to democracy could be examined, this thesis focuses on the role of the media and their relation to generations. Complementing Karl Mannheim's generation theory with narrative theory and mediation theory, it develops a 'mediated generation' approach to examining how people born in different times make sense of and engage with democracy. The thesis compares the generation of Democratic Consolidation, born in the 1980s and coming of age around the first party change in the ruling government in 2000, with their parents, dubbed the generation of Soft Authoritarianism, experiencing authoritarian rule first-hand as they lived through the Chiang Kai-shek or Chiang Ching-kuo regimes.

By using qualitative methods including focus groups, paired interviews and individual interviews, I found that both generations commonly associate democracy with polarisation, corruption and populism. However, their responses to these problems of democracy differ as regards their media engagement and orientation to politics. Blaming legacy media for driving partisan polarisation, the Democratic Consolidation generation normally relies on search engines for fact-checking, whereas the Soft Authoritarianism generation is more likely to trust television but will compare news across multiple television channels. As a reaction to corruption and populism, both generations are attracted to authentic, unconventional politicians, but their preferences and reasoning are different. In ascribing blame for populism, the generation of Democratic Consolidation criticises irrational netizens and Internet anonymity, whereas the generation of Soft Authoritarianism criticises the youth for failing to think deeply and for their susceptibility to popular culture influences, considering that their use of the Internet and social media for political expression has made Taiwan democracy populist.

In addition, this thesis argues that, on the one hand, the two generations develop their knowledge of democracy and strategies for dealing with political and media problems in separate mediated spaces. On the other, in everyday life they come together as family, and their family practices with the media, especially in Family Groups on LINE, dovetail with those in the real world; that is, media predominantly perform functions of reinforcing the principle of '*jia chang*' (literally meaning 'home ordinary') and a harmonious but hierarchical parent-child relation which shapes practices of (dis)engagement in political talk within the family.

This thesis demonstrates that generational experiences and identities can be empirically examined as narratives. Evidence of how the media contribute to certain generational narratives, identities and actions confirms the usefulness of adopting mediation theory to study generations. This mediated generation approach, used to explore intra-generational differences, successfully provides some new insights into

Mannheim's concept of generation units. The thesis concludes by exploring the implications of these findings beyond the Taiwanese case for the relationship between media, generations and democracy in the 21st century and the importance of critical reflection on transitional societies.

Acknowledgements

Table of contents

Notes on Romanisation and Presentation of Mandarin Chinese words

This thesis uses the Hanyu Pinyin system to transcribe Mandarin Chinese phrases and words. However, it follows conventional spelling for well-known places (e.g., Taipei) and people (e.g., Chiang Kai-shek). As can be seen, people's names are arranged in the Chinese conventional order, namely family names before given names. In addition, Chinese characters are included for any terms that have specific public, political or cultural connotations when they appear for the first time. The presentation of each term is shown as a combination of English translation, Chinese characters, and italicised Hanyu Pinyin – for example, filial piety (孝, *hsiao*).

Chapter 1: Introduction

I'm sorry that I have been participating in a sit-in outside the Legislative Yuan, and I'm sorry that I intended not to let you know about this. […] I understand your concern about my safety, but it has been peaceful outside the Legislative Yuan. I also understand that you are worried about students being manipulated, but I think you know better than me that everything has two sides. Naïve ideals can be the biggest weakness, but they can be the most powerful weapon too. You told me to mind my own business as the world is too complicated to meddle with. Yet, I think it is exactly because the world is so complicated that we need our elders to work together with us. As I'm writing this letter, I started to realise what I want to tell you the most: I am proud of you, and I hope you can be proud of me.

This is an extract from the letter I wrote to my parents during the 2014 Sunflower Movement[1] because they disagreed with my participation, and my father was so upset that he refused to talk to me for almost a month. For my parents, the fact that I participated in a social movement was as unexpected and undesirable as it was for the government to find citizens occupying the Legislative Yuan. As news about the Movement was disseminated through Facebook, my own Facebook post about it travelled from my cousin to her father. He then phoned my father, who had no Facebook account. Since my father was not answering my calls and avoided speaking to me face-to-face, my mother became the mediator; even though she too disapproved of me joining the Movement, she tried hard to make peace. To reach out to my father, who also had no email account, I typed the above letter in Word and sent it to my mother's work email.

While I was waiting for my father to reply to me, I followed on Facebook several live streams of protesters inside the Legislative Yuan and joined dozens of Movement-related online communities. I wondered why I could talk politics with friends – and even with strangers – in these communities, but not with my parents, particularly my father. Why did I have to avoid mentioning the Movement, to be extra careful about referring to politics at home? Was it because my parents' political opinions differed from mine? Could this be explained by our views of China? Were young people really more hostile towards China than our parents? Why did my parents see protest activities as riots? Was it because they watched China Television,

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[1]This movement, which took place between 18 March and 10 April 2014, has been considered one of the most significant protests in Taiwan's political history (Rowen, 2015; Wu, 2019). I describe the Sunflower Movement in more detail in the second section of this chapter.

which repeatedly broadcasted violent confrontations between protesters and police officers? Did what they saw on TV also explain why they regarded economic growth as more important than democratic progress? Exactly why did my parents and I have different political views? And how could I discuss politics with them? I also noticed that my letter, email and Facebook account appeared simultaneously empowering and constrained. On the one hand, I was able to express my own opinion and exchange ideas through these varied means of communication, but on the other it seemed that I could only reach people who shared similar views or were willing to engage in conversation. Why did the media seem to stop short of enabling effective communication between people with different political perspectives? In what ways could media be empowering or restricted in relation to political conversation? These puzzles have stayed with me, although my father started talking to me again after the Movement ended.

Another set of puzzles concerns my own peers. On the spot, I noticed that people had one conversation after another because they were not always in agreement. Regarding the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA), some argued that the Agreement would increase Taiwan's economic dependence on China, and hence endanger its democracy and national security. Others were not so much concerned about the CSSTA itself; their anger at the government was provoked by news coverage of 'half-minute Chung' – a nickname for the committee chair at the Legislative Yuan, who was reported to have passed the Agreement in 30 seconds. Still others were against not only the CSSTA but free trade in general. Why did people of my age approach the CSSTA controversy in different ways? Exactly who are the 'Sunflower generation', as labelled by the media and widely referred to by politicians?

In order to lay the foundations for reframing in the next chapter the above questions, in accordance with relevant theories, this introductory chapter first gives an overview of social and political developments in Taiwan from authoritarian regime to democratic polity. In so doing, special attention is also paid to the role of the media in relation to political transformation and societal changes. Then, by reviewing research on the Sunflower Movement and the so-called Sunflower generation, this chapter sketches out significant democratic developments and challenges in contemporary Taiwan. It ends with a description of research aims and a summary of chapter contents in this thesis.

1.1 From Authoritarianism to Democracy: The Continued Connection between Politics and Media

The emergence and development of democracy are historically contingent and vary across national contexts (Dahl, 1998; Huntington, 1991a). Although it is stated in our

Constitution[2] that 'The Republic of China[3] (ROC), founded on the Three Principles of the People,[4] shall be a democratic republic of the people, to be governed by the people and for the people', not until 1987 was martial law lifted.

In the early years of the martial law era, the idea of democracy was predominantly employed by the Kuomintang (KMT, hereafter)[5] as state propaganda to legitimise its rule of Taiwan and its claim to be the sole legitimate government representing China (X. F. Lee, 1987; Yeh, 2017). In addition to education,[6] the media were significant machines of state propaganda. Take *China Daily News*, one of the official newspapers, for example. It promoted Chiang Kai-shek as a fighter for democracy and equated the realisation of democracy with the defeat of the Communist Party of China (CPC, hereafter) (Jhang, 2019). Likewise, many studies (Chen, 1998; Jiang, 2001; Lee, 1987; Lin, 2000; Rawnsley & Rawnsley, 2012) point out that the media under the authoritarian regime served as part of the state apparatus – more specifically, the relationship between the state and the media was one of patron-client. That is, besides imposing restrictions[7] on the media (Chen, 1998; Dreyer, 2003; Rawnsley & Rawnsley, 2012), the KMT state focused its attention on coercion and co-optation, suppressing disobedient media while showering subservient media with economic and political benefits (C. C. Lee, 2000). To fulfil their client role, the media supported the party state's ideologies, rationalising the

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[2] The Constitution was passed in Nanjing, China, in 1946 and came with the Kuomintang to Taiwan in 1949, which marked the first year of martial law.

[3] Given the Constitution, ROC is the official name, but in contemporary international society the ROC is better known as 'Taiwan'. On official public occasions, President Tsai Ing-wen refers to 'the Republic of China, Taiwan'. Most of my informants referred to Taiwan as just 'Taiwan' rather than ROC, so I use 'Taiwan' throughout this thesis apart from when referring to some occasions when my informants did otherwise.

[4] The Three Principles of the People include nationalism, civil rights and welfare, and were proposed by Sun Yat-sen, who was propagandised as the father of the ROC.

[5] Also known as the Chinese Nationalist Party, the KMT used to rule China but was defeated by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP, hereafter) and then fled to Taiwan.

[6] Compulsory education during the martial law period was characterised by anti-Communism, Chinese nationalism and Confucian traditions. It centred on Sun Yat-sen's *Three Principles of the People*, on the Four Books which include *Analects of Confucius*, *Works of Mencius*, *Great Learning*, and *Doctrine of the Mean*, and on Chinese moral virtues such as filial piety (孝, *hsiao*), love (愛, *ai*), and harmony (和, *ho*) (Lin, 2001; Meyer, 1988).

[7] Such as the number of pages that a daily newspaper could publish and the mandatory use of Mandarin in films and television programmes.

suspension of civil rights in the name of political stability and thus depoliticising the public sphere (Lee, 2000; Lin, 2000).

Nevertheless, there were still voices of dissent. Besides mounting propaganda campaigns against the CPC, the magazine *Free China* published critical views of the party state during a time when Chiang Kai-shek tolerated it as a means of consolidating his political power and strengthening support from the US (Lee, 1987; Lee, 2000). To prevent the spread of communism, the US sent its troops to fight in the Korean War and then signed a mutual defence treaty with the ROC. As external legitimacy was secured, the party state became intolerant of *Free China*, especially when it began to advocate for the establishment of an opposition party (ibid.). In 1960, it was closed down and its founder, Lei Chen, charged with treason and given a ten-year prison sentence. Tensions between the (dissenting) media and the state were obvious, and so was the fact that domestic democratic developments in the Taiwanese context were inextricably intertwined with political interactions between China and the US.

Although attempts to form an opposition party were not successful, since then magazines had been playing a key role in disseminating liberal and democratic thought. There were *Apollo*, *China Tide*, *Taiwan Political Review*, *the Meilidao Magazine* and so on (Hsu, 2014a). While all these opposition publications adopted a critical view of the authoritarian government and shared the same fate, namely forced closure, they sometimes advocated differing political identities. *Apollo* and *China Tide* supported a unifying China, whereas the *Taiwan Political Review* and *Meilidao Magazine* discussed the concepts of 'new Taiwanese' and 'native Taiwanese' (ibid.). These identity debates emerged against the backdrop of endangered legitimacy of ROC's representativeness of China, including its withdrawal from the United Nations (UN) in 1971 and its diplomatic break with the US in 1978. The role of the media was particularly prominent in such political turmoil; that is, they could act as political organisations. For instance, *Meilidao Magazine* sponsored many 'outside the Party' (黨外, *dangwai*) rallies, one of which developed into the 1979 Meilidao Incident, a key event in Taiwan's democratisation[8] (Armoudian, 2011; Chou & Nathan, 1987; Hsu, 2014a; Jacobs, 2012).

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[8] The Meilidao Incident, also known as the Kaohsiung Incident, received its name from a demonstration organised by *Meilidao Magazine*. The magazine was closed down and some members of its staff were sentenced to lengthy terms of imprisonment – these staff members and the lawyers who defended them in the trial later entered politics successfully, reaching important political positions such as Taiwan's president and vice president.

While some opposition magazines fostered the idea of Taiwanese consciousness, the majority of cultural and mass-media forms, ranging from puppet shows to TV dramas, adhered to support for Chinese nationalism (Hsu, 2014a; Ko, 2012). For example, TV channels encouraged national solidarity and mobilised nationalistic sentiment through broadcasting ROC's participation in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, the 1968 Hongye baseball team's victory over a Japanese team, and the Gold Dragons championship victory in the 1969 Little League World Series (Harney, 2013; Ko, 2012). The development of Chinese nationalism was also assisted by the regulation of media production in Taiwanese native languages – radio and TV stations were restricted to producing no more than 30 per cent of their total programmes in Taiwanese languages (Hsu, 2014a; Su, 1993), whereas Mandarin was officially recognised as the 'national language' (國語, *guo yu*), and Mandarin-language films received government subsidies (Lo, 2001; Yeh & Davis, 2005). Not only economically, but also ideologically, the film industry was aligned with the party state. In addition to policy films, 'health realism' was another genre that focused on portraying and promoting a stable and malevolence-free society in Taiwan: 'villainy, corruption, and violent conflict are banished in these films' (Yeh & Davis, 2005: 26). If such an orderly social landscape was facilitated by the mass media as part of the state apparatus, what would the relation between society and the media become after martial law was lifted and media liberalisation ensued?

In 1988 the press ban was removed (Lin, 2008). The outcome was not an immediate multiplicity of newspapers but the rapid expansion of *United Daily News* and *China Times* with their existing economic and political capital – these had been major clients[9] of the party state during the martial law era and remained in a 'partner relationship' with the KMT government (Lin, 2000: 42). Nonetheless, *Liberty Times*[10] emerged from a deep split[11] within the KMT (Lin, 2000). It was utilised by Lee

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[9] These two newspapers' founders served on the Central Standing Committee of the KMT. Such connections continued, with newspapers having their people on the KMT Central Standing Committee even after martial law was lifted (Huang, 2010).

[10] Its founder served on the KMT Central Standing Committee and as National Policy Advisor to then President Lee Teng-hui (Huang, 2010).

[11] Mainstream Faction versus Non-Mainstream Faction – the former was led by Lee Teng-hui who was supportive of further nativisation (本土化, *bentuhua*), whereas the latter insisted on a China perspective for Taiwan (Jacobs, 2012).

Teng-hui[12] to promote regular direct elections to parliament and Taiwanese identity. As the first Taiwan-born and popularly elected president, he supported the removal of the Three Principles of the People from civil-service and university entrance examinations, making a public apology to the victims of the 228 Incident[13] and putting pressure on the Ministry of Education to adopt in junior and high-school education the 'Getting to Know Taiwan' curricula which abandoned the Greater China ideology and recentred on Taiwan (Corcuff, 2002; Chen, 2008; Jacobs, 2012).

The rise of Lee Teng-hui was accompanied by the progress of democratisation and the growth of Taiwanese consciousness (Chang, 2004; Hsu, 2014a). In addition to *Liberty Times*, there have been 'Taiwan identity media' (Hsu, 2014a: 157) such as Formosa Television (FTV) and Sanlih Entertainment Television (SET) since the opening up of television channels to the opposition and the passing of the 1993 Cable Radio and Television Act – the establishment of FTV 'has granted Taiwanese identities a strong presence on national television and has thus legitimised the expression of alternative identities to the "Chinese-ness" that previously dominated mainstream television' (Rawnsley, 2003: 150). One cannot address Taiwan-identity media without mentioning underground radio stations which were often compared to opposition magazines since they relied on donations and could mobilise their supporters for rallies (Chen, 1998; Hsu, 2014a). Entering the 1990s, underground radio and TV began to overtake opposition magazines as the two most popular media for consuming Taiwan-identity content (ibid.). However, these broadcasting media, with their alternative[14] – if not subversive – status, were eventually incorporated through legalisation into an increasingly privatised and commercialised media landscape. As

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[12] Lee Teng-hui was first appointed to the cabinet as Minister without Portfolio in 1972, then was chosen by Chiang Ching-kuo as his vice-presidential running mate in 1984, becoming president upon Chiang's death in 1988, and finally was popularly elected as president in 1996 (Jacobs & Liu, 2007; Jacobs, 2012). His presidency spanned from 1988 to 2000.

[13] Taking place on 28 February 1947, the 228 Incident was a popular 'uprising against the Chinese takeover government' (Chang, 2003: 42). The then-KMT government's bureaucracy and corruption are widely recognised as the root cause of the 228 Incident, which resulted in a massive crackdown on Taiwanese activists, elites, middle-class professionals and educated youth (Chang, 2003; Jacobs 2008). The Incident has played an important role in Taiwan independence movements (Fleischauer, 2007) and 28 February has been a national holiday since 1996.

[14] Examining whether and how underground radio stations could be considered alternative media from four perspectives, which included aim, organisation, production processes and representation of the media, Ke (2000) gave evidence on the alternative status of underground radio before these stations were legitimised by the government.

Ke (2000) concludes his examination of underground radio as a (once) alternative medium:

> What has shocked observers is that by legitimising underground radio and giving them freedom but no subsidy to continue their public service work, the government, perhaps not cynically, has succeeded in emasculating the dissidents and silencing minority voices. By simply opening these stations to market pressures, they have mostly surrendered to consumerism, while the government has collected praise for its liberalisation policies (p. 428).

Even though the KMT state deregulated the media in the post-martial law era, a democratic media landscape was not in place. Rather, excessive deregulation in the 1990s was criticised for leaving media competition unchecked, resulting in concentration and conglomeration (Chen, 1999, 2002; Cheng & Chen, 2003; Liu, 2007), and putting at risk the healthy development of civil society (Chung, 1993; Feng, 1994; Hung, 2006). Even after the first change in ruling party in 2000, the mass media remained vulnerable to state intervention and continued to suffer under-regulated market competition.

As part of his electoral campaign, Chen Shui-bian, the Democratic Progressive Party[15] (DPP, hereafter) candidate in the 2000 presidential election, promised to correct and change the country's media system for the better. Nonetheless, his administration was slow in introducing media reforms. For example, not until some months before Chen's re-election in 2004 did he push for formalising the withdrawal of the state, the military and political parties from direct media ownership. Likewise, only after he was re-elected were important reforms such as enhancements to the public broadcasting system and the establishment of a National Communication Commission implemented. In addition, Chen's proposed regulatory framework was criticised for being more concerned with consolidating government control over the media than with enhancing the media's democratic role in Taiwanese society (Hung, 2006; Rawnsley, 2004).

In the early 2000s, the problem of under-democratised media was further aggravated by trends of tabloidisation in the press (Hung, 2006; Su, 2001; Wang,

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[15] Established in 1986, the DPP remained the opposition party in the Legislative Yuan until 2000, its first presidential election victory. Then, in 2016, the party won a parliamentary majority for the first time (Fell, 2018). Today the DPP, together with the KMT, dominates Taiwan's political scene (ibid.). Regarding the issue of national identity, which distinguishes major political parties in the Taiwanese context better than a left-right ideological framework (Fell, 2018; Hsiao & Cheng, 2014), the DPP is more likely to promote a Taiwanese identity and the KMT an ROC Chinese nationalism.

2015), accompanied by the arrival and rise of *Apple Daily*, a tabloid newspaper run by Hong Kong businessman Jimmy Lai (Huang, Wen, Chang, Lu, & Lin, 2006; Liu, 2007; Rawnsley, 2004; Yi, 2008). Similarly, the common use of satellite news-gathering (SNG) technologies in the live broadcasting of election campaigns established and facilitated an aesthetic of political news that is characterised by media spectacles and motivated by a neoliberal view of journalism (Hsu, 1998; Huang, 2009; Tang, 2005). TV's contribution to creating political personas and influence has been prominent since the first popular elections.[16] One major genre which politicians have utilised to attract public attention and impress voters is talk shows. They did not attend talk shows as mere guests but 'as of March 2003, fifteen elected politicians hosted or produced television or radio talk shows' (Rawnsley, 2004: 214). It is therefore unsurprising that many studies have pinpointed how partisan, namely pro-KMT or pro-DPP, talk shows usually are (Chang & Lo, 2007; Sheng, 2005; Yang, 2004).

Instead of fulfilling a democratic function in society, more freedom in the press and broadcasting media since democratisation have led to news being produced as a commodity and politicians being consumed as celebrities (Chen, 2005; Lo, 2008) – for example, research has noted that newspapers and TV news media widely adopt celebrity frames in representing politicians (see Chiu, 2007; Chiu & Su, 2009; Hu, 2003). Some researchers even argue that the public have become fans or citizen-consumers (Chuang, 2004, 2014; Yang & Shaw, 2013) alongside the commodification of media and political realms. Nonetheless, it is also against such a backdrop that the revival of social movements[17] began, including the Lo-sheng Leprosarium Preservation Movement, the Wild Strawberry Movement, the Dapu Anti-Land-Expropriation Movement, the Anti-Kuokuang Petrochemical Industrial Park Movement, the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement, the White Shirt Army Movement, and the Sunflower Movement.

Most of these movements were initiated by civil-society groups or university students rather than by political parties (Fell, 2017). In addition to being non-partisan, they were characterised by participants' active use of the Internet, blogs, bulletin-board systems and social networking sites (Chen, 2012; Cheng & Chen, 2016; Chuang, 2011; Ebsworth, 2017; Fang, 2015; Y. H. Ho, 2014; Hsiao, 2011, 2017). Among these social movements, the Sunflower Movement that took place in 2014 was on the

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[16] The first televised debate among candidates took place in the 1994 Taipei City mayoral election (Chuang, 2013). It was in the same year that the first political talk show was aired (Yang, 2004).

[17] In the next chapter I discuss many of these social movements while presenting two generations within objective media and political landscapes in Taiwanese society between 1949 and 2016.

largest scale and of critical importance. It is regarded as a momentous event in Taiwan's political history, not only because the Legislative Yuan was occupied by citizens for the first time but also due to ensuing political developments such as the DPP's unprecedented parliamentary victory over the KMT, the establishment of movement-related political parties[18] and their electoral success, and to increased turnout rates of young voters (Fell, 2017, 2018; Lin, 2016; Muyard, 2015). Young people since then have often been labelled as 'the Sunflower generation', which is also the protagonist of my research inquiry. So, a review of young people's participation in the Sunflower Movement is carried out in the following section.

1.2 The Sunflower Movement and the Emergence of a New Political Generation

Within just one decade between 1995 and 2005, commercial Internet service became available in Taiwan, and by 2005 more than 64 per cent of the population had access to the Internet (Su, 2000; TWNIC, 2005). That is, unlike their elder counterparts living through an era of mass media controlled by the authoritarian state, young people grew up in a media environment characterised by liberalisation policies and by the Internet – by 2015 Internet use was 100 per cent for the population aged between 18 and 30 years old (TWNIC, 2015). As mentioned above, many student-led movements featured an extensive and effective use of the Internet and social media. The Sunflower Movement was no exception. Its participants used Facebook[19] as one of the primary tools for obtaining information, especially those under the age of 39[20] (Chen & Huang, 2015). Facebook was also used for sharing and disseminating information (Tsatsou & Zhao, 2016; Tsatsou, 2018). Regarding the dissemination of information, livestreaming enabled the protesters in the Legislative Yuan to broadcast major announcements and speeches – in one of the iconic photos of the Sunflower Movement an iPad supported by a pair of flip-flops is livestreaming from the Legislative Yuan, which had been successfully occupied by protesters (Cheng, 2015; Kung, 2016). As can be seen, a network-based and real-time style of political communication was being practised.

Predominantly, movement proponents considered information on social networking sites and livestreaming platforms more reliable than news coverage

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[18] The New Power Party (NPP) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

[19] As of 2014, the penetration rate of Facebook in Taiwan, namely monthly active Facebook users in the Taiwanese population, was 65 per cent, the highest among its global markets (*Taipei Times*, 2014). By 2018, Facebook claims that it 'already has 97% of Taiwan's Internet users' (Jennings, 2018).

[20] In comparison, participants aged 40 and above were more reliant on TV for obtaining information about the Sunflower Movement (Chen & Huang, 2015).

produced by established newspapers and TV news stations (Chen, 2014). This is not surprising, given that legacy media tended to focus on reporting the conflicts that happened during the Movement (Chen, 2017; Chiao & Huang, 2017) and portraying protesters as a mob (Chang, 2014; Lin, 2016). Nevertheless, the dominant role of legacy media in defining the Movement could be challenged by individual participants providing different narratives about themselves and the Movement through the practices of livestreaming and sharing. For instance, netizens on PTT,[21] the largest bulletin-board system in Taiwan, disclosed how several journalists from major newspapers and TV news stations tried to 'trick' student leaders into meeting with Terry Gou, a tycoon who opposed the Movement (Lin, 2014). In another PTT post, TVBS[22] journalists were shown intentionally knocking over trash cans in order to 'fake riots' (Yao, 2014). In addition to posting on PTT, movement participants could network nationwide to produce news. *News E Forum*, for example, was originally a Facebook page used by NTU Journalism School students for announcing departmental information and showcasing students' work. Dissatisfied with the established media's coverage, the NTU students collaborated with other students across universities[23] to write news stories that 'deliver the voices of the participants' (Lin, 2016: 260).

Furthermore, *News E Forum* was able to run for another year after the Movement ended, through crowdfunding. Utilising crowdfunding websites was a common practice in the Sunflower Movement. On FlyingV,[24] more than NT$ 6,330,000, approximately £158,000,[25] was collected from 3,621 donors in less than three hours to purchase a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times* (Chen, Liao, Wu, & Hwan, 2014; Cheng, 2015; Rowen, 2015; Yang, 2014). The advertisement was designed to draw the attention of the Taiwanese diaspora in the US as well as of the US government (Rowen, 2015). In fact, the Movement reached beyond the US. It was globally networked, as demonstrated by the '24-Hour Relay Across the Globe' event,

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[21] PTT was created by a group of National Taiwan University (NTU) students in 1995 and became popular among other university students. Since 2005 it has been known nationwide, after a heated discussion topic from one of its boards hit the headlines in the *China Times* (Li, 2012). Generally speaking, PTT users are young and university educated (Lin, 2017).

[22] It is a commercial 24-hour news channel, its viewers tend to be KMT supporters (Liu, 2009).

[23] Including National Cheng Chi University, National Taiwan Normal University, National Tsing Hua University, National Chiao Tung University, National Dong Hwa University.

[24] One of the biggest Taiwanese crowdfunding platforms.

[25] NTD-pound sterling exchange rate, of 1: 40 used.

with a series of protests unfolding in 49 cities across 21 countries (Chao, 2014; Pan, 2014; Rowen, 2015; Tiezzi, 2014).

The large sum of money donated by netizens was also used for placing advertisements in major Taiwanese newspapers whose readers were usually from older generations (Kung, 2016; Nielsen, 2015). As well as the newspaper advertisements, many other attempts were made by movement participants to communicate protest motivations and goals to their elder counterparts: QR codes were included in the advertisements (Kung, 2016), and 'dummies' (懶人包, *lan ren bao*)[26] were created (Chang, 2014; Cheng & Chen, 2016). These dummies were aimed at persuading parents to support the Movement (Chang, 2014; Su, 2014) and assumed that young people and their parents would diverge in their opinions on the Movement, with the former concerned about the latter's lack of recognition. 'Dear mother, please don't worry. Forgive me. I cannot leave [the Legislative Yuan] cos I must fight those unforgivable ones' (Wu, 2014), went the words of *Island's Sunrise,*[27] the theme song of the Movement. In response to the 'Sunflowers', more than a thousand parents held and waved carnations which 'symbolise motherly love' (Lu, 2014) while chanting 'Children! Do go home!' (ibid). The intergenerational confrontation and struggles were explicit.

The tense relationship between younger and older generations seems connected to their differing views of democracy. For instance, in evaluating the Sunflower Movement, older people widely drew on social stability as their primary frame of reference (J. H. Ho, 2014), whereas young people referred to democracy as one of the basics of life. This contrast can be well illustrated by an exchange between Terry Gou and Huang Yu-fen. When describing above how PTT netizens exposed the mean trick played by legacy media on student activists, I mention that Terry Gou disapproved of the Movement; in fact, at a post-Movement press conference, he commented that 'one cannot eat democracy as one can eat rice. How much social

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[26] Originating on PTT, dummies were initially in the format of numerous news titles and hyperlinks to original news stories arranged in chronological order, but nowadays the term broadly refers to any types of information, be these texts, photos or animation videos, which serve a specific purpose of helping information receivers quickly to get a sense of the main controversies and arguments around a given event (Chen, 2018, 2019; Sun, 2015).

[27] Written by Fire Ex, an indie-rock band, *Island's Sunrise* won Song of the Year at the 2015 Golden Melody Awards (Zhan, 2015). The broadcast of the awards ceremony was temporarily cut off in China and Singapore while Fire Ex received the award (Fell, 2017). Then, in 2016, the song was performed at President Tsai Ing-wen's inauguration (ibid.)

cost and resources have we wasted on a protest! Democracy does nothing good to GDP' (*Apple Daily*, 2014). Born in 1950 and a founder of Hon Hai Precision,[28] Terry Gou was seen as representing the voice of the accomplished post-war generation. However, for Huang Yu-fen, an activist born in 1990, 'Democracy is not rice but air. We cannot survive without air' (Chen, 2014). Her use of the metaphor of air showed the significance of democracy to the younger generation, but in the eyes of their above-mentioned elders holding carnations and demanding that young people return home, the DPP was behind the movement – regardless of research findings on the autonomy of Sunflower Movement participants (Chen & Huang, 2015).

In other words, while their elder counterparts prioritised economic security and showed a tendency to think in terms of political parties, young people engaged in autonomous and networked protests (Chen & Huang, 2015; Wang, 2014), pursuing self-actualisation; with an emphasis on having a sense of meaning in life (Chiu, 2014), they appeared to be transformed 'from "dutiful" citizens to "actualising" citizens' (Su, 2014). Self-actualising citizenship is characterised by a style of civic participation that focuses on lifestyle issues and favours networked activities through participatory media, whereas dutiful citizenship is oriented towards government or party-centred activities and pays more attention to issues in the news (Bennett, 2008; Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009). Shifts in citizenship styles and in existential priorities from materialist to post-materialist values occurring in post-industrial Western democracies (Bennett, 2008; Inglehart, 2008, 2018) may thus have taken place in Taiwanese society, a comparatively young third-wave democracy.[29]

There also seems to be a shift in national identity; more specifically, upholding democracy seems to be an increasingly essential element in being Taiwanese – as exemplified by the music video of *Island's Sunrise,* which starts with protesters chanting aloud: 'Reopen negotiation! Be transparent! Because we are the democratic Taiwan(ese)!' Likewise, on the night of her electoral victory in 2016, President-elect Tsai Ing-wen[30] gave a speech which concluded that 'Today's election result proves to the world that Taiwanese people are the people of freedom; Taiwanese people are the people of democracy' (Tsai Ing-wen on Facebook, 2016). The equation of democracy with Taiwanese identity cannot be uttered more clearly,

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[28] Hon Hai Precision is the world's largest electronics contract manufacturer, known by the trade name Foxconn (Forbes, 2021).

[29] Regimes experiencing democratic transition or returning to democracy in the 1970s and 1980s (Huntington, 1991a).

[30] She represented the DPP in both 2016 and 2020 presidential elections.

even though Taiwan's democratisation has always been closely linked to Taiwanisation (Jacobs, 2012). The authoritarian state, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, focused on instilling a Chinese identity into its people by making Mandarin the national language,[31] banning dialects[32] and nationalising traditional Chinese culture (Chun, 1994; Dreyer, 2003; Mengin, 1999): 'the opposition leaders had long linked the goal of democratisation to the issue of Taiwanese identity, claiming that democracy entailed self-determination and the right to independence from China' (Chang & Chu, 2008: 85). While older generations were indoctrinated into being Chinese under the authoritarian regime (Chun, 1994; Mengin, 1999; Su, 1993; Wang, 2005a), the younger generation grew up in a democratic society in which Taiwan-identity media flourished along with media liberalisation (Hsu, 2014a; Rawnsley, 2003), and Taiwanese consciousness comes naturally at protest scenes and on election days.

The generational difference in the socialisation of political identity may also lead to divergent views of the unification-independence issue and the China-Taiwan relationship. Many studies (Lin, 2014, 2015a, 2017; Peng, 2019) have found that younger generations are more likely to support Taiwan independence. Regarding generational attitudes towards China and cross-strait relations, research results are inconsistent: some studies (Kaeding, 2015; Liu & Li, 2017) have discovered that younger generations are hostile to China, but others (Rigger, 2015) did not find evidence for this. However, it is widely agreed that the China factor has an increasing influence on Taiwan politics (Tsai & Chen, 2015; Wu, 2015, 2016, 2019).

Since the Sunflower Movement, there has been much debate on whether expanding economic integration with China could endanger Taiwan's democratic development. Researching the 'China factor', defined as 'the process by which the PRC government utilises capital and related resources to absorb other countries and offshore districts (such as Hong Kong) into its sphere of economic influence, thereby making them economically dependent on China in order to further facilitate its political influence' (Wu, 2016: 430), many scholars have revealed its role not only in the political realm but also in the media (Chang, 2011, 2013; Hsu, 2014b; Huang, 2017, 2020; Yamada, 2014; Wu, 2016). In order to influence the Taiwanese news media, one major approach is to have the Taiwan Affairs Office[33] or China's local

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[31] 'Kuo yu' in Chinese literally means 'the language of nation'.

[32] Such as Taiwanese (also known as Hokkien or Minan yu) and Hakka.

[33] This is a Chinese government body responsible for setting and implementing guidelines and policies related to Taiwan.

governments[34] pay for being reported positively in the news (Chang, 2011, 2013), while another way is to use news outlets owned by Taiwanese businessmen who have been heavily investing in China for Chinese propaganda (Huang, 2017, 2020). This means that, regardless of their differing experiences of political socialisation, younger and older generations nowadays are faced with an ascendant China and its power to affect Taiwan's politics and media. In addition to this challenge, there are many other shared tests of the strength of Taiwan's democracy. For example, against a backdrop of the 2008 financial crisis, accompanied by a rising unemployment rate and real estate prices and declining wage levels (Wang, 2017), the long-standing debate about whether democratic systems contribute to economic prosperity came to the fore. In this debate, the younger members of Taiwanese society are labelled as 'the generation of collapse' (Chien, 2012; Lin, Hung, Li, Wang, & Chang, 2011; Tseng, 2014), 'the loser generation' (Ma, 2016; Yuming, 2014), 'the poor youth generation' (Gavel, 2017), and 'the tired generation' (Wu, 2017), as opposed to their elder counterparts, who are referred to as 'winners' (Tseng, 2014). What further complicates this picture of generational politics is that there can be some variety within this younger generation.

As described in the opening paragraphs, participants in the Sunflower Movement were not a homogenous group. They held different opinions about the CSSTA. This observation suggests that members of the so-called Sunflower generation – if it really exists – may differ in political attitudes and views. Regarding party preference, recent survey research findings are inconsistent: while Rigger (2015) perceives 'the fifth generation[35] to be relatively green', namely 'more pro-DPP than other generations' (p. 85), Lin (2017) contends that 'the Sunflower generation[36] is the least supportive of the green' (p. 46), explaining that 'they experienced the Chen Shui-bian presidency, and they were not satisfied with the DPP's performance' (p. 48). For this thesis, the question of whether the younger generation supports a certain political party or not is of less concern; instead, this thesis is more interested in examining *how* this generation talks about democratic politics in general – not limited to the topic of political party. Such an inquiry has the merit of exploring nuanced differences within the generation.

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[34] Usually at provincial level.

[35] Defined as 'the Taiwanese people born after 1982 – the eldest of whom were entering their formative years when Chen was elected in 2000' (Rigger, 2015: 84).

[36] Defined as people 'born between 1976 and 1995 and experienced the first DPP rule, and the KMT's return to power, and the Sunflower Movement during their formative years' (Lin, 2017: 36).

Nevertheless, 'political generations' research (see Chang & Wang, 2005; Lin, 2014, 2015a, 2017; Rigger, 2015), which is the mainstream approach to studying the problem of generations[37] in Taiwanese society, is principally based on survey data, given its conceptualisation of a generation as a static entity and its homogeneous view of generation formation. In this line of thought, the members of a generation can be determined by a few political events taking place during their formative years, but may remain unaffected by many more events happening later in the course of their lives; moreover, these specific political events have an equivalent impact on different groups of people within the generation. The political generations approach also tends to presuppose a successive relationship between generations, focusing on the study of generational discontinuities or continuities, as measured by survey variables.[38] However, I perceive intergenerational interactions to be more those of complexity and dynamics, and I am aware of potential differences within the same generation. In other words, my critical study of the so-called Sunflower generation makes both inter- and intra-generational comparisons.

1.3 Research Aims and an Overview of the Thesis

This thesis has three main objectives. The first is to empirically and critically examine the so-called Sunflower generation, which has been widely reported in the press and popularly addressed by politicians and in everyday conversations. In so doing, the thesis aims, secondly, to develop an analytical approach to studying generations and exploring the role of media in shaping generations. This approach seeks to extend beyond mainstream survey research on generations in Taiwanese society, and its rigid, if not deterministic, view of generation formation. More specifically, this will be developed and adopted for analysis of the complex relationship between politics and the media, and for drawing inter- and intra-generational comparisons in terms of political and media engagement. An unpacking of generational dynamics and relationships, especially involving political communications, is the third aim.

In this introductory chapter (Chapter 1), I have presented a historical review of political and media developments, demonstrating that the societies in which younger and older generations grew up differ in many ways, outlining generational differences in political views, civic values and national identity, describing several

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[37] While there is research which examines the 1960s and 1970s generations through a sociological and narrative approach (Hsiau, 2010a, 2010b, 2013, 2021), studies of the generations since democratisation have predominantly fallen into the political generation scholarship.

[38] Having said that, political generations research has its merits, as it urges researchers to consider what political events are historically significant and how demographic and socioeconomic factors can play a part in determining generational characteristics.

challenges to democracy facing the two generations, and discussing the possibility of intra-generational differences. Chapter 2 works on complementing Mannheim's (1927/1952) generation theory with narrative theory and mediation theory. It presents a theoretical framework of a 'mediated generation'. In addition, I reconceptualise the Sunflower generation as the generation of Democratic Consolidation, contextualising it within distinct media and political landscapes, and categorising its elder counterpart as the Soft Authoritarianism generation. In Chapter 3, I explain why I chose to conduct focus groups with young people and how I devised these in accordance with the principle of peer group conversations (Gamson, 1992), elaborating on my combination of focus groups with individual and paired interviews, and reflecting on the issue of research ethics and on several challenges I encountered during the fieldwork. Chapter 4 presents how the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation made sense of democracy in similar and different ways, and how the media are associated with meaning-making processes materially, symbolically and socially. Based on these analyses, Chapter 4 also discusses whether, and to what extent, the generation of Democratic Consolidation is taking shape. Chapter 5 shows how the two generations interact with each other in and *as* the family. Through a close examination of the LINE Family Group, it reveals that family practices on/via the media – such as avoidance of political conversation – dovetail with those in the real world. The thesis concludes with a summary of my main empirical findings, an assessment of the application of my 'mediated generations' approach to the Taiwanese case, and a discussion of research implications.

Chapter 2: Developing a 'Mediated Generation' Approach

The purpose of this chapter is to build a conceptual framework which can help me to theorise the so-called Sunflower generation and their parents, and to reframe my initial questions, as presented in the previous chapter. To do so, the present chapter begins with a review of Karl Mannheim's (1927/1952) generation theory, as this offers a sociocultural approach to understanding generations. The theory explains that certain historical events are transformative, not merely because they provide 'the content of experience' but because they involve 'the individual's mental and spiritual adjustment' (Mannheim, 1927/1952: 293). Nonetheless, it provides few clues to how people's experiences of and adjustment to transformative historical events can be empirically examined. To address this shortcoming, I complement Mannheim's generation theory with narrative theory, which locates experience, action and identity within narratives (Andrews, 2002, 2007; Hsiau, 2010a, 2021; Polletta, 2015; Ricoeur, 1985/1988; Ringmar, 1996; Todorov, 1969). Furthermore, I connect narrative theory with the concept of mediation, which not only regards the media as an important site for producing, consuming and communicating narratives, but also emphasises a dialectical relationship between the personal and the collective (Livingstone, 2007, 2009; Silverstone, 1999, 2002, 2005). Mediation theory is also drawn upon for a better capturing of the dialectical relationship between generational identity and people's engagement and experiences with media and politics, instead of treating politics and media as increasingly interconnected but still separate realms. In addition, Bolin's (2014, 2017) notions of objective and subjective society and media landscapes are employed so as to locate generations in Taiwanese society over a long period of historical time of the transition from authoritarianism to democracy. In other words, as a sociological inquiry into political generations with a focus on media, a 'mediated generation' approach is developed in this thesis in order to advance our knowledge of how the experience of members of a generation – be this political or media experience – becomes socially meaningful.

2.1 From Mannheim's Generation Theory to a 'Mediated Generation' Approach

The Problem of Generations by Karl Mannheim (1927/1952) has been widely used as the point of departure for sociological inquiry into the formation of generations (Hsiau, 2010a; Katz, 2017). Against a backdrop of the antithesis between positivism and romanticism, his theory is a critical response to the romanticist approach, which falls short of scientific procedures for analysing how innate ways of experiencing life and the world are formed, and to the positivist approach, which fails to offer an explanation of how biological factors such as aging and limited life span are relevant to shaping social interaction and interrelationships within a historical process. In

other words, a Mannheimian approach is an attempt to scientifically study the 'experienced time' of a generation (Mannheim, 1927/1952: 283), and to ultimately understand historical developments by critically reflecting on the relation between the biological and the social. Emphasising that a generation is 'the product of social and cultural forces' (Mannheim, 1927/1952: 311), a Mannheim-inspired generation study shifts its focus from biological concerns such as measuring the duration of a generation[39] and generational intervals[40], to the importance of experiences and the role of formative forces in shaping generations.

Specifically, in Mannheim (1927/1952)'s generation theory, the concept of 'generation location' is defined as 'a common location in the historical dimension of the social process' (p. 290), and as offering 'a structure of opportunity' (Corsten, 1999: 253). In other words, people of a specific generation location are exposed to the same historical events within a particular social context and experience them during the same biographical time period. As the notion of generation location underlines the significance of sociohistorical specificity in forming a generation (location), a Mannheimian study of generations, from the very outset, differs from age-cohort studies, which are characterised by a chronological view of time, a unilinear perspective of progress, and a naturalistic principle of life.

Being part of an *actual* generation, however, demands more than the co-presence of people within the same historical, social and cultural region. It requires people to share a sense of 'common destiny', namely 'a concrete bond' which 'is created between members of a generation by their being exposed to the social and intellectual symptoms of a process of dynamic de-stabilization' (Mannheim, 1927/1952: 303). For Mannheim, destabilisation refers to events such as wars[41], which are dramatic and traumatic. In addition to this debatable question of whether events of destabilisation need always to be as pronounced as wars (Bolin, 2017), there is another deficiency in Mannheim's concept of a generation as actuality, namely that there are few guidelines for how to empirically study generational sense of common destiny and generational experience of destabilising events (Aboim & Vasconcelos, 2014; Pilcher, 1994). Referring to young people experiencing the

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[39] An inquiry into starting and ending points of time in which members of a generation begin and cease to develop their own pattern of thoughts.

[40] An inquiry into an average time span after which an older generation will be superseded by a younger one.

[41] Mannheim's generation theory was developed in the wake of World War I, which was traumatic and transformative to many individuals, regardless of class (Bolin, 2017; Edmunds & Turner, 2002).

'upheavals' in the 1800s, Mannheim (1927/1952) distinguishes between peasants and townspeople, stating that they did not constitute the same generation actuality because the former 'remain unaffected by the events which move' the latter (ibid.). Even though he emphasises the place of participation in forming an actual generation, he is unclear about how participation can be studied. A remedy for a lack of instructions on empirically examining generational experiences, actions or identities, as suggested by Pilcher (1994), could be found in the critiques of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge.

For example, Mills (1939) not only points out that Mannheim is vague about how an unconscious inventory of experience can be made collectively, but also directs our attention to how language 'functions in the organisation and control of behaviour patterns' – acknowledging that 'the meanings of symbols are defined and redefined by socially coordinated actions', an empirical study of generational experiences and actions focuses on analysing the 'functioning vocabulary' and 'nuances of meaning and value they embody' (pp. 676-678). Similarly, Dant (1991) suggests that we treat discourse as the empirical site of experiences, since 'discursive practice involves social action that can be identified in time and place' (Dant, 1991: 31). Along these lines, researching the post-war generation in Taiwan, Hsiau (2010a, 2021) gives evidence of how narratives enable experiences to bear a meaning and to become integral to a broader social relationship. To put it another way, narrative gives meaning to experience and 'requires *actions* on the part of *actors*' (Ringmar, 1996: 73, emphasis in original).

Acts of narration not only make experiences meaningful and actions possible, but also contribute to identity formation (Andrews, 2002). The relationship between identity and narrative is best understood to be constitutive, since individuals – and also communities – construct and are constructed by stories (Andrews, 2002; Hsiau, 2010a, 2021; Ricoeur, 1985/1988). These constructions are neither stable nor seamless. Instead, narratives are subject to being rewritten (Andrews, 2007, 2014), and 'narrative identity continues to make and unmake itself' (Ricoeur, 1985/1988: 249). Furthermore, private life stories are embedded in public narratives which are characterised by 'a certain collective reference framework for meaning making' (Hsiau, 2021: 19) and by 'the works of a culture' (Ricoeur, 1985/1988: 247). This interconnection between private and public narratives is illustrated by the process by which metanarratives, namely narratives relating to formal realms – for example, state propaganda and state education – feed into individual experiences and self-definition (Andrews, 2007; Bolin, 2019). In other words, narration depends on the availability and the validity of the interpretative resources we use (Ringmar, 1996),

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contributing to a blend of private and public experiences and identities (Andrews, 2007; Bolin, 2019). Hence narratives and identities, be they individual or collective, are relational (Tilly 2002). This relational characteristic demands special research attention to how stories are told – 'It is not stories alone, but importantly the communication of stories which informs our construction of who we are, who we have been, and who we are becoming' (Andrews, 2002: 81). Through communications a narrative become tellable and an identity articulated (Andrews, 2014).

An examination of narratives and their communication can begin with an investigation into the major components of narrative. It is commonly believed that a narrative is composed of beginning, middle and end (Andrews, 2007; Hsiau, 2010a; Polletta, 2006). Characters such as heroes, villains and victims (Polletta, 2015) are also considered typical. For Ringmar (1996), 'the most characteristic feature of narrative is the plot' (p. 72), because plots connect one event with another, and one character with another (Polletta, 2015; Todorov, 1969). These connections, also termed 'emplotment', serve to sequence events in a certain ordering, to endow characters with certain viewpoints, and to create certain relations between events and characters (Hsiau, 2010a; Polletta, 2006; Ringmar, 1996; Tamboukou, Andrews & Squire, 2013). Emplotment, in a word, makes events and characters become meaningful. This can draw on classical rhetorical tropes such as metaphor and irony (Czarniawska, 2004) involving the invention of a 'problematique', namely a conflict resulting from lack of resources and requiring characters to take action (Ringmar, 1996), or at least 'the shift from one equilibrium to another' (Todorov, 1969: 75). However, in practice, these mechanisms of emplotment are loosely employed, and narratives are likely to be fragmented (Bolin, 2019). Given this feature of fragmentation, a narrative is not necessarily structured by a clear beginning, middle and end, a definite use of rhetorical devices, or a new equilibrium. Accordingly, my study of generational narratives is guided, but not bound, by these structural arrangements of narrative. It focuses more on the communication of narrative and the functions of such communication, which include sense-making and normalising.

Narrative communication functions to give instructions for action and interaction, and to underpin institutional practices (Bolin, 2019; Polletta, 2006). With my awareness of the prescriptive nature of narrative, and my focus on the communication processes of narrative, the question of *who* (can) engage in telling and responding to narratives becomes critical. Research that adopts a narrative/discursive approach to studying generations or that includes an examination of generational narratives/discourses has focused on activists (Mena,

2015), elites and educated youth (Hsiau, 2010a, 2021; Rigger, 2006). Such a choice of research focus makes a distinction between people who have more resources to tell stories and engaging in the meaning-making process of a generation and others who do not. As Hsiau (2010a) elaborates, 'Political or cultural elites of the intellectual stratum are good at utilising media, such as parole, words, and images, to narrativize and symbolise collective experiences for verifying their meanings' (pp. 57-58). Even though I acknowledge the narrative power of elites/intellectuals, agreeing that narrative and identity become collective only after they 'enter the public spheres' such as 'workplace, political activities, and communication media' (Hsiau, 2010a: 58), I recognise that in the contemporary media environment the distinction between public and private has become less clear-cut, and that ordinary people appear to have greater access to the public spheres. For example, one of Liu and Su's (2017) observations about the Sunflower Movement is that:

> Mass media and government elites could not monopolise the interpretation of major agendas, [since] protesters used mobile media, social networking sites and so forth to build heterogenous information and communication networks which influenced the development of policy and provoked a response from the government. (pp. 150-151)

Through a combination of social networking sites and mobile devices, as outlined above, it has become easier for ordinary citizens to produce and spread their own stories and to contest with government officials and media professionals the meaning of the movement. For instance, people ranging from lawyers or doctors to blue-collar workers used foul language to express their frustration in the 'Bowel Flower Forums',[42] which were widely livestreamed on YouTube (Chuang, 2021; Hioe, 2017): 'all enjoyed curse words and laughter. A communal sense of togetherness looped across the online and physical space' (Chuang, 2021). By speaking to the microphone, phoning in or joining online live chats, people from non-intellectual backgrounds seemed to have created their own public arenas in which they could act and narrate their actions and experiences in their own words. Considering the repressed political and media environment in 1970s Taiwan, Hsiau's (2010a, 2021) portrayal of common people relying on news articles, op-ed pieces, student magazines and essays written by intellectuals/elites to make sense of society seems fairly realistic. Nonetheless, contemporary Taiwan is a democracy and enjoys a high Internet penetration rate (Internet World Stats, 2022) and these political and media

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[42] 'Bowel Flower' (大腸花, *da chang hua*) is a pun on the movement's name, 'Sunflower' (Chung, 2014; Lin, 2014).

developments demand that contemporary researchers critically reflect on the roles both of ordinary people and of the media in the creation and communication of generational narratives.

Although, in *The Problem of Generations* (1927/1952), Mannheim does not discuss the media[43] in relation to generations, his conception of the mass media including the press, radio, cinema and television can be found in *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (1935/1940) and in *Diagnosis of Our Time* (1943/2010). As Palmer (1971) summarises, the mass media are referred to as 'social techniques' for a planned democracy, as part of 'mass methods' for instilling values whose influence is as crucial as formal schooling (pp. 128-130). Moreover, Mannheim is sanguine about voluntary cooperation between mass media institutions and democratically inclined elites, even though he 'recognises that the mass media have shared the general tendency toward centralization that is a feature of modern, industrial societies' (Palmer, 1971: 131). His optimism about the mass media resonates with his advocacy of using them 'for democratic ends' and 'for good rather than evil' (Palmer, 1971: 133). While researchers in the mass media era – like Mannheim and Hsiau – foreground the narrative power of elites in collaboration with the mass media, hence prioritising the uni-directional, if not top-down, communication of narrative, this thesis is concerned with ordinary people's narration in their everyday lives in a 21st century which has been described as the network society (Castells, 2004), as the age of social media (Fuchs, 2015) and as the platform society (van Dijk, Poell, & de Waal, 2018), to name but a few. Indeed, these media developments seem to have changed how people participate in transformative events, experience historic moments, and explore identities.

Take, for example, the '24-Hour Relay Across the Globe' campaign. With the help of social media platforms and livestreaming technologies, young Taiwanese spread across twenty-one countries were able to stand in solidarity with protesters inside and outside Taiwan's parliament (Chao, 2014; Rowen, 2015). The walls of the parliament building were covered by protest signs, one of which read 'I am a Hong Konger. Taiwan, please step on our corpses and think about the path you want to

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[43] The most relevant reference made by Mannheim (1927/1952) is to 'slogan' (p. 305), in his discussion about formative forces that can contribute to the formation of generation units.

take'[44] (Tsai, 2014; Wong, 2019; Zhang, 2014). In addition to 'I am a Hong Konger', there was '"I am a Taiwanese": Young generation guarding Taiwan democracy', a YouTube video inspired by the world-famous 'I am a Ukrainian' video.[45] On and through these digital media, transformative events for contemporary youth appear to be less bounded by geographical and national boundaries. Instead, their meaning and participation in them can be simultaneously nationalist and global-facing. As Wu (2019) observes, 'members of the Sunflower generation, thanks to the Internet and social media among other factors, turned a keen eye toward current world and regional affairs, such as the situation in Hong Kong, Japan, Okinawa, Tibet, the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, Ukraine, and beyond' (p. 234). Moreover, the interactive nature of social media and of the Internet encourages the re-sequencing or re-writing of narratives (Cover, 2006) and enables the digital storytelling of a 'whole range of personal stories now being told in potentially public form using digital media resources' (Couldry, 2008: 42). Considering these possible roles of digital media in shaping generational narratives and characterising generations, I further draw on media generations research, aiming to complement Mannheim's generation theory and narrative theory with mediation theory.

Instead of taking it for granted that generations are distinguished in terms of the technologies used, such as the 'Net Generation' (see Tapscott, 2009), a media generation approach acknowledges that generational experiences depend on a combination of factors, and attempts to reveal the complex relationship between media and generations. Externally, the media disseminate the historical events of particular importance to a given generation (Bolin, 2017; Colombo, 2011), providing building materials and forming mnemonic repertoires that can be drawn upon on later occasions (Aroldi, 2011; Bolin, 2017). Under some conditions, the media themselves may function as events of historical significance – 'the very appearance of a technology media, of a specific configuration of the media system and so on, can be considered an historical event' (Colombo, 2011: 28). Internally, at the level of

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[44] This sign first appeared as a placard hung around the neck of a Hong Konger who joined the sit-in outside the Legislative Yuan during the Sunflower Movement. It was widely circulated on Facebook and displayed on the façade of the Legislative Yuan at the March 30 Rally. A similar sign, saying 'Taiwanese people please step on the Hong Kongers' corpses and keep away from China', was spotted at the headquarters of Tsai Ing-wen's election campaign for the 2016 presidential election (Ng, 2016).

[45] This video was filmed during mass mobilisations in Ukraine in 2013 and 2014, known as the Euromaidan Movement. Demonstrators protested against the then president Viktor Yanukovych's refusal to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union (Channell-Justice, 2017; Saryusz-Wolski, 2014).

culture and everyday life, the media play a ritualistic role, which is manifested in specific generational habits or styles of media usage or choices of media consumption (Aroldi, 2011; Colombo, 2011; Vittadini, Siibak, Reifova, & Bilandzic, 2014). As can be seen, media generation researchers have moved away from a deterministic view of the media and have adopted a constructivist approach to studying media and generations – more specifically, they assert a reciprocal relationship between generations and media (Aroldi, 2011; Bolin, 2017; Colombo, 2011; Vittadini, Siibak, Reifova, & Bilandzic, 2014). In so doing, various roles that the media can play in the formation of generations have been identified, but in my research context such concept as *mediation* is more useful for it highlights how the media and people's everyday lives become meaningful dialectically.

A dialectical view of the media involves studying what people do with the media (Livingstone, 2007; Silverstone, 2005) as 'media become meaningful because of coordinated human activity and, at the same time, people understand the world and their position in it through the media. Mediation works *both* ways' (Livingstone, 2009: 5; emphasis added). Mediation is understood here as a process in which meaning moves across experience and representation, hence negotiated and transformed (Livingstone, 2009; Silverstone, 1999). This process is both *material* and *symbolic* because of 'the technological objects consumed in particular spatiotemporal settings' and 'symbolic messages located within particular sociocultural discourses and interpreted by audiences' (Couldry, Livingstone, & Markham, 2007: 24). Processes of mediation are also *social* as they concern people's actions, activities and practices involving in communication (Cammaerts, 2011; Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006; Silverstone, 1999), and they 'create a framework for the ordering of the everyday', providing 'a framework for the definition and conduct of our relationships to the other' (Silverstone, 2002: 761-762). Mediation, be it material, symbolic or social, is an 'uneven' process, since 'the power to work with, or against, the dominant or deeply entrenched meanings' (Silverstone, 2002: 762), 'the technical skills to be able to produce and transmit information', and the 'skills enabling individuals to critically assess information, select and make sense of information (Cammaerts, 2011: 42) are unequal within society.

I am aware of a certain degree of overlap between the concept of mediation and the constructivist/constructionist approach to mediatisation. The latter is one of the three major streams of research on mediatisation – in addition to the institutional and the technological approaches (Bolin, 2017; Hjarward, 2013). It focuses on 'the life-worlds of media users (and producers)' and 'the interplay between media, individual agency and the formation of structural constraints' (Bolin,

2017: 21). Nonetheless, there is a general distinction between mediation and mediatisation research: while the former is broader in scope because it concerns in-betweenness, namely the ways in which human interaction is mediated by all cultural forms and modes of exchange (e.g., language, tools, media), the latter is predominantly concerned with the impact of media institutions on other fields of society (Livingstone & Lunt, 2014). Since its primary concern is the role of media in the everyday lives of a given generation, and without assuming that the fields of generational politics and of generation-related institutions, such as family and schools, have undergone a transformation, this thesis follows Silverstone's (1999, 2002, 2005) theoretical and analytical principles of mediation studies, and has developed a mediated generation approach, as shown in the following figure:
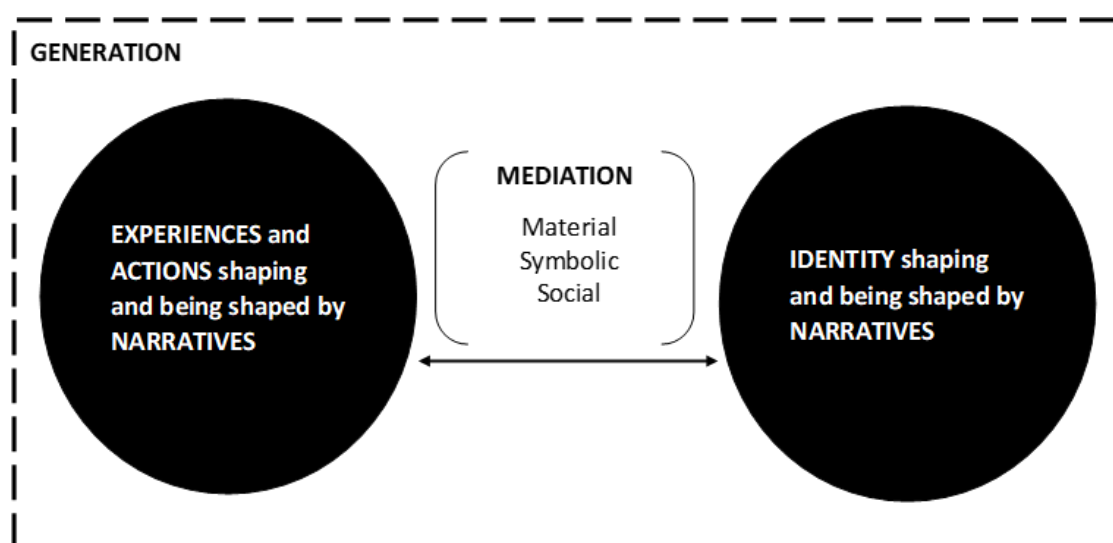
Figure 2.1. A mediated generation

As shown, a generation is characterised by distinct experiences and actions which shape and are shaped by narratives. Generational identity and narratives are also mutually constructed. Analysing generational narratives involves identifying beginning, middle, end, characters, and plots, examining the connection between plots and that between characters, revealing the creation of problematique and the use of metaphors (Andrews, 2007; Czarniawska, 2004; Hsiau, 2010a; Polletta, 2006, 2015; Ringmar, 1996; Tamboukou, Andrews & Squire, 2013; Todorov, 1969). It also requires an investigation into communication processes of which the narrative is told, received and acted upon (Andrews, 2002; Ringmar, 1996). Examining these communication processes in this thesis entails studying what media technologies and discourses the members of a generation work with in the context of their civic engagement, exploring how their media practices and civic actions become meaningful and how media take part in shaping their generational identities and

relationships. In carrying out such an examination, I pay equal attention to what technology appears inaccessible to whom, what meaning is unarticulated by whom, what type of interaction is discouraged, and why – since material, symbolic and social processes of mediation are usually uneven (Silverstone, 2002). Considering that the relation between narratives, experiences, actions and identity is an ongoing and constitutive process, I depict this as a double-headed arrow. The boundary of a mediated generation is shown as dotted lines because I consider people's identification with any generation to be subjective and subject to change.

In this section, I have reviewed Mannheim's generation theory, narrative theory, media generation studies, and mediation theory. By treating narrative as a site of generational experiences, acknowledging a constitutive relationship between generational narratives, experiences, actions, and identities, and recognising the importance of media in the production, consumption and communication of generational narratives, I have developed a mediated generation approach. The next section aims to identify the younger and older generations in contemporary Taiwan for empirical analysis.

2.2 Two Generations in Taiwanese Society

A mediation analysis demands contextualism, attending to historical conjunctures and connections across media and communication environments (Livingstone, 2009; Lo, 2001). Fully grasping the mediation processes of generations in Taiwanese society therefore encourages the contextualisation of generations in conjunction with media and political transformations over the long – and ongoing – history of Taiwan's struggles for democracy. To contextualise both generations and media, I employ Bolin's (2014, 2017) notions of objective and subjective society and media landscapes. According to Bolin (2017),

> The metaphor of landscape allows for thinking about the media in a way that transgresses the structure-agency dichotomy and makes it possible to see action as structured by frameworks produced in previous social action, by preceding others. Those structures, however, never make individual action determined. (p. 45)

Using the notion of society and media landscapes helps in capturing changes in media and society and exploring the dialectical relationship between the media and social actions. Considering that Taiwan's transition to a democracy from a martial law regime took place only at the end of the last century, locating generations within shifting landscapes is particularly needed. According to Bolin (2014, 2017), society and media landscapes are simultaneously objective and subjective. An objective society landscape consists of transformative social events within a historical process

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(e.g., for some generations in Estonia, the collapse of the Soviet Union), but these events may be experienced, remembered and interpreted in differing ways, and hence may also constitute a subjective society landscape. In the same vein, media landscapes are both objective and subjective. An objective media landscape is structured by the actual appearance and organisation of media technologies and by the emergence and dissemination of media genres and content – it is therefore both technological and symbolic. A subjective media landscape is shaped by how the media are 'remembered and made meaningful' (Bolin, 2017: 66), and by how they are 'lived and experienced first-hand' (Bolin, 2017: 69). The generational subjective understanding of media and political landscapes is explored in my empirical analyses.

I first conceptualise generations within objective media and political landscapes from 1949, with the KMT's retreat from mainland China to Taiwan, until 2016, with the third change of ruling party. Considering my research interest in comparing younger and older generations which were socialised into politics in different political systems, I conducted a literature review of political generations (Chang & Wang, 2005; Lin, 2014, 2015a, 2017; Rigger, 2006, 2015) and selected the first party alternation of ruling government in 2000 as the generational break because it marked a milestone in Taiwan's democratic transition, symbolising the consolidation of Taiwan democracy and an acknowledgement of Taiwanese identity. [46] Two generations are categorised: the Democratic Consolidation generation, consisting of people born after 1982 so that the eldest came of age in the year 2000, and its older counterpart, named the Soft Authoritarianism generation. These names suggest the political systems under which they were socialised into politics. The two generations are positioned within objective political and media landscapes, as shown below:

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[46] This was the first time for a local party to be elected to power. Additionally, the president-elect, Chen Shui-bian, was hailed as 'the son of Taiwan' – this title first appeared in Chen's autobiography and was then widely used in the media.

Political landscapes

- **1949** KMT's retreat to Taiwan
- **1966** Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement
- **1971** Withdrawal from UN
- **1979** Diplomatic break with the US, the Taiwan Relations Act, & Meilidao Incident
- **1986** Establishment of the DPP
- **1987** Lifting of martial law
- **1990** Wild Lily Movement
- **1991** Lifting of Anti-insurgency Law
- **1992** The first direct legislature election
- **1996** The first direct presidential election
- **2000** First party alternation
- **2008** Second party alternation
- **2008** Wild Strawberry Movement
- **2012** Anti-Media Monopoly Movement
- **2013** White Shirt Army Movement
- **2014** Sunflower Movement
- **2015** Anti-Black Box Curriculum Movement
- **2016** Third party alternation

1950 — 1970 — 1990 — 2010

1940 — 1960 — 1980 — 2000 — 2010 — 2020

Media landscapes

- **1949** Central News Agency & Broadcasting Corporation of China
- **1950** China Times
- **1951** United Daily
- **1962** TTV
- **1969** CTV
- **1971** CTS
- **1979** The closure of Meilidao Magazine
- **1988** Lifting of press ban
- **1995** Commercial Internet provider
- **1995** PTT
- **1996** FTV
- **1997** Compulsory computer education
- **1998** PTS
- **2003** HTV
- **2005** TITV
- **2007** YouTube
- **2008** Facebook
- **2010** IG
- **2011** LINE
- **2015** Over 80 % of Taiwanese population as Internet users (100% for 18-30 year-olds)

The Soft Authoritarianism generation
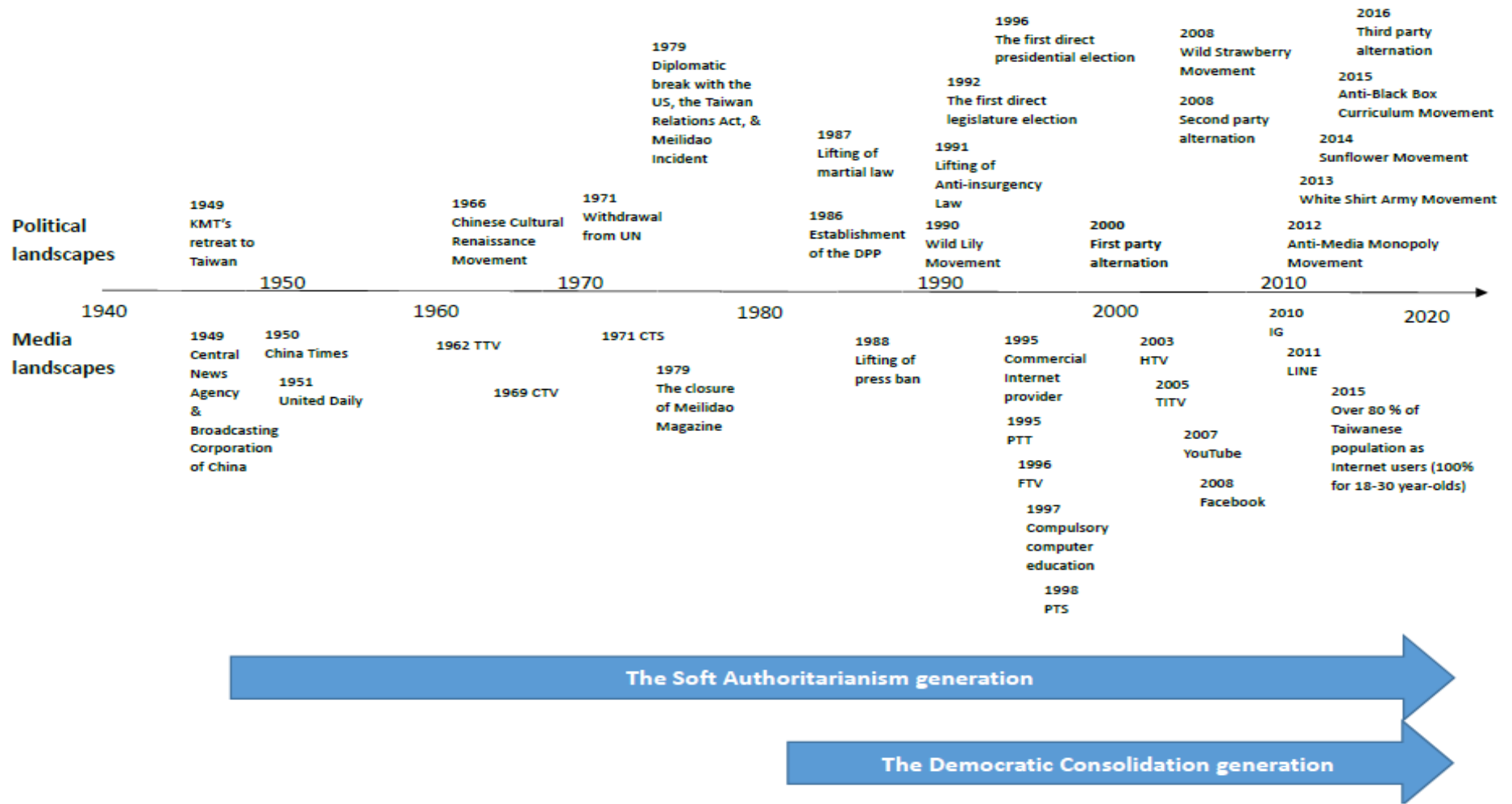
The Democratic Consolidation generation

Figure 2.2 Two generations within objective political and media landscapes

2.2.1 The Soft Authoritarianism generation

Parents are theorised as the Soft Authoritarianism generation, which was born in the Chiang Kai-shek regime, growing up and socialised into politics under the rule of Chiang Ching-Kuo. The predominant political ideology during the Chiang Kai-shek period was one of retaking the mainland (Chang, 2016; Fell, 2018) – although this was questioned by some elites and intellectuals after the signing of the US-ROC Mutual Defence Treaty, the general tone still focused on promoting 'the Treaty's effect of allying with anti-communist crusade and guaranteeing Taiwan's security' (Chang, 2016: 104), given that under the authoritarian rule of the party state the print and radio media were mostly controlled by the KMT. As shown in Figure 2.2, the KMT brought to Taiwan the Central News Agency, which was established in 1924 in Nanjing, China (Hsu, 2014). In addition to the party-owned news agency, newspapers during the martial law period were owned by the state or by people considered trustworthy by the party state – examples of the latter included *China Times* and *United Daily News*. Ownership of radio stations resembled that of newspapers. For example, the Broadcasting Corporation of China was owned by the KMT and by 1987 it ran 20 branch stations. In terms of total wattage, a combination of military and KMT-run radio enterprises during the martial law era was 94.5 per cent (Hsu, 2014).

Besides attacking communism, the era of White Terror[47] was also marked by the propaganda of Chinese ideology. Paralleling with the Cultural Revolution in 1966, the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement was initiated in Taiwan. While Chinese cultural traditions were condemned and discarded on the Mainland, they were used by the KMT government to build a Chinese national identity; that is, the Movement made people 'believe that this spirit of cultural consciousness was the key to the fate of the nation in all other respects', encompassing 'achievements as diverse as economic progress and athletic success' which were perceived to be 'consequences of (and causes for) this spirit of national unity' (Chun, 1994: 57). Such a perception was created through various social domains including the family, local neighbourhoods, school education, military training and the mass media (Hsiau,

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[47] It generally refers to state violence against any revolutionary or anti-establishment forces (Hou, 2007). In the Taiwanese context, the White Terror was an era of abuses committed by the authoritarian KMT regime from the late 1940s, when, one after another, the Temporary Provisions Effective during the Period of Mobilisation for the Suppression of the Communist Rebellion, the martial law, the Statute for Punishment of Rebellion, and the Provisions for the Control of Spies during the Period of Provisional Mobilisation were implemented, to the early 1990s, when these were fully abolished (Hou, 2007; Stolojan, 2017).

2000). For instance, in primary and secondary schools, Confucianism was taught as a set of 'ethical values which had a specific role in the service of the state' – by invoking Confucianism in terms of filial piety and respect for authorities, a sense of family solidarity was extended to a national one (Chun, 1994).

The role of the mass media in propagandising Chinese ideology was a prominent one (Hsu, 2014). At the level of language, all FM radio channels were restricted to broadcasting no more than 30 per cent of their programmes in Taiwanese native languages,[48] non-Mandarin television[49] programming was also limited[50] and only Mandarin-language films received funding (Dreyer, 2003; Su, 1993). Whereas characters speaking Taiwanese native languages were normally assigned negative roles,[51] heroes always spoke Mandarin (Tai, 1999) – or they would be removed, no matter how popular they were. Take Shi Yan-wen, the hero of a puppet show with a 97 per cent TV rating, for example. Although he exemplified the Confucian virtues such as loyalty and filial piety that the KMT state claimed to constitute the spirit of the Chinese nation, his show was terminated, even after a character named Zhong Guo-qiang – literally meaning 'China is strong' – was added (Hsu, 2014). In other words, the mass media were employed in the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement and in the White Terror era in general as part of the state apparatus for propagandising Chinese ideology and nationalism and, through the Movement, Chinese ideology not only fostered an identification with the Chinese nation but also help to form disciplinary lifestyles that corresponded to the ethos of the party state (Chun, 1994; Lin, 2001).

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[48] While Mandarin was made the official language, Taiwanese native languages including Taiwanese Hokkien/Hoklo, Hakka and indigenous languages were all made dialects.

[49] As noted in Figure 2.2, the Taiwan Television Enterprise (TTV) was launched in 1962, the China Television Company (CTV) in 1969, and the Chinese Television System (CTS) in 1971. These were owned by the Taiwan Provincial Government, the KMT and the military respectively (Hsu, 2014). People's TV consumption began to take off from the 1960s as in 1964 television manufacture was selected as one of the core industries. With American and Japanese investment, televisions became more affordable, and from 1969 colour TV sets became available (Ko, 2012).

[50] In 1962, non-Mandarin programmes were limited to less than 16 per cent of total broadcast time. From 1972, it was regulated that non-Mandarin programmes should be less than one hour per day on each channel (Hsiau, 1997).

[51] Due to tight budgets, even the roles portrayed in non-Mandarin programmes 'were of low socio-economic status: illiterates, peasants, workers, fishermen, elders, especially old women, and the like' (Hsiau, 1997: 308).

The latter half of the martial law period was marked by many political upheavals domestically and internationally. For example, in terms of international politics, the Soft Authoritarianism generation experienced political turmoil caused by the shifting power relationship between PRC/China and ROC/Taiwan – ROC lost its seat at the UN[52] in 1971 and its diplomatic relations with the US in 1979. Against this backdrop of diplomatic setbacks[53] and dwindling international legitimacy, Chiang Ching-kuo,[54] the successor to Chiang Kai-shek, practised 'soft authoritarianism'[55] (Winckler, 1984) since he 'had no intention of surrendering power' but did not want to 'risk international opprobrium, domestic subversion and ideological bankruptcy' (Rigger, 1999: 112). Nonetheless, domestic demand for political reforms was increasing and identity debates were emerging. During the Diaoyutai Islands dispute in the early 1970s, *The Intellectual*, a magazine launched by NTU graduates and students, criticised the KMT's domestic policies and called for the re-election of parliamentary bodies[56] (Hsiau, 2013; Rigger, 1999). Then in 1979, the Meilidao Incident happened, resulting in the closure of *Meilidao Magazine* and the imprisonment of its members. By introducing its readers to historical Taiwanese personages and the history of Taiwanese resistance, the magazine had been promoting Taiwanese consciousness in addition to promoting human rights and democratic values; moreover, it was more than a magazine but also a political organisation which was recognised as 'dangwai', meaning non-KMT (Hsu, 2014; Jacobs, 2016). Despite the lengthy prison sentences received by dangwai leaders, the opposition movement did not subside. Instead, the Meilidao Incident motivated the

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[52] Since then China, as recognised by the international community, has been the People's Republic of China (PRC) rather than the Republic of China (ROC).

[53] In 1972, a year after the ROC/Taiwan withdrew from the UN, then US President Richard Nixon paid a visit to the PRC (Chang, 1983). Additionally, Japan and the PRC established diplomatic relations in the same year, whereas the Japan-ROC/Taiwan relationship was intense, with conflict over the sovereignty of the Diaoyutai Islands (Yap, Chen, & Huang, 2012).

[54] As the son of Chiang Kai-shek, who led the KMT to relocate in Taiwan in 1949, he first served as the Minister of Defence (1965-1969), then as Premier (1972-1978), and finally as President (1978-1988) (Leng, 1993). During his premiership, Chiang Ching-kuo was also faced with economic upheavals caused by the 1973 oil crisis and responded with the Ten Major Construction Projects.

[55] A softening of authoritarianism was characterised by slightly higher tolerance of opposition and slightly larger scope for new social forces to develop (Fell, 2018; Winckler, 1984). This partly explains why the DPP was able to be established as an opposition party in 1986, a year before martial law was ended.

[56] Including the National Assembly, the Legislative Yuan and the Control Yuan.

lawyers for the defendants to enter politics, provoking fierce debate about Taiwanese identity and publicising the call for Taiwan independence (Armoudian, 2011; Chou & Nathan, 1987; Dreyer, 2003; Greene, 2009; Hsu, 2014; Jacobs, 2016).

As Chiang Ching-kuo's government moved away from hard-line policies, opposition media played a cat-and-mouse game in which opposition magazines and books tested the regime's tolerance of political dissent: 'state censors closed them down, only to see them reopen under new titles (Rigger, 1999: 113). However, the regime generally maintained its control of civil society – as exemplified by news coverage of the Meilidao Incident, the opposition was consistently portrayed as insurgents who had close connections with communists or Taiwan independence movement organisations (Weng & Chen, 2000; Weng, 2001). 'The discourse that the government cannot be changed and the KMT is irreplaceable is prevalent in mass media' (Weng, 2001: 142). The media landscape in which the generation of Soft Authoritarianism grew up was primarily characterised by state-controlled mass media.

Politically, this generation was socialised into Chinese ideology and identity, whereas Taiwanese languages, cultures and identity were repressed, as were opposition voices, despite a softening of authoritarianism during the Chiang Ching-Kuo era. Under the authoritarian regime, democracy and freedom were predominantly understood as resistance to communism (Jiang, 2001), serving the legitimacy of the ruling class. Nonetheless, political opposition and Taiwanese identity still emerged alongside economic modernisation (Fell, 2018). As one of the four Asian Tigers,[57] Taiwan in the 1980s had an average annual GDP growth of 8.46 per cent and its GDP per capita was at the same level as that in Hong Kong and Singapore (Lai, 2019). It is against this backdrop of a booming economy and the loosening of authoritarian rule that the Democratic Consolidation generation was born.

2.2.2 The Democratic Consolidation generation

As martial law was lifted in 1987, and Chiang Ching-kuo died in the following year. Taiwanese society began its democratisation at an accelerated pace. Almost in parallel with the 1989 Tiananmen Incident in China, the 1990 Wild Lily Movement, a student demonstration for democracy, was a pivotal moment in the process of democratic transition (Fell, 2018). Thousands of university students around Taiwan gathered in the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall, and most of their protest demands were met in the following years – in 1991, the Temporary Provisions Effective during

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[57] Including Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan.

the Period of Mobilisation for the Suppression of the Communist Rebellion were lifted; the National Assembly[58] was dissolved; the first direct election to the legislature in the Legislative Yuan was held in 1992, and those of the president and vice president in 1996 (Mengin, 1999; Outreach for Taiwan, n.d.).

Members of the *Democratic Consolidation generation* were born into such a burgeoning democracy. Their formative years were marked by regular national and local elections, competitive opposition forces, Taiwan-centred rhetoric, and rapid media liberalisation and developments (Fell, 2018; Liu, 2019; Rigger, 1999, 2015). The oldest members of this generation entered adulthood[59] in 2000, the first change of ruling party. Indeed, entering the 21st century, Taiwan has seen a regular alternation of ruling governments. Following the first ruling party change in 2000, the second alternation occurred in 2008 and the third in 2016. For the Democratic Consolidation generation, not only party alternation but also digitally mobilised and networked movements[60] are common. There was the Wild Strawberry Movement in

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[58] This National Assembly was elected in China in 1948, and then came to Taiwan with the KMT. Not having been re-elected since 1948, the Assembly had the nickname of 'Ten Thousand Year Assembly'.

[59] In Taiwan, young people aged 18 have criminal responsibility and the right to vote in a referendum. Culturally, turning 18 also means leaving home for higher education or work.

[60] One cannot discuss social movements in 21st century Taiwan without mentioning the Red Shirt Movement in 2006, which demanded that then President Chen Shui-bian take responsibility for corruption scandals and allegations by resigning from the presidency. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Chen represented the DPP in both the 2000 and the 2004 presidential elections, and his first presidency also marked the first change of elected ruling government. Despite the large scale of the Red Shirt Movement, I did not include it in Figure 2.2 because citizen participation in this movement was primarily based on the divide between pro-KMT and pro-DPP camps (Chang, 2013), whereas the social movements shown were more successful in attracting broader and more diverse participation; moreover, unlike these movements, in which social media and digital communications played a prominent role, the Red Shirt Movement relied heavily on broadcasting media and the press (Chen, 2008; Wu, 2017).

2008,[61] the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement in 2012, the White Shirt Army Movement in 2013,[62] the Sunflower Movement in 2014, and the Anti-Black-Box-Curriculum Movement in 2015[63] (Fell, 2017). As an unprecedentedly massive media-themed protest in Taiwan history (Ebsworth, 2017), the 2012 Anti-Media Monopoly Movement is worthy of a closer look. Led by students, this movement protested against the Want Want China Times Media Group.[64] In addition to dealing with the problem of ownership concentration as a consequence of media liberalisation and deregulation in the 1980s and 1990s, it drew public attention to China's influence on Taiwanese media (Ebsworth, 2017; Rawnsley & Feng, 2014) – Tsai Eng-meng, the owner of the Want Want Group, has a history of disregarding editorial independence, interfering in news coverage of any issues relating to China[65] and using his media outlets to promote unification (ibid.).

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[61] Chen Yun-lin, the chairman of China's Association for Relations, came to Taiwan to meet with the then-President Ma Ying-jeou. During his visit protestors, mainly led by the DPP, had been clashing with the police. In response, the police shut down some major highways, forbidding citizens from waving the national flag in public. Opposing these measures, a group of university students and their professors held a sit-in at the Executive Yuan government building in Taipei, resulting in many more student sit-ins across the nation. They demanded that Ma Ying-jeou and then-Premier Liu Chao-shiun make an apology, that the directors of the police and national security agencies step down, and that the Assembly and Parade Law be amended (Carpenter, 2011; Lee, 2016).

[62] A conscript died two days before fulfilment of his military service obligation. As the army and the Ministry of Defence failed to clear people's doubt about abuse, protesters called for the improvement of human rights in the military (Chen, 2018; Ho, 2014).

[63] On 23 July 2015, a group of high school students broke into the Ministry of Education and occupied the Education Minister's office overnight. They were protesting against the new high school curriculum, which involved a revision of several subjects including history, geography, Chinese language and civic education. Student protesters were most concerned about the history curriculum, which was seen as 'China-centric', and as aimed at 'brainwashing' (BBC Asia, 2015; Gold, 2015; *The Japan Times Asia Pacific*, 2015). They demanded that the government retract the curriculum and after Lin Kuan-hua, one of the student leaders, committed suicide they also demanded that Wu Se-hwa, the education minister, resign.

[64] By then, Want Want Holdings already owned *The China Times* (newspapers), China Television Co (terrestrial television) and CtiTV (cable television), but planned to purchase China Network Systems (the second-largest cable TV provider in Taiwan).

[65] Tsai Eng-meng removed Hsia Chen, the former editor-in-chief of China Times, following what he considered to be a 'disrespectful' headline about Chen Yunlin, the former chairman of China's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (Rawnsley & Feng, 2014).

Regarding the specific media landscape within which the Democratic Consolidation generation grew up, abundance and diversity are its two distinguishing characteristics. In quantitative terms, there were only 31 newspapers between 1951 and 1987, but more than 2,000 newspapers[66] were in circulation by mid-2006 (Rawnsley, 2012). Under the authoritarian regime, there were just three national TV stations, including the Taiwan Television Enterprise (TTV), China Television Company (CTV) and Chinese Television System (CTS), whereas there were five terrestrial TV stations and 66 cable television companies offering more than 100 channels by the mid-2000s (Lee, 2013). In terms of content, Formosa Television (FTV), was established as the fourth national television channel in 1997. Its establishment had a political significance, giving legitimacy and national visibility to Taiwanese identities as alternatives to the 'Chineseness' that dominated TTV, CTV, and CTS, which were created and owned by the KMT during the authoritarian period (Rawnsley, 2003). Moreover, the Public Television Service (PTS), Hakka Television (HTV), and Taiwan Indigenous Television (TITV) were established in 1998, 2003 and 2005 respectively. Their establishment symbolised a pursuit of pluralism and multiculturalism through media liberalisation reforms (Liu & Chen, 2006).

In addition to increased choices of print and broadcasting media, the Democratic Consolidation generation also grew up with the Internet and computers: in 1995 a commercial Internet service was introduced to the Taiwanese public[67] (Su, 2000); in the same year the PTT was created; in 1997 computer education was made compulsory in high schools (Pai, 2008). Since hitting the headlines of legacy media in 2005 (Li, 2012), PTT has been serving as the largest bulletin-board system in Taiwan. It has also been recognised as an important site of public debate (Lin, 2017), demonstrating a distinct Internet culture which features a political style of straightforwardness (Chuang, 2018) and a carnival-like and ritualistic type of collectivity (Huang & Lin, 2013; Lin, 2011). Then, the second decade of the present millennium has seen the arrival and prevalence of mobile devices, the mobile Internet, and social media. YouTube arrived in Taiwan in 2007, Facebook in 2008,

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[66] Among these, *Apple Daily,* as mentioned in the previous chapter, had a historic role as it not only rose to become the biggest newspaper in less than three years from its entry in 2003 but also facilitated the tabloidisation of the press.

[67] As mentioned in the previous chapter, the rate of Internet use for the population aged between 18 and 30 years old reached 100 per cent in 2015 (TWNIC, 2015).

Instagram in 2010, and LINE [68] in 2011 – in the same year, the Research, Development and Evaluation Commission, Executive Yuan (RDEC), for the first time published a survey research report on 3G usage among Taiwanese mobile users (RDEC, 2011). All 3G network services, however, were required to be terminated and replaced with 4G by the National Communications Commission (NCC) in 2018 (NCC, 2018).

Evidently, members of the Democratic Consolidation generation are not unfamiliar with rapid digital developments. In fact, they are often considered to be digital natives, as compared with their elder counterparts whose formative years overlapped with the mass media age and who are thence widely labelled as digital immigrants. Nevertheless, the distinction between digital natives and digital immigrants is commonly criticised for a deterministic view of digital media and for a simultaneously monolithic and dichotomous view of people's engagement with media (Buckingham, 2013; Helsper & Eynon, 2010; Lee, 2005). As described in my illustration of a mediated generation approach, this thesis treats the media's relation to generations as dialectical. In so doing, it is mindful of the complexity and diversity of generational engagement with media (and politics) – for example, there may be differences in how people of the same generation use digital media, whereas there may be similarities across different generations.

Regardless of similarities or differences, the reality is that the two generations, and the generation units within each, all live together as coevals in contemporary Taiwan, and all facing several dilemmas. In terms of domestic politics, despite a multi-party election environment, political elites have been polarising over the issue of national identity, which never fails to generate fierce debates in national elections (Clark & Tan, 2012). Regarding China-Taiwan relations, there have been, on the one hand, more exchanges (of an economic,[69] cultural[70] and even political[71] nature)

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[68] It started as an instant messaging application in 2011 in Japan, and then entered Taiwan in 2012. Nowadays LINE has an estimate of 21 million active users every month with a penetration rate of 91.3% (Tang, 2018; Tsai, 2019) and has grown to provide news (LINE Today), videos (LINE TV), mobile (LINE Mobile), shopping/transactions (LINE Pay) and upcoming banking services (LINE Bank) – just as its slogan says, 'LINE is new level of communication, and the very infrastructure of your life'.

[69] In the late 1980s, trade across the Strait went through Hong Kong, but direct cross-Strait trade really took off in the 1990s – 'trade with China went from 3.31 per cent of Taiwan's total trade in 1990 to 12.10 per cent in 2001' (Chang & Goldstein, 2007: 18).

across the Taiwan Strait since the termination of martial law, but, on the other, people increasingly find themselves in a situation where private corporations and the Chinese government can play a large part in Taiwan's democratic politics by, for instance, investing in media industries (Chang, 2011, 2013; Hsu, 2014b; Huang, 2017; Yamada, 2014; Wu, 2016). Likewise, Taiwan's economic dependency[72] on China is a double-edged sword, since China has always seen Taiwan as its breakaway province.

This section reconceptualises the so-called Sunflower generation as the Democratic Consolidation generation, identifies its elder counterpart as the Soft Authoritarianism generation, and presents the two generations within objective political and media landscapes. In the current presentation of landscapes, the events appear clear-cut, the two generations seem separate from each other, and each generation is shown as a homogenous entity, but my empirical analyses consider the subjective meanings of events, examine intergenerational relationships at both societal and kinship levels, and explore intra-generational differences. Thus I go on to review research on generational dynamics in the next section.

2.2.3 Generational dynamics

At the societal level, intergenerational relations involve a succession order between generations. According to Mannheim (1927/1952), this succession 'results in some loss of accumulated cultural possessions' and 'facilitates reevaluation of our inventory and teaches us both to forget that which is no longer useful and to covet that which has yet to be won' (p. 294). Reevaluation and loss occur because younger generations engage in creating new expression and ways of experiencing the lifeworld (Mannheim, 1927/1952) and in competing for more resources and power.

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[70] The Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS), representing PRC/China, and the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF), representing ROC/Taiwan, were established in 1991. Functioning as quasi-official organisations, they held many meetings between 1992 and 1995 within the 1992 Consensus which refers to 'One China Respective Interpretations' (Su, 2009).

[71] The meeting between former President Ma Ying-jeou and Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2015 is considered historic (Fell, 2018).

[72] In terms of trade concentration, the cross-Strait relation has been one of '"asymmetrical interdependence", which entails heightened vulnerability (on the Taiwanese side) to drastic international economic change' (Wu, 2016: 432). In 2015, Taiwan was listed in the top 10 of China dependent countries – '26% of its exports are China bound, and 'a whopping 16% of its economic output is dependent on China' (Rapoza, 2015).

Intergenerational relations 'are characterised less by a "passing of the torch" than a contentious period of intense, negative identification struggles' (Steele & Acuff, 2012: 10). In this conflictual view of intergenerational relations, older generations are often understood to be 'unable or unwilling to assimilate themselves into the new entelechy' (Mannheim, 1927/1952: 318), or even to be conceived of as 'an internal "Other"' within the nation-state (Steele & Acuff, 2012: 10). Nonetheless, some researchers (Andrews, 2002; Edmunds & Turner, 2002; Demartini, 1985) question whether intergenerational relations always feature cleavages, and whether younger generations always aspire to break away from their predecessors. They highlight the possibility of bonding between preceding and succeeding generations.

While Demartini (1985) criticises Mannheim for overlooking consensus and linkages between generations, Ricoeur (1985/1988) asserts that Mannheim called our attention to 'the continuity in the change of generations, along with all the degrees of conflict this change gives rise to' (p. 112). These different interpretations could result from Mannheim's lack of systematic discussion of intergenerational relations and his scant theorisation of how to study this topic empirically. My interpretation is that Mannheim may have been more expressive of the tension between generations, which he describes as 'incapable of solution except for one compensating factor' (Mannheim, 1927/1952: 301), but he simultaneously states that 'generations are in a state of constant interaction' (ibid.). He suggests that the compensation can be made by co-learning: 'not only does the teacher educate his pupil, but the pupil educates his teacher too' (Mannheim, 1927/1952: 301). As thus seen, Mannheim not only is aware of the co-existence of younger and older generations but also suggests that they educate each other. This thesis recognises that intergenerational relations involve both continuity and discontinuity, which can be studied in narrative terms. As Andrews (2002) elaborates, 'stories pass between generations' (p. 85), people 'reformulate them in order to inhabit them, to make them ours' (p. 178). To study intergenerational relations is therefore to examine what and how stories are told, as younger and older generations make sense of themselves and of each other – moreover, these two narrative processes are 'co-constructive' (Corsten, 1999: 267).

The relationship between generations is not limited to that between predecessors and successors, but is also about kinship. Within the family, younger and older generations are characterised by parent-child relations. Mannheim's (1927/1952) emphasis on early impressions working as a primary stratum of experiences suggests parents' influence on their children. But he also makes a clear distinction between appropriated and personally acquired experiences, highlighting

the importance of the latter, and contending that 'knowledge I have personally gained in real situations is the only sort of knowledge which really sticks' (p. 296). Since experiences are not summative, and knowledge simply taken from the parental generation is not as 'sticky' as that gained by the generation itself, the kinship aspect of intergenerational relations cannot be reduced to cultural transfer from parents to children. Instead, it may best be studied by foregrounding actual situations in which parents and children interact with each other – this thesis is particularly interested in those situations involving media, given that adult children in their twenties usually do not live with their parents (National Statistics, 2006).

In addition to the relationship between generations, generational dynamics also concern intra-generational relations. Mannheim (1927/1952) conceptualises 'generation units' within the same actual generation, which are characterised by different 'mental data'. Taking the youth of the 1800s as an example, he differentiates between the romantic-conservative and the liberal-rationalist. Furthermore, by referring to the 'Christian-German Dinner Society' as the origin of modern German Conservativism, Mannheim (1927/1952) highlights how associations and concrete groups are essential to the formation of generation units because 'mutual stimulation in a close-knit vital unit inflames the participants and enables them to develop integrative attitudes' (p. 307). Klatch's (1999) research on the 1960s generation in the US also gives evidence of the place of associations in creating generation units, with Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) viewed as the origins of the New Right and the New Left respectively. Studying the 1970s generation in Taiwan, Hsiau (2010, 2021) reveals three generation units, which were formed through the tangwai,[73] Native Literature, and Taiwan New Literature groups. Thus, my examination of intra-generational dynamics within the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation focuses on finding what generation units are created, what kind of groups/associations contribute to the creation of generation units, and what role the media play in shaping the mental data of generation units.

2.3 Research Questions and a Summary

This thesis sets out to address two overarching research questions: 1) How does mediation contribute to the formation of the Democratic Consolidation generation and of the Soft Authoritarianism generation? and 2) How do generational politics at both inter- and intra-generational levels take shape through mediation? These inquiries are based on a critical review of generation theory, narrative theory, media

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[73] As noted in the previous chapter, this term means 'outside the party', namely non-KMT.

generation studies, and mediation theory. My approach to studying generations lies in the Mannheimian tradition, which underscores the place of experiences in shaping generations. Built upon action-based narrative theories, my empirical analysis of generational experiences untangles the relationship between narrated experiences, identity and actions; that is, it examines what stories of Taiwan's democracy the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation tell, what plots and characters they identify in these stories, what metaphors they use in their narration, how their narration is connected to their identity and actions, and what stories they tell about themselves and about each other. As I recognise the media as a key site in which generational narratives, experiences, actions and identities take shape, my empirical analysis also focuses on the material, symbolic and social roles of media in the making of generations. Informed by the notion of subjective media landscapes and by a dialectical view of the media and people's everyday lives, this 'mediated generation' analysis investigates what media technologies the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation use to engage in politics and communicate with each other, what media discourses they draw upon to make sense of themselves, of each other, and of Taiwan's democracy, and how their engagement with the media contributes to their identities and relationships.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter focuses on explicating the rationale behind the research design and presenting the methodological procedures and issues. Given my concern with the question of how each generation collectively tells stories about Taiwan's democracy and about themselves as the younger or older members of contemporary Taiwanese society (RQ1), focus groups (Kitzinger, 1994; Morgan, 1996, 1997) and peer group conversations (Gamson, 1992) were used as the primary method of data collection. In addition, I adopted individual and paired interviews for collecting data on the Soft Authoritarianism generation – this adjustment was made with a view to increasing parents' participation in my research. Challenges that I met during fieldwork are described in detail in the section on 'Fieldwork overview and reflexivity'. My research interest also lies in the processes of mediating inter- and intra-generational politics (RQ2). I therefore selected two media texts which outline some observations about generational attitudes towards politics, generational participation in politics and generational engagement with the media. These were used as interview prompts inviting research participants to reflect on their own media engagement, political identity and action, and in order to compare their responses with others. The topic guide was also designed to discover how inter- and intra-generational relationships take shape through the media. This is presented in the next section.

3.1 Research Rationale and Design

Considering my primary research concern with how people of similar age but from different backgrounds recognise themselves as part of a single generation, or refuse this, agreeing or disagreeing on certain ways of engaging with politics[74] and the media[75], the focus group method was adopted because it allowed me to examine *what* languages are commonly used, what experiences and values are shared (Crabtree, Yanoshik, Miller, & O'Connor, 1993; Morse, 2012), and to explore *how* certain groups of people think (Kitzinger, 1994; Morgan, 1997). In other words, the method offers the advantage of analysing responses, be these of agreement or differences, in situ (Kitzinger, 1994; Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2007).

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[74] As outlined in the topic guide (Appendix 1), the topic for discussion was focused on politics, but the issues were various, such as elections, Taiwan's democratisation history and national identity.

[75] As discussed in the previous chapter and also shown in the topic guide, in this research the media studied are material (e.g., media technologies such as Facebook and LINE), symbolic (e.g., popular media discourse on the 'Sunflower Generation') and social (e.g., the question of how people share information and talk about politics with family members).

In terms of focus group composition, I prioritised organising focus groups of faces already familiar to one another rather than of total strangers, given that a certain degree of familiarity and homogeneity within a group helps to create comfort, maximise interactions and facilitate deeper levels of disclosure, hence generating richer data (Liamputtong, 2011). Homogeneity in my focus groups was thus based on participants' social backgrounds and on their lived experiences rather on than their views (Liamputtong 2009) – research participants were not recruited on the basis of similar thinking but were brought together because they had 'enough in common to allow the development of a productive conversational dynamic' (Conradson, 2005: 133). In other words, focus groups were designed to be internally homogenous in order to create a more comfortable setting for discussion (Morgan, 1997) but simultaneously to be diverse, characterised by multiple everyday life scripts (Kitzinger, 1994).

In practice, instead of finding participants for an entire group by myself and ending up with individuals who were total strangers to one another, I shared the task and power of composing focus groups with my research participants. This approach is inspired by Gamson's (1992) use of 'peer group conversations', which are similar to conventional focus groups with the presence of facilitators but differ in two specific ways: first, each group consists of people from the same social network; that is recruitment always begins with a contact person and the person then contacts his or her own peers in order to form a focus group. Second, peer group conversations usually take place in people's homes, thus being 'held on the participants' turf rather than in a bureaucratic setting' (Gamson, 1992: 193). Based on such arrangements, the contact person plays a crucial role in ensuring both homogeneity and diversity. The three basic criteria for being considered a contact person included birth year, citizenship and age – s/he had to be born after 1982,[76] hold Taiwanese citizenship,[77] and be at least 18 years old.[78] I got in touch not only with my own peers, such as high school classmates, university roommates, graduate school friends and cousins, but also reached out to young people who were outside my own social circle through

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[76] As illustrated in the section on generation categorisation in Chapter 2, the Sunflower generation is theorised in my research as 'the Democratic Consolidation generation', which refers to people born after 1982 – since the oldest of them came of age in 2000, the year of the first party alternation in the ruling government.

[77] Since this thesis focuses on generations in Taiwanese society and is interested in the question of how different generations perceive themselves to be Taiwanese.

[78] This is the voting age for referendums, and it was used as one criterion for choosing the contact person since there were referendums in 2018, as well as municipal elections.

attending various activities, ranging from book launch events,[79] election campaigns,[80] protests and a film screening[81] to a concert of indigenous music[82] and an exhibition held by an indigenous student society.[83] To be more specific, I identified a contact person, introduced my research project to her/him, answered whatever questions s/he might have, and encouraged her/him to invite three to five friends to whatever venue they found most comfortable[84] for a focused discussion on media, generations and democracy. I aimed to have four to six research participants in each group discussion since this arrangement retains the qualities of being a group and gives enough space for all participants to take part (Krueger & Casey, 2015; Smithson, 2008). Considering my research aim of exploring respective generational narratives, focus groups of younger and older people were arranged separately. I planned first to conduct focus groups/peer group conversations with young participants and then

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[79] I first went to an event where a worker-writer talked about the 'low-end population' in China and reflected on social problems in Taiwanese society such as income inequality, the gap between rural and urban areas, and discrimination against migrant workers. The writer himself has been working as a civil site engineer for many years, so I approached him to see if he could introduce me to workers on any construction site and provide me with advice on interacting with *The Working People* – the title of one of the two books he has authored. The other event was the launch of *Who Governs?*. I attended this for the opportunity of meeting young people who expressed great interest in politics.

[80] Considering recent research findings that young people are more likely to support smaller parties (Lin, 2017), I spent much time attending campaign activities organised by smaller parties such as the New Power Party, the Green Party Taiwan, the Taiwan Obasan Political Equality Party and the Left Party, in addition to visiting campaign sites of major political parties. I also went to campaign activities held by independent political candidates such as Chu Mei-hsueh and Hsueh Cheng-yi.

[81] Organised by the Taoyuan Flight Attendants Union and the Taoyuan Confederation of Trade Unions, this event screened *En Guerre* (At War), a French film about a group of workers fighting against the decision of a sudden factory shutdown. My attendance at this event was part of my effort to build connections with people who could introduce me to working people and with the working people themselves.

[82] The singer was Panai Kusui, an iconic advocate of indigenous people's rights to traditional land and opponent of nuclear power. She was invited to sing at President Tsai Ing-wen's inauguration in 2016.

[83] The exhibition was named 'Prjian', which means 'the beginning'. Held by the Yuan Society, National Taiwan University of Science and Technology, it showcased crafts, weaving techniques, traditional singing and dance.

[84] More than one third of focus-group meetings took place at participants' homes, workplaces, or schools. When research participants did not have any preference but asked me for suggestions, I offered them a few options, including coffee shops, tea houses, restaurants or rented meeting rooms.

encouraged them to invite their parents to organise focus groups of their own peers. This recruitment strategy had the merits of creating active and smooth interactions[85] among group participants and allowing an analysis of intergenerational relationships at the kinship and family level.

Considering the principle of saturation (Liamputtong, 2009; 2011) and my own limitations of time and budget, I planned to conduct focus groups/peer group conversations until the research data reached saturation, namely that more data would no longer contribute to new understanding of my research themes, which included: 1) generational use of media for civic engagement; 2) interpretations of the media discourse on the 'Sunflower Generation' and collective experience and identity of being younger members of Taiwanese society; and 3) generational memory of democratisation history, generational perception of contemporary democracy in Taiwan, and generational vision for its future. Following the guideline that a focus-group meeting should be limited to no longer than two hours (Langer, 2001; Liamputtong, 2011; Morgan, 1997), I scheduled 30 minutes for discussing each theme. Specifically, each focus-group session was planned to begin with me introducing the research project, obtaining participants' verbal consent for their participation, explaining to them that their names would be anonymised, making sure that all of them understood and agreed to their interviews being audio-recorded, assuring them that all the interview recordings and transcripts would be available to me and my supervisors only, and setting the tone for discussions, that is, emphasising that I was simply a moderator, whereas all participants were the real protagonists in the focus groups and their voices were equally important. The introduction would be completed by an icebreaker exercise where research participants would be asked to write down their names together with three words to describe their hometowns.[86]

The opening of each focus-group meeting was followed by the use of two prompts. The first was a news article titled 'Facebook Revolution', referring to the

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[85] Research participants needed to feel comfortable and free enough to evaluate other generations and reflect on family communications. Separate interviews were therefore employed to ensure an 'appropriate environment' (Krueger, 1994).

[86] This activity was designed in order to have all participants say something early in their discussion, assuring them that their voices mattered.

Internet generation and youth political engagement.[87] I used this to encourage research participants to share their views of Facebook and the Internet, discussing how they used media for their engagement in politics and public affairs. After an easier discussion on media use, research participants were offered an opinion piece about 'The Sunflower Generation' and invited to talk about whether, and if so how, they agreed or disagreed with the article, which describes the younger generation as standing up against injustice and weighing democracy more than economic development. By evaluating this description, research participants were encouraged to reflect on their generational positions in society and their relationships with other generations, sharing their opinions about democracy, economy and social justice. After discussing contemporary democratic politics in Taiwan, research participants were invited to have a discussion on Taiwan's democratisation history. As I showed them several sticky notes,[88] each showing one historical event commonly considered significant by researchers in political science, they were prompted to judge whether the given event was important to Taiwan democracy, whether they found it pertinent, and why. After recalling the past, research participants were encouraged to look to the future, namely their visions for deepening democracy in Taiwanese society. During the discussion I adhered to my moderator's role[89] (Morgan, 1997) but asked follow-up questions for clarification or further explanation.

Each peer group conversation ended with a short questionnaire which was designed to find out the socioeconomic backgrounds and voting records of individual participants, serving as a complement to the interview data. Appendix 1 is the topic guide, showing the general structure for each interview and the main questions. Appendix 2 is the questionnaire, which starts with some demographic questions, followed by others about political participation. When research participants were

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[87] The news article highlights the role of Facebook in the 2014 mid-term election and describes young voters as new citizens who are no longer passive receivers of messages from political parties, the ruling government and the media.

[88] Included the 228 Incident, ROC's withdrawal from the UN, the Meilidao Incident, the lifting of martial law, the lifting of the Temporary Provisions Effective during the Period of Mobilisation for the Suppression of the Communist Rebellion, the first direct presidential election, the first change in ruling government, the White Short Army Movement, and the Sunflower Movement.

[89] That is, I limited my interventions to reminding my participants about moving to the next topic in due course, and making sure that all of them were part of the conversation by interrupting some who dominated the discussion and encouraging others who were comparatively silent to speak. By doing so, I could not only listen attentively to my research participants but also write notes which documented group dynamics.

filling in their questionnaires, they were asked to brainstorm on their group names, namely that how they would like to be named in my research. After collecting the questionnaires in focus groups with young participants, I thanked them for their participation and promptly asked them to help extend my research invitation to their parents – I elaborated on my plan of doing a comparative analysis of generations, guaranteeing them that I would not disclose any information from their discussions to their parents.

All the interviews were transcribed verbatim in written Chinese. Although written Chinese characters were used for consistency of transcription, footnotes were added to those interviews involving the use of local dialects such as Taiwanese Hokkien. I transcribed the first few interviews myself in order to review my moderating style and begin to familiarise myself with the data. Nonetheless, given time constraints and the availability of funding from my academic department for transcription, I hired some transcribers who were either specialists[90] or post-graduate students[91] with Taiwanese citizenship.[92] I provided all transcribers with an anonymised transcript as an example and with a set of guidelines, which included transcribing word by word and recording pauses, emphases and emotional expressions such as laughter and sighing – these details appear small but are important because they suggest how research participants feel when they refer to certain issues and would help me make better sense of the interview (Liamputtong, 2011; Poland, 2002). As soon as I received the transcripts, I reviewed them carefully while listening to the recordings in full. Since it could be challenging for employed transcribers to distinguish between the different voices, I reorganised the transcripts on several occasions. Such meticulous examination is significant because analysing focus groups takes into consideration 'not only what is said, but *who* is saying it in the session' (Liamputtong, 2011: 166).

In order to analyse interview transcripts, I adopted a combination of deductive and inductive approaches to conducting thematic analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2006), since I was looking for certain themes based on my literature review of political generation studies, but at the same time I remained open to identifying any theme that might emerge from the data corpus. In other words, my coding process was both theory- and data-driven. It began with immersing myself in the data by

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[90] From a professional transcription agency recommended by a journalist friend.

[91] Most of them were from the Graduate Institute of Journalism, National Taiwan University, and others from the universities in London.

[92] So that they would have a basic knowledge of Taiwanese society and politics.

reading, re-reading and taking notes for coding, followed by generating initial codes, collating them into potential themes, and reviewing and refining them by working out the relationships between main themes and sub-themes and producing a thematic map for analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Grbich, 2010; Liamputtong, 2011). When coding and developing themes, I paid attention not only to the content of each focus group but also to processes, namely the interactions taking place among interview participants and between the participants and myself as the moderator (Liamputtong, 2011; Warr, 2005), since the 'content of the discussion cannot be well analysed without making reference to its context' (Munday, 2006: 102). In addition to using Word for annotation and coding manually, NVivo 12 was used for its 'data management capacities' and for the 'facilitation of the orderly and accountable practice of analysis' (Fielding, 2002: 176), hence ensuring the validity of research results (Kelle, 2004).

After presenting here my procedures for collecting, organising and analysing my research data, the following sections document how the procedures and principles were carried out, reflecting on relevant ethical issues and on what worked and what did not. Such reflection on the strengths and limitations of the production of research data benefits critical analysis.

3.2 Research Ethics

As described above, I came to identify and introduce myself to the 'contact persons' for my research by attending a wide variety of public events. They were provided with an invitation letter outlining my research topic and aim, and describing the interview format. They were also encouraged to invite their peers to take part together in my research, so most research participants first agreed on their participation with the contact person and then gave their consent[93] in the actual focus-group interviews. Considering that some of my research participants, such as the indigenous participants, were in a relatively vulnerable and marginalised position, I reiterated that they had the right to withdraw from my research and to request that their data be removed at any time they wanted. The risks and benefits of recruiting minority individuals to participate in my research project had been carefully

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[93] In my pilot study, I provided my participants with an information sheet and a consent form, but one of some feedback I received from them was that in the beginning of interview I informed them of what I wanted to study through conducting the interviews and what I would do with the interview data, so they knew what to expect from being part of my research and found it unnecessary to read and sign two sheets. As a result, I only obtained verbal consent from my research participants during my fieldwork.

discussed with my supervisors and reviewed by the LSE Research Ethics Committee. In terms of confidentiality, this research involved no sharing of confidential information or data beyond that for which consent was given. In addition, to protect their privacy all my research participants have been anonymised[94]. Regarding the issue of privacy, I was cautious about not mentioning my young participants' discussions when interviewing their parents; moreover, I limited my own activities to the living-room areas where home interviews usually took place. Furthermore, all the interview recordings, transcripts, notes and images collected during my fieldwork are stored on the LSE OneDrive system, where the security of my data complies with European and UK data protection regulations.

3.3 Pilot and Reflexivity

Before embarking on my fieldwork, I ran three pilot focus groups in London in June and July 2018. Since my access to Taiwanese expatriate communities was limited to student societies and associations, most participants in these three focus groups were postgraduate students in their twenties. Despite the very homogenous composition of the pilot focus groups, I still learned a few lessons from conducting them. First, reaching out to potential participants required extra effort and care. Preoccupied with their daily routine, people had little time and energy even for considering whether they would like to participate in my research. I learned to be explicit about what I wanted to do with the focus group, emphasising and explaining why their participation mattered, and proactively proposing meeting times. Especially when there was no monetary incentive, I tried to be as proactive as possible. Next, although I had foreseen the difficulty of reaching out to indigenous people, I did not expect zero participation. My failure to include one indigenous participant in my pilot study taught me to be more cautious about the ways in which I approached and recruited potential indigenous participants. Considering the marginal status of indigenous people both in Taiwanese society and in my personal social circle, I concluded that purposive sampling strategies (Mason, 2002; Robinson, 2014) would be more effective than mere snowballing. Specifically, I consulted two indigenous students with whom I made friends through a guest lecture on indigenous cultures. According to them, being introduced to indigenous communities would be better than making direct contact with individual indigenous participants because indigenous people have become wary of Han researchers in recent years.

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[94] To preserve the anonymity of all research participants, their names used within this thesis are pseudonyms. Specifically, I first followed the Wade–Giles spelling system, which is adopted by Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and then I deliberately removed final letters, be them consonants or vowels, in my research participants' first names, to form pseudonyms.

Following their advice, I successfully included two groups of young indigenous people in my research sample – the next section gives more details about how I found people who could help introduce me to indigenous communities.

Then, in order to check whether a focus group of four to six participants would go well, I organised one pilot group of six people and the rest of four people. In the former case, the conversation seemed to be more easily dominated by a few participants, and 1.5 hours appeared to be insufficient to cover the three planned discussions. By comparison, the latter were more interactive and more successful[95] in generating more engaging conversations. To ensure all participants' maximum involvement and a suitable length of each session, I tried to adhere during my fieldwork to the arrangement of four to six participants in one focus group. Fourthly, in terms of moderation, I grasped how I could better engage all participants in their conversations and gained some experience of mitigating tricky situations – such as one in which outspoken participants dominated the discussion – by practising active listening[96] and posing follow-up questions. Last but not least, I changed the icebreaker from giving an introduction to one's hometown to sharing one's view of Taiwan. Although the original design did help to break the ice, it was mostly irrelevant to my research themes. Instead, by asking research participants to write down three words about Taiwan, I gained a general understanding of what aspect of Taiwanese society they were most concerned about. However, this icebreaker was later removed from my fieldwork due to issues of group dynamics and time management.[97] While the pilot focus groups were helpful in improving my research design and my moderation skills, I went on to meet different challenges during my fieldwork and I reflect on these in the following section.

3.4 Fieldwork Overview and Reflexivity

I conducted my fieldwork between August 2018 and January 2019, during which period there were municipal elections and referendums taking place on 24 November 2018. In municipal elections, the electorate voted for heads of six special municipalities,[98] city mayors and councillors, county magistrates and heads, township chiefs and councillors, and village chiefs. In the referendums, they expressed their

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[95] This was also because I learned from the first pilot group how to make the second and third groups go more smoothly.

[96] That is, I learned to respond empathetically, utilising such strategies as repeating my interviewees' replies and becoming more mindful of disclosing my own opinion.

[97] The average length of interviews was almost two hours (01:59:19).

[98] Including Taipei City, New Taipei City, Taoyuan City, Taichung City, Tainan City and Kaohsiung City.

opinion on ten issues ranging from energy policy, an import ban on food from Fukushima and same-sex marriage to a change in Olympic team name from 'Chinese Taipei' to 'Taiwan'. For the first time the referendum voting age was lowered from 20 to 18. Among a total of 30 focus groups of young people, ten were conducted before the election day, one was carried out on the very day, and the remaining ones after that. More than one third of the focus groups (12/30) met at participants' homes, workplaces, or schools. The rest took place in meeting rooms,[99] coffee shops, tea houses or restaurants. Having four participants in a focus group was the most common. In total, there were 116 young people aged between 18 and 38,[100] with an average age of 28. Of these, 52 were female and 64 were male. In addition, I conducted 21 interviews with 39 parents, including 19 mothers and 20 fathers. They were aged between 44 and 68, with an average age of 57, that is, born after 1961. Most parents (29/39) were interviewed after the 2018 referendums and elections, and more than half of the interviews (14/21) took place at parent participants' homes.

The research participants were scattered across Taiwan, living in 13 municipal cities or counties[101] on the main island. As shown in Figure 3.2, I was based in Taoyuan city, which is marked by an orange person icon, but I travelled around Taiwan – only those cities and counties coloured in black were not covered. Regarding the cities and counties which I visited, I have depicted those under KMT leadership in blue, others under DPP leadership in green, and Taipei City in turquoise to symbolise its then non-partisan mayor,[102] according to the 2018 election results. In addition to diversity of regions, many participants were also of different ethnic

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[99] By using Happ, an online platform for hiring meeting rooms, I was able to arrange several focus-group interviews in meeting rooms, which were usually close to tube stations in Taipei city.

[100] Even though the upper age limit for recruiting 'contact people' was set at 36 – people born in 1982 being roughly 36 years old in 2018, there were five research participants aged 37 or 38, as the 'contact people' were mostly free to invite whomever they found it comfortable to talk with about politics. I only asked them to strictly follow the lower age limit, namely 18, while suggesting that they could invite friends born after 1982.

[101] Taiwan consists of 22 political units, which includes 19 municipal cities or counties on Taiwan Island and three offshore counties. Although I did not manage to travel to the offshore territories, there were a few young participants from Penghu, the biggest offshore county.

[102] In August 2019, Ko Wen-je established the Taiwan People's Party.

origins,[103] including Hakkas, Mainlanders, and indigenous people, even though most young participants (about seven-tenths) came from families in which at least one parent was ethnically Min-nan/Holo.[104]
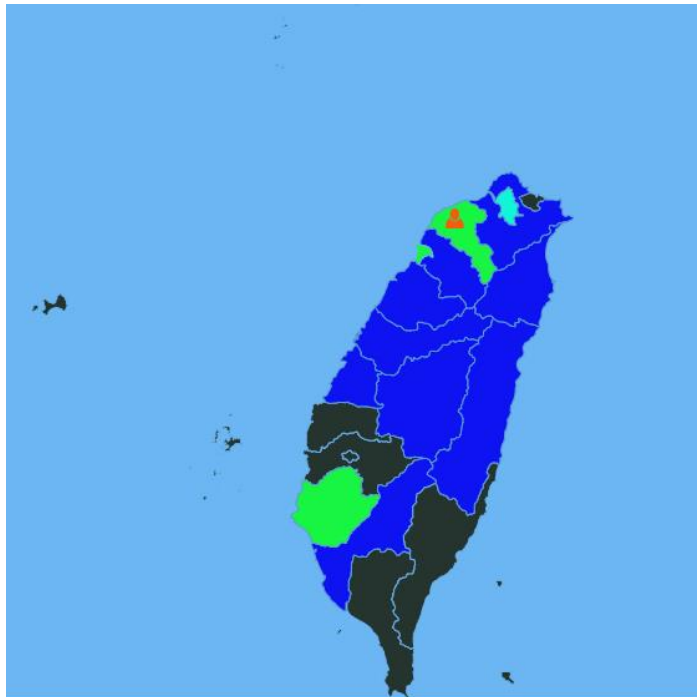
Figure 3.2: Map of fieldwork locations

3.4.1 My own identity as a member of the Democratic Consolidation generation: How I managed my interaction with parent participants

I noticed an invisible distance between parent participants and myself, which was created by our age difference. From the time of recruitment, I experienced difficulty

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[103] Under the authoritarian regime, the idea of ethnicity was used to distinguish between mainlanders and native Taiwanese. Consisting of approximately 14 per cent of Taiwan's population, the former group of people were also called 'wai-sheng-ren', referring to people who migrated to Taiwan from China after 1945, the end of WWII, as opposed to the latter group, who were in Taiwan before 1895, the start of Japanese colonial rule (Wang, 2008). Along with democratisation, ethnicity began to be associated with the 'four major ethnic groups', including Min-nan/Holo people, Hakkas and indigenous people in addition to mainlanders (Shih, 2007). The Min-nan/Holo population has been the largest (about 70 per cent), whereas Hakka and indigenous people constitute about 14 per cent and 2 per cent of the entire population, respectively (Wang, 2008). Since the mid-1980s, migrants through marriage from China and from South East Asian countries such as Vietnam and Indonesia have been adding ethnic diversity to Taiwanese society (Lu, 2005).

[104] Although statistics vary slightly across time, Min-nan/Holo people usually make up 70 per cent of Taiwan's population.

in establishing contact with potential parent participants. As described above, I concluded focus-group meetings by asking my young informants to help extend research invitations to their parents. On most occasions, my invitation was declined because parents either considered talking politics too sensitive or claimed that they knew little about politics or had little opinion about it. I therefore suggested replacing 'politics' with 'social and public issues' and highlighting the importance of parents' views. Additionally, I offered more flexibility to potential parent participants in terms of how they preferred to take part in my research; that is, they could choose between focus groups, individual or paired interviews, even though my original plan had been to collect exclusively focus-group data for my study of the Soft Authoritarianism generation so that these data were consistent in type with the data from the Democratic Consolidation generation. The adjustments were made, however, in order to increase the willingness of parents to participate in my research, especially after I learned from several young informants that their parents showed a marked reluctance[105] to invite their friends to focus groups. Paired interviews, namely where both parents were interviewed together, were the most popular (a total of 11 couples), followed by eight individual interviews. Only two parents chose to invite their friends to form focus groups, with nine participants in total.

Carrying out paired interviews was challenging since it required me to strike a balance between being taken seriously by the parent participants, who were older than me, and creating a casual and conversational environment for our interviews, not to mention the fact that most parents chose to be interviewed at home. Observing that parent participants tended to see and address me as 'the young',[106] I positioned myself as an active learner who was keen to listen to the stories of the older generation, showing great interest and asking many how and why questions. Similarly, viewing the Sunflower Movement[107] as a young people's initiative, many parents asked me if I had participated in it. I avoided mentioning my own political stance on the Movement but highlighted my curiosity about its occurrence and

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[105] Many parents did not like the idea of focus groups because they considered it 'troublesome' – as their children repeated, 'I don't want to trouble my friends with this. They are busy, you know'.

[106] An often-used expression was 'you young people' (你們年輕人, *ni men nian qing ren*). In addition to using this expression to distinguish themselves from young people, quite a few parents portrayed their younger contemporaries as lacking sophistication and life experience – an analysis of the older generation's view of young people is included in Chapter 5. Having said that, almost all parent participants referred to young people as 'the future'.

[107] Those parents who disagreed with the Movement would further inquire 'exactly what "you, young people" were thinking when taking part in it'.

immediately inquired how they made sense of it. Some parents who enjoyed being listened to gave long answers and dominated the conversation. I would try to engage other parent participants in the interviews by asking if they agreed with the speakers, even though I found it more difficult to interrupt parent participants than young participants – not only because they were older, but also because some parents in the interviews criticised young people nowadays for becoming disrespectful of traditions, social order and the elderly. In addition to treating them with respect, I sometimes referred to my own parents and their viewpoints in order to elicit more personal and intimate accounts from parent informants, and stories of *their* time.

Finally, what was unexpected was one question[108] posed by several parent participants, especially mothers. They asked: 'Are you planning to become a politician?'. When I expressed more interest in entering academia rather than politics, I noticed their faces relax and I was given a positive reply, indicating their view that women are better suited to being teachers than politicians. Considering that our president is a woman, and that she received 3.08 million more votes than her male opponent in the 2016 presidential election (*Taiwan Today*, 2016), I felt shocked by this question and reaction. Nevertheless, I remained composed and asked them to elaborate on their preferences. Since parents' replies centred on and echoed the criticism of Taiwan's politics that they made in the interviews (as detailed in Chapter 4), I reasoned that the issue was less about discrimination against female politicians than disenchantment with politics. While existing guidelines on interviewing older people (Gerontological Society of America, 2012; London School of Economics and Political Science, 2021; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, n.d.) tend to assume that older interviewees are vulnerable and that the researcher has more power over them, I sometimes found myself feeling tense because many parent participants appeared very confident[109] about not only sharing their thoughts but also showering me with their life advice. Nonetheless, I adhered to being respectful of my parent informants and tried my best to use age to my advantage, so that they felt comfortable about engaging in conversation with me and at the same time regarded me as a capable and reliable interviewer. The challenge of managing power

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[108] This question was usually asked 'off the record', that is, after I turned off my voice recorder. This could suggest that these respondents 'have agendas that differ from those reflected in the interviewer's questions' (Warren, 2012: 139) – they were obviously disillusioned with politics, whereas my research questions were designed to find out how they engaged in politics.

[109] Even though I felt tense, I still respected their confidence and took into consideration that their confident speech could be a social performance since they, as older members of our society, were expected to sound sophisticated.

relations also existed in my interviews with indigenous participants, although in this case I was on the side of the more powerful, hence my extra care and caution when interacting with them.

3.4.2 My identity as a Han researcher: How I managed my interaction with indigenous participants

Before my fieldwork I had four acquaintances with indigenous backgrounds, and I was not close to them since we had only added each other on Facebook after a conference on indigenous media and a guest lecture on indigenous knowledge and cultures. Fortunately, one of them, also a PhD student himself, was interested in my research project and he offered to take me to his home village and helped introduce me to his friend, Dondon Houmwm, who had returned to his own tribe and has been dedicating himself to the creation and preservation of Truku[110] culture. Dondon later acted as the contact person and introduced me to the Dowmung tribe in Hualien County. Given his *smapuh[111]* identity, my entry into the tribe was smooth,[112] but I still put a lot of effort into connecting with the people and gaining their trust in participating in my research.

Before starting my 13-day stay with the tribe, I read articles about Dondon and his work, watched videos about Truku history and culture, studied government reports and academic publications of the Truku people,[113] and consulted my indigenous PhD-student acquaintance [114] about conducting interviews with indigenous people. One of the most useful tips was to simply spend time with the locals. In doing so, I demonstrated that I wanted to build relationships with them rather than take advantage of them. Specifically, I sought to make them trust that I would not take the opportunity of interviewing them for granted. I joined them in painting walls and tables and cleaning the community centre. When they were

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[110] The Truku people, also known as the Taroko, gained official recognition in 2004 (Council of Indigenous Peoples, 2021). Currently there are 16 indigenous peoples officially recognised by the Taiwan government.

[111] He disliked being called a shaman or witch-doctor, preferring 'smapuh' which means 'the inheritor of rituals'.

[112] When interpreting the interview data, I would be reflexive about how my interviewees' relationship with Dondon was reflected in his/her interaction with me and even in his/her interview responses, since I am aware of Dondon's privileged position in the tribe.

[113] Such as *Oral History Study of Indigenous Cultures in the Taroko National Park* (Sun, Wu, & Cihung, 2006) and *'Emotion is Like Flowing Water': The Truku's Home and Emotions* (Wang, 2014).

[114] He is from the Bunun, Atayal and Kanakanavu, three of the 16 indigenous tribes in Taiwan.

crafting knives and swords, I stayed with them and prepared drinks, snacks and sometimes breakfast. I also ate as many lunches and suppers with them as possible, hanging out with them at local shops and eateries, where they enjoyed having a drink[115] and chatting with friends before bedtime. The tribal life seemed to be characterised by a routine of work, eating and drinking, so most importantly being able to participate in these activities together meant that they began to accept and trust me. Following the rule of thumb that relationship-building should always come first with research on indigenous people, I did not inquire whether they would like to be interviewed until the penultimate day of my stay with the tribe. Put in a nutshell, I was conscious of my Han identity and its possible hinderance of gaining trust from indigenous people, so I did as much preparation work as I could, and during interviews I showed my utmost respect by practising active listening and asking my interviewees to help explain certain vocabulary or cultural ideas.

3.4.3 How I managed my interaction with research participants whose political beliefs were in conflict with mine

Many, if not all, of my political beliefs[116] contradict those of the KMT, so I was particularly cautious about not making this clear. In addition to controlling my facial expressions, I held my tongue and really listened – doing so not only made research participants feel heard and respected but also allowed me to digest unfamiliar viewpoints and come up with appropriate and probing questions which were used to elicit further elaboration and examples. To put it another way, I remained vigilant against taking comments personally[117] and focused on asking questions in order to understand different viewpoints. By framing my probing questions with humility, I aimed to keep the conversation flowing and open. Indeed, I avoided assuming that I knew a great deal and understood them all the time; instead, I paraphrased what I thought my research participants were telling me. Paraphrasing helped to demonstrate my commitment to listening and learning from them and ensured the accuracy of my interview data. Gestures of recognition are also helpful in creating

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[115] They knew I was making an effort to fit in with them as my face got really red after trying their favourite alcohol, and they stopped me from drinking more. Similarly, I was invited to a drink after finishing a focus group with another group of indigenous young people.

[116] For example, regarding economy, I see heavy economic dependence on China as a threat to national security, whereas the KMT since 2008 has been promoting the Chinese market as the panacea for Taiwan's declining economic growth. In the same vein, the KMT upholds 'one China' ideology, but I identify Taiwan as an independent country.

[117] For instance, on quite a few occasions, my interviewees criticised the Sunflower Movement in which I participated.

honest conversations, so I used these to start my sentences, followed by probing questions such as 'I agree this is a difficult issue, so could you tell me a bit more about it?' and 'Thank you for sharing this viewpoint. I didn't know it before. I wonder if you could give me some examples?'. The guiding principle was to act as an advocate rather than a defender or opponent (Duchovnay, Moore, & Masullo, 2020). Nonetheless, sticking to this principle was challenging, especially in 2018, the year of my fieldwork and of many victories for KMT political candidates and in KMT-backed referendums, so that the political climate was welcoming and even celebratory for KMT supporters.[118]

Interview settings are not merely 'historically variable' (Warren, 2012: 131) but also reflexive, 'as each participant looks at the world through the other's eyes, incorporating both self and other into the process of interpretation (Warren, 2001: 98). Following this line of thinking, in addition to reflecting on how my research participants interacted with me, I paid close attention to my own reactions and emotions during and after the interviews. For example, I deliberately assumed particular facial expressions, and doing this was demanding. Then, my emotional responses to KMT supporters include confusion, worries and doubt, and this characterised the uneasiness I felt when interacting with some parent participants. I dealt with these negative emotions both during the interviews and later when analysing the data. According to Malacrida (2007), much has been written about research participants' emotions, but there has been little study of the impact of emotional aspects of research on the researchers themselves. Emotions, however, play a crucial role in the researcher's grasp of interview contexts and her interpretation of interview data – especially when there are conflicting opinions.

3.5 Discussion

This research employed a combination of focus groups and peer group conversations to collect interview data from the Democratic Consolidation generation. Via the 'contact people', who fulfilled three criteria of recruitment, including being born after 1982, being at least 18 years old and being Taiwanese citizens, I completed 30 peer group conversations/focus groups with people from a wide range of occupational

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[118] So, it was not entirely surprising that I had an easier time in recruiting research participants whose political ideologies appeared to be more aligned with the KMT. To ensure richness and diversity of my data, I purposefully sought and reached out to some people who were less likely to be supportive of the KMT (i.e., political victims of the KMT authoritarian rule) and others who were more likely to agree with the Sunflower Movement (i.e., postgraduate students from the Graduate Institute of Journalism, National Taiwan University).

backgrounds: civil servants, construction workers, engineers, factory workers, finance professionals, labour union staff, journalists, political candidates, political activists, high school and university students, and so on. Although I planned to conduct focus groups with parents, they turned out to prefer being interviewed together with their partners or individually. So, I conducted individual or paired interviews with 39 parents, in addition to interviewing 116 young people.

In this chapter, I also review my pilot study and fieldwork. Adjustments to research design and the matter of reflexivity are discussed. For instance, the original design of the icebreaker was to ask research participants to use three words to describe their hometowns. After conducting three pilot focus groups, I changed it into a discussion on Taiwan. The icebreaker was removed after I finished eight focus groups with young people and four interviews with their parents, since I realised that the data collected largely overlapped with the ensuing conversations. With respect to reflexivity, I critically reflect on how my own identities, namely being from the Han people and being a younger member of our society, could have influenced my interactions with parent participants and indigenous participants. Additionally, I took into account the potential impact of my own political beliefs on interview processes. While I prioritised ethical practices with research participants, reflexivity in this thesis also entails an ethics of caring for the researcher's well-being, particularly when experiencing uneasiness and power imbalances. In other words, interviews are understood to be social interactions (Warren, 2001, 2012), and reflecting on the interactions and power relations (Tanggaard, 2007) constitutes an important part of my analysis – Chapter 4 touches upon the interactions within respective generations and is followed by an examination of intergenerational relationships (Chapter 5). In terms of how research data is presented, I focus on giving as much of a voice to my research participants as possible, but at the same time aim for clarity and readability.

Chapter 4

Mediating Democracy: An Inter- and Intra-Generational Analysis

By revealing that the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation make sense of Taiwan's democracy and engage in politics in similar or different ways, this chapter gives evidence of the formation of these two generations. It presents distinct political vocabulary and narratives that each generation used for explaining its understanding of democratic politics in Taiwanese society. For example, the Democratic Consolidation generation valued the notion of open government, whereas the Soft Authoritarianism generation advocated the enforcement of stricter laws.

The analysis also shows that the two generations identified similar political and media problems; however, their ways of dealing with these problems differed. For instance, both generations discussed the problem of political polarisation and referred to party politics as 'Blue versus Green', but the Democratic Consolidation generation was found more likely than the Soft Authoritarianism generation to support smaller parties instead of the KMT and the DPP. Likewise, even though online searches were employed as a strategy for verifying news, the Democratic Consolidation generation specified search engines such as Google, whereas the Soft Authoritarian generation broadly referred to 'the Internet'. These media and political differences further confirm their generational backgrounds – the popularisation of the idea of open government since the 1990s and the arrival of Google in Taiwan in 2006 were parallel with the formative years of the Democratic Consolidation generation, whereas the Soft Authoritarianism generation was more familiar with the Internet and more comfortable with resorting to strict laws.

In addition to the role of generation in shaping political views and engagement, and media practices, this chapter demonstrates that party preference, education, employment status, residential area and political interest and involvement may contribute to intra-generational differences. Then, specifically relating to the material, symbolic, and social dimensions of mediation processes, generational use of TV and social media for news and for a sense of authenticity was discussed in depth; certain media narratives such as that of the 'cape 700 million' were closely examined; specific social dynamics created through the media were uncovered – for example, one analysis reveals the role of peer pressure in the practice of a playful political culture on YouTube.

4.1 Democratic Politics is Polarised

As mentioned, the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation pointed out common problems with Taiwan's democracy, which included: polarisation, corruption and populism. This section shows how the two generations narrated polarisation. In their discussions of polarisation, both generations unanimously referred to the 'blue' versus the 'green'. In the academic literature, the blue is defined in terms of pan-blue coalitions which include the Kuomintang (KMT), the People First Party (PFP) and the New Party (NP), while the Greens are the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) (Fell, 2007, 2018). Nevertheless, the blue-green division appeared more straightforwardly in people's language, since they tended merely to distinguish between the KMT, as the blue, and the DPP, as the green.

Both generations claimed that the KMT and the DPP disagree with each other on almost everything, but they usually did so without referring to any specific issues. What was referred to was the metaphor of 'fights'. This metaphor was widely used to depict not only the divide between the KMT and the DPP, but also the contemporary news media in Taiwan. In their narratives, both generations perceived the blue-green divide in media and political landscapes to be more than antagonism, emphasising how constant, fierce and insoluble the fights are, describing how impossible it is for politicians from the two parties, as well as their supporters, to talk to one another. Both generations therefore claimed to be distant and different from the blue and the green. They called themselves 'median voters'[119] (中間選民, *zhong jian xuan min*), contending that they were not easily influenced by political and media bias but adopted certain strategies in response. These strategies, however, varied from generation to generation. For example, the Democratic Consolidation generation highlighted its use of search engines for fact-checking, whereas the Soft Authoritarianism generation focused on comparing multiple TV channels.

4.1.1 Generational claims to be 'median voters' and generational strategies for countering partisan media

Many young people and their parents described themselves as 'median voters' who were, in their own words, 'not partisan' but 'neutral' in politics. They emphasised that they made political decisions by judging every issue on its own merits rather

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[119] This is my informants' exact wording, even though what they referred to was closer to 'Independents' (獨立選民, *du li xuan min*) in terms of political science definition. I also observed that my informants tended to equate being 'median' with being 'moderate', indicating that people affiliated with any political party were more likely to be 'obsessed' with politics.

than on the basis of their own party identification. In 2018, the year of my fieldwork, the rate of independents or 'no response' on party identification was the highest (49.1%) it had been over the past two decades[120] (NCCU Election Study Centre, 2020). The tendency for people to identify as non-partisan is usually found when party polarisation and competition become intense (Chang & Chen, 2013). This study argues that people's claims to be 'median' may be not merely a reaction to intense party competition and polarisation but could be construed as a discursive strategy to increase the legitimacy of their political opinions. The following examples demonstrate how each respective generation drew upon the notion of neutrality in order to gain an upper hand over the other.

> I consider myself rather rational and neutral, [but] tut, I was wondering why university students nowadays did not have their own judgement when seeing them being manipulated. [They were] easily manipulated. Tut, this was very disappointing. (Pe-chi, mother born in 1967)

> The elders always pretend to be neutral first, and then test the water. Like, [I was] on a taxi ride, the driver [said] 'Damn, voting for Ting Shou-chung[121] is fine'. I responded, 'Alright, you'll vote for him'. But the driver actually wanted me to vote for Yao Wen-chih,[122] [so] his response was 'Tut, I think Ting Shou-chung is not good'. I realise the elders fake neutrality. (Tu-yu, daughter born in 1989)

In the older generation's narrative concerning youth political participation, university students were singled out as being incapable of independent thinking and 'easily manipulated'. The younger generation did not portray their elder counterparts in this way, but the older generation was described as 'faking neutrality'. In both cases, a negative tone was adopted to tell these stories, and inferior qualities were assigned to one another. In the meantime, neutrality was defined as an essential attribute for making legitimate political judgements, and both generations claimed to possess it; moreover, the older generation was likely to emphasise that they were not only neutral but also more rational than their younger counterparts – such reference to rationality and denigration of the youth appears again in my analysis of the older generation's understanding of populism (Section 4.3).

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[120] More precisely, it was the highest rate since 1998. The average rate between 1998 and 2020 was 41.1 per cent.

[121] Represented the KMT in the 2018 Taipei city mayor election.

[122] Represented the DPP in the 2018 Taipei city mayor election.

Even though both the Soft Authoritarianism generation and the Democratic Consolidation generation called themselves median voters, they differed in their choices of party vote.[123] Back in the 2016 election, only 13 per cent of the parents participating in this study cast their party votes for neither the KMT nor the DPP, whereas this was true of about 47 per cent of the young participants. In other words, the Democratic Consolidation generation was more likely to support smaller parties – and this tendency was reflected in their general voting behaviour. Unlike the majority of parents in the study, who continued to cast their votes for the KMT or DPP candidates, many young people voted for candidates from smaller parties – one group of 18-year-olds asserted that: 'the blue, green parties can hardly appeal to the young generation', and many more young people said things like the following:

> I had been considering myself very green, [because] my family had always been standing for the DPP. But during the 318 Movement I started to think if there was something else which might not have anything to do with the DPP but [relate to] perhaps citizens or the emergence of the third force. (Yu-tin, daughter born in 1997)

> Like the New Power Party. [It symbolises] going beyond Blue and Green. (Hao-chin, daughter born in 1993)

> Miao Po-ya[124] and the New Power Party are the third force. (Yu-che, son born in 1984)

Compared with their parents, young people were more likely to address the 'third force' (第三勢力, *di san shi li*) in their political discussions, and many of them associated this with the New Power Party (NPP). Prior evidence shows that people voting for the NPP in the 2016 election were on average younger than those supporting the KMT or the DPP (Lin, 2016). Although the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation had different political preferences, they used the same metaphor of 'fights' to describe party politics. As party politics are compared to fights, the root metaphor may be that Taiwan's multiparty democracy is just a battlefield.

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[123] The party vote decides the total number of seats that each political party gets in parliament. Taiwan's parliamentary electoral system is a two-vote system in which every eligible voter has two votes: one for a candidate in one of 73 districts and the other for a political party – this latter vote is known as the party vote, which 'is distributed proportionally for parties receiving more than 5 per cent of the vote to allocate to a further 34 seats' (Fell, 2018: 76).

[124] Representing the Social Democratic Party, Miao Po-ya did not succeed in the 2016 legislative election but was elected in the 2018 Taipei city council election.

(Group of young people born between 1988 and 1991)

La-xi: A few days ago, I watched [the] news as a preparation for this discussion. [But] I was, like, 'What are they arguing about?' I said to my brother, 'What exactly are they arguing about? I don't get it'.

Men-hsua: I don't really watch news these days. I don't want to spend so much time on watching these fights, [but] take my previous [viewing] experiences, for example. There were always Blue news channels and Green news channels. The overlap between them would be true.

Sa-chii: It's possible that both are not true.

Jia-jia: [The overlap] is the weather forecast, but is it accurate?

Men-hsua: Weather. Hahaha!

(Group of young people born between 1988 and 1990)

Ti-yun: You can tell that the information being shared from Sanlih, Chung T'ien and TVBS's Facebook pages is different.

Ho-hiang: And on LINE the elders forward fake news. They keep doing it!

Chi-yu: But this can train our judgement skills.

Ti-yun: The point is that some people cannot make good judgements but get stuffed, stuffed and stuffed [with biases], [so] in the end they become very extreme.

Chi-yu: I say [that] political talk shows are even more one-sided. [Those] television political pundits can be bought, so even though the issue is not righteous, they can still turn it into something good.

(Mother born in 1962 and father born in 1954)

Shi-yun: I think the media are politically coloured.

Yun-hsian: Of course. [They're] clearly distinguished. Like China Television is blue.

Shi-yun: There are pan-blue and pan-green [media].

Yun-hsian: I'm pan-Formosa Television. Haha.

Shi-yun: Right, he is pan-green.

Interviewer: How about you?

Shi-yun: I think Blue and Green have their own merits and flaws, [but we're] all Taiwanese, so… tut, the media are, like, a few politicians having been attempting to manipulate the general public. And... some people don't have their own thinking, being

led by the nose by the media. Taiwan has suffered too much from internal fights. The political fights are pretty bad.

(Mother born in 1956 and father born in 1953)

Yu-ti: Everyone forms her/his own [judgement]. If s/he considers it true, then it is true.

Tun-yu: Believers always believe [what they believe].[125]

Yu-ti: DPP supporters would say, 'Chen Shui-bian didn't engage in any corrupt practices. Even if he did take money, he must have used it in a meaningful way'. Blues would say, 'How is it possible that Ma Ying-jeou was corrupt? I believe he is clean!' Everyone just believes whatever s/he believes. Like one time we were at the Far Eastern Club, my husband told an old man that all newspapers, radio and TV stations have their own political stances. But the old man replied, 'No way. The Chung T'ien TV doesn't have one!'

Tun-yu: But if he were of the Green camp, [he would say] 'Sanlih doesn't have any specific stances. Its news coverage is very objective!'

Interviewer: But how about you? How do you distinguish between true and false information?

Tun-yu: It is very difficult. I would say…hmm…if you're interested in this news topic, you'd better go find another news source for comparison.

Yu-ti: For me, I consider if I am interested in this piece of news, instead of thinking if it is real or fake. This is why news titles are sensational – making people want to read them.

Tun-yu: People usually read what they are interested in. They care less about if news is true or false.

In explaining the metaphor of 'fights', both generations drew on certain media technologies and genres which characterised the media landscapes within which they had been socialised into politics. The Democratic Consolidation generation referred to political talk shows, a genre gaining popularity in the 2000s, and Facebook, a social networking site entering the Taiwanese market in 2008, whereas the Soft Authoritarianism generation talked about newspapers and TV stations that

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[125] 信者恆信, *xin zhe heng xin* – quite a few informants referred to this expression, although it cannot be found in the Ministry of Education's Mandarin Chinese Dictionary.

have aired since the 1990s. Even though the two generations made reference to different media, they both described the media representation of political fights as confusing viewers and wasting their time. In addition, they seemed to suggest that TV news media were the most partisan, enthusiastically categorising TV news channels as either Blue or Green, reiterating that 'China Television, Chung T'ien Television and TVBS were blue, whereas Formosa Television and Sanlih E-Television were green' – their reiteration was so effortless that this perception of a blue-green divide in TV news media can be regarded as cross-generational knowledge.

Previous research has demonstrated that legacy media, including newspapers, TV news and political talk shows, tend to be in favour of a certain political party and adopt an antagonistic framing in portraying inter-party relationships (Chang & Lo, 2007; Lo & Huang, 2010; Wu & Lee, 2005). This study has further shown that social media such as Facebook and LINE can also be partisan, since legacy media converge on these platforms. That is, the problem of partisan media may be aggravated in today's media environment, which features convergence, since biased news can easily be distributed across different media technologies and genres ranging from TV news coverage to Facebook posts and messages shared in group chats on LINE. Furthermore, news, be it on TV or on social networking sites, was considered not only partisan but also *fake*. While the Soft Authoritarianism generation was more likely to refer to the idea that 'believers always believe what they believe', the Democratic Consolidation generation was more sceptical of legacy news media and expressed more concern about the issue of fake news – one focus group of young people even named themselves as the 'Don't know what to do with fake news' group. This younger generation also tended to accuse their elders of spreading fake news on LINE. However, the two generations equally saw themselves as faced with a partisan media landscape:

> [We watch] the Public Television Service (PTS) and Next TV. Although Next TV is a bit pan-green, it's still rather neutral among approximately ten news channels. (Hsue-chin, mother born in 1964)

> [I] watch PTS because it isn't biased towards any party. It's run by people's money not by a political party or advertising. (Chu-chi, father born in 1966)

> Because nowadays everyone is very busy, [we] can't waste efforts [to distinguish real news] …my son gave me something[126] for filtering out fake news, [but] I don't have time [to do so]. (Yu-ti, mother born in 1956)

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[126] The informant was trying to recall what her son provided her with, but she could not. Based on her description and because I had interviewed her son, I knew she was referring to Cofacts, a chat bot that

You can tell that some opinion leaders and their Facebook fan pages have obvious stances, [although] their posts are not as exaggerated as those from China Times and Chung T'ien Television. Seriously, it would be such a headache to dig into every issue. It's very tiring, you know? (Sa-chii, son born in 1991)

I only know PTS [as being less partisan] and some independent newspapers, but ironically, I don't usually see them because that kind of stuff is easily buried in a Facebook news feed. Because Facebook can be bought too. Sometimes when you're exhausted – living a life is already tiring – and you feel really upset, all you want is to see something pleasant [and] pleasing to your eyes. (Ye-yu, son born in 1986)

Today there are seven 24-hour TV news channels,[127] rather than ten as noted by Hsue-chin, but this number of TV news channels is still twice as many as during the authoritarian period, when the three terrestrial TV stations were owned either by the state or by the KMT, not to mention the fact that nowadays dozens of cable TV and satellite TV stations also produce news programmes. Despite an increase in TV news broadcasters, both generations pointed out that only PTS could be considered less partisan, whereas others were biased towards either the KMT or the DPP. While the older generation's discussion of partisan news media centred on TV broadcasters, the younger generation commented on the ways in which Facebook could be laden with biased political news. This finding indicates that the older and younger generations are accustomed to consuming news through TV and Facebook, respectively; moreover, their distinct media habits reflect to a great extent the different eras in which they were socialised into politics: broadcasting versus social media. Nonetheless, they both experienced difficulties in finding non-partisan news, agreeing that obtaining less biased information in a partisan media environment requires extra effort, and highlighting time and energy constraints on doing so.

In addition to their differences in news consumption, the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation differed in implementing counterstrategies in response to partisan media. Even though they both had developed two primary strategies, namely 'reading and watching more

can fact-check news in LINE groups.

[127] Including Era TV, EBC News, Formosa TV, SET News, TVBS News, Unique Business TV and EBC Financial News. There was one more 24-hour news channel, Chung T'ien Television (CTI TV), which was cited above by Sa-chii, but its licence was not renewed. Although CTI TV's licence ended on 11 December 2020, it has since been broadcasting on YouTube.

media' and 'making comparison between varied media', these strategies were practised differently. Regarding the former, quite a few parents referred to their viewing of PTS, whereas young people talked more about 'independent media'[128] as opposed to legacy media which are understood to be controlled by private owners and run for profit. In addition to supporting and subscribing to independent news organisations,[129] many young people preferred certain individual journalists or experts who were freelance or self-employed, as they tended to trust the professionals who had little affiliation with legacy media institutions.

In terms of comparisons between different media, the Soft Authoritarianism generation tended to compare and contrast multiple TV channels, whereas the Democratic Consolidation generation normally did fact-checking via search engines. Indeed, many young people emphasised that they fact-checked, but their elders rarely did. Using search engines for fact-checking can therefore symbolise being part of this younger generation; that is, this is not only a generational habit but also constitutes a generational identity. In a similar vein, using TV channels to verify information can be interpreted as a habit of the older generation. Having said this, several parents described how they sometimes would search on the Internet in order to cross-examine information from TV – this finding may not be too surprising, since the Internet access rate of people aged 55[130] and above has increased by 20.3 per cent[131] since 2018 (Taiwan Network Information Centre, 2019) and watching TV while using the Internet has also become common among this population (Chang, 2015). In addition to increased Internet access and use, I noticed that those parents cross-checking information on TV and on the Internet were likely to have a full-time job,[132] to reside in urban areas or to be highly educated.[133] This finding suggests a probable difference in Internet use between members of the older generation.

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[128] *The Reporter* was the most frequently mentioned independent news organisation among my young informants. It was founded by a non-profit organisation and branded as having 'an open and non-commercial spirit' and 'in-depth reportage and investigative journalism' (*The Reporter* website, 2020).

[129] Apart from *The Reporter*, *News Lens* and *Initium Media* were mentioned.

[130] The average age of my parent informants was 57.

[131] The rate jumped from 52.3 per cent in 2018 to 72.6 per cent in 2019.

[132] Almost one third of my parent sample were fully employed, another third were retired, and the rest consisted of parents who worked part-time, helped out for free in family businesses or did housework at home.

[133] University or Master's degree.

Since both generations were able to search on the Internet as a technique for ensuring the accuracy and quality of news information, it is worthwhile to further examine the ways in which they carried out online searches. Compared with the Soft Authoritarianism generation, who referred to 'the Internet', the Democratic Consolidation generation were more likely to directly use the brand names of dominant search engines[134] – Google, which entered Taiwanese market in 2006 (Hsu, 2006), was the most mentioned and used. In addition to Google, Yahoo also served as one of the main news sources for many young people. Although the Soft Authoritarianism generation might not use Google News or Yahoo News as much as the Democratic Consolidation generation, all found LINE Today indispensable in everyday life – in other words, both generations had become familiar with consuming news on certain platforms that aggregate news. Since these platforms feature interactivity, they host Comment sections which were utilised by the Democratic Consolidation generation for obtaining different opinions.

> [I] also read comments, [checking] other people's reactions. There are replies under some articles. They're sometimes more neutral or more objective. (We-sin, daughter born in 1993)

> At bottom [you can] generally find different opinions. If you find [the comments] all the same, you feel weird instead. Just read more, [check out] the pros and cons, [and] read more netizens' replies. (Te-ann, son born in 1986)

While reading comments was one way of gaining multiple and diverse insights into certain issues for the Democratic Consolidation generation, the Soft Authoritarianism generation seemed less concerned about this, even though LINE Today also provides a Comment section. One possible explanation may be that parents used LINE primarily for social networking, whereas news consumption through LINE Today was only complementary. I observed that parents might not read the comments underneath news articles, but they were keen on forwarding news to their LINE groups. Moreover, the news that parents shared was not necessarily about politics. When they did share political news, parents tended to adopt a casual tone in order to build a rapport with their peers or family members. A more elaborate discussion of how the Soft Authoritarianism generation used LINE is included in the next chapter.

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[134] This does not mean that all the parent informants were equally unfamiliar with search engines. This study found that those parents who were still at work or who resided in urban areas did use search engines.

4.1.2 The political culture of the Democratic Consolidation generation: YouTube, emotional realism and playfulness

Against a backdrop of partisan media, this study also observed the role of YouTube in both generations' political communication. Specifically, many young informants referred to certain YouTubers when having discussions about elections, political candidates or news events. Some parents spoke of YouTube for watching 'programmes that interest them', and others came across YouTube videos in LINE groups – as they showed me what kind of videos had been circulating in LINE groups, I noticed that many videos were from YouTube,[135] but these parent informants did not necessarily know this. In other words, although YouTube could be a source of information for both generations, the Democratic Consolidation generation used it in a more direct and active way than their elder counterparts. In what follows, I further investigate how this younger generation turn to YouTubers for political opinions.

Frequently mentioned YouTubers included Froggy Chiu, Guan Zhang, Chih-chi 77 and Brian. During both 2018 and 2020 elections, quite a few political candidates of importance appeared on these YouTubers' channels. For instance, re-elected President Tsai Ing-wen teamed up with all these YouTubers in videos. Another demonstration of their political influence is the fact that some went on to be elected to government positions. Froggy Chiu, for example, went in less than three years from making lifestyle videos[136] on YouTube to being elected as a Taipei city councillor. Then, in 2019, Froggy Chiu established a political party called 'Can't Stop This Party' together with two other YouTubers.[137] Early in 2020 the party was

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[135] Some young informants also observed and commented – often in a disapproving tone – that their parents watched videos on YouTube. For example, 'YouTube recommends videos, and my father will watch them. He watches this news, then relevant stuff shows up, so he just clicks and clicks. It's hard to convince him that this information is false, whereas that is true. He doesn't want to know the opposite opinion' (Hsie-lin, daughter born in 1985).

[136] Back in 2015 he was known as a YouTuber on a channel named 'Not Suitable for Work', whose first one-million-view video presented 'Ten Facts about Sex Organs'. Later he acquired his own fanbase, with his management of another channel called Froggy which focuses on a wide range of topics such as food, films, music and stories from his life. Nonetheless, from his announcement that he was running for the 2018 local election to today, Froggy Chiu has been producing the 'Unboxing Democracy' series, which deals with public and political issues.

[137] One of these is the aforementioned Chih-chi 77. Another is Retina, the main news reader at Eye Central Television, which is a parody of China Central Television. While the former focuses on producing informative videos about a wide range of public issues, the latter specialises in political satire videos.

officially recognised by the Ministry of the Interior as the 365th political party[138] in Taiwan. Given their evident political influence, YouTubers can be regarded as a new type of celebrity politicians who are celebrities in popular culture and use their popularity to speak for public opinion (Street, 2004; Street, Inthorn, & Scott, 2012). Their acquisition of popularity is, however, different from that of celebrities from the age of mass media, who are normally affiliated with certain entertainment enterprises. Conversely, YouTube celebrities usually start off by themselves and tend to distinguish themselves from established media powers. The following popular YouTube video dialogue illustrates how the distinction can be made.

> Froggy Chiu: Hello, this is Froggy Chiu. I received your message about TV title sponsorship and exposure. I would like to inquire about the prices.
>
> Salesperson: Prices differ. It depends, [as] you [can choose to] appear in entertainment programmes such as Super Entourage [or] news or news magazine programmes.
>
> Froggy Chiu: How much is one news magazine programme?
>
> Salesperson: It's around NT$ 170,000.[139]
>
> Froggy Chiu: NT$ 170,000, right? How about political talk show? How much would it be?
>
> Salesperson: [There are] evening political talk shows such as Deep Throat News and Political Gossip. [The prices of] afternoon and evening shows are different. I can give you a quote for whatever you want.
>
> Froggy Chiu: Because I'm quite popular, I can also bring you [media] exposure and traffic. Why then do I pay you rather than you paying me?
>
> Salesperson: It depends on our news department. Sometimes they look for sources they want and tell those people what stories they need – this is not for free. Their products are different from what our sales department [can] do. We do [things] from our clients' perspective, [whereas] they might just make everyone a bit relevant.

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[138] However, in February 2021 Froggy Chiu announced that the party had no plans to participate in elections and would soon be terminated. He emphasised that the original plan had been 'helping the public restore happiness and positive emotions in politics' because 'politics are not only about hatred and pain' (Liu, 2021).

[139] Using an NTD-pound sterling exchange rate of 1: 40, this is approximately £4,250.

Froggy Chiu: One final question. I wonder if there are any samples for me to get an idea of the [advertising] effect. Are there any paid news programmes recently?

Salesperson: Recently we've got [to produce paid news for] Hou You-yi.[140]

This phone conversation between Froggy Chiu and a salesperson from Chung T'ien Television was in the first episode of the 'Unboxing Democracy' series that Froggy Chiu created after he announced he would stand for the 2018 Taipei City Council election. Quite a few young informants referred to this YouTube video as evidence explaining how powerful money could be in the realms of media and politics and why legacy media could not be trusted, whereas YouTube celebrities were more trustworthy. While Chung T'ien Television was not transparent about its way of doing business, Froggy Chiu frankly disclosed his business principles at the conclusion of the episode:

Is advertorial a bad thing? Froggy Chiu's [channel] actually produces advertorials too. [Making] advertorials itself is not shameful, but it is important to ensure the transparency of commercial information. On this channel, we provide sufficient clues for our audience to know that this is an advertorial, [so] consumers will not have any misunderstanding. […] We've never endorsed any politicians nor been paid by anyone to be in our shows. But do you have any idea how many TV programmes [that] you're now watching are advertorials? Shouldn't news programmes abide by higher moral and ethical standards? But now [news] has become a type of product that can be bought anytime. Such standards are not even as good as Internet celebrities who shoot videos on cell-phones. […] Why do we keep emphasising an extremely low budget election style? Because we need to resist such temptations of media and money. I am Froggy Chiu aka Chiu Wei-jie,[141] Taipei City Council candidate for the Song-shan and Xin-yi districts. We are still on our way to unboxing democracy'.

The 'unboxing' metaphor indicates that democracy is in a black box and needs to be unveiled. So, who can perform this task? For young informants who followed Froggy Chiu and identified with his views of politics, YouTubers appeared to be better candidates than traditional media professionals and conventional politicians because they dared to reveal political realities and their self-disclosure of business models embodied 'transparency', an important ideal for the Democratic Consolidation

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[140] Representing the KMT, Hou You-yi won the New Taipei city mayoral election in 2018.

[141] Froggy Chiu's real name.

generation – as presented in the next section on political corruption, many young people said they valued transparency and openness. Likewise, their 'shot on a cellphone' and 'low budget' styles distinguished these YouTubers from legacy media, which are portrayed in this last narrative as immoral businesspeople. This narrative also suggests that the influence of money had become entrenched in the realms of politics and news media. On the other hand, YouTubers were viewed as an attractive alternative to corrupt politicians and media professionals because they were 'real' and 'outspoken'.

(Group of young people born between 1984 and 1992)

Interviewer: I wonder if you see anyone as opinion leaders.

Su-chi: Guan Zhang.

Su-yuan: It depends.

We-zhon: [He] matches young people's *outspoken* image. [emphasis added]

We-chua: Right! He is straightforward and [therefore] more objective and fairer.

Jia-min: More grassroots.

Su-chi: He doesn't speak officialese.

We-chua: He doesn't speak from the government or businessmen's perspective.

(Group of young people born between 1996 and 1998)

Shen-wei: Live streaming is everywhere. Previously there was only Twitch,[142] but…

Ka-tii: YouTube.

Shen-wei: Nowadays YouTube also started live streaming. [Live streaming] has begun to take off. And King Kong.[143]

Ka-tii: Facebook too.

Sung-hao: Everyone can just create an account, start live streaming [and] express yourself. It's rather *real* [emphasis added]. Like Guan Zhang – we often watch him. [He] is scolding [people] or talking about games.

Interviewer: I will go check him out.

Shen-wei: Don't!

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[142] As a video live streaming service, Twitch was created in 2011 and later purchased by Amazon in 2014.

[143] King Kong was a Taiwanese live streaming service, and it was merged with Lang Live in April 2020.

Tung-han:	Better not to.
Sung-hao:	You will learn stuff that you shouldn't learn. Haha.
Ka-tii:	Because he talks about Taiwan politics and current affairs in a very…
Shen-wei:	Outspoken.
Ka-tii:	Right, outspoken.

I did check out Guan Zhang's videos afterwards, and I can still recall how shocked I felt about his outspokenness, namely frequently spelling out swear words to express his disapproval of legacy news institutions and leading politicians. However, I came to see why these young people and many others were attracted to 'outspoken' and 'real' Guan Zhang and his 'grassroots' language, as opposed to established politicians' 'officialese' – while the latter did 'stuff that you shouldn't know', Guan Zhang revealed this. In this regard, Guan Zhang was also 'unboxing democracy', as Froggy Chiu did, exemplifying a 'real' way of doing politics based on straightforward expression and emotional appeals. Froggy Chiu, in the previously mentioned video, vented his disdain for the dominant role of money in the media and political spheres; meanwhile, Guan Zhang used offensive language to convey his anger in almost every video, especially in live streams. To put it another way, many young informants considered YouTubers *real* because they told true stories in an outspoken style, combined with the cellphone or live streaming techniques. Not only does such realism have a material and symbolic base, but it is also emotional and furthermore this emotional realism is co-constructed by young people like my informants, who experienced certain feelings – 'The more I watch, the more upset I feel. Our society is dominated by money', Jia-jia[144] commented on Froggy Chiu's video discussed above. 'Very often I get angry. [I'm] mad as hell!': Men-ju[145] described how she felt when reading comments underneath YouTube videos. Evidently, people's emotional involvement and investment complete the emotional realism of YouTube, and expressive politics as such construct not only a celebrity persona but also a collective identity characterised by emotional realism. Playfulness is another feature of young people's way of engaging in politics and of consuming YouTube.

(Group of young people born in 2000)

Yu-ji:	I have been following Chih-chi 77.
Yu-qi:	Oh, yes.

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[144] Born in 1990

[145] Born in 1992

Yu-ji:	There are short videos that discuss current affairs – but not necessarily; [videos are] sometimes just about trivial matters in life.
Yu-qi:	The content is more knowledge-based.
Interviewer:	What kind of knowledge?
Yu-qi:	About politics, democracy and hmm… human psyche, marketing and many more.
Yu-ji:	Right! Recently… like, it's interesting that he talked about why we are required to memorise footnotes in Mandarin textbooks. That kind of minor stuff.
Interviewer:	In addition to Chih-chi 77, are there any other YouTubers [you follow]?
Classmate[146]:	I watch How How.
Yu-qi:	He recently made a marriage proposal!
Classmate:	He does product placements [in his videos]. Very funny!
Yu-chin:	Right, very funny! Relieving stress.
Yu-ji:	The channel I watch is called Taiwan Bar.
Yu-qi:	Oh, Taiwan Bar.
Yu-chin:	Yeah, Taiwan Bar.
Yu-ji:	For me, their views are relatively neutral because the pros and cons are always noted.
Yu-qi:	And their style is rather light-hearted. [It] makes people who are originally not interested in a given topic also able to finish watching an entire video.
Yu-chin:	The topic could be a bit serious, like history stuff.
Yu-qi:	The 228 Incident.
Yu-chin:	Right, but [Taiwan Bar] uses a light-hearted way to present it.
Interviewer:	How about you?
Kua-min:	I watch Froggy Chiu's Not Suitable for Work.
Yu-qi:	He has become a city councillor, hasn't he?
Yu-chin:	That's right.

As mentioned earlier, Froggy Chiu established a political party called Can't Stop This Party with two other YouTubers – Chih-chi 77 was one of them, and he, according to

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[146] As my informants' classmate, this girl did not sign up for the focus group, but she turned up and asked if she could audit rather than participate. Although she was quiet most of the time, she jumped in when we were discussing YouTubers.

my informants, made a wide variety of 'short' and 'interesting' videos. Being 'fun' is, after all, written in the rule book of the Can't Stop This Party. Likewise, How How was described as 'very funny', and Taiwan Bar's 'light-hearted' style of presenting serious topics was complimented by my young informants. One more piece of evidence that playfulness is central to the Democratic Consolidation generation's engagement with politics is young people's viewing of YouTube news channels such as Crazy News and OM Goose. These channels present news in the form of mashups, combining news clips from legacy media with images, memes, film clips and so on; moreover, this type of news mashup normally comes with a hilarious and sarcastic voiceover. Even though watching news mashups was popular among this younger generation, not all my young informants genuinely enjoyed it.

(Group of young people born between 1987 and 1994)

Yi-chin: OM Goose edits news in [a] certain political tone, but because it's *for fun* [emphasis added], people can easily digest it, and [there are] Guan Zhang or Froggy Chiu or Joeman –

A-lin: Who's Joeman?

Nun-yu: Did he eat bento[147] with Ko Wen-je?

Yi-chin: Right. [They were] eating bento!

Nun-yu: I watched it.

Yi-chin: There was also [the] 'One day as a city mayor advisor' [video].

Nun-yu: Yes, 'One day as a city mayor advisor'.

Yi-chin: These internet celebrities can earn up to NT$200,000 or 300,000.[148]

A-lin: Per month?

Yi-chin: Nope, per video. So, Ko Wen-je's popularity and his media influence are the reason why Joeman was willing to collaborate with him for free.

A-lin: Internet celebrities wouldn't be interested in Chu Mei-hsueh[149] because [such collaboration] isn't beneficial to them, but they are interested in Ko Wen-je and Han Kuo-yu for mutual promotion.

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[147] A boxed meal usually has rice, vegetables and meat.

[148] Approximately £5,000 or £7,500, with an NTD-pound sterling exchange rate of 1: 40.

[149] Coming from a labour union background, he was an independent candidate in the 2018 Taoyuan City mayoral election.

Nun-yu:	This is it. Sometimes I feel I'm not keeping up with the times. Some internet celebrities are not that funny, but their subscriber counts are very high.
Ka-sin:	I personally find that kind of stuff very superficial. I don't really like it, but *I think everyone's watching it* [emphasis added], so [I'm], like, 'hmm… shouldn't I take a look? So I know what everybody is talking about'.

Although this group of young people disagreed with OM Goose and found the interactions between internet celebrities and politicians 'superficial', they still watched the 'for fun' type of YouTube videos in order to keep up with 'everybody else'. Specifically, YouTube prioritises a certain kind of fun based on the popularity of individual YouTubers and politicians. While popularity as the principal metric that YouTube uses to curate content has been widely discussed (Burgess & Green, 2018; Gillespie, 2014), this study highlights how it is dialectically constructed – the platform prioritises funny videos and promotes them, but the algorithmic popularity metric only starts to work when some viewers click on the videos and others follow suit because of peer pressure. I observed that young people with more experience of political activism were likely to be critical of the 'for fun' type of political communication. For instance, the group of young people quoted above were labour union members and some of them had been involved in political campaigns for Chu Mei-hsueh, an independent candidate in the 2018 Taoyuan City mayoral election. According to them, the playful political culture on YouTube tended to exclude marginal political candidates and issues such as labour policy.

In this section, I have shown that both generations perceived party politics as polarised and legacy media as partisan – and also social media, due to media convergence, analysing generational narratives about being median voters, investigating similar or different strategies used by each generation to deal with partisan media, and discussing the younger generation's playful way of engaging in politics on YouTube. The next section examines how the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation narrated political corruption, the second most popular theme that they referred to when discussing Taiwan's democracy.

4.2 Democratic Politics is Corrupt

Both generations discussed corruption as another serious problem with Taiwan's democracy, even though the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)[150] told a different

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[150] This index has been published by Transparency International.

story. In 2018[151] the average was 43 on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean), and more than two-thirds of countries scored below 50, but Taiwan scored 63, and ranked 31st among 180 countries and territories around the world. As Table 4.1 shows, Taiwan has been scoring above 60 since 2011, and its ranking has been stable. So, why would the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation perceive democratic politics to be corrupt? How did they tell a story of political corruption?

Table 4.1 Taiwan's Corruption Perceptions Index between 2009 and 2018

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Score	56	58	61	61	61	61	62	61	63	63
Rank	37	33	32	37	36	36	31	31	29	31

* Source: https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi

4.2.1 Reiteration of Chen Shui-bian's corruption scandal as the 'cape 700 million'

In their narrative about political corruption, both generations referred to kickbacks in public procurement and bribery in elections as general examples of corruption, but the most discussed case was the corruption scandal involving former President Chen Shui-bian. While the Democratic Consolidation generation made fun of this scandal, without any specific feelings towards it, the Soft Authoritarianism generation often described it as one of the most significant political events in the history of Taiwan's democracy. Parents identifying with the KMT[152] linked Chen Shui-bian's corruption to the Red Shirt Army Movement[153] which demanded his resignation. On the other hand, parents identifying with the DPP considered the corruption scandal a major political event because it tarnished the development of Taiwanese consciousness.[154]

(Mother born in 1956 and father born in 1953)

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[151] I draw on the 2018 statistics because my fieldwork was between September 2018 and January 2019. The 2019 statistics can be found at: https://www.transparency.org/country/TWN As seen, in 2019 Taiwan scored 65 and ranked 28th.

[152] As shown in my methodology chapter and noted in my examination of how each generation cast their party vote, research participants' identification with a political party is mainly measured by their party votes cast in the 2016 election, as well as by whom they voted for in the 2014 election.

[153] Chang (2013) offered a detailed description of this movement, as did Shih (2007), who further examined the political implications of 'red'. Ngo's (2015) research analysed the success and failure of the movement from an institutional perspective.

[154] In the eyes of DPP supporters, the DPP is a local and Taiwanese political party as opposed to the KMT party, which is seen as at best an outsider and at worst a colonialist party.

Yu-ti: Ah, what is the White Shirt Army?[155] Weren't we the Red Shirt Army?

Interviewer: The White Shirt Army was mentioned by young people.

Yu-ti: Really? [But] we're not young people.

Interviewer: Hung Chung-chiu…

Yu-ti: Oh, that deceased child.

Tun-yu: Democracy in the military?

Yu-ti: What we participated in is the Red Shirt Army.

Interviewer: Why do you consider the Red Shirt Army important?

Tun-yu: [Because it was for] anti-corruption.

Based on a literature review of democratisation research, I had prepared post-it notes on more than ten historical events[156] – the White Shirt Army Movement in 2013 was one of these and was recognised by many young people, who often viewed it as a precursor of the Sunflower Movement. While young people often viewed this movement as a precursor of the Sunflower Movement because it demonstrated that young netizens could be mobilised for offline rallies, most parents considered it unimportant and did not discuss it – as Yu-ti commented, 'we're not young people'. For her and several other KMT parents, the Red Shirt Army Movement was of real importance. They highlighted its anti-corruption significance; however, their DPP peers might disagree.

    (Mother born in 1959 and father born in 1955)

Sue-me: I think resources are still in the hands of the KMT, [but they] really need to be redistributed, so that the tang-wai[157] can stand a chance. Like today I was telling my husband, A-bian's[158] corruption makes me completely [disappointed]. Why do power and money corrupt people?'

Ha-lun: Do you know Chu Wan-ching?

Interviewer: Chu Wan-ching?

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[155] In 2013, the White Shirt Army Movement was organised in order to seek justice for Hung Chung-chiu, a 24-year-old young man who died during his military service.

[156] See Research Rationale and Design section in Chapter 3.

[157] As noted in Chapter 1, *tangwai* literally means 'outside the Party' because the KMT was the only legitimate party during the authoritarian period.

[158] Chen Shui-bian's Taiwanese nickname.

Ha-lun: The secretary to the previous premier Lien Chan.[159] [She] has escaped abroad. I think Taiwanese people are pathetic. Chen Shui-bian was not cunning. Was [his] corruption about much money? [But he] embarrassed all the Taiwanese people. The KMT's corrupt money in the past was too much to be counted.

Every narrative features a beginning and an ending (Andrews, 2007; Hsiau, 2010a; Polletta, 2006) as well as characters (Polletta, 2015). For many DPP parents, the narrative about political corruption began with the KMT regime. They referred to high-profile KMT politicians and characterised them as villains by highlighting their more 'cunning' ways of committing corruption. These examples of KMT corruption were, however, absent in the KMT parents' narratives about political corruption, which focused on Chen Shui-bian. The DPP parents were also more likely to evaluate Chen Shui-bian's corruption in terms of his representation of the Taiwanese. They lamented the fact that his corruption scandal cast a shadow on Taiwanese identity – as Ha-lun noted, '[he] embarrassed all the Taiwanese people'. In both KMT and DPP parents' narratives about corruption, there are no endings, which suggests that political corruption is an ongoing problem in Taiwan. Although young people regarded neither Chen Shui-bian's corruption scandal nor the Red-shirt Army Movement as politically important as their parents did, both the younger and older generations invariably referred to the corruption scandal as the 'cape 700 million'.

(Group of young people born between 1996 and 1998)

Sung-hao: The KMT had been in power for so long that it began to be corrupt, so the DPP got to take its place.

Tung-han: That *700 million* [emphasis added]. Haha!

Interviewer: What?

Shen-wei: *The cape 700 million* [emphasis added]!

Ka-tii: That's not all [of the corrupt money].

Shen-wei: Corrupt money had been sent abroad.

Sung-hao: Definitely more than *700 million* [emphasis added]!

Ka-tii: No Taiwanese presidents finished their terms without any legal cases.

Shen-wei: It seems that Ma Ying-jeou [was corrupt] too.

Sung-hao: He [was] corrupted the least.

Shen-wei: But he still was.

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[159] Representing the KMT, he was elected as Vice President in 1996, but his presidential election campaigns in 2000 and 2004 were not successful.

| Sung-hao: | Right, but by comparison, [he was] less corrupt. |
| Tung-han: | Less than *700 million* [emphasis added]. |

Although at the time of Chen Shui-bian's corruption scandal in 2008 these four informants were only between 10 and 12 years old, they showed some understanding of the incident by referring it to the 'cape 700 million', which parodies a 2008 blockbuster named 'Cape No.7'. They, together with many other young people and parents, had no difficulty in reiterating 'cape 700 million' as if this was all they could remember. It might not be a surprise that people recalled few other details of Chen's corruption scandal. Evidence (Park, 2012)[160] has shown that news coverage of political corruption predominantly adopts an episodic frame which focuses on illustrating issues by providing sensational descriptions or provocative pictures, whereas little effort is made to examine the historical and societal contexts, consequences, plausible solutions or institutional reforms (thematic frame). More specifically, the news media concentrate on reporting individual instances and perpetrators instead of revealing how these occurrences of corruption could relate to wider contexts such as the legal system, government structure or political culture (Paletz & Entman, 1981; Park, 2012).

In addition to considering symbolic meanings in news coverage, an examination of mediated scandals requires attention to the forms of media and communication (Thompson, 2000). The corruption scandal of Chen Shui-bian took place during a time of rapidly growing online journalism, and since then information dissemination and communications have been bounded less and less by spatial and temporal locales – this may, to some extent, explain why my very young informants were aware of this scandal, which had become timeless. The influence of the media on people's perception and understanding of political corruption seems self-evident, since most people have no direct life experiences of this. It is therefore important to pay more attention to how political corruption is framed from certain perspectives (Altheide, 1976; Tuchman, 1978), to what roles individual actors are assigned, and to what kind of definite relationships are imposed on these characters (Carey, 1988).

(Group of young people born between 1988 and 1991)
| Fan-yu: | Like Wu Yin-ning. Hasn't she been involved in many controversies? |

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[160] Park (2012) used 'political corruption' as the keyword for sampling the *Chicago Tribune* between 2001 and 2011.

Hao-pen: Wu Yin-ning? You mean [the manager of] Taipei Agriculture?[161] The person who will be travelling to the Maldives? (People start laughing) Spending government money for [her own] pleasure!

Fan-yu: Yeah! There was only a small paragraph in [her] work report. That's the one!

Interviewer: Was that also her?

Chi-chen: Nope, it was someone else. A legislator.

Fan-yu: Another person? Not the same one?

When this conversation took place, one month before the 2018 election, Wu Yin-ning, the then general manager of Taipei Agricultural Products Marketing Corporation,[162] was involved in several controversies.[163] Despite the differing natures of these controversies, be it misuse of government money or absence from the Taipei City Council, one commonality is that Wu[164] was consistently portrayed in the pan-blue/pro-KMT media as an enemy of Taipei City mayor Ko Wen-je;[165] more specifically, Wu and her DPP supporters were depicted as the villains and as equally corrupt, whereas Ko was characterised as the hero who confronted Wu and the DPP for the public good. This resembles what we saw earlier in the workings of episodic corruption coverage: complexity was reduced to a minimum and political news made into a 'people' story (Denton, 1991; Woodward, 1997). Moreover, a conflictual perspective was adopted, and conflicts have always been considered newsworthy (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017; Phillips, 2015). Furthermore, reflecting on the ways in which scandal can lend itself to media exposure (Thompson, 2000), it was not unexpected to observe a media frenzy over Wu Yin-ning's scandal, since scandals usually sell – not to mention that the scandal was made public not long before polling day.

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[161] The full name is Taipei Agricultural Products Marketing Corporation.

[162] A quasi-governmental organisation with 45.52 per cent share held by the Taipei City government and the Council of Agriculture, Executive Yuan.

[163] For example, another heated controversy was Wu's refusal to report to the Taipei City Council. While she insisted on holding no responsibility for reporting to the Taipei City Council, Wu was criticised by Taipei Mayor Ko Wen-je and pro-KMT media. During these controversies and criticism, the DPP had been supporting her, but Wu was dismissed less than a week after the DPP's defeat in the 2018 elections.

[164] Although the DPP had been supporting Wu throughout the controversies, she was dismissed less than a week after the party's defeat in the 2018 elections.

[165] The DPP did not support Ko Wen-je, as it did in 2014, but nominated its own candidate. So in 2018 Ko was running for re-election as a non-partisan candidate.

Both many young people and many of their parents described how politicians tended to prioritise their own interests or those of their parties. During their campaigns, three young informants[166] who were standing for the 2018 Kaohsiung City Council election had been confronted with some voters who questioned whether 'you will be sucking our money, otherwise why would you run for election?' There was indeed a prevalent belief that politicians were corrupt. In response to political corruption, the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation shared some similar interpretations, such as that of the 'cape 700 million' narrative, but differed in how they felt about Chen Shui-bian's corruption. While the Democratic Consolidation generation was largely apathetic about the corruption scandal and joked about it, the Soft Authoritarianism generation acknowledged its importance and attached to it certain emotions and interpretations, which were found to be dependent on their party identification. As both generations disagreed with corrupt established politicians, they turned to 'unconventional politicians'.

4.2.2 Unconventional politicians and their authenticity

Both generations recognised two specific characteristics of unconventional politicians. Firstly, unconventional politicians were viewed as lacking party support and resources, as opposed to established politicians who had considerable resources for their election campaigns because they were affiliated with major political parties, namely the KMT and the DPP. For young people Ko Wen-je was a typical example of an unconventional politician, since he had run as an independent candidate in both 2014 and 2018 elections, even though in August 2019 he established the Taiwan People's Party (TPP), a party positioning itself as 'an alternative to the blue and the green' (*Taiwan People News*, 2019). However, most parents, be they pro-KMT or DPP, did not consider Ko Wen-je as an unconventional politician. For the pro-KMT parents, Han Kuo-yu was a better example of an unconventional politician. These parents argued that although Han Kuo-yu represented the KMT in the 2018 Kaohsiung City mayoral election, he was not a typical KMT politician. They downplayed Han Kuo-yu's partisanship but emphasised that he was short of campaign money and support from political personages from the Party. Against all odds he turned a deeply green city into a blue one, since Kaohsiung City had been under the DPP's rule for two decades. One KMT parent after another repeated this David and Goliath type of

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[166] They were three young women in their early 30s and ran as independent candidates in the 2018 election. They had little children and were members of the Association of Parents Participating in Education in Taiwan.

story, which was characteristic of 'unexpectedness' and its news value (Galtung & Ruge, 1981; So, 2011).

Evidently, both generations were attracted to unconventional politicians and the idea of 'beyond "Blue" and "Green"' (超越藍綠, *chao yue lan lu*). This notion, according to Cheng (2016), has become more and more prevalent since the corruption scandal of Chen Shui-bian, as the DPP began to shift from emphasising partisan and ethnic identities to pushing identification with democracy in order to maintain the legitimacy of its rule. Additionally, during elections the discourse of 'beyond "Blue" and "Green"' would exhibit a profound increase in news coverage, so it could be seen as an empty signifier for political consumption (Cheng, 2016). People's consumption of unconventional politicians is also related to the notion of 'authenticity'. It was found that both the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation were attracted to the perceived authenticity of unconventional politicians – or 'political amateurs', in some research participants' own words – who are not so much characterised by their political inexperience as by their distance from the conventional practices of politics.

> (Mother born in 1974 and father born in 1972)
>
> Me-kue: [Han Kuo-yu] is very concerned about [the people]. He went to the countryside.
>
> Chu-hsie: Yes, yes!
>
> Me-kue: He wasn't doing it for himself.
>
> Chu-hsie: He didn't run for election only for the sake of it. He ran for the election because he really wanted to do stuff. I read it on the Internet that he travelled around [Taiwan] when working as a secretary to Wu Den-yih.[167] [There are] not just descriptions, [and] even photos! [He] doesn't look like an official!

Unlike conventional politicians who were deemed selfish and pretentious, Han Kuo-yu was seen as having the people in mind and speaking the people's language – as a father born in 1966 added, 'the people can understand what Han Kuo-yu is talking about. This is very important!' Although the Soft Authoritarianism generation is typically not considered technology savvy, this study found parents collecting evidence of the ordinariness of Han Kuo-yu through multiple media. In addition to the photos on the Internet, they referred to the televised debates and YouTube videos in which Han Kuo-yu almost always had his sleeves rolled up, in contrast to his

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[167] He was then the chairperson of the KMT.

opponent wearing a business suit. Similarly, this quality of ordinariness is also found in the Democratic Consolidation generation's account of Ko Wen-je. Echoing recent studies of Ko Wen-je (Kong, 2018; You, Chang, & Wang, 2019), which found that he had been utilising social media to build an image of an 'ordinary person' and generate a sense of authenticity, many young informants in my research discussed a YouTube video titled 'One Day as a City Mayor Advisor',[168] unanimously drawing on the opening scene in which Ko Wen-je took the bus to work. 'Which city mayor bikes or takes a bus to work? I can't think of anyone but Ko Wen-je. Those [conventional politicians] even have their own private drivers', a 22-year-old commented. In other words, the everyday-life episode of commuting on public transport resonated with young people's routines and thus separated Ko Wen-je from conventional politicians. Apart from appearing to be ordinary, authenticity involves 'telling the truth'.

> (Group of young people born between 1986 and 1993)
>
> Te-ann: Ko Wen-je is straightforward, speaking whatever comes into his mind. He's being himself.
>
> Hao-chin: He speaks the truth.
>
> We-sin: TRUTH.
>
> Hao-chin: Right. [What he says] isn't racism or something else.
>
> We-sin: This is way better than euphemisms that are not to the point.
>
> Chia-lin: He makes people feel that he is a really authentic person. He's not pretending at all.

There was considerable overlap between young people's descriptions of Ko Wen-je and of YouTube celebrity politicians. With the aura of straightforwardness and outspokenness, speaking whatever comes into one's mind is made equivalent to speaking the truth. To put it another way, spontaneity and intimacy (Enli, 2015, 2016; Luebke, 2021) are key to the perceived authenticity of Ko Wen-je, and YouTube can contribute to spontaneous and intimate communications between politicians and Internet celebrities. A further analysis of the 'One Day as a City Mayor Advisor' YouTube video mentioned above will shine light on how YouTube could be related to young people's perception of Ko Wen-je's authenticity. After Ko Wen-je gets on the bus, the following conversation ensues:

> Host: Mayor, may I ask you a personal question? Why did you run for the mayoral election when you were having a good life?

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[168] This video was rated as the most popular YouTube video of 2018 (Google Taiwan, 2018). It was released on 5 July 2018, less than five months before the 2018 election. The video can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qkf4farak1k&vl=de

Ko Wen-je: I was having a peaceful life at the NTU Hospital, but suddenly [there were] the MG149 incident,[169] the NSC incident[170] and the AIDS incident.[171] How come [the government] enjoyed torturing its own citizens?

Producer: It's rare to see people[172] outside the camera frame constantly eying one another warily. They're like, 'Can this go public?' 'Can you bleep that?'

Ko Wen-je: Did I say something wrong?

Host: Nope, what you say is all truth!

The narrative about Ko Wen-je's transition from being a doctor to being a politician begins with a revelation of being mistreated by the government. This revelation signposts a problematique (Ringmar, 1996) that defines the conflict between the ruling government and Ko Wen-je, justifying the latter's action of standing for election. In terms of characterisation, Ko Wen-je portrays himself as a victim whose 'peaceful life' was taken away and who was thrown into 'torture'. His suffering is summarised in a 'how come' question that suggests shock and sounds accusatory. His victimhood further validates his action of running for election. Ko Wen-je's reply is not only 'personal', as already defined by the host in his inquiry, but also authentic – by referring to people outside the camera frame, the producer highlights that Ko Wen-je's answer is not scripted, and hence real. Once again, spontaneity created through a seemingly unscripted language and intimacy generated through personal stories contributes to a sense of authenticity. Ko Wen-je's narrative is made 'true', and its truthfulness strengthened because 'what you say is all truth' is highlighted in a different font and occupies almost one third of the screen, while 'the truth' is circled in red. All of these examples entail truth-telling as another essential element of authenticity, exhibiting several effective ways of creating authenticity which include personalising and emotionalising political narratives, and adopting a seemingly unscripted language (Enli, 2016; Kong, 2018; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019). A recent survey study (Liu, 2019) focuses on people aged under 40, discovering that the more people dislike traditional political parties, the more likely they are to be

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[169] Ko Wen-je was responsible for a MG149 project, but he was accused of using a separate bank account for money laundering.

[170] NSC stood for the National Science Council. Ko Wen-je was accused of misusing NSC funding.

[171] Ko Wen-je was involved in a controversy over transplantation of five organs from a donor with HIV.

[172] Although Ko Wen-je's staff were not captured on camera, their presence is verified since the producer of the YouTube programme directly addresses them – even though the producer cannot be seen on screen either, the audience can hear him.

supportive of unconventional politicians. My research has identified this tendency as cross-generational, and it further reveals generational differences in the meaning-making of authenticity by comparing the Democratic Consolidation generation's narrative about Ko Wen-je's abilities with the Soft Authoritarianism generation's narrative about Han Kuo-yu's virtue.

> (People born in 1981 and in 1991)
>
> Yii-chen: Although [Ko Wen-je] is authentic, it [still] depends on what he says.
>
> Mi-yen: He needs to have the ability [to do things].
>
> Yii-chen: Right! Having the ability [to fulfil political promises] instead of paying lip service.
>
> Mi-yen: Didn't Ko Wen-je introduce ECMO[173] to Taiwan? Everyone knows that he is a doctor. There're so many doctors, but if speaking of ECMO [everyone] thinks of him.

> (Group of people born between 1988 and 1990)
>
> Ho-hiang: [Ko Wen-je] tore down that viaduct. Is there any other city mayor who has such guts to do so?
>
> Ti-yun: Has he not yet dealt with the Zhong-xiao bus stop?
>
> Chi-yu: Done! That is done! He dealt with it on the very first day of his term.
>
> Ho-hiang: Right!
>
> Interviewer: So, the reason why you like Ko Wen-je is because he doesn't have any [political] background but dares to do things?
>
> Chi-yu: Yes. He doesn't care about what other people think about him. He's authentic, and he's a doctor, so he has strong logical thinking. His most classic saying is that he doesn't have [any] friends [in the DPP], [so] the DPP can't take much advantage of him. So, he is a man who solely judges what is right and what is wrong instead of [being influenced by] *guan xi*.[174]

Many young people highlighted Ko Wen-je's ability to fulfil his manifestos and referred to his doctor's identity, in contrast to conventional politicians who not only lacked capability but also were burdened by their affiliation with a party – 'political baggage', as my informants usually described it. Due to political baggage, established

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[173] Stands for extra-corporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO).

[174] This term can be interpreted as interpersonal relationships or social networks.

politicians' decision-making was likely to be bound by *guan xi*, whereas Ko Wen-je, without political baggage, could do 'what is right' – this is consistent with his campaign song for the 2018 election, which is titled 'Do Things Right'. This song is a collaboration between Ko Wen-je and Chun Yang, a then-26-year-old rap singer. Its music video opens with the scene of a bus stop which is consistently used to symbolise his ordinariness, hence strengthening his aura of authenticity. In addition, rap is also a means of building authenticity since it has been a musical genre associated with a 'keeping it real' ethos and with youth culture (Clay, 2003; Li, 2005; Tang, H. T., 2018). While the perceived authenticity of Ko Wen-je for the Democratic Consolidation generation is based on a narrative about his ability to 'do the right thing, do things right',[175] the Soft Authoritarianism generation's lauding of Han Kuo-yu as 'authentic' is based on Chinese ethics.

> He doesn't [verbally] attack his opponents. No personal attacks. (Hsi-wa, mother born in 1960)

> I prefer Han Kuo-yu because he is more authentic and, besides, he shows respect for his opponent. He might laugh at himself, but he never makes personal attacks. Democracy should be like this – respecting rather than slandering one another. (Ye-kuan, father born in 1966)

> His decency, [his] deep thinking, and what I admire in him most is that he never speaks ill of anyone! Throughout his campaign and until [the moment] when he got elected, he has never verbally attacked his opponent. No matter how aggressive his opponent was, he just replied and clarified. (Chu-chi, father born in 1966)

Parents primarily associated Han Kuo-yu's authenticity with his decent and virtuous demeanour. Their prioritisation of politicians' moral goodness may have reflected their experience of living through the authoritarian regime, under which the KMT state employed Chinese ethics for social control. Since parents were indoctrinated to follow the 'four virtues' (四維, *si wei*),[176] namely propriety, righteousness, uprightness and sense of shame (Chang, 2002), it was not unusual to find them emphasising that Han Kuo-yu was decent and uttered no bad word about his opponent. Another example of the authoritarian legacy is that parents, especially

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[175] Chorus of rap song.

[176] After democratisation, Civic Ethics Education shifted its focus of teaching from the four virtues to multiculturalism (Chang, 2002).

those identifying with the KMT, reiterated Han Kuo-yu's self-comparison to Chiang Ching-kuo,[177] the second president during the authoritarian period, described as advocating a 'compassionate, approachable, and public-spirited leadership that exemplified the Confucian virtues of unselfishness' (Chu, 2012: 46). As shown in the opening of this section, parent participants specifically referred to Han Kuo-yu's visits to the countryside – Chiang Ching-kuo was also known for visiting villagers and workers (Chu, 2012). Even though parents relied less on social media than their younger counterparts, the spontaneous and immediate communication enabled by social media (Enli, 2015, 2016; Luebke, 2021) still played a part in their perceived authenticity of Han Kuo-yu:

> (Group of parents[178] born in 1961 or 1962)
>
> Min-hsie: Sometimes Han Kuo-yu does live streaming on Facebook, [and] we would go watch [it].
>
> Chen-pin: That's live streaming.
>
> Min-hsie: If we find it good, we will click Like.
>
> Cho-lu: Doesn't it connect to your LINE? If you added Han Kuo-yu on LINE, you should have seen his live streaming.
>
> Shi-min: I Lined Han Kuo-yu about the guy selling jade on the opposite side of my stall [because] his birthday is on 17 April 1967, and Han Kuo-yu's birthday is on 17th April 1957.

Watching Han Kuo-yu's livestreaming videos on Facebook and instant messaging him on LINE allowed this group of parents to forge an important connection with the politician, who they described as likeable and approachable. Shi-min's fondness for Han Kuo-yu was made particularly explicit, as he seemed to remember every small detail about him, such as his birthday. Nonetheless, people's perception of the authenticity of unconventional politicians could change over time. For example, an informant born in 2000 commented: 'Some years ago [I] liked Ko Wen-je because he was very authentic and he dared to get things done, but [now] he isn't dealing with the Taipei Dome'. Similarly, the meaning of authenticity is not fixed but subject to negotiation (Enli, 2015).

> I wouldn't describe Ko Wen-je as authentic. His language is different from conventional politicians. [He's] very straightforward. But sometimes [he

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[177] As the son of Chiang Kai-shek, who led the KMT to relocate in Taiwan in 1949, he first served as Minister of Defence (1965-1969), then as Premier (1972-1978) and finally as President (1978-1988) (Leng, 1993).

[178] They were members of a mountain climbing club.

should] be mindful of [his speech] because freedom is bounded. It's not absolute but relative, especially if his speech hurts people. He presents himself as a childish old man, but nowadays young people just like this kind [of politicians]. They find him funny. (Ye-kuan, father born in 1966)

[Han Kuo-yu] is not authentic at all! I grew up in a traditional market. People in the traditional market just chit-chat and gossip. He's like that, saying whatever he likes and taking no responsibility. [Making Kaohsiung] the richest city in Taiwan [and building] the Love Wheel. These speeches are irresponsible! (Yun-hsian, father born in 1954)

As can be seen, parents did not always consider Han Kuo-yu to be authentic. By associating his speech with 'chit-chat' and 'gossip', Yu-hsian reinterpreted Han Kuo-yu's informal style as 'irresponsible'. Likewise, Ye-kuan disagreed with Ko Wen-je's political language, which is so straightforward that he dismissed it as 'childish' and 'hurtful'. In these cases, spontaneity, illustrated by improvised and unscripted speech (Enli, 2015; Luebke, 2021), failed to create for them a feeling of authenticity. Given that such negotiation normally took place among pro-DPP or anti-KMT parents, in this study it is argued that party identification plays a role in the Soft Authoritarianism generation's understanding of unconventional politicians and their authenticity. By comparison, I observed that experience of political activism is more likely than party identification to predict how the Democratic Consolidation generation would make sense of Ko Wen-je and his authenticity.

If any established politicians spoke the same language as Ko Wen-je, [they] would be [described as] making indiscreet remarks. It's nonsense that he markets himself as a political amateur. Politics requires professionalism. (Je-yu, son born in 1997)

It's a type of taste – being out of control and speaking bluntly, even being rude. Crazy psychos. (Chen-yi, daughter born in 1989)

While most young people were drawn to Ko Wen-je's informal style, Je-yu and Chen-yi rejected it as 'unprofessional', 'rude' and 'crazy'. What linked a small number of my young informants who disapproved of Ko Wen-je is that they had more experiences of engaging in politics – for example, Je-yu was one of the student leaders in the 2015 Anti-Black-Box-Curriculum Movement and Chen-yi, after participating in the 2014 Sunflower Movement, was elected to Yi-lan County Council.

Finally, although both generations appeared equally fascinated by unconventional politicians and their perceived authenticity, and used relatively similar language in describing democracy as corrupt, their visions for improving corrupt politics were found to be different. The Democratic Consolidation generation tended to advocate more openness and transparency in government – since these values were written into the TPP Constitution, whose founder Ko Wen-je enjoyed great popularity among my young informants, it was almost self-evident that the younger generation considered open government most crucial to combating corruption. Moreover, for this generation, another remedy for a corrupt political environment is to participate in elections. Contrary to the conventional wisdom that young people are not interested in electoral activities, there has been an increase in youth participation in elections. In addition to increased turnout rates in recent elections, as described in Chapter 1, more and more young people have stood in elections since the 2014 election. There were only eight parliamentarians under the age of 39 in 2012, but in 2016 that number increased to 12 (Central Election Commission, 2012, 2016). There was also a substantial increase on the six special municipality councils, where the number of elected councillors aged under 39 was 50 in 2014 and 80 in 2018 (Central Election Commission, 2014, 2018). While the Democratic Consolidation generation was poised to change contemporary corrupt politics through direct participation in elections and the pursuit of a transparent government, the Soft Authoritarianism generation's reactions focused on precautionary measures such as making laws stricter and strengthening moral education.

Parents' proposals for such precautionary measures may be related to their lived experience of the authoritarian regime, as they tended to belittle themselves when facing the authorities – 'we're just "the little common people" (小老百姓, *xiao lao bai xing*). Politics is not our game'. Being 'the little common people' may be satisfactory for quite a few of the parents, since they expressed nostalgia for the authoritarian period. Some of them mentioned Chiang Ching-kuo and Sun Yun-suan[179] as role models who they saw as being 'honest and upright'. Others told me that in the past people were kind and moral, and society was generally simpler, so corruption was rarely heard of. They drew on news stories about scams, frauds and killings to illustrate how untrustworthy people have become and how unsafe contemporary Taiwanese society is. Nonetheless, these parents seemed to ignore the fact that under the rule of an authoritarian government the news media were unlikely to report on crimes or to expose political corruption cases against the will of

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[179] A KMT member who served as Minister of the Executive Yuan between 1978 and 1984.

the party state which was their patron (Lin, 2000). In addition to censored media content, people's access to media back then was limited. For instance, a couple in their fifties recalled that when they were children, they did not have a TV at home but had to go to someone else's house to watch TV.

> (Mother born in 1967 and father born in 1963)
>
> Ku-chen: The rules were strict in the authoritarian period. Thieves, marches and violence were almost unknown. Perhaps it is because there was no information? Because we didn't have TVs. It is probably because I did not get information, I found it particularly safe back then.
>
> Shu-hu: Right. When I was little, there was no TV at home. Really!
>
> Interviewer: I heard from my mother that people would squeeze into someone's house where there was a TV.
>
> Shu-hu: Yes, yes.
>
> Ku-chen: But kids were there for puppet shows. Just watching puppet shows, nothing else.

Today there were two televisions in Ku-chen and Shu-hu's house. In addition to watching TV, they also used LINE on their smartphones; in fact, Ku-chen was doing some work on his computer during our interview. With more media available for use nowadays, Ku-chen appeared to be insecure about being exposed to negative news, which had tended to be absent under an authoritarian regime.

4.3 Democratic Politics is Populist

In addition to describing democracy as polarised and corrupt, quite a few young people and also their parents discussed a 'populist' democracy. Definitions of populism in the academic literature vary and can be ambiguous, but they generally concern ideology (Kaltwasser, 2017; Mudde, 2004) and practice (Jansen, 2011) – the former approach highlights a distinction between the virtuous people and the corrupt elite, and the latter focuses on mobilization of, and actions taken by, the people. This section presents an analysis of what ideological distinctions are made and what actions are associated with the Democratic Consolidation generation's and the Soft Authoritarianism generation's narratives about populism. Overall, both generations considered populism detrimental to Taiwan's democracy. In their narration, they directly used such terminology as 'populism' and 'populist' or drew on certain tropes such as 'overly democratic' and 'overly free', which were manifested in 'saying whatever one likes' and 'voicing opposition just for its own sake'.

(Mother born in 1963 and father born in 1960)

Me-lin: Democracy and freedom are really important, but nowadays the media have made democracy go too far. Overly free!

We-ten: The fault lies in our education. Like what Lee Ming-yi said, 'as long as I like it, there isn't anything I can't do'. This is definitely wrong.

Interviewer: Who is she?

We-ten: Lee Ming-yi, a star. Don't you know her? As an actress and singer.

Interviewer: Oh, I see. Was she popular in your time?

We-ten: She has a famous saying, 'freedom is that as long as I like it, there isn't anything I can't do'.

Me-lin: [She] became popular after saying this.

We-ten: [But] freedom is based on no violation of other people's freedom. Have you ever learned the definition of freedom since your primary school education? That's what I refer to as education failures.

Me-lin: There are many education failures. Like civic and moral education. In the past there were ethics [classes which] taught etiquette, [but] children today don't [learn it]. I find etiquette very important. Freedom is freedom, but etiquette is still significant. Like, us, we inherited etiquette from Chinese culture, but we no longer talk about it.

Although I figured out who Lee Ming-yi was only after We-ten's elaboration, this celebrity, born in 1966, and her advertising slogan appearing on TV in 1990, were referred to in We-ten and Me-lin's narrative about today's young people. In their narrative, young people nowadays are prone to abuse freedom due to the removal of moral education,[180] which was properly taught in the past. Such an observation is shared by many parents: young people were said to misinterpret freedom and democracy as doing whatever they liked at the expense of others because they did not learn Chinese etiquette through moral education. In other words, while the Soft Authoritarianism generation has 'inherited etiquette from Chinese culture', and

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[180] The long-standing Civic Ethics Education was not removed, but its curriculum has undergone several changes and the current Grades 1-9 Curriculum focuses more on values such as multiculturalism but downplays Chinese traditional morality such as the five ethical relationships (五倫, *we lun*) and the four virtues (四維, *si wei*) (Chang, 2002).

hence is immune to exploiting freedom, the Democratic Consolidation generation was portrayed as immoral populists. In this study it was observed that the Soft Authoritarianism generation identified not only young people but also media, especially social media, as mostly to blame for populism.

(Three parents[181] born in 1956, 1967, and 1971, respectively)

Pe-chi: Today democracy has become populist because one or two people can decide [for others]. It's *not real* democracy but populism [emphasis added]. You listen to populist opinion and discount the masses' interest. This is bad for the nation. I think every nation needs governance. Governing everyone is politics.

Interviewer: Interesting. Many other groups also talked about populism.

Li-ku: Populism is a paranoid type of democracy. What is democracy? The minority obeys the majority, and the majority respects the minority. Yet the minority now think they are the majority.

Hsia-chu: If a class of students propose: 'Teacher, let's vote on having mid-term exams or not', of course students prefer no exams, and there is only one teacher. One person versus a group of people. In any class students are the majority, but we need to look at the bigger picture. At school students are obliged to take the exam. Similarly, in politics the majority might not always be right. Our democracy has become 'counting people'.

Interviewer: Mobilising [people]?

Hsia-chu: Right. So, the difference between democracy and populism is a distinction between the big self and the small self.

Li-ku: The small self swells unlimitedly. Because of the development of social media, [in] the 2014 [and] 2016 elections and in this election the influence of young people has been increasing, [whereas] that of elders is gradually decreasing.

Hsia-chu: Indeed. Like what we discussed earlier about online popularity. Young people tend to voice their opinion on the Internet, [which] can be spread widely.

Li-ku: Right! Young people's voices are so loud that a wave of popularity is formed. [But] the problem is: I'm afraid that young people's perception of the world is not deep enough. Like our daughter thinks that Ko Wen-je is doing an excellent job, but we really don't think so. I fear that [because] young people's

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[181] They used to be colleagues at a media organisation.

perception of the world is not deep enough, democracy will slowly derail.

In this narrative about populism, populists were characterised as a 'minority' of people who were not obliged by collective interests but tended to mistake themselves for the majority. Here the distinction between minority and majority is not made in terms of quantity, but in terms of quality – parents drew this distinction in order to illustrate how young people had a bigger but harmful voice in elections. They used the metaphor of the classroom for further elaboration. In this metaphor, Taiwanese society was compared to a disorderly classroom, in which teachers were unable to enforce discipline because students refused to fulfil their obligation to take the exam. Parents were compared to teachers whose authority to establish and ensure order was hijacked by the students, who were larger in number but did not know any better. The claim that 'the majority might not always be right' indicates a sense of anxiety rather than an appreciation of greater youth political participation.

Additionally, parents made another distinction between 'the big self' (大我, *da wo*) and 'the small self' (小我, *xiao wo*). According to the Ministry of Education's Mandarin Chinese Dictionary, 'the big self'[182] refers to nations or groups as opposed to individuals (Ministry of Education Dictionary, 2015a). Such a division between the individual and the collective also exists in Western societies,[183] but in traditional Chinese culture individuals are seen not as independent but as heavily dependent on human ethics and interpersonal relationships, so they are expected to conform to norms, take responsibilities, meet obligations and sacrifice their small selves in order to fulfil the big self (Yang, 1995; Yang, 2001). As populists practised the small self, their way of doing democratic politics was disparaged as 'paranoid', and democracy as such was considered 'not real'. Since young people tended to act from the small self, their superficial perception of the world would 'derail' democracy. Perceiving young people as lacking in deep thinking is common among my parent informants and this will be further discussed in the next chapter, which focuses on intergenerational interactions and relationships. What has been made explicit here is that young people's use of the Internet and of social media to express their voices was blamed for a negative influence on democracy. Nevertheless, quite a few young people dismissed the Soft Authoritarianism generation's discourse of 'overly democratic' and 'overly free', suggesting that this was outdated.

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[182] The dictionary also mentions that the 'big self' in Buddhism means 'true self'.

[183] Democratic countries in Western Europe and North America.

Elders are more likely to consider contemporary Taiwan overly democratic and too noisy because in their era of economic take-off they were, like, 'we don't need so much opinion [but] follow the government'. (Sa-chii, son born in 1991)

Honestly, Taiwan isn't particularly free. [Interviewer: Really? But some elderly people say Taiwan is overly free.] Excuse me? That's THEIR concept based on their generation. The era in which I grew up differs so much from theirs. I travelled around [the world], getting to see places that are freer – this is the trend in advanced countries such as the US, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and South Korea. (Tu-chian, son born in 1984)

The Democratic Consolidation generation contended that the Soft Authoritarianism generation tended to express few opinions against government and had a narrower view of freedom. While the Democratic Consolidation generation also compared Taiwan with other democracies around the world, the Soft Authoritarianism generation was more likely to juxtapose Taiwan with its nondemocratic neighbours such as Singapore and China. For example, Hiu-mi, a mother born in 1968, spelled out how to fix the 'overly free' problem: 'It's not good to have too much freedom. Taiwan is overly free. In foreign countries, the penalties for drink-driving are all very serious, like caning'. Singapore[184] and its practice of caning were often drawn upon by parents to illustrate how tough laws could be a panacea for political problems – as discussed in the previous section, one of the Soft Authoritarianism generation's ways of dealing with political corruption is to enforce stricter laws. Analysing the 2001 Asia Barometer Survey data, Wang's (2007) research has also revealed that older generations tend to interpret democracy as 'obeying given laws'. Parents' tendency to resort to the authorities reflected the era of authoritarianism in which they grew up.

(Group of young people born between 1983 and 1985)

Hsie-lin:	Because that era was [one] of authoritarianism. Authoritarianism oppressed everyone everywhere – at school and at home. The way in which parents treated their children was also authoritarian, and so was that in which the entire nation treated its people.
Mi-jun:	Freedom was understood as chaos.

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[184] Singapore was also seen as evidence that prosperity and social order can be achieved without democracy.

Interviewer: I heard this from some parent informants. They also talked about Taiwan being…

Yue-lin: …Overly free!

Mi-jun: My mother said so too.

Hsie-lin: So did my father. Haha.

Yue-lin: They want democracy done in their way.

Hsie-lin: Which is about doing whatever I want you to do.

Mi-jun: I want you to be within this boundary of freedom that I acknowledge.

Yue-lin: Behind it is all about control.

Although the young people understood the impact of the previous authoritarian regime on their parents, they lamented the arbitrary equation of freedom with chaos and the paternalistic view of freedom. While parents talked about the importance of Chinese moral values in ensuring proper social relationships and order, hence preventing democracy from becoming populist and fake, young people criticised the authoritarian legacies and interpreted parents' preaching as 'control'. Having said that, a few young people did also make the 'overly democratic and free' argument, even though they did not adopt a normative and moralising language.

(Group of young people born between 1988 and 1990)

Ti-yun: Free speech is indeed overly free. In Taiwan there are no sensitive words, and you can yell at people or take action, so it's very democratic, but I think this is the cause of social unrest.

Ho-hiang: Right. When society is overly free, it becomes chaotic. Also, so many people on the Internet are anonymous.

Ti-yun: People just choose to criticise. One person's criticism might not be anything, but when a group of people begin to criticise, there will be a force – just like the way many riots took place.

Interviewer: Are you referring to haters on the Internet?

Ti-yun: Not necessarily. [Those] irrational people.

Interviewer: Irrational? And you consider most people nowadays are irrational?

Ti-yun: That's right.

Chi-yu: On the Internet you can expose the darkest side of your inner self [because of] internet anonymity. You don't need to be responsible for your speech.

The culprits identified by the Democratic Consolidation generation are people who exploit the characteristic anonymity of the Internet. These people were portrayed as 'irrational', and were said to reveal their 'dark inner self' and to act irresponsibly on the Internet. Taking no responsibility for one's speech was widely discussed among my young informants. Some specifically referred to online speech. Others highlighted the irresponsibility of politicians, describing how on the screen politicians wilfully yelled at one another and then they almost always did not fulfil their election promises in reality. The connection between populism and irrationality has been addressed in prior research (Caramani, 2017; Yang, 2004), but the findings of this study further demonstrate how young people ascribed blame to Internet anonymity, revealing that this view of the Internet as a facilitator of populism resonated with that of their parents. In addition to their shared belief that the Internet could have a detrimental effect on democracy, most young people and their parents concurred in their perception of *other* people as populists.

(Group of young people born in 2000)

Interviewer: You mentioned populism. Would you like to talk a bit more about it?

Yu-ji: I think the problem is about 'dummies' getting really popular on the Internet.

Yu-qi: Yes.

Yu-ji: When you think you're participating in democracy, you're not, because you've never read anything first-hand. What you've been reading is second-hand. All that is compiled by other people.

Yu-chin: Right!

Yu-ji: You think this is right, and you think to yourself that you have chewed on [it]. You feel that you participated, and this is democracy. Yet you might just get manipulated by the powerful.

Yu-qi: Reading dummies cuts both ways. Second-hand information might not be intentionally misleading, but for sure it is not as objective as first-hand information.

Yu-chin: [Dummies are] a bit subjective.

Yu-qi: I think it is an issue of attitude. Choosing to read dummies reflects that you are not that eager to learn more about the event and participate in it.

Populists were often considered not only irrational but also vulnerable to political manipulation. One popular way of manipulation was reported to be 'dummies',[185] which provide 'second-hand' and 'subjective' information about politics. The popularity of dummies among my young informants was obvious, given that many of them discussed their use of them; however, they may not thereby fall neatly into the category of irrational populists, since they demonstrated a certain reflexivity: 'reading dummies just makes you aware of something, but you do not grasp the ins and outs' (La-xi, daughter born in 1988) and 'reading dummies provides me with a framework, [but] I would then search for details on my own' (Wa-qin, daughter born in 1991). As parents considered young people more susceptible to political manipulation, and young people pointed a finger at those who were less engaged in politics and who lazily consumed dummies, this study asserts that populism is often used as a discursive strategy to weaken the Other's democratic legitimacy, but the construction of the Other is not based on a moral distinction between elites and the people.

(Group of young people born between 1992 and 1998)

We-chin: Throughout the referendum, we saw people being, like: 'I WANT TO SAY SOMETHING'. Everyone had so much opinion and they were fighting against each other endlessly. They didn't seem to have the slightest idea of listening to each other. On the Internet there were so many comments which were all about arguing back and forth. People didn't listen to each other. They voiced opposition just for its own sake.

Interviewer: Some people also mentioned 'voicing opposition just for its own sake' – are you suggesting that people don't communicate?

Men-ju: Right, everyone just listens to whatever they like or speaks whatever they like. There's no effective communication. Perhaps [people] lack empathy?

Yu-fan: [People] simply pick sides.

We-chin: You're right.

Men-ju: Like populists.

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[185] As described in the twenty-sixth footnote on page 19, dummies in the Taiwanese communication context are a genre that originated from and popularised by PTT. They usually consist of multiple types of media content, and they are consumed for the purpose of building a basic understanding of certain controversies or debates within a fairly short time frame.

As seen, populists could be construed as people who spoke or listened to anything they liked. Once again, the Internet was singled out as allowing populists to 'voice opposition for its own sake'. Although earlier in my analysis of polarised democratic politics I describe some young people reading online comments for alternative information, it became evident that this practice could cut both ways. On the one hand, online comments showcased different political views, but on the other, they did not necessarily facilitate communications, not to mention mutual understanding. Likewise, the Internet enabled people to express their own opinion, but it did not guarantee empathetic listening. When political communication was reduced to a matter of picking sides, people could fight against each other endlessly, as described above, but it was also possible that most people could be drawn to one side.

> People of our age don't really have any opinion leaders, but nowadays young people are rather used to seeking and following opinion leaders or whoever they admire. I find this a huge problem. In contemporary Taiwan everyone thinks shallowly. Without independent thinking, everyone just repeats whatever they hear. Honestly, I felt very happy that Han Kuo-yu won the election, but to some extent I see his victory also as a result of people jumping on the bandwagon – so was Ko Wen-je's previous victory. If young people continue with this kind of idol worship, it's very likely for us to see many more ACTORS rather than politicians being elected (Hsia-chu, father born in 1971)

> I saw a video on Facebook posted by some supporters of Chen Chi-mai. It addressed the question: 'why would you support Han Kuo-yu?' [Because] everyone was saying, '[He] seems nice. His image is very refreshing.' But there is no mention of his policy. Everyone probably just learned from Facebook that he looks rather fresh. Most people usually have no idea about his manifesto – after all, Han Kuo-yu didn't talk much about his manifesto in the election debates. It is right that people sometimes get influenced by their friends on Facebook because you feel like 'everyone seems supportive of homosexuals, so I should also show my support. And everyone seems supportive of Ko Wen-je, so if I don't support him, I'm not [one of] the youth.' (Chi-fen, daughter born in 1989)

> I admire that Han Kuo-yu speaks in plain language, being modest rather than being pie in the sky, but later it reached the point that 'If today I don't support you, I am not cool'. Taiwanese people can get insane easily, you know? Today a lot of people are wearing Superdry clothes, then lots of people will go buy Superdry. Today many people wear Levis, then I would feel

embarrassed if I don't wear them. But if I get Levis, I would feel confident and invincible. Similarly, now it's like 'If you don't support Han Kuo-yu, you're not cool'. (Tu-chian, son born in 1984)

Holding on to the stereotype that young people lacked independent thinking, tending to follow opinion leaders and worship political stars, quite a few parents expressed concerns about them supporting actor-like politicians. Although young people did not specifically refer to their elder counterparts, they appeared equally concerned about a bandwagon effect in political elections as they observed the influence of friends' posts on Facebook and of peer pressure to look 'cool' – popular opinion was compared to popular culture products such as 'Superdry' and 'Levis'. For both young people and their parents, consuming popular opinion without independent thinking is a populist practice. In addition, although they frequently mentioned Han Kuo-yu and Ko Wen-je for their wild popularity, unlike in academic research, where there is a trend towards defining these as populist politicians (Batto, 2019; Chen, 2020; Hsiao, 2019), young people and their parents, especially those who supported these two politicians, did not go along with such an interpretation. Instead, they avoided the negative connotations of populism, emphasising the authenticity of Han Kuo-yu and Ko Wen-je. Despite the fact that prior research (Enli & Rosenberg, 2018; Wood, Corbett, & Flinders, 2016) shows a positive connection between populism and authenticity, namely that populist politicians are seen as authentic, both the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation considered being authentic to be morally good whereas being populist was seen as the opposite.

4.4 Discussion

By comparing young informants and their parents, and presenting their similarities and differences in political and media engagement, this chapter gives empirical evidence of the formation of the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation. It is found that although both generations preferred democracy to authoritarianism, their discussions about democracy centred on their dissatisfaction with it, including the problems of polarisation, corruption and populism. There are several ways in which the findings can shed light on the mediation of democratic politics in Taiwanese society. First, a mediated generation approach is useful for identifying distinct generational actions such as the Democratic Consolidation generation's playful form of civic engagement on YouTube. Combining narrative theory with mediation theory can therefore be seen as successful. Second, a mediated generation approach is also helpful in understanding the nuances in generational narratives about democracy. For example, even though

both generations drew upon 'the cape 700 million', the Soft Authoritarianism generation's storytelling was characterised by more details and emotions; moreover, intra-generational differences in the way that KMT parents and DPP parents narrated Chen Shui-bian's corruption scandals were uncovered. Likewise, examination of the notion of authenticity provides fresh insights into both inter- and intra-generational differences. At the inter-generational level, the Democratic Consolidation generation's perception of Ko Wen-je's authenticity highlighted his abilities, whereas the Soft Authoritarianism generation found Han Kuo-yu authentic for his virtues. Party identification and level of political involvement are found to contribute to intra-generational differences in interpreting unconventional politicians' authenticity. For instance, members of the Democratic Consolidation generation with more experience of political activism were more likely to dismiss Ko Wen-je's perceived authenticity. This mediated generation approach is therefore useful for further reflecting on Mannheim's concept of generation units.

Third, many roles of the media in shaping generations are presented. In material terms, social media were indeed found to be important and integral to the everyday life of the Democratic Consolidation generation, whereas the Soft Authoritarianism generation made more references to mass media such as TV. However, both generations referred to livestreaming technology when discussing the perceived authenticity of unconventional politicians. In addition, the symbolic power of the media, especially news media, is evident. For instance, both generations could reiterate the 'cape 700 million' narrative – even the very young members of the Democratic Consolidation generation discussed it. Then, the finding that due to peer pressure some young people followed certain YouTubers and practised a playful political culture is a good example of the social dimension of mediated politics. The uneven nature of mediation processes of democratic politics is also explored: YouTube's algorithmic popularity metric is found to exclude certain kinds of public debates such as labour issues. In addition to playing multiple roles in shaping generational experiences, narratives, identity and actions, the media are often found to be a double-edged sword in relation to democratic politics. For instance, the Democratic Consolidation generation benefited from reading online comments for alternative opinions, but the anonymous nature of the Internet was described as increasing the risk of populism.

Chapter 5

Mediating Generations and the Family: Differing Democratic Imaginaries, Sustained Familial Harmony and Limited Political Conversation

This chapter investigates intergenerational politics through two main analyses. It begins by analysing how the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation recognised themselves and acknowledged one another. I used the 'Sunflower generation' label,[186] often defined in the media as 'young people being more concerned about democratic values and social justice than economic development', in order to invite my young informants to self-reflexivity as an internal means of making sense of a given generation (Aroldi & Colombo, 2013; Colombo, 2011). In other words, this prompt was utilised to encourage young people to narrate their position in contemporary Taiwan and to recognise themselves in the trajectory of Taiwanese politics. I used the same prompt to draw parent participants into discussing their views of their younger counterparts and reflecting on who they themselves are. These examinations are helpful in building a better understanding of distinct generational consciousness and experiences and in laying the groundwork for further exploring intergenerational relationships in the family sphere.

Then, treating the family as a major site of political socialisation and intergenerational interactions, the second analysis focuses on exploring how the two generations came together, interacted with each other in and *as* family, and negotiated family life, given that, as shown in the previous chapter, they tended to be in separate mediated spaces when developing a knowledge of democracy and strategies for dealing with political and media problems. This investigation into generational politics within the family includes one examination of how the family is conceived and practised through generational interactions and another of how generational interactions and family practices take shape through the media. Research results reveal that a hierarchical intergenerational relationship was reproduced in the families studied, as shown particularly in Section 5.2.2. Evidence also shows that family practices in/via various media dovetail with those in the real world.[187] Since the LINE Family Group was found to be integral to everyday family life, special attention was paid to its role in reinforcing certain family values, reproducing certain parent-child dynamics and shaping certain ways of (dis)engaging in family

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[186] A description of this label can be found in Chapter 3, which also explains how the researcher used it as a prompt in interviews.

[187] Neither do I suggest that family life on LINE or via other types of media is less real, nor do I see the real world as unmediated.

political conversations – whereas the civic actions described in the previous chapter primarily relate to voting behaviours and news consumption, this chapter focuses on political conversation, particularly between young people and their parents. It was found that family members normally avoided discussing political topics, but there were still a few circumstances under which political talk did occur. Hence, the final analysis of 'Blurring the familial and the political' presents how these rare political conversations were carried out.

5.1 Mediating Generational Experience with Politics and Generational Identification with Taiwan

Both the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation directly associated the term 'Sunflower generation' with the Sunflower Movement. However, regarding their attitudes towards the Movement, more of the Democratic Consolidation (69/116) than of the Soft Authoritarianism generation (15/39) considered that it had created a positive influence on Taiwan's democracy. 'Before the Sunflower Movement, I thought one could never change politics and our voices would never be heard. But there was really this chance of being heard', said We-sin, a daughter born in 1993. Almost all my young informants, whether supportive of the Movement or not, voiced their objections to the 'black-box' procedure by which the CSSTA[188] had been passed. The metaphor of the 'box' was often used by the Democratic Consolidation generation to describe Taiwan's democracy – as analysed in the previous chapter, many young people regarded certain YouTubers as celebrity politicians for their efforts to 'unbox democracy'. In other words, this generation shared a perception that Taiwan's democracy had been in a black box, but it could be saved. Indeed, many young people told me that they and their peers became interested and began to participate in politics after being involved in the Sunflower Movement. Moreover, some of them recognised it as a transformative event in their political socialisation. For example, Si-su, a son born in 1984, explained:

> I was deeply influenced by the Sunflower Movement. To me, it was a watershed. Before the Movement, I didn't care about these things. I was, like, "Dad told me to vote for Ma Ying-jeou, [so] I did". I didn't care about social issues either. But when that happened, I was very shocked and started to find out what politics are. Then I started to participate, going to the Legislative Yuan and attending talks and so on.

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[188] As mentioned in Chapter 1, CSSTA is an abbreviation for the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement.

While some young informants emphasised the significant impact of the Movement on their political consciousness and engagement, others questioned the motivation behind people's participation, which they described as 'jumping on the bandwagon'. Similarly, those parents who did not support the Movement dismissed youth participation as DPP manipulation. To elaborate on their disagreement with the Movement, these young people and their parents alike drew on news coverage of trivial matters[189] or of scandals involving popular participants such as Chen Wei-ting[190] and Liu Chiao-an.[191] They reiterated reports of the former's past cases of sexual harassment and the latter's involvement in prostitution. Despite their shared disapproval of the Movement and their use of similar narratives, they differed in partisanship; that is, those young informants disapproving of the Movement were found to be politically apathetic, seldom casting their ballots, whereas their elder counterparts had a consistent history of voting for the KMT. Compared with the pro-KMT parents, the pro-DPP parents were more likely to support youth participation in the Sunflower Movement.

Despite the differences within each generation's attitude towards the Sunflower Movement, it was found that young people were more likely overall than their parents to have participated in person in the Movement – more of the Democratic Consolidation generation (56/116) than of the Soft Authoritarianism generation (5/39) had been on the spot. In addition to in-person participation, my young informants discussed widely their use of social media and the Internet in the Sunflower Movement, whereas the parents had referred to TV news to build an understanding of the Movement.

> Even though the Sunflower Movement took place in Taipei, we followed the news on social media every day. When we were discussing if we should stand for election, I realised how this Movement had influenced many of our

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[189] One widely cited news story was that after breaking into the Executive Yuan, young protestors ate Hsiao Chia-chi's, the then Deputy Secretary-general, sun cakes.

[190] He was one of the main student leaders in the Sunflower Movement.

[191] She was nicknamed 'the Queen of the Sunflowers' by news media after a photograph of her wearing a V-neck shirt and shorts was widely used by journalists in their reports of the Sunflower Movement.

members,[192] motivating them to participate in elections. (Yue-lin, daughter born in 1983)

Young people used the Internet and other new ways of networking for social movements, so [they are] named the 'Sunflower generation', […] my Facebook back then was flooded with messages about what was happening. [There were] updates every half an hour. Most of my friends and classmates approved of the movement. Almost none disagreed – even if s/he did not agree, s/he wouldn't dare to say so since everyone seemed to agree to use the Internet for protest and civil disobedience. Everyone found it the right thing to do. (Po-hu, son born in 1992)

The Sunflower [Movement] was in the news. Was it about protesting? That was in the news for so many days. I don't know what it was about. I just watched [it on TV] and forgot. (Shu-hu, mother born in 1967)

We didn't know much about it. Just watched TV. Saw those kids pushing here and there. (Shi-yun, mother born in 1962)

[The Sunflower Movement] was in the news. EVERY DAY. (Yun-hsian, father born in 1954)

My findings are consistent with previous research, which has found that most participants were in their twenties or thirties and primarily using social media to get news and for networking (Chen & Huang, 2015; Cheng, 2015; Tsatsou & Zhao, 2016); furthermore, they highlight the importance of social media in enabling virtual participation through real-time communication, showing that online participation could be just as engaging as in-person participation, especially during such a massive-scale movement as the Sunflower Movement. My findings also largely echo other research results that have revealed a positive correlation between people's attitudes towards the Sunflower Movement and their use of social media (Chen, Chang & Huang, 2016; Chen & Chang, 2017). Regardless of their attitude towards the Movement, most parents continued to emphasise their TV use in discussions about the Movement. For example, parent participants Shi-yun and Yun-hsian, mentioned above, were supportive of the Movement, but had remained reliant on TV news to

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[192] In 2018 the association was called the Obasan Alliance and in September 2019 it became an official party named the Taiwan Obasan Political Equality Party. Demographically, 'Obasan' denotes middle-aged women (45-64 years old), but culturally it can refer to a married woman who has children already (as opposed to 'lady'). Based on this cultural definition, Yue-lin, who had a six-year-old child, could be seen as an 'obasan'.

keep up with developments rather than checking Facebook posts. This gives further evidence for my analysis in the previous chapter, where the two generations are shown to have developed their understanding of democratic politics – and to have engaged in it – within separate mediated spaces. Having said that, I noticed that the older generation's media use could still change over time. More specifically, it was found that parents had become active users of LINE in order to use it for instant messaging, socialising and networking. For instance, Hsue-chin, a mother born in 1964, noted that 'Back then LINE wasn't so popular. [We were] calling each other on mobiles'. She explained how she contacted her daughter, who had been at the Legislative Yuan since the very first day of the 2014 Sunflower Movement. However, in 2018[193] almost all my parent informants[194] had their own LINE accounts, using them for socialising with their families and friends in LINE groups – the prominence of LINE in the parental generation's social and family life is discussed further in the next section.

Although many young informants supported the Sunflower Movement, acknowledging their participation as characterised by social media use, most of them could not agree with the definition of the 'Sunflower generation' as treating social justice and democratic values as more important than economic prosperity. They emphasised that they were concerned about the economy as much as about democracy, but building wealth had become much more difficult for their generation than for their older counterparts. This sense of intergenerational injustice was well illustrated by the following remarks:

> We're depressed. [Life's] very difficult! Houses are all owned by older people, [whereas] we can't even afford a toilet.[195] (Chen-yi, daughter born in 1989)

> The previous generation experienced Taiwan's economic miracle, during which they made much money as long as they worked hard, so they considered making money their biggest goal and they did put effort into it. But our generation contrasts with them. Even though you work hard, you might not be able to afford a house. Oh, correction: you CANNOT afford it! So, for our generation, we might not really view liberal values as the most

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[193] This year, as mentioned in Chapter 2, saw the termination of 3G network services and marked the 4G era of mobile communication in Taiwanese society (National Communications Commission, 2018).

[194] Except for Lun-hsie, a father born in 1953.

[195] In Chapter 2 I outline economic, political and media changes that the younger and older generations had objectively been through for the purpose of categorising generations, whereas this chapter documents subjective generational feelings and experiences of the changes.

important, but we feel like pursuing something other than making money because working hard doesn't earn you much money. (Hsia-jun, son born in 1984)

The Democratic Consolidation generation's frustration with their inferior economic status was evident. Instead of calling themselves the Sunflowers, some young people described themselves as 'a generation living pay cheque to pay cheque' (月光族, *yue guang zu*), and others as 'corporate livestock' (社畜, *she chu*), a term which was first introduced by Japanese social critics in the 1990s (Shibata, 2007) and has entered the Taiwanese popular culture[196] since the 2010s. Likewise, in almost all the focus groups, young people joked about being labelled as 'strawberries' or 'peaches', which metaphorically means young people who look exquisite but are easily crushed by stress. They disapproved of these fruit metaphors, which had been given by business-people and made popular through the news media (Chen, 2016; Chiu, 2014). They accused their elders of exploitation, since strawberries and peaches are for eating or being juiced. These findings support prior research which has pointed to a feeling of uncertainty about the economy and a sense of deprivation among the younger sections of the Taiwanese population (Tseng, 2014; Wang, 2017). They also demonstrate how the unattainable nature of economic prosperity may provide a basis for the Democratic Consolidation generation's 'post-materialist' tendency – if so, post-materialism and materialism may not be clear-cut binaries, as suggested by Inglehart's (2008, 2018) research on intergenerational value changes in advanced industrial societies. In other words, the Democratic Consolidation generation saw itself as the victim of unfair competition with its elder counterpart for economic resources, hence involuntarily focusing more on pursuing non-materialist values such as democracy. In this narrative the intergenerational relationship was characterised more by conflict (Steele & Acuff, 2012) rather than by collaboration.

Furthermore, my analysis shows how, although both Democratic Consolidation generation and Soft Authoritarianism generation referred to Taiwan's 'economic miracle' and its past 'Asian Tiger' title, they used these terms in different ways. While young people drew on these historical narratives to highlight their present suffering from economic exploitation and to justify their choice to pursue non-materialist ideals, their parents lamented the economic decline and even expressed nostalgia for the authoritarian era. That is, having experienced Taiwan's economic miracle in

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[196] Such as the web drama *Wage Slave* and books with titles like *Corporate Livestock Can be Elegant: Working in Switzerland, the Highest Paid Country* and *The Fifty Shades of Corporate Livestock: Fifty Sentences from Spoiled Bosses who Drive their Employees Mad.*

the 1970s (Copper, 2007), parents tended to find today's stagnant economy particularly unacceptable. Some of them, especially those identifying with the KMT, described the authoritarian era as Taiwan's 'heyday' and specifically referred to Chiang Ching-kuo's Ten Major Construction Projects. Most parents' view of Chiang Ching-kuo as a model politician, and their emphasis on his achievements – often without mentioning his suppression of political dissidents – partly reflected a mediated political landscape featuring a patron-client relationship between state and media, as discussed in the previous chapter. In other words, for the Soft Authoritarianism generation, democracy is not a prerequisite for a satisfying economic life, whereas democracy, in the eyes of the Democratic Consolidation generation, has been the political reality and recession the economic reality.

Since the KMT parents tended to believe that working with China was the best way to restore economic glories and to secure a brighter future for their younger counterparts, unsurprisingly they disagreed with young people's participation in the Sunflower Movement and sometimes even denigrated young people in general.

> Naïve! I remember I saw it on the news that young people were saying "We don't need the Chinese. We can do it on our own". Hahaha! They haven't had work, so they naively think so. (Me-kue, mother born in 1974)

> On Facebook there's a video in which Wu Tsung-hsien[197] talked about this [the Sunflower Movement]. He questioned if those young people have served in the military [and] if they have been paying taxes. He had a point, didn't he? I think young people are hot-blooded, so their emotions can be easily stirred. (Hsie-chi, father born in 1963)

Considering the KMT parents' general objection to the Sunflower Movement,[198] it was not surprising to find them describing young people as 'naïve' and 'hot-blooded'. Yet, the parents who were politically inclined towards the DPP or expressed disapproval of the KMT often described young people as 'innocent' and 'passionate'. There was this tendency for parent informants – regardless of their party identification – to consider young people less mature in their thinking, less capable of managing their emotions and lacking in life experience. Some parents, such as Me-kue and Hsie-chi quoted above, drew on certain media content, be it news

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[197] Born in 1962, Wu Tsung-hsien has been dubbed 'the king of variety shows'. In addition to hosting variety shows, he is also a singer and actor.

[198] The Introduction chapter gives a detailed account of the Sunflower Movement, which took place under the presidency of Ma Ying-jeou, the then-KMT chairperson, and protesters demanded his administration to retract the service trade pact with China.

coverage or Facebook videos, to give evidence. Others made general comparisons between the young and the old:

> Young people have a kind of hot blood. You can't say they're not right, but really, they think little, unlike the middle-aged [or] the elderly, who have accumulated some experience. (Hsi-wa, mother born in 1960)

> Young people sometimes do not think thoroughly. They would focus on one dimension but neglect others. I can't think of an example right now, but hmm… *we* think extensively, in a well-rounded way. [emphasis added] (Ye-kuan, born in 1966)

Still others supported their claims that young people were full of passion but short on thinking by recalling their own youth. As Hsia-chu, a father born in 1971, remarked, 'What we experienced was the Wild Lily Student Movement.[199] I was the first high-school student to speak on stage but honestly speaking, after all these years, when reflecting on my participation in the Movement, I'd say I had passion but no ideals. It was just about jumping on the bandwagon'. These different ways of foregrounding juvenility and ultimately reducing young people's civic legitimacy echo prior research findings on youth political participation and media representations of the youth both in Taiwan and in Western democracies (Mejias & Banaji, 2019; Novak, 2016; Wang, 2016). Such a dominant imaginary of the youth not only travels across different societies but is also made timeless by parents' insistence on tradition. For instance, Sue-me, a mother born in 1959, noted that '*From ancient times to modern days* it has been the case that young people are hot-blooded and their ways of doing things might not be accepted by us, *the traditionalists'* [emphasis added]. Traditionally, the old are seen as superior to the young since age is the ordering principle of Confucian society (Chu & Yu, 2010; Tu, 1998). It is therefore not too surprising to see the young denigrated by the old in this normatively hierarchical relationship. Evidence of the influence of Chinese traditional values on the older generation is presented in the previous chapter, which describes how some parents blamed the removal of Chinese moral education for creating young populists. The following quotes further demonstrate how parents' disapproval of young people's 'hot-blooded' thinking and behaviours may be related to their political socialisation under the authoritarian regime.

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[199] Taking place in March of 1990, the Movement began with students occupying the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall and resulted in accelerated democratic reforms by the then-President Lee Teng-Hui (Ho, 2010; Rowen, 2015).

In our time, we were forced to join the KMT. Isn't it difficult for you to imagine? I went to a girls' high school, and all of us were asked to join [the party]. Most people would just join it, but I was very impressed by a girl who had the best grades in our class because she didn't join the party. She was questioned by military instructors[200] many times. (Chi-lin, mother born in 1960)

I joined the KMT when studying at the Junior Teachers College. *We didn't have that kind of consciousness of confronting the state [but] obeyed the school* [emphasis added]. Like, when hearing that [the government] was looking for Shih Ming-teh[201], I was very panicked. It was indeed like being on tenterhooks. (Hsie-chi, father born in 1963)

In their youth, parents were schooled in obeying military instructors, the KMT party and the state. Despite the possibility of dissent and resistance,[202] the formative experience of living through such a repressive regime as the martial law rule may have generally shaped parents into docile citizens who tended to feel uncomfortable about their children's confrontation with the authorities. On the other hand, this older generation's comparatively submissive approach to social and political life is considered old-fashioned by many young informants:

(Group of young people born in 1984 or 1985)

We-chua: [Because] they're older [it] doesn't mean they're wiser.
Su-chi: Another point is that the elders were used to hard work, so they tend to put up with everything.
We-zhon: Even with things that are unfair.

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[200] Military instructors are responsible for a military training course which was first introduced to secondary-school students aged between 16 and 18 by the China Youth Anti-Communist National Salvation Corps, Ministry of National Defence, in 1953 and then became part of the Ministry of Education in 1960 (Cheng, 2009; Jen, 2006). The military instructor system will be removed from school by 2023 (Legislative Yuan, 2018).

[201] Leading organiser of the pro-democracy rally on 10 December 1979, which was subsequently known as the Meilidao Incident. I give a description of this incident when outlining important political events in Taiwan's democratisation history in Chapter 2. After being in prison for 25 years, Shih Ming-teh served as chairperson of the DPP between 1993 and 1996.

[202] Out of 39 parents, only four informants either described their consumption of 'outside-the-party' (黨外, *dang wai*) magazines or mentioned an involvement of their families of origin in dissident movements.

Su-chi:	For the elders, they *know their place and stick to it* [emphasis added].
We-chua:	That's *the older generation* [emphasis added].
Su-yuan:	The elders are, like, "*you'd just be quiet and do it*" [emphasis added].
We-chua:	They consider us selfish, but we're [doing it] for our future.

Several negative meanings (e.g., naïve, hot-blooded, selfish[203]) and labels (e.g., strawberries) have been given by the older generation to the younger generation, and vice versa – the older generation was regarded as having a tendency to tolerate injustices and adhere to the status quo. In addition to these generational stereotypes, the divergence in their identification with Taiwan may have added to the tension between the two generations.

> If someone now asks me where I am from, I'll tell him/her that I grew up in Taiwan, but I probably don't yet say that I am Taiwanese – after all, when we were little, we were signed up for the Chinese original domicile system![204] (Chi-lin, mother born in 1960)

> Our families and schools taught us that "we are Chinese", and Diaoyutai[205] has been our territory since the Qing dynasty. The South China Sea has also been our territory. These are written in our books! If you deny them, what we have valued for half a century will be completely overturned. (Tun-yu, father born in 1953)

Under the authoritarian KMT regime, the Soft Authoritarianism generation was indoctrinated to be Chinese. The Chinese original domicile system was a mechanism for instilling *Chinese-ness* into native Taiwanese, since it treated Taiwan as a Chinese province and highlighted that Taiwanese Han people were originally from the Mainland (Wang, 2005a, 2016). This system also legitimised a distinction between mainlanders and native Taiwanese, and created tension between them by laying the

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[203] Likewise, my analysis of populist democracy in Chapter 4 begins with the older generation's reference to the youth's 'small self' and 'self-centredness'.

[204] 'Original domicile' (省籍, *sheng chih*) was a system for categorising people according to their geographic origins in China or Taiwan. It was institutionalised by the KMT regime, operating in favour of 'Chinese national imagination' and legitimising the regime's claim to the Chinese mainland (Wang, 2005a: 60). In 1992 the system was amended to replace original domicile with actual birthplace (Wang, 2005a, 2016).

[205] This group of islets have been the subject of an ongoing territorial dispute between China, Japan and Taiwan (see BBC News, 2014).

foundations for state allocation of government positions to mainlanders in the name of provincial balance (ibid.). While some parents, usually those from mainlander families[206] or identifying with the KMT, held on to Chinese identity, others began to question the past Sinicization measures.

> For our generation, the better educated you were, the more brainwashed you were by the party state. When I entered university in 1981, I still had the consciousness of Greater China, dreaming of returning to Jiangnan[207] and Damo[208] [laughs]. Still had that illusion. During the four years at university my Taiwanese consciousness started to grow, not because of education but because Taiwanese society was changing. Criticism of the KMT started to emerge. (Yan-tui, mother born in 1962)

> In our era there was the National Assembly, which elected the president. The members of this National Assembly covered all the Chinese provinces, but there were only a small number of people from certain provinces. It was funny that a caretaker at our primary school became a member of the National Assembly overnight because the person representing his province died. (Shan-chi, father born in 1956)

Yan-tui described her dream of returning to China as an 'illusion', and Shan-chi told a 'funny' story about the National Assembly. These examples show that the metanarrative of Chinese nationalism disseminated via state institutions such as education, household registration and identification card systems could be negotiated, or even given a different meaning. In other words, as 'criticism of the KMT started to emerge', greater resources for interpreting the state narrative became available to people, and the validity of the Chinese nationalism metanarrative was tested. My analysis found that parents who were anti-KMT or identified with the DPP were more likely to question Chinese nationalist ideology. I therefore pay special attention here to how this intra-generational difference in national identity may have influenced the ways in which KMT and DPP parents talked with their children about their identification with Taiwan. While parents' sense of national identity was influenced by their lived experiences under the authoritarian regime and their party identification, young people had studied the 'Getting to Know

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[206] Their parents relocated to Taiwan during the war between the KMT and the CCP, which broke out in 1947.

[207] 江南 in Mandarin refers to lands to the south of the Yangtze River, the longest river in China.

[208] 大漠 in Mandarin refers to the Gobi Desert, which stretches across northern China and southern Mongolia.

Taiwan'[209] textbooks, which exemplify a paradigm shift from Chinese- to Taiwanese-centred national ideology (Sung & Chang, 2010; Wang, 2001, 2005b).

> In senior high school our history teacher gave us homework. My assignment was to collect historical data on the Meilidao Incident. I did, and felt deeply shocked. I went to ask my mother, "Why was the Meilidao Incident different from what I had thought?" But my mother just replied that mainlanders were poor, blah, blah, blah. Then I knew something isn't right. (Ye-yun, daughter born in 1989)

> A couple of sentences or a page about the Meilidao Incident in the history textbook did not give me a vivid picture of it. Later, because of media and my peers, I looked up the Incident. (Chua-chi, daughter born in 1987)

> In one civics class our teacher introduced us to social movements – those having a "bentu"[210] historical perspective. He told us, "there are now a group of people protesting against cross-strait trade", and then he took us to the Legislative Yuan. (Chu-che, son born in 1997)

> Everyone should have learned about the 228 Incident in junior high school. For our generation, the textbooks cover it. But one time when I was in senior high school, I went to an exhibition at the 228 Memorial Museum. I was genuinely shocked – compared with textbooks, you really got to know what had happened. (Nen-yu, son born in 1990)

Both the 228 Incident and the Meilidao Incident are considered landmark events in the formation and consolidation of Taiwanese nationalism (Chang, 2003; Hsu, 2014a), and they have been taught in school since the late 1990s. While parents were faced with military instructors, school pressure to join the KMT and indoctrination in Chinese ideology, their children grew up with history and civics education that covers Taiwan's struggle for democratisation. Likewise, since social movements are no longer a taboo subject, quite a few young informants recalled they were

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[209] These textbooks were introduced into junior high-school education in 1997. They signalled the start of displacing China from the centre of curricula and promoting a Taiwan-centred mode of thinking (Wang, 2001, 2005b), which continued in the 2002 Grade 1-9 Curriculum Reform (Sung & Chang, 2010).

[210] Written as 本土 in Mandarin, the term literally means 'this earth', which 'is precisely "Taiwan" in the context of the island' (Jacobs, 2005: 19). In his discussion of multiple translations of *bentu*, Jacobs (2005) explains that 'native' is vague, 'indigenous' is confusing as it also refers to indigenous people, and 'local' is misleading as it adopts the Chinese view of Taiwan as just one local government.

encouraged not only to explore past social movements but also to participate in recent ones such as the Sunflower Movement. Chu-che refers to this above, and in the opening part of this section many other young informants describe it as a transformative event. The two generations' different lived experience may, however, hinder rather than benefit political conversation between them as illustrated by Ye-yun's discussion with her mother of the Meilidao Incident, which created disagreement and suspicion. In addition to the issue about different lived experiences, an increase in narrative resources plays a part – young people referred to history textbooks, civic classes, the media, the 228 Memorial Museum, and peer conversations. Even though in today's democratic society parents were also exposed to more narrative resources, they may adhere to the way of thinking developed in their formative years, which overlapped with the authoritarianism period. For example, in narrating the Meilidao Incident, Ye-yun's mother specifically drew on the distinction between mainlander and native Taiwanese. This distinction was officially abandoned in 1992, as the original domicile system was replaced with records of actual birthplaces (Wang, 2005a, 2016). Comparatively, young people rarely distinguish between mainlander and native Taiwanese, only making such a distinction when addressing history or commenting on their elder counterparts – they were, after all, educated to be just Taiwanese.

Compared with stories heard from parents or from the media, certain forms of engagement such as completing an assignment, being present at the Legislative Yuan or visiting the 228 Memorial Museum were found to be more effective in facilitating people's understanding of Taiwan's democratisation history and hence in contributing to the development of a 'bentu' perspective. This can be explained by the importance of personally acquired knowledge, which is stickier than appropriated knowledge (Mannheim, 1927/1952). Nevertheless, certain news stories were found to be sticky, as many young people and their parents unanimously referred to 'news' when complaining about the 228 Incident. For example:

> [The 228 Incident] caused pain to many people. It was terrible. Every February it is brought up by news and discussed in political programmes – they don't really discuss what happened at that time but criticise the government, so I feel confused, thinking "What? Why are you always fighting about this?" (La-xi, daughter born in 1988)

> In the 228 Incident, many mainlanders – not just Taiwanese people – also died, but the news always reports on Taiwanese people. My sister once saw Taiwanese people attacking the mainlanders, and a child died, so every time

when there's TV news about the 228 Incident she would say "a lot of mainlanders died too". (Hsi-wa, mother born in 1960)

It was found that news coverage of the 228 Incident created confusion and even fuelled the antagonism between mainlanders and native Taiwanese. Whether one received a Taiwan-centred history education or not, a cross-generational belief is that the 228 Incident has nowadays been politicised for electoral reasons. This finding suggests that the news media in a democratic society tend to highlight the contentiousness of politics; more specifically, news as a genre seems to fall short at present both in reporting historical events and in engaging people in mutual conversation. The media play a role in shaping not only generational views of past political events but also generational perceptions of the contemporary world – the following conversation further illustrates the latter:

(Group of young people born between 1999 and 2000)

Me-li: I'm very worried that one day Taiwan will…

Yi-che: Be unified?

Me-li: Yeah, [I'm] very worried.

Ya-hsua: I think the younger generation wouldn't like to be unified. If it was in the previous era, people might wish for unification, but [today] taking freedom for example, there's already a big difference.

Yi-che: Indeed, in Asia we're a truly free country.

Me-li: In China Wu Pao-chun[211] and Chou Tzu-yu[212] were oppressed. They were forced to identify themselves as Chinese.

Kua-hsua: Like, Hu Ge[213] started to talk about "China: Not even a bit can be left behind"[214] during the Golden Horse Film Festival.

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[211] In 2010, Wu Pao-chun won the title of Master Baker in the bread category of the Coupe du Monde de la Boulangerie. Three years later his story of success was adapted into a film (Yi, 2013). Before the opening of his first bakery shop in Shanghai in December 2018, Wu Pao-chun was accused by Chinese netizens of being pro-Taiwan independence. However, he was criticised by Taiwanese netizens later when he released a statement describing himself as 'a baker born in Taiwan, China' and 'being proud to be Chinese' (Hsu, 2018).

[212] Alongside three Japanese members, Chou Tzu-yu is the only Taiwanese member of TWICE, a South Korean girl group. In January 2016, she was accused by Chinese netizens of being pro-Taiwan independence because she was waving a Taiwanese flag in a TV show (Buckley & Ramzy, 2016). Shortly afterwards, in a YouTube video released by JYP Entertainment, the entertainment agency to which she belonged, Chou Tzu-yu, stated that she had 'always been proud of being Chinese'.

Me-li:	And nowadays many entertainers refer to China as *nei-di*[215] [emphasis added]. Whenever I hear this, I just feel…
Yi-che:	Super pissed off.
Me-li:	Unhappy.
Kua-hsua:	Boycott them!
Me-li:	I remember that once Wu Chun[216] described his time in Taiwan. He didn't mention China, but "Taiwan, China" was shown on the screen, so I dropped the programme.
Kua-hsua:	I have been watching Korean variety shows, which are translated by Chinese people. Whenever Taiwan is mentioned, it is shown as "Taiwan, China". I read in the comments that videos will be removed if Taiwan isn't translated as "Taiwan, China".
Ya-hsua:	Just like the broadcast of the Golden Horse Film Festival was terminated right away.

Many young informants raised the subject of Chinese suppression of Taiwanese celebrities ranging from singer and actor to baker. They recounted how Wu Pao-chun and Chou Tzu-yu were labelled as pro-Taiwan-independence, forced to apologise for their Taiwanese identity and ended up claiming they were Chinese nationals. Similarly, the controversy surrounding the 2018 Golden Horse Film Festival was more widely discussed by young people than by parents – they criticised Chinese attendees for reiterating a political slogan that indicates Taiwan is part of China, and they were sarcastic about a temporary cut-off of the broadcast of the Festival during which the winner of Best Documentary Award expressed her hope for Taiwan to be recognised as 'a genuine independent entity' (Jiang, 2018). Media

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[213] Hu Ge is a Chinese actor and singer. In 2019, he ranked third on the Forbes China Celebrity 100 list (Forbes China, 2019).

[214] 中国一点都不能少, *zhong guo yi dian dou bu neng shao*. This is a campaign slogan that first appeared on the official Weibo of the *People's Daily* in 2016 during the South China Sea Arbitration. This slogan is usually accompanied by a map of China which is in red and includes Taiwan and many islands in the South China Sea (Tan, 2016).

[215] This is the Mandarin pronunciation of 內地 – the former character means 'inside' and the latter 'land'. According to the Ministry of Education Dictionary, there are four meanings of 內地: a) land within a capital; b) the nation; c) inland areas; d) non-commercial harbour (Ministry of Education Dictionary, 2015b).

[216] Although Wu Chun is Bruneian Chinese, he has been seen as an entertainer from Taiwan since he debuted in 2005 as a member of Fahrenheit, a Taiwanese boy band. He became popular after starring in several hit dramas such as Tokyo Juliet and Hanazakarino Kimitachihe.

censorship as such was used by many young informants to distinguish between China and Taiwan and to (re)assert their Taiwanese identity.

The ways in which media platforms are related to young people's identification with Taiwan are simultaneously symbolic and technological – 'we grew up using Google and Facebook, which are banned in China. If we were unified [with China], we would not be able to use them. How are we going to live [without them]?' Hsia-jun, a son born in 1984, explained why he disliked a unified political prospect. Another member of his focus group added, 'because you take things away from us, we'll just be very pissed off'. Negative feelings can be aroused by the thought of not being able to use certain media technologies, or are created by seeing certain media content such as 'Taiwan, China' in subtitles, as mentioned above in the case of Me-li. There was only one group of young informants who praised WeChat[217] and Alipay[218] for their convenience, and even so they joked about media censorship in China:

> (Group of young people born between 1996 and 1998)
> Sung-hao: China is very autocratic. For example, children in China do not know what Peppa Pig is.
> Tung-han: Haha. Peppa Pig has been blacklisted.
> Ka-tii: They don't know Winnie the Pooh either.
> Shen-wei: Twitch has been blacklisted too!
> Ka-tii: And YouTube.

In addition to Facebook and Google, two more American media platforms were mentioned, Twitch and YouTube, and two animated characters, Peppa Pig and Winnie the Pooh, were described as 'blacklisted' in China. By telling these stories about China's media censorship, young people distinguished between 'very autocratic' China and democratic Taiwan. Compared with the Democratic Consolidation generation, the Soft Authoritarianism generation seemed less critical of the Chinese way of dealing with the media. Furthermore, since parents rarely referred to media platforms as symbols of national identity, this study contends that young people's articulation of media in such a way is also constitutive of their generational identity. While most young people highlighted the *differences* between

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[217] In 2011, WeChat was released by Tencent as an instant messaging application and was often described as the Chinese equivalent of WhatsApp, but it has nowadays grown into a 'mega-platform' (Chen, Mao, and Qiu, 2018: 4).

[218] Alipay is a third-party payment platform operated by Alibaba, an e-commerce giant in China (Chen, Mao, and Qiu, 2018).

Taiwan and China in terms of media and of democratic practices, many parents referred to the historical and ethnic *connections* between Taiwan and China.

> In our family there are Hakka people coming from mainland China several generations ago, so it's very difficult to make a historical distinction between Taiwan and the mainland. (Pe-chi, mother born in 1967)

> I think mainland China would cherish us because we're of the same [Chinese] nation. Right? But young people nowadays fear them. (Hiu-chen, mother born in 1961)

> We should side with mainland China. Unite together rather than go against [each other]. [We're] all Chinese. (Ten-yu, father born in 1963)

> My ancestors were from Nanjing, Fujian, [so] I identify with the idea of returning to the motherland – but not now, and probably not in this generation. Otherwise it'll turn out like the 228 Incident in which people with higher living standards[219] were ruled by those with lower living standards who resorted to military force. [But still] take our Chinese history for example: "The long united shall divide; the long divided shall unite". (We-ten, father born in 1960)

Compared with the Democratic Consolidation generation, the Soft Authoritarianism generation was more likely to draw on the ethnic similarity between the Taiwanese population and the Chinese population. Regardless of different party identification, parents often mentioned that their ancestors came from mainland China when discussing the issue of national identity. This finding sheds light on an observed shift from ethnic to civic nationalism in the process of Taiwan's democratisation (Lin, 2004; Wong, 2003), suggesting that such a trend could vary according to generation – the Democratic Consolidation generation had moved away from an ethnic-based concept of national identity, whereas the Soft Authoritarianism generation's identity discourse still featured explicit references to ethnicity. In addition to making the 'ethnic Chinese' reference, the Soft Authoritarianism generation was also more likely to refer to Chinese history in their discussion of identity. For example, We-ten, quoted above, directly cited the opening line of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, one of the four Chinese Classic Novels, but he changed the sentence order so that 'unite' was emphasised. Overall, parents were

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[219] Compared with people in mainland China, who went through the overthrow of the Qing dynasty, followed by World War II and the Chinese Civil War, Taiwanese people under Japanese colonial rule between 1895 and 1945 experienced modernisation (Liao & Wang, 2006).

more likely than their younger counterparts to refer to Chinese history – this finding can be partly explained by their experience of Chinese indoctrination under the authoritarian regime. Moreover, parents from mainlander or KMT backgrounds were more likely than DPP parents not only to make these references as such but also to advocate Taiwan's unification with China. I also observed that KMT parents were more likely to consume Chinese media than their DPP counterparts. For instance:

> I watch singing competition shows like the mainland Chinese one, *Sing! China*. [But] my daughter doesn't watch it. She watches the other one, a Taiwanese singing show. (Hsi-wa, mother born in 1960)

> I prefer informative stuff such as *The Forbidden City 100*. There are 100 episodes about the Forbidden City on the mainland, like how these palaces were built. And *A Bite of China* is on the subject of eating. (Ye-kuan, father born in 1966)

Hsi-wa watched *Sing! China* on some streaming websites – she seemed to only have a vague idea of what these websites[220] were – after all, it was her daughter who introduced her to them. Although Hsi-wa and her daughter used the same streaming websites and both of them liked singing competition shows, they were unlikely to watch the shows together because they used their own laptops to access the streaming websites and, as Hsi-wa pointed out, there were Chinese and Taiwanese shows to choose from. While His-wa chose *Sing! China*, her daughter preferred a Taiwanese show. In other words, both generations could remain in separate mediated spaces in which they consumed media content in accordance with their own identities. However, in contrast to KMT parents' consumption of Chinese media, quite a few DPP parents resembled their children in terms of their disapproval of the mistreatment of Taiwanese celebrities such as Chou Tzu-yu and Wu Pao-chun, mentioned above.

> Wu Pao-chun has his own difficulties, but he shouldn't have said "Chinese Taiwan".[221] After all, Taiwan is Taiwan, [whereas] China is China. (Me-lin, mother born in 1963)

> Like the girl going to Korea, something Yu? [Interviewer: Chou Tzu-yu?] Right, she was labelled as a Taiwan independence advocate, and A-mei[222] was also

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[220] According to Hsi-wa, streaming sites are where one has free access to TV shows, series and movies. She also mentioned that movies can be downloaded from some websites.

[221] 中國台灣, *zhong guo tai wan*

blacklisted after she sang the national anthem at the National Day ceremony. (We-ten, father born in 1960)

Unlike KMT parents, Me-lin did not call China the mainland. DPP parents stressed that Taiwan is not China and they normally disagreed with unification, as did most young people. To put it another way, DPP parents and young people are closer to each other on the political spectrum with regard not only to their identification with Taiwan but to also their position on the unification versus independence issue. Likewise, their perception of China was also found to be similar in their ways of reiterating certain narratives about Chinese repression, in which Taiwanese celebrities were portrayed as victims. In addition to mentioning Chou Tzu-yu, We-ten talked about how A-mei was blocked from entering China for several years because of her performance of the Republic of China (Taiwan)[223] national anthem in 2000 – the occasion was not the National Day as We-ten recalled, but Chen Shui-bian's inauguration ceremony. Before his corruption scandal broke out in 2006, Chen Shui-bian's presidency was seen as a milestone in Taiwan's democratisation history since it marked the first change of ruling party.[224] Even though many young people, as shown in the previous chapter, joked about Chen Shui-bian's 'cape 700 million' scandal and did not identify with the DPP, they and their DPP parents repeated similar stories in which Taiwanese public figures were mistreated by Chinese government and society. Nonetheless, their cultural references reflect their age difference since young people focused their discussion on Chou Tzu-yu but hardly ever mentioned A-mei – the former was born in 1999, and the latter in 1972. Another intergenerational difference is that the Democratic Consolidation generation's understanding of Chinese repression is less associated with DPP identification and based more on personal experience or on media representations of China.

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[222] Since late 1990s, A-mei has been recognised as an iconic singer by Mandarin-speaking audiences around the world (Guy, 2002).

[223] While the UN recognises the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Republic of China (ROC) is internationally known as Taiwan. I follow the websites of the Presidential Office and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which consistently show 'Republic of China (Taiwan)'. Passport also adopts this formulation but has 'Taiwan' standing alone in the centre of the cover page, without the brackets. Since 11 January 2021, Taiwanese citizens can apply for a new passport on which Taiwan is printed in a bigger font.

[224] Until then the KMT had governed Taiwan for 55 years (1945-2000).

On the Internet I read many articles about the referendum on the Tokyo Olympics.[225] They reasoned that people feared Chinese repression, so they chose not to vote. If we're repressed, international society will be inclined to China instead of supporting Taiwan. This is the reality. It's hopeless. (Yu-chin, daughter born in 2000)

Do you have any experiences of when you travelled abroad and were asked "you're from Taiwan, but you have China on your passport"? [Another focus group participant: Yes!] One time my husband and I went to Dubai. A guy at the car rental company asked us, "you're from China? Taiwan?" The other time my husband was given a hard time. He was accused of holding a fake Chinese passport, so I got really angry and then went to buy a Taiwan passport cover. (Hin-yu, daughter born in 1986)

Since we withdrew from the United Nations, we've been suffering Chinese repression such as [denial of access to] the World Health Organisation. Today China tells you to do this and tells you to do something else tomorrow. In the end, you can only do whatever China asks you to. Hong Kong is an obvious example, but many Taiwanese people still watch whatever the media feed them. If the media don't cover [Hong Kong protests], people will not care. (Wen-fan, son born in 1987)

In the past, one way for our magazine to make money was inviting rich Chinese entrepreneurs to Taiwan to give a speech. But since 2016 the Chinese government has been restricting the issuing of entry permits to Taiwan. So, our previous business model, which relies on Renminbi,[226] is no longer easy. I don't agree with our magazine's ideology but, tut, I look after my belly[227] first. (Yu-chen, son born in 1983)

Although believing that Taiwan is an independent country and saying so several times in the focus group discussion, Yu-chen had been working for a pro-unification magazine for more than 1.5 years by the time of our interview. Echoing previous research on Chinese influence on Taiwan's media industry (Chang, 2011, 2013; Hsu, 2014b; Huang, 2017; Yamada, 2014; Wu, 2016), Yu-chen's story further demonstrates how a struggle between one's own political identity and the influence of China can unfold. Similarly, Hin-yu's account of how she and her husband were

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[225] The referendum question asks: 'Do you agree with using "Taiwan" as the name to apply for participating in all international sports competitions, including the 2020 Tokyo Olympics?'

[226] This refers to the currency of the People's Republic of China.

[227] Yu-chen used this expression in Taiwanese Hokkien. He meant that he needed to feed himself.

questioned about their nationality also gives evidence of the political tension experienced by individuals in their ordinary lives. Most people do not work for a magazine company or have the experience of travelling to Dubai, but they probably watch TV news and read articles on the Internet to keep up to date with society. Consequently, 'if news media don't cover [Hong Kong protests], people will not care', as Wen-fan pointed out. The media's role is not limited to giving visibility to political events but can shape people's perception of these events in certain ways. For example, Yu-chin became certain that China would not allow Taiwanese athletes to compete in the Tokyo Olympics under the name of Taiwan, believing that 'people feared Chinese repression, so they chose not to vote' – she claimed this was 'the reality' and felt 'hopeless' about it. This narrative about the impossibility of competing in the Tokyo Olympics under the name of Taiwan was known by all my research informants, young and old alike. The narrative was so dominant that even after 'reading many articles' online, Yu-chin had only one way of viewing the issue. In this case, the Internet was more like a homogenous space of speech than a place where people could discover alternative views, which many young informants had praised and promoted, as described in the previous chapter. Compared with age/generation criteria, party identification better explained people's votes in the Tokyo Olympics referendum. That is, people identifying with the DPP or who were anti-KMT were found to be more likely to vote YES in this referendum.

In this section, I have demonstrated how certain media technologies and content contribute to generational identities and generational identification with Taiwan. In doing so, I have presented the stereotypes which the respective generations had of each other, putting these in the context of generational lived experience. I have also shown that, given the distinct generational experiences, parents tended to feel nostalgic about economic miracles under the authoritarian regime, whereas young people widely viewed recession as an economic reality, and democracy as a political reality. Since parents were educated with Confucian values and socialised into politics with the presence of military instructors and the one-party state, they were more likely than their younger counterparts to prioritise age and authority. In addition, considering the shift in national ideology during Taiwan's democratisation, I have discussed the intergenerational differences in their identification with Taiwan and their perception of China. This analysis highlights how the Democratic Consolidation generation drew on certain media brands and referred to media censorship in China in order to elaborate on their Taiwanese identity and keep a distance from the Soft Authoritarianism generation's 'being ethnic Chinese' discourse. In analysing how each generation identified with Taiwan and viewed the independence versus unification issue, I discovered the role of party identification in

shaping intra-generational differences such as that between KMT and DPP parents. In the following sections, I further examine how intra- and inter-generational differences act in the realm of the family.

5.2 Mediating Generational Politics in the Family

Except for the high-school student participants and some young people working in the suburbs, most of the young research participants had left their hometowns for university education or job opportunities, and therefore did not reside with their parents. Nonetheless, their family life extended across this physical space and distance as they were included in Family Groups (家庭群組, *jia ting qun zu*) on LINE, the instant messaging application most widely used in Taiwanese society.[228] Those young people living together with their parents in the same household were also in LINE Family Groups. My study of the mediation of family political communication focuses on, but does not limit itself to, an investigation of Family Groups on LINE.

In the following analyses, LINE Family Groups are conceptualised as *places* which constitute the qualities and experiences of 'home-ness' (Silverstone, 1994; Silverstone, Hirsch, & Morley, 2005). They are not merely extra spaces for family members to interact with one another; instead, the interactions and communications taking place in Family Groups involve the social reproduction of knowledge, values and power relations. More specifically, a domestication analysis of the LINE Family Group aims to discover its involvement in constructing social knowledge, cultural values and family hierarchy both technologically and symbolically (Silverstone, 1996; Silverstone, Hirsch, & Morley, 2005). The first two subsections are dedicated to demonstrating the making of the *familial* in a Taiwanese family and the continuities and discontinuities of this process between offline family settings and LINE Family Groups. By studying some occasions when family members talked about politics, the third subsection aims to further unpack the relationship between the familial and the political in Taiwanese society.

5.2.1 Constructing 'jia chang'[229] in LINE Family Groups

As shown in Chapter 4, young people and their parents relied on different social media platforms for public and political information; however, they were all connected with one another on and through LINE. On this platform they were

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[228] As described in Chapter 2, LINE 'has evolved from a single purpose chat app to the do-everything platform for everyday cultural and economic activities' (Steinberg, 2020: 1). It has an estimated 21 million monthly active users (Tang, 2018; Tsai, 2019) in Taiwan, whose population is approximately 23 million.

[229] 家常 in Mandarin. This can be literally translated as 'home ordinary'.

Friends and members of Family Groups consisting of their nuclear or extended families. While young people and their parents did not refer to one another as Friends, they explained what they did in Family Groups, and tended to conflate this feature with the platform as a whole.

> Actually, most of the time I update my parents [about] whether today I'm going home for dinner or not. (Yu-chin, daughter born in 2000)

> I LINE[230] my mother. [Messages are] usually just about life. Like having meals. (Wi-tu, son born in 1981)

> Our family interactions are rather [based on] daily life. We don't really chat about politics on LINE. (Pe-chi, mother born in 1967)

> On LINE we always discuss *jia chang* stuff [emphasis added]. Our discussion doesn't involve this kind [of political issues]. (Tun-yu, father born in 1953)

Another young participant in Yu-chin's focus group added, 'just jia chang stuff'. According to the Ministry of Education Dictionary, 'jia chang' refers to everyday affairs at home or ordinariness. For most young and parent informants, it was ordinary and part of everyday family life to talk about what to eat for dinner or where to travel, whereas political talk was normally off the (family) table. In other words, LINE was primarily 'domesticated for contacting and coordinating family members' schedules.

> (Mother born in 1974 and father born in 1972)
> Interviewer: What do you share on LINE?
> Chu-hsie: Information.
> Me-kue: In our family group chat, we just contact.
> Chu-hsie: Right! Contacting each other is our focus.
> Me-kue: We don't really send *those [political stuff].* [emphasis added]
> Chu-hsie: Sometimes there are… like a few days ago, my sister sent us a video about exercises for elderly people.
> Interviewer: Some health-related messages?
> Chu-hsie: Yes, health messages.
>
> (Mother born in 1963 and father born in 1960)
> Interviewer: Are you in family groups on LINE?
> Both: YES!

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[230] Here LINE is used as a verb. Such usage is similar to the way many young people use Google as a verb.

Interviewer: Do you discuss any social issues there?

Me-lin: No, no. LINE is for contacting only.

We-ten: Or some funny stuff. Not really news clips, [but] funny stuff. [We would] share with everyone.

When elaborating on their use of LINE for 'contacting' their families, parents referred to 'free calls', whereas their children usually made complaints about the 'elderly pictures' discussed below. In addition to making free calls, parents posted 'funny stuff' and 'health messages', as opposed to news and political content. In other words, LINE is co-constructed as a place of 'jia chang' as it affords instant messaging between family members who prioritise certain types of content such as jokes and health videos, but avoid news clips and political topics. Although after our interview Chu-hsie forgot to share the exercise video with me,[231] I obtained a health-related message from another young informant whose family groups were populated with this type of content and who had complained about it to me.

Figure 5.1 Health message in LINE Family Group

As one can see in Figure 5.1, the food pictures are large and placed in the middle, whereas written texts are short and listed in bullet points rather than complete

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[231] It is also likely that Chu-hsie did not really plan to send me 'jia chang' messages since I am not a family member. He promised to do so only because he was in the interview.

sentences. This strong emphasis on visual elements largely reflects the materiality of LINE, namely that it has been designed for incentivising pictorial messages.[232] Additionally, I observed that my informants normally opened and used LINE on their smartphones,[233] as appropriate to its entry into the Taiwanese market as an instant messaging application for smartphones. To fit small mobile screens, pictures unquestionably work better than texts. Then, symbolically, health-related messages could be interpreted both as parental love and as control since they were acquired by parents from their peers and then forwarded to children in order to promote certain lifestyles. Normally, children's response was either complaint or silence. These reactions also apply to young peoples' general reception of 'elderly pictures' (長輩圖, *zhang bei tu*).

(Young people born between 1992 and 1998)

Men-ju:	'Good morning'.
Ju-ku:	Pictures – something like 'God bless you'.
We-chin:	Or something like 'Eat this and grow'.
Ju-ku:	Right, health-related.
Men-ju:	[Parents] just show care for you. Like my father has been sharing lots of inspiring stories.
Yu-fan:	So do my parents. Super annoying!
Men-ju:	[They] regularly LINE[234] me to ask 'Have you read our messages? I don't think you have'.

(Two young people born in 1994 and 1995, respectively)

Yu-lii:	It's a nightmare when your family starts using LINE. Everything becomes a nightmare!
Interviewer:	You mean they start sending you these elderly pictures?
Yu-lii:	Yeah, this and that.
Tu-chu:	'Morning!'
Yu-lii:	Right! That kind of stuff.
Tu-chu:	'God will guide you!'
Yu-lii:	Or something funny.

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[232] Since its release in 2011, one of LINE's default features is free sticker packs. Then since 2013 users can purchase stickers for their personal use or send them as gifts to friends and family members who are also LINE users. The design of auto-suggested stickers and emoji appearing above the on-screen keyboard when users are typing has been available since 2014.

[233] A recent study gives similar evidence (see Lin, 2020).

[234] As noted earlier, LINE is used as a verb.

Interviewer: I see, but why would your parents start using LINE?

Yu-lii: For contacting children. [Using LINE] is convenient and free, and later on, the more you use it, the more you're accustomed to it.

Young people's account of funny and health-related content in their family group chats confirms my finding that 'jia chang' messages are characteristic of LINE Family Groups. I noticed that young people usually used 'elderly pictures' as an umbrella term to refer to 'jia chang' messages. In addition to health messages, 'morning pictures' (早安圖, *zao an tu*) and 'inspiring stories' are also typical 'elderly pictures'. Figure 5.2 shows what constitutes a morning picture, which, as suggested by its name, is customarily posted by parents/ family elders in the morning to send greetings and give blessings to their children/ youngsters.

Figure 5.2 An example of morning pictures

'Good morning' is highlighted in red and placed in the middle. Although there is neither 'God bless you' nor 'God will guide you', as Ju-ku and Tu-chu had commented, there are words of encouragement on the bottom which read 'Trust yourself. Turn the impossible to the possible. Turn the possible to the unlimited possible. You are stronger than you imagined'. A combination of positive remarks and pictures of pets[235] constitutes a distinct aesthetic of these elderly pictures, as revealed in prior research (Liu, 2017). My analysis calls attention to the sociocultural function of these pictures: maintaining parents' presence in the family and reinforcing the notion of a caring and loving family, which has been well documented by previous research on the family in popular culture (Chen, 2005; Chen & Shaw, 2008; Fang, 2016). That is, by enabling parents to share messages and videos with their children at a distance in real time, LINE Family Group has become a site for practising 'jia chang' and a family culture of love and care. Nonetheless, many young informants did not identify with these parental practices but perceived them as an annoyance or even a 'nightmare'. They complained about receiving too many messages from their parents or older family members, who – especially those who had retired – could spend plenty of time sending messages. The problem is not simply one of too many messages, but also involves young people's perception that these elderly pictures are neither useful nor trustworthy.

> Elders crazily forwarded information from somewhere. My father would add his own opinion to his messages, but there are lots of messages coming from nowhere. I don't know where they originate from because my father and his gang[236] have their Groups too. There's always something amazing. (Chi-fen, daughter born in 1989)

> My father- and mother-in-law sometimes forwarded some strange messages to our family group. I noticed that they were in simplified Chinese.[237] And then there were some horrifying news stories – for example, if someone knocks at your car window, and you open it, your face will be knifed! But there was no mention of place and time in this kind of news, so I think fake

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[235] Dogs or cats are the most common.

[236] The phrase Chi-fen used is 狐群狗黨, *hu qun gou dang*, meaning people who together collude and engage in inappropriate activities (Ministry of Education Dictionary, 2015d).

[237] Simplified Chinese has been adopted by the People's Republic of China since 1956, whereas traditional Chinese is the writing system in the Republic of China (Taiwan). Su and Chun (2021) gave a detailed explanation of how the distinctions between these two scripts are not only linguistic but also political and ideological.

news is not limited to political articles. There's fake news about daily life and social incidents. (Hin-yu, daughter born in 1986)

I can bear with those elderly pictures like 'morning', but then there are some wrong ideas about 'nourishing life'[238] – this is still bearable, but [there is] false information and fake news and even discrimination, such as against homosexuals. I don't have anything to talk about to these people. (Pin-lu, son born in 1986)

It happens to every family that there's a Group in which all generations gather. The elders are accustomed to posting these elderly pictures such as 'care' and 'morning'. They forward that kind of stuff without much thinking – just forwarded. For us who are wiser, those are rubbish, so we go and create another Group of our own. (Tu-chian, son born in 1984)

Chi-fen spelled out 'amazing' in a sarcastic tone. She had a negative attitude towards messages sent by the older members of the family, as many young informants did. While the elders seemed to enjoy forwarding messages to their family groups, their messages were described as 'strange' and 'rubbish' and even labelled as 'fake news'. When illustrating the older generation's dissemination of fake news, Hin-yu took the example of a news story written in simplified Chinese – as demonstrated in my previous examination of generational differences in their identification with Taiwan, young people were generally more active than their older counterparts in differentiating Taiwan from China, so it is not unexpected for Hin-yu to question her in-laws' consumption of news in simplified Chinese. For Pin-lu, the messages about homosexuals sent by his older family members were not only fake but also discriminatory – later, when examining certain occasions on which younger and older family members had political conversations, I show that there was widespread support for homosexuals' rights among young people, whereas parents' attitudes were comparatively ambivalent.

Even though the news story about personal safety and the messages about homosexuals' rights, which could have belonged to the public sphere, did enter family talk on LINE, Family Groups remained private and apolitical as the young people generally disagreed with the messages forwarded by their parents and

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[238] Nourishing life is defined as 'the ancient Chinese art and science of living to promote longevity, minimise ageing and maximise health' (Wilcox, 2017: 28). Messages about nourishing life centre on what one should or should not do to cultivate a nourishing and flourishing life. As seen, they fulfil a similar function to that of health-related messages, namely giving guidance and instructions on how young people should live their everyday lives.

tended to ignore them. More specifically, the elders who engaged in 'crazily' sending messages 'without much thinking' were viewed as Others whom young people avoided talking to. As the former took on the roles of information provider and instructor, leading and styling conversations in Family Groups in certain ways, the latter responded by having their own conversations elsewhere or creating their own groups on LINE. Hence, it seems fair to propose that LINE Family Groups do not enhance the role of parents in the political socialisation of their grown children but reproduce an instructive, if not preachy, style of parenting and consequently increase the distance between the two generations.

5.2.2 Reproducing familial hierarchy and harmony off- and on-line

While parents complained about their messages being 'left on read' (已讀不回, *yi du bu hui*),[239] young people told me how they had been discouraged from sharing their thoughts.

> (Group of young people born between 1989 and 1993)
>
> Hon-xian: At university I began to learn new ideas. Like many young people, I came to know certain ideologies, and when we started to be critical of society our parents became very worried about us.
>
> Wa-qin: That's right!
>
> Ke-ro: They think we made friends with some bad people.
>
> Hon-xian: Something like that.
>
> Interviewer: So, you have little [political] discussion with your family?
>
> Hon-xian: Yeah, limited discussion. My mother might not get what I'm saying because it sometimes can be very abstract. As for my father, he has his own views.

The reason given by Hon-xian for not having political conversations with his family is commonly found among the younger generation: parents/older family members could not understand but tended to belittle young people's thinking which differs from theirs. In addition to feeling worried about what exactly their children/younger counterparts learned at school and fearing that they might have befriended 'bad people', parents/elders were said to discourage their children/younger counterparts from expressing their opinions.

> For our elders, questioning is not allowed, so they can't accept that we question them. This is the most difficult part of communication! (Yue-lin, daughter born in 1983)

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[239] On LINE one would see her/his message marked 'Read' as soon as the receiver has read it.

Really, the elderly are used to interrupting you [and] don't let you finish your sentence, you know? They have a big ego, thinking that this is the way it is. (Su-chi, son born in 1985)

I lived in Western countries for a while. After coming back to Taiwan, I've noticed that here there is a strong distinction between the older generation and the younger generation, although it isn't as sharp as that in South Korea. This culture often results in communication gaps. If you express yourself, elders will consider you too young – you're not old enough [and] your experiences are not adequate. I already have a certain maturity and understanding, but when I express my views to my elders, they're, like, 'oh, little kids' – something like this. Gradually, there's no more communication. (Tu-chian, son born in 1984)

Despite different family backgrounds,[240] Yue-lin, Su-chi and Tu-chian both portrayed the relationship between young and old as hierarchical. According to them, being bluntly interrupted and being called 'little kids' are not unimaginable in young people's interactions with their parents/elders – after all, seniority is entitled to authority in the Confucian pedagogic and paternalistic culture (Ho, 1996; Tu, 1998) which still characterises modern Taiwan (Jian, 2013). While their views were disregarded, several young informants pointed out that their elders were ready to engage in conversations with 'people of their generation'. These findings together not only resonate with my prior analysis of generation stereotypes but also reaffirm an unequal parent-child relationship in which parents act as instructors and exert authority in the family, whether online or offline. Such a way of interacting with their grown children could be explained by the Soft Authoritarianism generation's experience of Sinicization under the KMT authoritarian regime, which instilled Chinese-ness into people through education centring on Confucian values (Lai, 2020; Makeham, 2005). Chen-pin, a father born in 1961, illustrated what respecting parents is about:

The basic Chinese idea is that "I say it is good, then that's it. If you talk about something else, you're disagreeing with me". Foreigners might accept this behaviour [because] they interact with their children differently – like the children call their fathers by their name. But can you call your father by his name? NO.

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[240] Yue-lin came from a Minnan/Hokkien middle-class family, Su-chi from a working-class indigenous family, and Tu-chian from a mainlander middle-class family.

To put it another way, the parent-child relationship based on deference to elders as a fundamental principle of Confucianism is expected to be hierarchical. Legacies from the authoritarian period are not restricted to Confucian doctrines but include a reluctance to talk about politics.

> (Group of young people born between 1987 and 1989)
>
> Yi-zu: Many elders are not willing to discuss politics. That [reluctance] might have formed since the 228 Incident.
>
> Tu-chie: I wrote political stuff on Facebook, [but] my parents would say, 'Don't do that on Facebook'.
>
> Tu-yu: This sounds more relevant to the White Terror.
>
> Yi-zu: After the 228 Incident.
>
> Chin-shen: [Getting] involved in politics would result in being dealt with by the government.
>
> Yi-zu: 'Don't do politics!'
>
> Tu-chie: When I went to Tibet this August, my mother said, 'Don't shoot off your mouth there. What can we do if you can't come back?'

It is evident that Tu-chie's parents perceived Facebook as a public space. Although Tu-chie shared a similar perception of Facebook, he was not as concerned about state surveillance as his parents, who believed that governments, be they authoritarian or democratic, were monitoring their people online and offline. Instead, Tu-chie and other young participants in the focus group ascribed such a fear, felt by the older generation, to the fact that parents/elders had lived through the authoritarian period. In other words, even when they found out their children's political views on Facebook, parents were unlikely to engage in political conversations and more likely to discourage them. In this way, the realm of the family continues to be apolitical – the same goes for LINE.

> (Mother born in 1967 and father born in 1963)
>
> Ku-chen: Just some family trivia.
>
> Shu-hu: That's right.
>
> Interviewer: Not even during the election period?
>
> Shu-hu: Nope.
>
> Ku-chen: We talked about elections in private, directly. [Discussing] elections is sensitive, so [it's better] not to leave any evidence on LINE.
>
> Interviewer: Face to face [and] at home?
>
> Ku-chen: Right, we once did discuss the elections.
>
> Shu-hu: [But] not on LINE, not on [our] mobile.

Ku-chen: It's obvious on LINE, after all. [We] try to avoid [it].

Ku-chen and Shu-hu focused on talking about 'family trivia' on LINE. Because they considered LINE to be subject to state surveillance, they 'avoided' discussing public and 'sensitive'[241] matters such as elections. Overall, parents expressed more concern about state power over communications compared with their younger counterparts,[242] who tended to view the platforms themselves as the real worry and discussed the issue of algorithms. This generational difference may be partly explained by the fact that young people grew up in a politically free but highly commercialised society – many of them chose to name their focus groups[243] by directly referring to their political identities (e.g., 'BeTaiwan')[244] or to certain media (e.g., 'Apple Daily Entertainment'), [245] whereas their parents recounted how people under authoritarian rule were mistreated or imprisoned for their political expression.

> The father of a good friend of our family wrote something about the Communist Party in a toilet, and then he was thrown in jail. Later when that good friend of our family was going to study at university, my parents offered to be her guarantor, so that she could enter [the university]. The White Terror was like this. (Hsi-wa, mother born in 1960)

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[241] As discussed in Chapter 3 on methodology, I was turned down by several parents because they found talking about politics too 'sensitive'.

[242] Even though most young people focused their discussion on the power of platform companies and news institutions, there was a small group of young people accusing the state/government of controlling the news media – I noticed that they were more hostile towards the authorities and more likely to be politically apathetic, that is, they seldom cast their votes and had very little or no experience of participating in rallies.

[243] As described in the methodology chapter, research participants were invited to name their focus groups or themselves. After creating an Excel file and putting all these names into categories (e.g., media-related, generation/age-related, occupation-related, residence-related, gender/sexuality-related, political-identity-related, personal-identity-related), I found that young people were more likely than their parents to use political-identity-related names. Parent participants tended to name themselves after the cities or towns where they resided.

[244] More than one third of the young focus groups' chosen names were related to politics. In addition to 'BeTaiwan', there were, for example, 'Taipei Anti-Curriculum', 'Hawk versus Dove', and 'nihilism'.

[245] Media-related names accounted for about one sixth. Further examples were 'the Internet generation' and 'Don't know what to do with fake news'.

There was no press freedom. All news reports were reviewed [by the state] before broadcast. The same went for songs. There were [also] many miscarriages of justice. A lot of problems. (Chu-chi, father born in 1966)

My father talked about many schoolteachers being put in jail. And in the past people would lower their voices when criticising the government. (Ha-lun, father born in 1955)

These parents shared similar memories of the authoritarian past, when the state could be so powerful that people's lives would be easily spoiled or even taken away, and likewise criticising the government could be so dangerous that people would normally lower their voices when doing so. Nevertheless, whether they had experienced the authoritarian regime or not, both parents and young people widely held the belief that a family runs the risk of ruining familial harmony and love if they engage in political talk.

In the family we know one another's bottom line and are concerned about getting into an argument. Considering the affection for each other, we do not fight and do not dare to cross the bottom line. (Je-yu, son born in 1997)

In my [LINE] family group, some family members are blue, whereas others are green, so if you post this [political] stuff, you mess up familial harmony. (We-chua, son born in 1984)

When we were first married, there were such situations in which we were watching a political programme, he cursed, I cursed, and then we turned off the TV. We agreed on not watching this kind of programme at home [because] it affected our family relationship. (Hsue-chin, mother born in 1964)

Discussing politics is unresolvable and hurtful to relationships. They are two separate matters: politics is politics, whereas familial love is familial love. (Ha-lun, father born in 1955)

Both generations tended to distinguish family from politics, highlighting the importance of 'love', 'affection' and 'harmony' to the family realm – this finding echoes my discovery, described in the previous section, that a caring and loving family was the dominant imaginary of the Taiwanese family. Thus, both generations avoided political talk, which was deemed damaging to family relationships, especially when family members held different opinions. Moreover, both generations not only associated party politics with 'fights' and 'quarrels', as shown in Chapter 4, but they also used this metaphor to make sense of political conversations:

I rarely talk politics with my parents, [because] I don't want to get into a quarrel. (Yu-fan, daughter born in 1995)

My parents' political views contrast with that of my friends. If talking in our own language to my parents, [I'm] asking for trouble. (Chi-fen, daughter born in 1989)

Don't you see lots of people fighting over political candidates? They might even wrestle with each other because they're from different political parties. [This] is reported on television news! (Yun-hsiu, mother born in 1967)

If our political views are different, we will avoid talking [politics] – it will easily lead to fights. Sometimes friendships break up. The same goes for family members. (Min-hsie, father born in 1962)

The cross-generational adoption of this conflictual view of political conversations was based on personal observation or influenced by media representation and viewing experiences – for example, Hsue-chin and her husband were overwhelmed by anger when watching political programmes and learned the lesson. For Yun-hsiu, the risk of relationship breakdown due to political talk could not be more real than the way it was represented on TV news. In response to my doubts as to whether people really fought and 'wrestled with each other', she raised her voice: 'There are [these kinds of incidents]! Or why does the television news report it?' Against the backdrop of this kind of political talk painted by news and political programmes as disagreeable and even destructive, it is not surprising that people did not take LINE Family as an opportunity to exchange political views with their families. Instead, they insisted that engaging in political talk did more harm than good and was therefore 'meaningless'. Apart from (mis)representation, the role of the media in this avoidance of political talk is also related to media skills.

My parents send pictures, but they aren't able to type many words. They can do voice calls, but they find it troublesome, so we just don't discuss politics [on LINE]. Additionally, the way they type messages is like writing an essay – using commas and full stops. I don't get what they really mean. (Wa-qin, daughter born in 1991)

LINE is inconvenient! The same-sex marriage issue is so complicated that one can't talk about it on LINE. I hate discussing things via LINE. If you try to debunk those lies [circulated on LINE Family], you'll need to type super-many words! (A-lin, daughter born in 1987)

> On LINE people use words, but some people are not very good at written expression, so I might misunderstand them, right? There's misunderstanding, and then people might not make themselves clear enough, so I prefer [talking] face to face. (Chi-lin, mother born in 1960)

> I don't do it on LINE because I type very slowly. Haha. It's not possible for me to discuss referendum issues on LINE. I type slowly. Too slowly. (Ye-kuan, father born in 1966)

Quite a few young people described how their parents were not adept at typing and would seek help from them every now and then. Some parents confirmed this observation and justified their preference for face-to-face discussion should they really want to talk about politics with their families. Their inability to type at a faster speed could also explain why parents focused on forwarding messages, as noted in my analysis of the 'elderly pictures'. This could also be the reason why some parents typed paragraphs instead of one short message at a time, since they had difficulty in keeping up with the speed of instant messaging. It is debatable whether public topics such as same-sex marriage or referendums are too 'complicated' to be discussed on LINE, but this study has presented evidence that the media, ranging from TV programmes to LINE Groups, are unlikely to promote political talk among families. This study also observed that many parents referred to 'respect' as an explanation for their avoidance of political talk with their children.

> My eldest son didn't have any political opinion, but after entering the university he became supportive of pension reforms. He considers us [as having] vested interests. I find this horrible, but I haven't had any discussions with him. We just *respect* his views [emphasis added]. (Ju-min, mother born in 1965)

> Everyone has their ways of collecting information – via multiple media or from peers. So, I think this is a matter of *respect* [emphasis added] and it's simply impossible to [discuss]. (Pa-hun, father born in 1960)

As their children may develop different ways of thinking through education, their peers, or the media, quite a few parents underlined their 'respect' for their children, using this as a pretext for not engaging in political talk with them. Since parents' respect for their children worked to sustain familial harmony and hierarchy, and considering that young people rarely drew on respect as a reason for disengaging from political talks with their family, the idea of respect as such could be seen as patronising. Indeed, when explaining their interactions with their peers, parents did not refer to 'respect' as much as they did in discussion of their children. Additionally,

they appeared more willing to have 'political fights' with their peers, including friends and other family members of the same generation. In the next section I demonstrate how political conversations are more likely to take place within equal relationships. Responding to their parents' 'respect' discourse, many young people resorted to silence, the same reaction they showed to receiving the elderly pictures. They turned quiet and even avoided interaction with their parents – for example, We-chin, a son born in 1998, described how:

> I didn't go back to vote, because my [political] standpoint was different from that of my parents. In our [LINE] family group, [my parents] shared some articles, [so] I have a basic idea of their positions. My parents wanted me to vote for Han Kuo-yu.[246] They almost cut off my financial support. It's all fine if [we] don't talk about this.

Even though We-chin did not cast his ballot and resumed silence in the LINE family group, his withdrawal and use of silence helped to secure his finances and familial harmony. On the one hand, inaction and silence empowered We-chin – although to a very limited degree. On the other, these responses continued to hinder people from expressing and exchanging different views, especially on LINE, where silence could be more easily practised than in a face-to-face context. As silence in LINE Family Group was filled up with 'jia chang' messages, a family atmosphere of harmony and hierarchy was reaffirmed, but so was a sense of frustration that both parents and young people felt with regard to political talk and to each other.

5.2.3 Blurring the familial and the political

Despite a caring and harmonious family being seen as the default, interactions between family members were found to be more nuanced. Should silence and avoidance always be the norm, it would hardly be possible for parents and young people to know one another's political views. I therefore explored how the political was able to enter the realm of the family. For example, watching TV news together opened up an opportunity for political talk.

> (Group of young people born between 1988 and 1991)
>
> Sa-chii: My father and I were sitting at the dining table, and he said, "Do you know? If you vote for Tsai Ing-wen, there will be one or two people in our family dying in wars!"
>
> [*Other participants laugh*]
>
> Jia-jia: You just responded and continued talking to him.

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[246] As mentioned in the previous chapter, Han Kuo-yu stood for the Kaohsiung City mayoral election in 2018.

Sa-chii:	I felt like I hadn't studied enough. He talked about American isolationism, which resulted in the KMT's defeat in its civil war with the CCP. He said, "How would you know if the US will not give us up? Taiwan will be attacked by all sorts of missiles and nuclear weapons". [So] I've started to read books about international affairs, thinking that someday I shall give an alternative opinion at the dining table.
La-xi:	[It sounds] exhausting!
Jia-jia:	You're very hard-working!
La-xi:	My father and my brother also talk [about politics] at mealtimes. But their opinions are different, [so] I often hear them arguing loudly. I think my brother always wins the argument, though, because he would come up with some sort of theories, and my father can't refute [but] just says, "Alright, that's it. You young people!"
Interviewer:	How about your family?
Men-hsua:	They're politically apathetic. They still have their own stance, but they don't argue. Like, I would tell them my opinion and they would respond with "Oh. Hmm." Just that.
Jia-jia:	This is like an information session but not communication.

The common occasion for parents and young people to be together was at the dining table or in the living room at mealtimes. When eating their meal they had the TV news on. Usually selected by the parents,[247] the TV news provided talking points, but considering its partisan tendency, as discussed in Chapter 4, this could fall short of laying the foundations for fruitful political conversation in the family. Moreover, certain ways in which parents conversed with their children often resulted in the termination of conversations. Posing a rhetorical question, Sa-chii's father did not expect to elicit an opinion, but that his son would agree with him; furthermore, he reminded Sa-chii of the deadly consequence of voting for Tsai Ing-wen. If Sa-chii disagreed with his father, he thus became an unfilial son and was described as willing to have his family's lives lost. La-xi's father used neither rhetorical nor hypothetical expressions, but he was also the one who terminated the conversation; moreover, he singled out his son and 'young people' in general, implicitly blaming them for futile political talk. Considering the hierarchical parent-child relationship

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[247] The remote control for the TV set in the living room was usually in the hands of parents. However, in several families there was more than one TV set. Additionally, quite a few young people described using their smart phones while 'listening' to the TV.

analysed in the previous section, it is understandable that the two fathers ended conversations abruptly, whereas their – already grown-up – children fell silent. Even though Sa-chii identified his ill-preparedness and lack of knowledge as the reasons for his unsuccessful conversation with his father, I doubt if better knowledge would make any difference when family dynamics are characterised by the exercise of parental authority. As seen in the case of Laxi's brother, his 'theories' generated nothing more than 'that's it'. Although Men-hsua was able to express his views, his family's political talk remained non-reciprocal, as his parents did not share their own opinions but merely made some random sounds to suggest their doubt and disagreement. One piece of evidence after another unfortunately demonstrated that reciprocity was often missing in political talk between younger and older generations. Jia Jia's case was special. Since he was the only PhD student in the family, his disabled[248] parents valued his opinion: 'Before polling day, I told them who and what to vote for. They might give their opinion, but I would tell them what is true. They trust their only PhD son in the household'. It is no wonder that Jia Jia suggested that Sa-chii 'just respond and continue talking to' his father, because he himself was listened to and trusted by his parents.

Nonetheless, I would argue that parenting style, rather than trust, is what really shapes the dynamic of political conversation in the family. Sa-chii's and Men-hsua's political views were dismissed probably not because they were distrusted by their parents but due to an entrenched belief in a parental authority[249] which could be established and exercised through having their children listen to them.

> We talk and they listen. They don't necessarily respond, but they listen and then gradually they would have their own opinion. (Pe-chi, mother born in 1967)

> I told him that you shouldn't judge from people's appearance, right? [Interviewer: He judges people by their looks?] I think he already has some opinion. People are like this: they have certain opinion about someone, so they find him/her annoying, and then they dislike him/her completely. It's fine for him to talk about this with me in private, but if he goes out, talking about this with other people, he will be laughed at. (Ye-kuan, father born in 1966)

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[248] Jia Jia mentioned in the focus group discussion that his parents are 'deaf people, so their grasp of information isn't fast, and they rely on me'.

[249] Many young informants associated parental authority with 'control', 'interference', 'emotional blackmail' and even 'bullying'.

When social issues[250] appear in the news, we ask [our children] "what do you think?" I think their opinion is the same as ours, so there isn't much to discuss. (Ku-chen, father born in 1963)

Speaking seemed to constitute a major part of parents' political conversation with their children who, it seemed, were expected to be listeners. In terms of what topic parents spoke about, this study discovered that many mothers and their children[251] had conversations about same-sex marriage. The most popular type of stories young people shared with their mothers were about tragedies in which homosexual couples' rights to grant consent for surgery on each other's behalf were denied. Young people named such storytelling as 'heart-warming attacks' (溫情攻勢, *wen qing gong shi*) that were used to evoke the sympathy of listeners. Their use of such 'heart-warming attacks' could be related to their lower position in the familial hierarchy, since prior research has revealed that the speech style of the disadvantaged features emotional expression (Fan, 2010; Young, 1996). This study contends that 'heart-warming attacks' should not be seen as evidence of the stereotypes of the youth[252] which are associated with strong emotions; they are used as a communicative strategy for talking politics in the hierarchical family. Another reason for young people's strategic use of 'heart-warming attacks' may be related to mothers' preferred way of talking politics. According to several young people, their mothers were more likely than their fathers to be drawn to emotional narratives.

In addition to same-sex marriage, both parents and their children might discuss political candidates. Ye-kuan obviously disapproved of his son's judgment of political candidates based on their appearance. He sought to teach his son a lesson which would spare him from being a joke. While it is evident that the purpose of Ye-kuan's political conversation with his son was to educate, his son's opinion remained unclear to me. Given that Ye-kuan did not give details of his son's opinion, I doubt if he really knew why his son found certain political candidates annoying. In fact, when parents asked their children for an opinion, they seemed more concerned about ascertaining the consistency of opinion between them than about developing a

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[250] In our interview, Ku-chen and his wife talked about the problem of street crime, their disagreement on abolishing the death penalty and the issue of same-sex marriage.

[251] Research (Cheng, Wu, & Adamczyk, 2016; Lin, 2020) has found that the legalisation of same-sex marriage is generally accepted by young people.

[252] As shown in the first analysis presented in this chapter, young people were often viewed by their elders as passionate and hot-blooded.

deeper understanding of each other's views. Consequently, when views were similar, 'there isn't much to discuss', as noted by Ku-chen. Whether their views were similar or not, parents and young informants generally had few political conversations with one another, but, having said that, I did discern the role of political distance in political talk: the closer young people and their parents were to each other on the political spectrum, the more likely they were to discuss politics with each another. The influence of political distance was not an absolute, but when it occurred, people not only talked to each other but also spoke well of each other as being, for example, 'open-minded' or having 'new' and 'comprehensive information'.

Among all the political candidates in the 2018 elections, Han Kuo-yu appeared most likely to be mentioned in family political talk because parents, especially those identifying with the KMT, showed great interest in him, and he had been everywhere in the media:

> My father doesn't live in Kaohsiung. He's in Nantou, but he has been talking about Han Kuo-yu. (Men-ju, daughter born in 1992)

> I barely saw any news about Lin Chia-lung[253] during the entire election, and there was little news about Ko Wen-je[254] towards polling day. Facebook is just full of news about Han Kuo-yu. (Te-sha, daughter born in 1989)

> It's always Chung T'ien News on my father's TV. One day my father happily asked me 'Did you watch the news? Han Kuo-yu is getting popular!' He repeated that 'Han Kuo-yu was amazing!' (Hsie-lin, daughter born in 1985)

> On Chung T'ien News there's news about Han Kuo-yu throughout the day. (Yu-chen, son born in 1983) [Another participant added: It's like Han Kuo-yu's YouTube channel.]

Quite a few young people complained to me that both the news media and their own parents were obsessed with Han Kuo-yu, even though some of them also pointed out that it has always been the case for the news media to focus on covering certain politicians, usually those from the major parties, who received 'far too much' media attention. In political discussions about Han Kuo-yu, parents continued to take the lead, whereas young people mainly played the role of listeners. Additionally,

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[253] Representing the DPP, Lin Chia-lung was elected as the Taichung City mayor in 2014, but he failed to be re-elected in 2018.

[254] As mentioned in the previous chapter, Ko Wen-je won the Taipei City mayoral elections in both 2014 and 2018.

political talk in the family was once again found to be random and reliant on media coverage for its discursive resources.

Finally, the topic of national identity was discussed in some families. In these families, parents were more likely to identify with the DPP and they talked with their children before the 2018 referendum about the question: Do you agree with using 'Taiwan'[255] as the name when applying to participate in all international sports competitions, including the 2020 Tokyo Olympics? Although the KMT parents rarely brought up the subject of national identity with their children, they talked about athletes' rights, expressing concern that athletes could be denied participation in the Tokyo Olympics if the name Taiwan was adopted. Regardless of party identification and of generation, many informants referred to news coverage in which a group of athletes had protested and implored the public to vote No in the referendum – in this narrative, athletes acted as victims whose rights to compete in the Tokyo Olympics would be denied should the referendum proposition be passed. This contributed to the dominant narrative about the impossibility of participating in the Tokyo Olympics under the name Taiwan, as analysed in the first section of this chapter.

In summary, this section begins with an examination of how Taiwanese family is made private and apolitical, and how LINE Family Groups are domesticated into a harmonious but hierarchical family culture. For instance, 'jia chang' messages such as 'elderly pictures' are used to express familial love and simultaneously to exert parental authority. I have also discussed how the generational experiences of living under an authoritarian regime and being taught Confucian doctrines may have contributed to the Soft Authoritarianism generation's tendency to position themselves as instructors in the family and to their paternalistic style when interacting with young people. Nonetheless, on LINE, parents' authoritative and instructional role in the family may be compromised as their children intentionally left them on 'read' or created their own Groups elsewhere. Likewise, since parents may not be able to type fast, they could not use LINE effectively to influence the political views of their children from a distance. Their slow typing does, however, help to keep political talk out of LINE Family Groups, so the virtual family can remain apolitical and private. Indeed, most parents and young people actively made a distinction between familial and political subjects. In addition, they widely believed that political talk would result in fights, damaging familial harmony – their reference

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[255] Given the One China policy of the international community, Taiwan has been participating in international sports events under the name 'Chinese Taipei'.

to certain media representation illuminates the symbolic role of the media in shaping such an understanding. This section finishes with an analysis of the ways and the context in which political talk did take place in the family. It was found that young people and their parents could engage in random political talk while having their meals together, and against this backdrop TV news played an important part in providing subjects for family political talk. The political/public topics that managed to enter the family realm included same-sex marriage, national identity and political candidates. Political talk about them was, however, shaped by the persistence of parental authority, parents' party identification and their gender.

5.3 Discussion

There are several ways in which these research results can shine light on the mediation of intergenerational relationships and interactions in contemporary Taiwan and within the family sphere. First, a mediated generation approach is effective in exploring multiple roles of the media in shaping the generational identities of the two generations. For instance, certain media brands and content, mostly American, were found to contribute to the Democratic Consolidation generation's identification with Taiwan and its democracy. In other words, the media did not play one separate role at a time, either available technologies or shared rituals or habits (Aroldi, 2011); rather, the mediation process of the generational and national identities of the Democratic Consolidation generation was simultaneously technological, symbolic, and social. Second, a mediated generation analysis does not exclude relevant political factors such as party identification. Take the Soft Authoritarianism generation, for example. The pro-KMT parents were more likely than their pro-DPP counterparts to highlight their Chinese identity, to make no reference to Chinese repression of Taiwanese celebrities and to consume mainland Chinese media content. Nonetheless, the members of the Soft Authoritarianism generation, regardless of their party preferences, were generally influenced by their experience of living under an authoritarian regime. That is, this study reveals that authoritarian legacies work not only at national (Huntington, 1991b; Chang, Chu, & Park, 2007; Chang & Chu, 2013)[256] or individual levels (Chang, 2009; Wu, 2008),[257] but are also reflected in everyday narratives such as the generational narrative about

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[256] This body of research is concerned with whether democracy can endure after transition and under what circumstances authoritarian nostalgia occurs and authoritarianism revives. For instance, Chang, Chu, and Park (2007) point out that citizens' support for democratic values may be influenced by the level of national economic development.

[257] Both Chang (2009) and Wu (2008)'s research has documented a negative association between individuals' educational level and their authoritarian propensity.

Chiang Ching-kuo's economic achievements, and are embedded in social relationships such as the generational practice of avoiding political conversation in the family.

A mediated generation approach is indeed useful in revealing family dynamics. One of my major research results is that narratives of 'jia chang' were exemplified in the communication of 'elderly pictures', laying the groundwork for a loving and apolitical family. Parents' instructional and authoritative role, both online and offline, is another important finding. In other words, the media can be seen as a primary site for reproducing familial values and relationships – together with peer groups, high schools and universities, they seemed to play a bigger part than the family in the political socialisation of the Democratic Consolidation generation, especially considering that the contemporary Taiwanese family was found to be hierarchical and depoliticised. Specifically, this study observed several examples where young people had developed different political attitudes and identities from their pro-KMT parents: some had learned more about the KMT's repression of Taiwanese people during the martial law period through Taiwan-centred history education, and others by reading relevant news articles and information, and still others described their participation in the Sunflower Movement with their friends as having an 'enlightenment' effect on their civic consciousness. Political discontinuity may also occur in terms of managing political knowledge and discussion between generations. While young people with small children discussed what they had been doing or would do to pass down Taiwanese identity to the 'future generation' (e.g., speaking Hokkien or Hakka to their children and buying them books on Taiwanese history), older parents did not show such keenness to impart their political knowledge to young people – instead, they tended to avoid discussing politics or to prefer a top-down political conversation style.

This chapter demonstrates that intergenerational relationships within the family contain several layers of complexity. Considering the reproduction of certain familial values, such as harmony, the relation between parents and children is characterised by congruence and continuity. However, the practice of avoiding political conversation exemplifies tension and discontinuity (Steele & Acuff, 2012). Bonding between generations (Andrews, 2002; Edmunds & Turner, 2002; Demartini, 1985) seems likely to happen only between young people and DPP parents, given their closer positioning on the political spectrum, but co-learning (Mannheim, 1927/1952) is rarely found.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

I start this thesis with a set of puzzles resulting from my personal experience of being a young participant in the Sunflower Movement and of being in conflict with my parents because of our different political views. The thesis therefore sets out to investigate the formation of the Democratic Consolidation generation and its relationship with the Soft Authoritarianism generation, and to examine the mediation processes of generational political participation. In order to make these research inquiries, in Chapter 2 I first develop a mediated generation approach, conceptualise the so-called Sunflower generation as the Democratic Consolidation generation, and identify its elder counterpart as the Soft Authoritarianism generation. Then, Chapter 4 presents the two generations by giving empirical evidence of their distinct generational characteristics in terms of political and media engagement (e.g., the Democratic Consolidation generation practised a playful way of doing politics), revealing generational differences (e.g., the Soft Authoritarianism generation is more likely to be attracted to virtue-based political authenticity), and discussing cross-generational commonalities (e.g., both generations identified polarisation, corruption, and populism as major problems of Taiwan's democracy). In this chapter, intra-generational differences are also discussed – for example, while party identification is found to contribute to generation units within the Soft Authoritarianism generation, members of the Democratic Consolidation generation may differ in their perception of political authenticity according to their level of political engagement. Chapter 5 discusses the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation in the context of the family in order to further explore intergenerational relationships. This reveals several stereotypes that the two generations have of each other, which lay a challenging basis for intergenerational exchanges, and further discloses how young people and their parents (dis)engage in political conversation within the family. These analyses also show a dialectical relationship between the media, generational experiences, identity and actions.

In this conclusion chapter, my primary purpose is to critically evaluate the usefulness of the mediated generation approach to studying democratic politics in Taiwanese society, whose transformation from an authoritarian regime to a democracy is only a matter of around three decades, and to examine the Democratic Consolidation generation, whose formative years were characterised by democratisation and digitalisation. I first highlight key findings, then review the strengths and limitations of a mediated generation approach, discuss what kind of intergenerational relationship may benefit democratic developments, and end by

outlining the implications of this thesis for future research into the relationship between media, generations and democracy in the 21st century.

6.1 Main Empirical Findings

The letter I wrote to my parents and quote at the beginning of this thesis began with an apology for my participation in the Sunflower Movement. In retrospect, both my letter and my apology were more strategic than sincere since I have never regretted joining sit-ins outside the Legislative Yuan. It was through participating in this Movement that I came to really see the political differences between me and my parents and to search for my own political identity. I found that the young informants in my study were more likely than their parents to consider the Sunflower Movement a positive influence on Taiwan's democracy, specifically because the Movement facilitated youth participation in politics. Additionally, their discussions about the Movement were likely to focus on the 'black-box' Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA). This perception of Taiwan's democracy in terms of a 'black box' was prevalent among the Democratic Consolidation generation, whereas the Soft Authoritarianism generation was found to speak, think and act according to a partisanship logic. For instance, parents who disagreed with the Sunflower Movement and interpreted youth participation as DPP manipulation often voted for the KMT,[258] while pro-DPP parents appeared more supportive of young people's engagement in the Sunflower Movement. Despite their different attitudes towards youth political participation, they all shared a tendency to consider young people inadequate for critical thinking and emotion management and to emphasise young people's limited life experience. Commonly used vocabulary included 'hot-blooded', 'naïve', 'passionate' and 'innocent'.

This disparaging perception of young people and their political engagement reflects the specific era in which these parents were socialised into politics – under the authoritarian regime, they learned to obey military instructors at school, were propelled into joining the KMT party and indoctrinated into following Confucianism, which prioritises seniority (Chu & Yu, 2010; Tu, 1998). The influence of Confucian values on the members of the Soft Authoritarianism generation is not limited to their own experience of living through a repressive public culture during the authoritarian period (Lai, 2020; Makeham, 2005) but has extended to their paternalistic way of interacting with their younger counterparts in the present day. Nonetheless, my interviewees from the Democratic Consolidation generation normally disagreed with and complained about such a paternalistic style of communication. While prior

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[258] In terms of both party votes and political candidates.

research on the relationship between Confucianism and democracy has focused on assessing the compatibility between the two value systems and evaluating how the public in Confucian societies support or disagree with liberal democracy (Fetzer & Soper, 2007; Fukuyama, 1995), my research reveals how Confucian values may shape the family dynamic and contribute to the generational practice of avoiding talking about politics in the family.

I found that a hierarchical parent-child relationship, combined with the norm of harmony and the practice of 'jia chang', often hinders reciprocal political talk in the realm of the family – both online and offline. For example, in LINE Family Groups, young people and their parents focused on talking about 'jia chang' topics such as family trips and dinner arrangements. A loving and caring family culture was reinforced by parents' active sharing of 'elderly pictures' ranging from health-related messages to 'morning pictures'. Given that these pictures usually promote certain lifestyles or moral values, they also serve to reassert parental authority in the family. Having more power over the direction of family conversations and interactions, parents preferred to keep their families apolitical because political subjects were 'sensitive' and talking about them could easily lead to 'fights'. Perceiving politics to be a sensitive issue reflects the fact that the authoritarian period was characterised by political repression – quite a few parents recounted how political expression was then restricted both in the media and in everyday conversation. However, associating political talk with fights was found to be a common metaphor used by both generations, who referred to media representation or personal experience as evidence of this. While involving themselves in conflicts was considered 'meaningless', harmony was an overarching principle for managing and maintaining family relationships. Hence, political conversations were normally off the family table, and silence was used to avoid potential fights. Young people were more likely than their parents to resort to silence, given their lower position in the family hierarchy. Having said that, silence could sometimes be a demonstration of resistance. For instance, young people intentionally ensured that their parents' messages in their LINE Family groups were 'left on read', thus silently voicing their disagreement. On rare occasions when political conversation took place in the family, news media acted as an important provider of discursive resources – families engaged in random political talk when watching TV news during mealtimes or discussed Han Kuo-yu due to the widespread news coverage. While parents were likely to lead these political conversations, young people were mainly listeners. In other words, these rare and random political conversations in the family tended to be unidirectional. Nonetheless, the closer family members were to each other on the political spectrum, the more likely they were to engage in reciprocal political talk.

154

What added up to an intense intergenerational relationship was political differences in national identity. The Democratic Consolidation generation differed from the Soft Authoritarianism generation in terms not only of their attitude towards the Sunflower Movement and of their political language, but also of their identification with Taiwan. While almost all my young informants explicitly called themselves Taiwanese and objected to the prospect of unification, their parents tended to recognise the ethnic and cultural connections between Chinese people and Taiwanese people. Specifically, the Democratic Consolidation generation felt distant from the Chinese way of life, which they described as censored and repressed. Many young people were quick to point out that Facebook, Google and YouTube are not available in China, and some referred to censored media content such as Winnie the Pooh and Peppa Pig. Then, with respect to repression, many young people discussed how Taiwanese celebrities could be forced into apologising for their Taiwanese identity. Whereas the Democratic Consolidation generation was likely to make a clear distinction between being Taiwanese and being Chinese, demonstrating obvious familiarity with Western platforms and media content, particularly American ones, the Soft Authoritarianism generation, who lived through an authoritarian regime, was indoctrinated into identifying as Chinese. More precisely, the pro-KMT parents interviewed were more likely than their pro-DPP counterparts to call themselves Chinese. They were also found to be more likely to consume Chinese media content such as Sing! China and The Forbidden City 100. Even though further research is needed to ascertain whether this media consumption is more of a cause or an outcome of their views, the relationship between media consumption and political identity is evidently reciprocal.

While the pro-KMT parents advocated a closer economic relationship between Taiwan and China, most young people were found to be concerned about how economic dependence on China could have serious consequences for Taiwan's democracy, pointing out that economy and politics are inextricably intertwined. A few young informants, however, insisted that politics can be separated from economy. They supported economic collaboration with China but normally resisted political integration. These young people appeared to be politically apathetic, seldom voting in elections. In other words, their indifference to politics led them to make a clear-cut distinction between political life and economic life. But still they were not willing to trade the former for the latter, especially when the former was under threat. Overall, for the Democratic Consolidation generation, democracy has been the political reality, whereas a prosperous economic life has been perceived to be near impossible. Young people's frustration with their economic inferiority was

exemplified in the generational names they gave themselves, including 'a generation living pay cheque to pay cheque' and 'corporate livestock'.

The Democratic Consolidation generation expressed disenchantment not only with the economy but also with democracy. Democratic politics was described as polarised, corrupt and populist. These descriptions were widely shared by the Soft Authoritarianism generation. Even though both generations had similar interpretations of Taiwan's democracy, they differed in their ways of dealing with these problems of democracy. The Democratic Consolidation generation was found to be more likely than the Soft Authoritarianism generation to support smaller parties as a solution to '"blue" versus "green"' politics. Blaming the legacy media for aggravating the problem of partisan polarisation, the Soft Authoritarianism generation focused on comparing multiple television channels, whereas the Democratic Consolidation generation used search engines for fact-checking. In response to political corruption, the Soft Authoritarianism generation demanded that the government carry out stricter law enforcement, whereas the Democratic Consolidation generation called for open and transparent government. For the Democratic Consolidation generation, social media played an important role in their political engagement, but the Soft Authoritarianism generation ascribed the success of populism to young people's use of social media.

Likewise, even though the two generations may draw on similar narratives or ideas, they tended to attach different meaning and significance to these. Take the 'cape 700 million' narrative, for example. Both generations used it to discuss Chen Shui-bian's corruption scandal; however, for the members of the Soft Authoritarianism generation, this narrative was laden with more importance and was associated with their party identification. While the Democratic Consolidation generation referred to the 'economic miracle' narrative to contrast it with today's stagnant economy, the Soft Authoritarianism generation employed the same narrative to justify their nostalgia for the politically authoritarian but economically prosperous past. Regarding the notion of authenticity, the Democratic Consolidation generation elaborated on Ko Wen-je's abilities, whereas the Soft Authoritarianism generation highlighted Han Kuo-yu's virtue – this emphasis resonates with the parents' having learned the 'four virtues' as part of Chinese nationalist education under the authoritarian regime. It was also found that the Soft Authoritarianism generation's perception of Han Kuo-yu might vary according to parents' party identification, whereas different understandings of the authenticity of Ko Wen-je could be predicted by young people's involvement in politics. Within the Democratic Consolidation generation, the members interviewed who had greater experience of

political activism were more likely than others to dismiss Ko Wen-je's political style as inauthentic and unprofessional. After reviewing here my major research findings, below I carry out an evaluation of the 'mediated generation' approach.

6.2 Strengths and Limitations of a Mediated Generation Approach

My mediated generation approach is based on Mannheim's generation theory and complemented with narrative theory and mediation theory. It was adapted to examining how generational engagement with democracy, intergenerational relationships and political conversations in the family may be mediated. Its attention to the media is essential, since the democratisation of Taiwanese society took place along with the introduction of media liberalisation and privatisation and the arrival of the Internet, digital media and social media. This mediated generation approach makes several contributions to our knowledge of political change and generational communication. First, it presents an opportunity to assess the role of ordinary citizens in relation to historical and political change. While narrative-based generation research focuses on political and cultural elites (Hsiau, 2010a, 2013, 2021), this mediated generation study foregrounds ordinary citizens' political and media practices in their everyday lives. In so doing, it is successful in revealing the connections between the personal and the collective, and between the familial and the national – for example, Chapter 5 shows the impact of metanarratives of being Chinese on the dynamics of the family. Similarly, in Chapter 4, ordinary citizens' engagement in co-constructing or negotiating political meaning is presented: the Democratic Consolidation generation was found to practise a playful political culture through their consumption of and interactions with YouTube celebrity politicians, while both the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation actively made sense of the perceived authenticity of unconventional politicians.

These examples provide evidence of the agency of ordinary people in shaping generational narratives and identities. They also demonstrate that changes in political thinking and culture may crystallise through mundane activities. Moreover, this analysis sheds light on potential discrepancies between researchers' and ordinary people's understandings of certain political vocabulary, such as polarisation and populism. Ordinary citizens' perception of polarisation is based on narratives about the fierce fight between the KMT and the DPP, rather than on an assessment of how far apart these two parties' stances are on salient issues (Fell, 2018). Unlike an analytical focus on the ideological distinction between the elite and the people in the existing academic literature of populism (Kaltwasser, 2017; Mudde, 2004), my informants specifically referred to tropes such as 'overly democratic' and 'overly free',

associating populism with certain political and media practices such as saying whatever one likes, voicing opposition for its own sake, and consuming dummies without independent thinking. In these narratives about populism, their fellow citizens were often identified as the culprits. Another interesting observation is that my informants seemed to see research interviews as an opportunity to deal with their own worries. They focused on discussing problems rather than on the positives of Taiwan's democracy, despite the fact that Taiwan has recently scored 94 out of 100 in the Freedom House index, which is higher than many European Union countries (Parello-Plesner, 2022).

Next, analysis of the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation in the context of the family provides insights into the kinship dimension of generations, highlighting the interconnection between kinship and social generation. For example, social stereotypes of young people such as being inexperienced and hot-blooded contribute to the construction of a hierarchical parent-child relationship. Hence the relation between generations within the Taiwanese family is characterised by the one between teachers and pupils (Mannheim, 1927/1952). This relationship is also practised in LINE Family group, where parents continue to act as instructors and expect their children to listen to them. The media may serve as a new site of family political socialisation. Such analysis also illustrates the fact that self-identification alone does not define a generation; instead, any generation gains meaning and becomes distinctive through its interaction with other generations. Defining and understanding any generation therefore requires special attention to the social relationships involved – not only within the family but also other agents of socialisation such as peer groups. My research shows some members of the Democratic Consolidation generation watching news mashup videos and following certain YouTubers as a result of peer pressure. It also shows both the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generations tending to share similar political views with their peers, and hence having political conversations with them, but future research is needed in order to further reveal how political exchanges can take place between peers, what political talk within peer groups may look like, and whether there are generational differences in the dynamics of peer group conversations.

Third, a mediated generation approach is also useful in exploring potential differences within a generation, as it conceptualises how identity and narrative are both, by their very nature, contested. My research findings point out that party identification may create differences within the Soft Authoritarianism generation, whereas political involvement further distinguishes between the members of the

Democratic Consolidation generation – in addition to the distinction observed between politically apathetic and politically active youth, the politically active segment of young people may further be distinguished by their political associations; that is, young people involved in labour unions were more likely than their peers to frame their political discussions from a class perspective and to lament how during elections the issue of labour rights was often overshadowed by that of national identity. This observation echoes Mannheim's (1927/1952) description of how 'mutual stimulation in a close-knit vital unit inflames the participants and enables them to develop integrative attitudes' (p. 307). Nevertheless, given that my research focuses more on making comparisons between younger and older generations, its analysis of generation units falls short of research depth. Such questions as what political associations and what type of participation in these associations can create generation units require further research.

Fourth, by applying the notion of landscape, and the distinction between objective and subjective landscapes, to the realm of politics (Bolin, 2014, 2017), my research provides an in-depth discussion of the significance of the Sunflower Movement to the Democratic Consolidation generation. The Movement was found to be more important than the chosen generational break, namely the first change in ruling government. Analysis of subjective landscapes, be they media or political, is thus seen to be beneficial to building a better understanding of historical events and social change. Similarly, looking into the subjective interpretation of the 228 Incident shows a discrepancy: while the academic literature on Taiwanese identity and democratisation attaches great importance to this Incident, the majority of both generational groups studied held a negative view of it and unanimously referred to the news narrative that portrays the Incident as a confrontation between mainlanders and native Taiwanese.

Then, examining how generational identity, experience and actions are mediated demonstrates that generational identity can be simultaneously material, symbolic, and social. For instance, when explaining their identity as Taiwanese, the members of the Democratic Consolidation generation were more likely than their elder counterparts to emphasise their civic use of search engines and social networking sites, recounting popular stories of Chinese repression of Taiwanese celebrities, criticising the problem of media censorship in China, and making adjustments to their own ways of consuming media (e.g., ceasing to watch Korean variety shows that refer to Taiwan as 'Taiwan, China'). In other words, by actively reflecting on how the media become meaningful in relation to generational narratives, identities and actions, a mediated generation approach is successful in

159

avoiding a deterministic view of the media in shaping generations, in discovering subjective meanings of the media (e.g., the Democratic Consolidation generation's use of Facebook constitutes its Taiwanese identity), and in capturing dynamic mediation processes (e.g., the Soft Authoritarianism generation is catching up with and making a normative use of social media).

Moreover, with a focus on the everyday life context, a mediated generation analysis of the Democratic Consolidation generation highlights that the meaning of the Sunflower Movement is beyond the Movement itself, and the function of the media is beyond mobilisation; instead, it is manifested in daily practices of resisting the black-box politics such as this generation's turning to outspoken and seemingly transparent YouTubers for political opinion. While political scientists in the field of Taiwan Studies have prioritised a quantitative approach, focusing on any correlation between generational political attitudes and media uses, a mediated generation approach presents an opportunity to explore how political attitudes may take shape through media practices and may be negotiated in social interactions, and how media uses may be connected to social identities and norms. Furthermore, prior generational research has been predominantly retrospective, whereas my study of the Democratic Consolidation generation is an attempt to witness the emergence of a generation that has just begun to rise to prominence. A mediated generation approach seems effective *both* in discovering narratives that have consolidated over time *and* in exploring people's constant negotiation of meaning. It proposes to treat generations as 'in-the-making'.

6.3 Democracy in the 21st Century

When I was pondering how to finish this chapter, a country that has been an independent democracy since 1991 was invaded by its neighbouring colossal dictatorship. This is Ukraine, and its war with Russia has alarmed many Taiwanese citizens. Since the outbreak of the war, 'Ukraine today, Taiwan tomorrow!' is a slogan that has been widely disseminated on social media (*The Economist*, 2022). This slogan is indicative of some resemblance between these two countries. Both Ukraine and Taiwan sought a new chapter in their national histories against the backdrop of the victories of liberalism and democracy at the end of the last century (Fukuyama, 1989; Huntington, 1991). Additionally, their statehood has been under threat – in a manner resembling the Russian leadership's discourse on unity, China has always aimed for reunification, since it considers Taiwan a breakaway province. Nonetheless, Ukrainian identity thrives, and so does Taiwanese identity. While I am sympathetic to the plight of Ukraine and have been engaging in discussion of this with friends back in Taiwan and here in London, my conversation with my parents

about the Russian invasion of Ukraine has shared several features of my experience during the Sunflower Movement: substantial disagreement, a great deal of tension, and the role of my mother as a mediator. There were, however, differences, and the biggest is that we actually talked. Our talk was intense, but it was not as traumatic as my previous experience, characterised by plain silence and rejection of any communication. I messaged my parents in our LINE Family Group, expressing my interest in learning their opinion on Ukraine and Russia and emphasising that having a conversation about this issue would be helpful to my thesis writing. Since we were thousands of miles away from each other, we coordinated and carried out our conversation first on LINE and later on Google Meet because the video call quality on LINE was not good. Perhaps because we were not physically in the same space or because I was already mentally prepared, I was not so appalled by my father's blaming of Ukraine for distancing itself from Russia and his assertion that Taiwanese people should never sacrifice their lives for Taiwanese identity. Neither was I surprised by his dominance of our conversation, even though I felt upset that my mother waited and waited for her turn to speak. However, her limited expression of her views clearly showed that she disagreed with my father. As my father started to raise his voice and simply repeated that Ukraine used to be part of Russia, my mother suggested that it was time for them to go to bed. After turning off my camera and finding myself alone, I wrote the following:

> *I'm proud of myself for participating in the Sunflower Movement and becoming more connected to Taiwanese society and the world. It is my intention to demonstrate how I am and will always be an active citizen. I understand that you lived through a time of political repression, but I cannot agree with your limited way of engaging in politics. I also understand why you adhere to support for a certain political party and accept Chinese unification, but for myself I look forward to a steady growth of smaller parties and aspire to 'stand up like a Taiwanese'. I still think younger and older generations should work together, but, as I am finishing this thesis, I realise what I want to tell you now is: My generation is ready to take on more responsibility for Taiwan's democracy.*

This text may be compared with the letter I included in Chapter 1. Instead of being apologetic about my political action and identity, I now feel proud that I can think differently from my parents. I realise how our differences are connected to the different eras in which we were socialised into politics. The more I understand their generation, the more certain I feel about my own political beliefs. I have faith in the growth of an ever-more flourishing democracy in Taiwan and in being recognised as

Taiwanese – the phrase 'stand up like a Taiwanese'[259] originated from Huang Wen-shiung's[260] attempt to assassinate Chiang Ching-kuo[261] and has become a popular phrase in Taiwan independence movements. Time has moved on, and Taiwan's political landscape has seen many changes, such as the Chiang family succession being replaced by regular direct presidential elections. My research has, however, shown the influence of the authoritarian past on the Soft Authoritarianism generation and of authoritarian legacies on everyday narratives and political conversation. This study found that a Confucian, hierarchy-based family culture has tended to develop strained relations between the young and the old. In such an intergenerational relationship, the views of elders tend to be prioritised, whereas disagreements tend to be harmonised. This type of interaction between generations centres on transmitting the older generation's knowledge and culture to the younger generation. Nevertheless, intergenerational relationships can have a different shape.

Compared with a transmission view of intergenerational relations, the Mannheimian approach, as reviewed in Chapter 2, encourages intergenerational exchange and mutual learning, respectively manifested in his reference to 'reevaluation' (Mannheim, 1927/1952: 294) and his claim that teachers can also be educated by their pupils. Even though my research does find that young people's digital skills often create an opportunity for their parents to learn from them, such transmission of digital knowledge is transient and remains unidirectional. In other words, the relationship between the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generation is consistently characterised by one-way transmission, whereas Mannheim's (1927/1952) conception of intergenerational relationships as co-education highlights the importance of reciprocity. However, a reciprocal approach to intergenerational relationships would be considered more useful than a transmission approach, especially from the perspective of a deliberative democracy which values dialogue and even argument (Bächtiger & Pedrini, 2010; Habermas, 2005). Moreover, it could also help to strengthen the place of the family in political socialisation – by adopting a reciprocal logic of intergenerational communication, parents will be ready to treat their children as

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[259] Among proponents of Taiwan independence, the story of Huang's attempted assassination of Chiang Ching-kuo was that he shouted 'Let me stand up like a Taiwanese' before getting arrested.

[260] Back in 1970, he was a Taiwanese graduate student at Cornell University (Lelyveld, 1970) and had been writing articles for the World United Formosans for Independence organisation (Cheung, 2016).

[261] As first introduced in Chapter 2, he was the son of Chiang Kai-shek and once served as Minister of Defence, as Premier, and as President. He lifted martial law in July 1987, less than a year before his death.

young citizens, to acknowledge their equal rights to political expression and thus to focus on preparing them to later engage in political conversation in the wider world. The family in this case will cease to be apolitical and become politically productive.

The Soft Authoritarianism generation's transmission approach seems to exclude the practice of reciprocity, but reciprocity is theoretically central to Confucianism, connoting 'like-heartedness', that is, the quality of being able to put oneself in other people's shoes (McNaughton, 1974; Yum, 1988). The problem with the Soft Authoritarianism generation's approach may lie not in Confucianism itself but may be more related to a Confucian concept of democracy constructed by the past authoritarian regime, under which the common good was equated with state interests, and empathy was overshadowed by loyalties to family and nation (Huang, 2006; Shi & Lu, 2010). Hence a new question emerging out of my research is: How can we deal with authoritarian legacies in order to facilitate reciprocal relations between generations? This question alone deserves a full investigation and cannot be properly addressed here, but I can make two suggestions, based on my mediated generation research. First, cultural and historical sensitivity will be the key to problematising the issue of authoritarian legacy and to devising reciprocal intergenerational relationships. For example, the notion of intergenerational justice has been widely adopted in order to rethink generational politics and to address contemporary crises with cross-generational effects, but its examination is often based on the Western liberal tradition (Huang, 2012; Thompson, 2012; Tremmel, 2009). Considering my research finding that, in a hierarchical family, senior family members enjoy greater power than their younger counterparts to express their political views and shape conversations, it is paradoxical to consider the ideal of 'justice' when inequality is thus normalised. This paradox as such urges us to further explore how the idea of justice is perceived and practised in different cultures and polities and by different *generations*.

Another key step will be to consider how the media facilitate or hinder reciprocal interactions between generations. My research has revealed that the media provide discursive resources for the Democratic Consolidation generation and the Soft Authoritarianism generations to form self-identification and perception of each other – these resources are often related to stereotypes. It has found that generations nowadays tend to be in separate mediated spaces which reflect their media habits and sometimes their political identities. When in the same mediated space, the two generations often interact in accordance with established norms. Take LINE Family Group for example. It mainly acts as a site for practising familial harmony and hierarchy and for sustaining the de-politicisation of the family. Despite

163

these findings about the media as a hinderance to a reciprocal intergenerational relationship, there is still evidence of the media facilitating mutual understanding and exchanges between generations. Further research on these communication conditions may be useful to our discussion of a normative role of the media in relation to multiple generations living together in a democratic society.

To conclude, by developing a mediated generation approach and adopting this to the study of the Democratic Consolidation generation in Taiwanese society, this thesis serves as an initial attempt to build a better understanding of a global generation of young people socialised into politics at a historical juncture featuring accelerated social changes that have been facilitated by digital media – such as the Maidan generation in Ukraine and the post-Pinochet generation in Chile, to name just two. As these generations begin to take a more central role in their societies and occupy international headlines, not only more research but also more innovative ways of studying these generations are needed in order to advance our knowledge of democracy in the 21st century.

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Briefing

- Introduce myself and my research project (topics and aims).
- Confirm consent: emphasise confidentiality, anonymity and the right to withdrawal.

Generational labels, digital media & democracy

1. Discuss a news article titled 'This election gave evidence to Facebook Revolution 2.0'. Questions for discussion include:

    1) The article describes how young people rely on social media in order to be informed and interact with political candidates. I am curious about what you do with social media, and why.

    2) The author emphasises the importance of social media in political campaigns and political participation. What do you think about her point of view? From your perspective, what influence do social media have on democratic politics?

        a. Follow-up: some people discuss the issue of a filter bubble on Facebook. What do you think about this? How do you deal with it?

        b. Follow-up: in addition to Facebook, LINE is another popular social media site in Taiwan. Some people describe how the elder members of their family like to share information with them on LINE. Do you have any similar experiences?

    3) In terms of using the Internet and social media, do you see your generation as *similar to* or *different from* your parents' generation?

2. Our discussion was thus far on social media. Let's shift our focus to mainstream media. What comes into your mind when you hear 'mainstream media'? In terms of using the mainstream media, do you see your generation as *similar to* or *different from* your parents' generation?

The Sunflower Generation & meanings of democracy

1. Have you ever heard of the 'Sunflower Generation'? What comes into your mind when you now hear this?

2. Do you consider yourselves as the 'sunflowers'? What would you call your generation?

3. It is mentioned in this news article that the 'Sunflower Generation' does not sacrifice social justice and democracy for economic development. What do you think about this description?

4. Speaking of democracy, what comes into your mind when you hear the word? How would you describe Taiwan's democracy?

Generation, historical events, Taiwan's democracy & national identity

1. Some people consider the Meilidao Incident crucial to Taiwan's democratisation and others the lifting of martial law. What do you think about these two historical events? Are they important to Taiwan's democracy? In addition to these, what are the other historical events you find important to Taiwan's democracy?

Note: Give participants some time to think and brainstorm, and then show cards which list the historical events recognised as important by academic researchers.
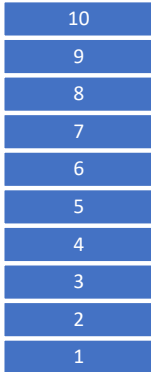
2. Some people think that transitional justice is important to deepening Taiwan's democracy. What do you think?

3. For you, what changes to Taiwan's democratic politics would you like to see?

4. Do you see any challenges to Taiwan's democracy? Some people are concerned about the Chinese influence on Taiwan's democracy. What do you think about this?

5. Speaking of Taiwan in relation to China, I am curious about your view of national identity. Have you ever discussed the issue of national identity with your parents? How is your identity *similar to* or *different from* theirs?

Closing

This is the end of our focus-group discussion. I would like to invite you to brainstorm a group name which will be used in my dissertation. At the same time, could you please help fill in this short questionnaire? I would also appreciate it if you could please help introduce your parents to me for interview. Thank you very much for participating in this focus group.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Demographics

Name:	Gender: □Male □Female	Year of birth:
Where were you born? _____city/county _____district/township		
Where have you lived for the longest time before the age of 18? _____city/county _____district/township □Same as above		
Is your father □Taiwanese Minnan □Taiwanese Hakka □Taiwanese indigenous □Taiwanese waishengren □Chinese (including Hong Kong and Macau) □Southeast Asian □Other, please specify: _____		
Is your mother □Taiwanese Minnan □Taiwanese Hakka □Taiwanese indigenous □Taiwanese waishengren □Chinese (including Hong Kong and Macau) □Southeast Asian □Other, please specify: _____		
Which of the following categories best describes your current work? □Full-time job (30 hours or more per week) □Regular part-time job □Irregular part-time job □Family business with pay □Family business without pay □Student without job; School: _____Department: _____ □Student with job; School: _____Department: _____ □Apprentice, trainee □Maternity leave (with pay) □Leave without pay □Housework without job □Military service □Retired □Cannot work due to older age, sickness or disability □Unemployed and looking for job □No plans to find a job □Other, please specify: _____		
Where do you work? Company: _____ Position: _____		
The following picture shows how our society is composed of different social strata. '10' is the highest whereas '0' is the lowest. Please circle the number that best describes where you now stand. 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1		

Political participation

Were you on the spot during the 318 Movement? □Yes, _____times □No
Were you supportive of the 318 Movement? □Yes □No □I don't know/I'm not sure □Other, please specify: _____
Did you vote in the 2014 local elections? □Yes □No
Did you vote in the 2016 presidential election? □Yes, I voted for _____ □No

Did you cast your party ballot[262] in 2016?   □Yes, I voted for □Kuomintang □Democratic Progressive Party □New Party □People First Party □Taiwan Solidarity Union □Green Party Taiwan □New Power Party □Social Democratic Party   □No
Are you going to vote in the coming local elections? □Yes □No □I don't know/I haven't decided yet

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[262] The Legislative Yuan consists of 113 seats – 73 seats are allocated to legislators from geographically-based single-member districts, six to aboriginal legislators, and 34 to legislators elected by proportional representation. The last category is based on how many votes each party obtains – there is a ballot featuring a list of political parties, called the party ballot.