

# Memory and national identity building after dramatic historical events: the cases of Croatia and Taiwan

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University of Zagreb  
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**Memory and national identity building after dramatic historical events: the  
cases of Croatia and Taiwan**

Master's Thesis

Zagreb, 2023.

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**Memory and national identity building after dramatic historical  
events: the cases of Croatia and Taiwan**

MASTER'S THESIS

Mentor: prof. dr. sc. Dejan Jović

Student: Chia-Wei Fang

Zagreb, September, 2023.

I confirm that I wrote the master's thesis *Memory and national identity building after dramatic historical events: the cases of Croatia and Taiwan* myself, and that it is completely my work, in this form, I handed it to my mentor Professor Dejan Jović. Also, I confirm it has never been published, and it was not used to fulfil obligation on some other university, and that I never received any ECTS credits for it. Finally, I declare that in this work, I abide the rules of scientific and academic work, especially, paragraphs 16 to 19, Ethical Codes of the University of Zagreb.

Chia-Wei Fang

## **Abstract**

Croatia's independence from Yugoslavia in 1991 and the retreat of the Republic of China government from Mainland China to Taiwan in 1949 have led to different eras for the people of these two lands, but due to geography and history, Croatia and Taiwan still have unique relations with their neighboring countries that are not merely *neighbors*. This thesis examines how Croatians and Taiwanese perceive their national identity and relationship with the post-Yugoslav countries/Mainland China decades after the dramatic historical events that affected the fate of their countries, especially in the context of the Internet era, Croatia's accession to the European Union, and the rising tension in the Taiwan Strait, how ordinary people – in particular the younger generation, feel the impact of the historical legacies and the strong bonds created by shared cultures.

### **Key words:**

Croatia, Taiwan, Republic of China, People's Republic of China, national identity, post-Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, Chiang Kai-shek, language, popular culture, young people

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## Introduction

Croatia and Taiwan are on opposite ends of the globe, 10,000 kilometers apart, with completely different histories, cultures, races, religions, and languages, even the people of these two countries know very little about each other. Compared to Mainland China, there is not much research on the post-Yugoslav countries in Taiwan's academia, also very few students have gone to the post-Yugoslav countries to study. On the other hand, most of the research on East Asia in Croatian academia is focused on Mainland China. It is rare to discuss Croatia and Taiwan together, if giving an example of a Balkan country that has been compared to Taiwan because of its political situation, it is usually Kosovo, but I see quite some similarities between Croatia and Taiwan.

After Croatia declared its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, other people who used to belong to the same country suddenly became foreign countries. And with time and the affinity with the European Union, Croatia also has a different path from other *foreign countries*. After the National Government of the Republic of China retreated to Taiwan in 1949, because of the civil war led to the disagreement on the interpretation of *China*, people who used to belong to the same country suddenly had different country names while it seemed hard to call each other *a foreign country*, with history evolved, different political systems and cultures developed on the both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Compared to the independence of Croatia in 1991, longer time has passed since the 1949 political separation of the two sides of the Strait, but many Taiwanese still find it difficult to define where they are from, and are still groping in the fog of national identity, whereas Croatians have a much clearer national identity.

When being asked about the nationality, the people of both countries usually will answer *I am Croatian* and *I am Taiwanese* without hesitation. But when being asked ‘Are you (Croatian/Taiwanese) and Serbian/Chinese the same people?’, even though they may give a negative answer immediately, it is somehow difficult to draw a clear line. Of course, no foreigner with a basic understanding of the history of Croatia or Taiwan would ask such a sensitive question, but since such a complicated complex exists, it is worthwhile to explore the possible reasons behind it.

There have been many studies analyzing the national identity of Croatia and Taiwan from the perspectives of history, memory, and nationalism, but I would like to explore it from a sociological perspective that is close to the lives of ordinary people. The Chinese ancient philosopher *Mengzi*

(‘孟子’) said: ‘*The people are the most important element in a nation, the spirits of the land and grain (referring to the state) are the next, the emperor is the lightest.*’ (‘民為貴，社稷次之，君為輕’). Although this quote is about his *People-Centered Philosophy* as a principle of governance, I would like to borrow his concept that the people are the foundation of the country, to explore what shapes the way ordinary people – especially the younger generations, view themselves and their *neighbors* when the history is fading away and political philosophy is not more important than real life.

Therefore, the sources for this thesis come mainly from sociological research, public opinion surveys, and my conversations with people of different generations. It is undeniable that due to the language limitation, as well as my understanding of Croatia and Yugoslavia – from history to society, is still not comprehensive and sufficient, there are limitations on data collection and the accuracy of analysis. In addition, the factors affecting the construction of national identity are extremely complex and diverse, the scope this thesis covers is limited.

As for the relationship between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, since it is still politically unresolved, it is not precise to call either side China. Therefore, I refer to the territory ruled by the Beijing regime as Mainland China or People's Republic of China (PRC), and the territory ruled by the Taipei regime as Republic of China (ROC) or Taiwan.

Although this thesis is not a historical analysis, the historical background is undoubtedly the basis for the present development of the two countries, it is therefore necessary to outline the important historical events.

Chapter One provides a brief history of Croatia from the 6th century B.C., through imperial rule and becoming a state of Yugoslavia, to its independence in 1991.

Chapter Two introduces the history of Taiwan from being ruled by various countries since the 17th century, the founding of Republic of China in 1911, the National Government of the ROC’s retreat to Taiwan in 1949, to the political development to the present day.

In Chapter Three, I discuss the influence of common languages on common identity, and extend it to the sharing of pop culture in common-language areas in the Internet era.

In Chapter Four, I discuss how the most important and controversial historical figures of both countries – Josip Broz Tito and Chiang Kai-shek, have been dealt with and viewed in terms of transitional justice today, and extends this to the young generation's general views on history, politics, and real life.



In Chapter 5, using the concept proposed by the Taiwanese political scientist Jiang Yi-huah, I analyze the national identities of Croatia and Taiwan from the three domains of ethnicity, culture, and institutions. I also try to look into how Croatian and Taiwanese people consider themselves and how they *wish* to be considered.

## **Chapter One: The History of the Republic of Croatia**

Croats migrated and settled in the Balkans during the 6th and 7th century, formed two polities Duchy of Croatia and Principality of Lower Pannonia in formal Roman provinces Pannonia and Dalmatia under Frankish Kingdom's rule. In 925, the first documented king of Croatia Tomislav unified Pannonia and Dalmatia, Kingdom of Croatia was established. In 1102, Koloman was crowned as King of Croatia and Dalmatia, Croatia was annexed to Kingdom of Hungary ever since. After the Battle of Mohács in 1526 and the decline of Kingdom of Hungary, Croatia accepted Ferdinand I as the King of Croatia and joined Habsburg Monarchy, at the time, Dalmatia was ruled by the Republic of Venice, Slavonia and most of the territory were ruled by Habsburg Monarchy. During the time being governed by Habsburg Monarchy, Croatia constantly fought for unification, independence and autonomy, her territory had been governed by Hungary and Austria until 1918. On the other hand, since 15th century, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Macedonia were dominated by Ottoman Empire until late 19th and early 20th century.

In 19th century, the resentment in the Balkans gradually accumulated, the Balkans was shrouded in the climate of national sentiment, every nation wanted to seize the chance to be emancipated from the oppression when Austro-Hungarian Empire and Ottoman Empire declined, which led to two Balkan wars in 1912 and 1913, and soon touched off the First World War in 1914. Following the collapse of Austro-Hungarian Empire after the First World War, Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was formed in 1918. In the first 10 years, the partisan struggle in the parliamentary government indicated the fragile base of the Kingdom, conflicts between the two major political parties People's Radical Party and Croatian Peasant Party led to the assassination of Croatian Peasant Party leader Stjepan Radić. In response to the political instability, King Alexander I redesignated the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes as Kingdom of Yugoslavia and proclaimed dictatorship in 1929. To resolve the disputes between Serbs and Croats, Prince Paul, the Regent of Yugoslavia, replaced the Prime Minister of Yugoslavia Milan Stojadinović with

Dragiša Cvetković, as Prince Paul had lost confidence in Stojadinović's ability to resolve the impasse with Vladko Maček and his Croatian Peasant Party because of Stojadinović's failure to reach a compromise with the Croats during more than three and a half years in office. (Lampe, 2000: 194; Djokić, 2011: 154). The Cvetković–Maček Agreement was reached in August 1939, Vladko Maček joined the central government as the deputy prime minister together with four other Croats, the agreement led to the creation of a larger and single Croatian administrative unit called Banovina Croatia ('Banovina Hrvatska') which contained two existing Croatian counties ('banovine') of Sava and Primorje and additional districts. In the newly established Banovina, Croats were given broad autonomy except the competencies in state security, defence, foreign affairs, and external trade.

During the Second World War, the Axis Powers invaded Yugoslavia in 1941, Kingdom of Yugoslavia was partitioned by Germany, Italy, Hungary, and Bulgaria; Dalmatia was occupied by Italy; the rest of Croatia became the Independent State of Croatia as a fascist puppet state led by Ustaša's leader Ante Pavelić. Its overriding purpose was to create an ethnically pure Croatian state from which Serbs, Jews, and gypsies would be permanently cleansed (Lampe, 2000: 209).

Horrible crimes were committed by all sides during the wars, the Independent State of Croatia became the main slaughterhouse of war, deaths of Yugoslavians from all causes attributable to war numbered 1.027 million, Serbs, Croats and Bosnia's Muslims together accounted for 81 per cent of the war victims (Benson, 2004: 77; Mennecke, 2013: 483). In 1945, life of Independent State ended with the war, it became People's Republic of Croatia (renamed Socialist Republic of Croatia in 1963), constituted Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (renamed Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1963) with five other republics: Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Montenegro, and two autonomous provinces: Kosovo and Vojvodina, which were part of Serbia.

The Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia was a strictly centralized one-party state, led by Communist Party of Yugoslavia (renamed the League of Communists in 1952), the leader of the ruling party as well as the Prime Minister (as of 1953 President of the Republic) was Josip Broz Tito. Tito's Yugoslavia was built based on the slogan *Brotherhood and unity*, aiming to overcome conflicts and maintain peaceful relations among Yugoslavia's nations. Tito adopted economic reforms and market socialism to recover Yugoslavia from the Second World War. For instance, the Law on Workers' Self-management in 1950 aimed at increasing efficiency and competitive

power, it introduced workers' council, which allowed workers to engage in key management decision making. The market orientation of the project aimed at allowing Yugoslav industry to trade with the west, given its new found isolation from the Soviet bloc (Lydall, 1984: 67), which contributed to the significant growth of Yugoslavia's economy in 1950s and 1960s. As for the foreign affairs, Tito insisted on non-alignment policy, during the Cold War, Yugoslavia maintained its independence of Soviet Union and reaped benefits of the competition between Soviet Union and the United States.

In late 1960s to 1971, Croatia Spring was a notable event which advocated for more autonomy of Croatia and consequently challenged the federal government. After 1965 market reforms, Croatians had complaints about economic issues such as imbalance between its contribution and obtainment of the federal budget, and resentment at Serbian influence in the federal government. This economically motivated dissatisfaction found cultural expression among the intellectuals (Lane, 2004: 140), argument about Croatian and Serbian languages was raised, it again stimulated the nationalism sentiment and increased the tension between Yugoslavia's nations. The movement was repressed by the regime but brought a new constitution of Yugoslavia which came into effect in 1974 and gave more rights to the six republics.

In 1980, Tito – the president of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as well as the President of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia passed away, the main unifying force of Yugoslavia consequently vanished. Meanwhile the 1979 oil crisis aggravated existing inflation and foreign debt. Economy difficulties, unbalanced economic development and growing ethnic tensions within Yugoslavia, and the failure of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, destabilized the country and pushed it to approach the breakup.

In April and May 1990, Croatia had the first free multi-party parliamentary elections, Croatian Democratic Union (Hrvatska demokratska zajednica, HDZ) won the elections, the leader of the party Franjo Tuđman was elected as the president, which indicated the end of communist rule in Croatia. In December 1990, the new Croatian constitution was passed, Serbs was categorized as a minority ethnic group, the tension between Croats and Serbs in Croatia was further intensified. In the same year, Serbian Autonomous Oblast of Krajina (SAO Krajina) was established, including the region around Knin, Northern Dalmatia and Lika. SAO Krajina declared the secession from Croatia on 1 April 1991, and proclaimed itself as a Serbian state named Republic of Serbian

Krajina, later in February 1992, it was joined with two other separate Serb autonomous regions SAO Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmia and SAO Western Slavonia.

On 19 May 1991, Croatia independence referendum was approved with the results of 93.24 per cent in favor of Republic of Croatia as a sovereign and independent state, and 5.38 per cent against remaining in Yugoslavia as a single federal state, on 25 June 1991, Croatia declared independence. From 1991 to 1995, a series of armed conflicts and massacres were taken place in Croatia known as Croatian War of Independence (in Croatia also as “Homeland War”), Croatia armed forces fought against Yugoslav People's Army which sided with Serb rebels (1991-1992) and the Serbian Army of Krajina (1992-1995). Croatia’s decisive victory in the military offensive Operation Storm in 1995 marked the end of the war, Croatia and the authorities of Republic of Serbian Krajina signed the peace agreement called Erdut Agreement in the same year. Under the terms of the agreement, United Nation Security Council established a Transitional Administration in the regions of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Sirmium, after the two-year transitional period, the territories were formally reintegrated to Croatia in 1998. In 2013, Croatia joined European Union, and adopted the euro and became a member of Schengen Area in 2023.

## **Chapter Two: The History of Taiwan (Republic of China)**

From 17th century to the end of the Second World War, Taiwan was ruled by Dutch, Spanish, Zheng Chenggong’s Kingdom of Tungning, Qing Dynasty of China, and Japan. In 1945, Japan surrendered to the Allies of the Second World War, Government of Republic of China (ROC) took over the administration of the islands of Taiwan and Penghu, marked the end of Japanese rule of Taiwan.

10 October 1911, Hsinhai Revolution overthrew the last imperial dynasty of China – Qing Dynasty, on 1 January 1912, Republic of China (ROC) was established, Sun Yat-sen was elected as the first provisional president. In 1925, Sun Yat-sen passed away, Chiang Kai-shek became the leader of Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang, KMT) as well as the leader of the government of ROC. In 1949, ROC lost the civil war against the Communist Party of China (CCP) led by Mao Zedong, and retreated to Taiwan. On 1 October 1949, Mao Zedong proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Beijing, took control of Mainland China, both ROC and PRC assert themselves as the sole legitimate government of China. PRC attempted to liberate Taiwan while

ROC attempted to recover the territories in Mainland China, the armed conflicts continued, PRC successfully conquered several islands in Taiwan Strait. Until early 1950, the Truman administration of the U.S. expected CCP could be another Josip Broz Tito and split with the Soviet Union. President Truman initially intended to prevent being militarily involved in Taiwan Strait, on 5 January 1950, he stated:

‘The United States has no predatory designs on Formosa, or on any other Chinese territory. The United States has no desire to obtain special rights or privileges, or to establish military bases on Formosa at this time. Nor does it have any intention of utilizing its Armed Forces to interfere in the present situation. The United States Government will not pursue a course which will lead to involvement in the civil conflict in China. Similarly, the United States Government will not provide military aid or advice to Chinese forces on Formosa. In the view of the United States Government, the resources on Formosa are adequate to enable them to obtain the items which they might consider necessary for the defense of the island. The United States Government proposes to continue under existing legislative authority the present ECA program of economic assistance.’

However, the outbreak of the Korean War on 25 June 1950 changed U.S. strategy on Taiwan Strait, President Truman declared the neutralization of Taiwan Strait and sent the 7th Fleet into the Strait to prevent a wider war. PRC’s engagement in the Korean War also led to the deterioration of U.S.-PRC relations, the strategic importance of Taiwan to prevent the spread of communism and to the U.S.’s interests in the Western Pacific was further prominent, U.S. continued to claim the *undetermined status of Taiwan* theory. ROC’s seat in the United Nation as the representation of China was consequently secured.

On 3 September 1954, PRC started shelling Kinmen islands, and took Yijiangshan Islands and Dachen Islands in 1955, it was known as The First Taiwan Strait Crisis. Since then, the ROC-controlled territories are Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu to this day. The Second Taiwan Strait Crisis started from the intense Artillery Battle in Kinmen on 23 August 1958, and in substance ended in January 1959, but the shelling intermittently continued until the establishment of PRC-U.S. diplomatic relations in 1979.

On 28 February 1947, the conflict between Taipei police and a contraband cigarette peddler led to large-scale mass protests. The existing discontent over growing unemployment rates, inflation, and corruption was sparked, KMT troops brutally suppressed the continuing riots. Benshengren—the Han Chinese that settles in Taiwan before Japan’s surrender in 1945, massacred Waishengren—

the Chinese migrants came from Mainland China after 1945. Following the 228 incident, martial law was declared in Taiwan on 19 May 1949, the White Terror era began. Dissidence and supporters of communism and Taiwan independence were being persecuted, until the martial law was lifted in 1987, ROC was transformed from a one-party system to a democracy.

On 25 October 1971, United Nations General Assembly adopted the Resolution 2758, recognizing PRC as the only legitimate representative of *China* to the UN, ROC was expelled from the UN and replaced by PRC hereafter. Consequently, most states switched diplomatic recognition from ROC to PRC. Up to 2023, there are 13 states recognize ROC as a sovereign state with maintaining full diplomatic relations, the only one in Europe is Vatican City State.

In 1972, United States President Richard Nixon visited PRC for the normalization of U.S.-PRC relations. At the end of the visit, U.S. and PRC issued Shanghai Communiqué, in which the U.S. *acknowledges* there is only one China, and Taiwan is a part of China. On 1978, U.S. and PRC announced Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations, which recognizes the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal Government of China. On 1 January 1979, the U.S.-PRC diplomatic relations were officially established, at the same time, the 1955 U.S.-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty and the diplomatic relations with ROC were terminated.

In 1970s, Chiang Kai-shek's son Chiang Ching-kuo served as the head of the Executive Yuan, he launched Ten Major Construction Projects which contributed to Taiwan's rapid industrialization and high economic growth, namely Taiwan Economic Miracle, Taiwan thus made up Four Asian Dragons with Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea. In 1975, Chiang Kai-shek passed away, his vice president Yen Chia-kan succeeded to the office. In 1978, Chiang Ching-kuo was elected in the indirect presidential election, during his term in office, Chiang rejected CCP leader Deng Xiao-ping's *One Country, Two systems* proposal. In 1987, Chiang ended the 38 years of martial law, opposition political parties can be legally formed henceforth, in the same year, he permitted residents of Taiwan return to Mainland China for family reunions.

In 1988, Chiang Ching-kuo passed away, Vice President Lee Teng-hui became the first Benschengren president. On June 1995, Lee Teng-hui visited the U.S., PRC conducted a series of live fire and amphibious assault exercises surrounding Taiwan as reaction, which is known as the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis. In 1996, ROC had the first direct presidential election, Lee Teng-hui was reelected.

In 2000, Chen Shui-bian of Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was elected in the presidential election, resulting in the first turnover of executive power between political parties in ROC. DPP was founded in 1986, which has ‘Establishing the *Republic of Taiwan* as a sovereign, independent, and autonomous nation’ in its party platform.

In 2008, Ma Ying-jeou was elected as the president, KMT took office again. Ma’s cross-Strait policy was based on the outcome of a meeting in 1992 between ROC’s semiofficial representative Straits Exchange Foundation and its counterpart – PRC’s Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits, which is known as 1992 Consensus. With this consensus, both sides of the Strait agree that there is one China, both Mainland China and Taiwan are part of China, but two sides have different definitions of *China*, which can be verbally and respectively stated (Taipei considers China as Republic of China, while Beijing considers China as People’s Republic of China). Under ROC’s constitutional framework, ROC is a sovereign state, but at present has two areas – free area and mainland area, ROC’s ruling power only extends to the free area (Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu). Ma stated *Mutual Non-recognition of Sovereignty, Mutual Non-denial of Jurisdiction and No Unification, No Independence, No Use of Force* in order to maintain the status quo and peace.

In 2016, Tsai Ing-wen of DPP was elected in the presidential election, and reelected in 2020. Regarding the cross-Strait issue, Tsai stated *Taiwan is ROC, ROC is Taiwan*, in the interview with BBC after the victory of the election, she said:

‘Well, the idea is that we don't have a need to declare ourselves an independent state. We are an independent country already and we call ourselves the Republic of China (Taiwan)’

In 2021, Tsai stated *The Two Sides across the Taiwan Strait Are Not Subordinate to Each Other* in the speech of the national day on 10 October, which was considered as President Lee Teng-hui’s Two-state Theory by PRC.

In the context of U.S.-PRC tensions, after U.S. House speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan on 2 and 3 August 2022, PRC launched a series of military exercises around Taiwan from 4 to 7 August, as part of the exercises, PRC fired eleven ballistic missiles into the waters around Taiwan, Japanese Ministry of Defense announced that four of the missiles flew over Taiwan island, it was considered as the Fourth Taiwan Strait Crisis.

The next presidential election will take place on 13 January 2024, the three major nominees are Hon Yu-ih of KMT, Lai Ching-te of DPP, and Ko Wen-je of Taiwan People’s Party (TPP).

President	In office	Political party	Cross-Strait policy
Chiang Kai-shek Yen Chia-kan	1948-1949 and 1950-1975 1975-1978	KMT	Reconquer the Mainland China
Chiang Ching-kuo	1978-1988	KMT	No Contact, No Negotiation, and No Compromise, China's Reunification under the Three Principles of the People
Lee Teng-hui	1988-2000	KMT	Special state-to-state Relationship, Two-State Theory
Chen Shui-bian	2000-2008	DPP	One Country on Each Side, One China One Taiwan
Ma Ying-jeou	2008-2016	KMT	1992 Consensus, One China with Respective Interpretations, No Unification, No Independence, No Use of Force
Tsai Ing-wen	2016-present	DPP	The Two Sides across the Taiwan Strait Are Not Subordinate to Each Other

## Chapter Three: Common Language and Internet Era — Communicate Without Barriers

### 3.1 Croatian Language: Invisible Connection — Our Songs, Our Inside Jokes

Before 1990s, Croatian and Serbian were considered as the same language, today they are called officially in two different names. The term *Serbo-Croatian* is used by foreign linguists, and appears on Wiktionary where foreigners can look into the language and perceive Croatian and Serbian are one language given the term, while it is controversial among the people who actually speak it. In 1850, The Literary Agreement made the effort to unify the languages and dialects, but didn't settle the name of the joint literary language. In 1954, The Novi Sad Agreement named Eastern and Western variants *Serbo-Croatian* and *Croato-Serbian*, but in 1960s the tensions



regarding languages between Croatia and Serbia appeared again, Declaration on the Name and Position of the Croatian Literary Language in 1967 demanded to use the name *Croatian Literary Language*. When Croatia became independent in 1991, Croatian was finally declared the official language, and became the 24th official language of European Union in 2013. The name of the language however never ceased being argued, a book called *Jezik i nacionalizam* (Language and Nationalism) by Croatian linguist Snježana Kordić published in 2010 argues that the language of Croats (and Serbs and Bosnians and Montenegrins) is Serbo-Croatian, the book and the author received a lot of media attention since the general public considers the term *Serbo-Croatian* politically incorrect (Kapović, 2011: 53).

How the language should be named, and whether Croatian and Serbian languages are two separate languages, are always a political issue and being utilized for the preservation of national identity. Serbo-Croatian is the official language of Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Kosovo, although it is now called by their national names in each country (Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin), scientifically, the four languages/variants are all based on Štokavian (‘Štokavština’) and are mutually intelligible. Far more than 90 per cent of typically 'Serbian' words are understood by over 90 per cent of Croats, and vice versa (Kordić, 2010: 101), regular people can hardly point out the linguistic differences. The most visible difference is the usage of Latin and Cyrillic alphabet, as like the usage of Traditional Chinese characters in Taiwan and Simplified characters in China. There is no controversy to call the language Mandarin Chinese in Taiwan or in China, but naming the language Croatian or Serbo-Croatian intuitively connects to the nations – even though linguistics as a science should be separated from politics.

Besides the name of the language which can immediately touches Croatian speakers’ sentiment towards the nationality, among the younger people that didn’t undergo the wars, the cultural contacts play a more significant role in their daily life. Music, TV shows, films, social networks, etc. in the language that one can perfectly understand are naturally more appealing than in other unfamiliar languages. Serbian music is thus very popular in Croatia, especially among the young generation, Serbian singers such as Devito, Nucci, Voyage and many more often occupy the Billboard charts in Croatia.

Living in the internet era makes it particularly easier for Croatians being exposed to Serbian language through not only traditional media but also Youtube, TikTok, and podcasts, etc., vice versa, Croatian singers are also very popular in the whole post-Yugoslav area. The identity issues

are barely involved when people are dancing in the clubs or enjoying the entertainment on their devices.

The popular cultures in familiar languages are preferable to Croatians, and consequently facilitates the exchanges of languages. Thus, phrases in Serbia can easily be imported to Croatia and vice versa, for instance the phrase *samo jako* 'going strong' that is popular among the youth in Croatia (Kapović, 2020: 174). Indeed, linguistic purism and prescriptivism are still in conservative agenda, hate speech can still be spread through media and online forums, the new generations are rather indifferent about politics and the old disputes in the history.

Although the memory and sentiments of the old time are fading away, it does not eliminate people's identification as a part of this region, even among younger people. It is common that nationals of the post-Yugoslav countries are gathering through the internet. For instance, there is a large number of Facebook groups called *Srbi, Hrvati i Bosanci u...* (Serbians, Croatians and Bosnians in...) for people from these countries that live abroad to share information. As the people that speak the mutually intelligible languages and have similar backgrounds are a lot easier to communicate with. Additionally, the similarities make people feel they should help each other when they are all abroad, the social circles are therefore built.

For entertainment, there are also communities on social media with content focusing on matters in this certain area. For instance, the Instagram accounts @europeancomedy that has 389,000 followers and names itself *EASTERN EUROPEAN MEMES* in the account profile, it shares the memes in English about the traits and lifestyle of the Balkan people. The account @balkan\_memes with 407,000 followers has similar content, and states *Balkan humor all in one place* in the description of the account. The account @yugojokes with 337,000 followers also shares memes that covers the Balkans, the content is in both English and Croatian languages.

Instagram is the most frequently used social media for entertainment (Valenti, 2021: 17), the users of Instagram around the globe as well as in Croatia are mainly young people. According to the statistics made by software development company NapoleonCat, in June 2023, there were 1570,200 Instagram users in Croatia, 62.8 per cent of the users are aged 13 to 34 (NapoleonCat, 2023), making them the largest group of Instagram users, it thus can be assumed that these accounts are mainly reviewed by younger people. These Instagram accounts do not touch on politics or the historical disputes, although the terms *Eastern Europe* or *Balkans* are not favorable to everyone in the area, the followers are not seeking political topics or arguments in these accounts. Instead, they

are only checking out the content for entertainment, they can seize the exclusive amusement based on this region, the content makes people have resonance with others from this certain region and enhance the feeling of being part of it.

After the break-up of Yugoslavia, language was admittedly utilized as a tool to distinguish nations (e.g., the naming of languages), however, languages permeate everyday lives of the native speakers like air, and the similarities between the language variants are more intuitive to the speakers than the differences, naturally, the common language still connects post-Yugoslav countries. Especially nowadays, mass communication is not limited by national borders, such connection is noticeably sustained and strengthened through popular culture, and is spontaneous among people rather than deliberate manipulation through political means or state funding. Joseph Nye defines culture as one of the sources of soft power, and popular culture focuses on mass entertainment (Nye, 2004: 29-30), the popular culture not only contributes to post-Yugoslav countries' soft power, but also *softens* the scars left from the last century.

### **3.2 Chinese Mandarin: In the Same Language, We Have Something More Fun Than Politics to Talk About**

Most of the people in Taiwan speak Mandarin Chinese and know at least one of the dialects – Hokkien and Hakka. According to the statistics in 2020, Mandarin Chinese is spoken by 96.8 per cent of the population of Taiwan, it is spoken as the main language in use by 66.3 per cent of the speakers, and 30.5 per cent as the second language. Taiwanese Hokkien – a variety of Southern Min Chinese, is spoken by 86 per cent of the population, consisting of 31.7 per cent as the main language and 54.3 per cent as the second language. Taiwanese Hakka – a variety of Hakka Chinese, is spoken by 5.5 per cent of the population as the main or second language. Indigenous languages are spoken by 16 groups of indigenous people in Taiwan, which are spoken by 1.1 per cent of the population as the main or second language. (Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, 2020)

The writing systems in Mainland China and Taiwan present the most manifest difference. Traditional Chinese characters are used in Taiwan, in contrast, Simplified Chinese Characters are in use in Mainland China since the Chinese Character Simplification Scheme was promulgated in the 1956 by the State Council of People's Republic of China, the number of strokes of the

characters was reduced. On the aspect of phonology, the pronunciation of Mandarin in Taiwan is largely identical to Mandarin in Mainland China, but the pronunciations of some individual characters differ. The usage of vocabulary also has differences across Taiwan Strait, which include the same word with different meanings, two different words have the same meaning, and the translation of proper nouns (e.g., names of countries, place, personages). The two sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to different regimes since 1949, the separation consequently caused the formation of these certain differences due to the unlikeness of political system, economy, culture, education, social life, customs, external influences, ideology, regional culture, etc. The combination of these factors undoubtedly has the greatest impact on the most active vocabulary (Zheng & Chen, 2018: 141). Due to the close exchanges between the two sides of the strait, the integration of Taiwanese Mandarin and Mainland Mandarin is also accelerating. Hence, although there is no intentional standardization of commonly used words, through communication or through the media, they will naturally be integrated over time (Kim, 2006: 238).

With the popularization of the Internet, the two sides of the Taiwan Strait have developed their own buzzwords, which are based on different principles of creation. Many of Taiwan's buzzwords are converted from Hokkien, which most of the Mainland Chinese people are unfamiliar with. In addition, Mainland people are less likely to have access to Taiwan's buzzwords due to media control (Qiu, 2016: 16-21). In contrast, Mainland China's buzzwords are mostly based on similar pronunciations of different words, making them relatively easy for Taiwanese to understand. Taiwanese people often see or hear Mainland China's buzzwords through online social media platforms, such as Tiktok, Xiaohongshu, or Mainland Chinese variety shows. These buzzwords have gradually formed a part of Taiwan's internet culture, and even gradually integrated into daily conversations. Because Mainland China's buzzwords are also in Mandarin, many Taiwanese unknowingly start to use them, the speed of spread among Taiwanese is therefore fast. Hence, although buzzwords do not use a standard grammatical structure, they can be understood as long as the people have common comprehension (Qiu, 2016: 21), the common comprehension in this case is based on a common language.

The same language also makes Mainland China and Taiwan's TV dramas and variety shows on both sides of the Strait have a wide audience. Historical TV shows set in ancient Chinese palaces are particularly popular in Taiwan. For example, *Scarlet Heart* in 2021, *Empresses in the Palace* in 2012, and *Ruyi's Royal Love in the Palace* in 2018 have all been a hit in Taiwan, it is also

common that Taiwanese actors perform in Mainland's TV shows. These TV dramas are popular not only because there is no language barrier for Taiwanese audiences to watch, but also because of the common historical roots that make Taiwanese audiences interested in Chinese historical dramas. Jing Yong, a wuxia (martial arts heroes) novelist with a wide readership among Chinese speakers, is not only a household name for his novels, his works have also been turned into TV dramas and are popular in Taiwan.

Pop music also plays an important role in cross-Strait people's exchanges. Music is the carrier of lyrics, the common language allows listeners on both sides of the Strait to understand and resonate with the songs without barrier, the transmission of the songs across the Strait is thus easy.

Taiwanese pop music entered Mainland China since Chinese Communist Party's policy *Reform and Opening-up* in 1978, with the rise and gradual popularization of cassette tapes, radio and television broadcasts, CDs, and the Internet. At the beginning of the *Reform and Opening-up* time, the music industry in Mainland China had not yet sprung up, and the *inventory* of songs was not yet able to meet the demands of the pop music market, Taiwan's music thus became an important resource (Huang, 2021: 11, 24), Taiwanese singers and music groups to hold concerts in the Mainland has since become the norm.

Since the 2010s, music variety shows have risen in Mainland China. Compared to Taiwan, these shows have strong funds and a huge audience. Many Taiwanese singers have gone to the Mainland to develop their careers, earn higher remuneration and pursue a bigger stage. As Taiwanese pop music has been popular in China for many years, Taiwanese songs are sung frequently on these shows. It is common that Mainland Chinese singers and Taiwanese singers sing each other's songs, or cooperate on the music stage. Familiar songs and familiar singers have successfully aroused the interest of Taiwanese audiences in watching Mainland's music variety shows, and get to know Mainland Chinese singers.

In addition, although YouTube is blocked in Mainland China, the Chinese television stations such as Shanghai Dragon Television, Hunan Television, and Jiangsu Television have official channels on YouTube targeting oversea internet users. Therefore, Taiwanese audiences can easily access Mainland's variety shows. These songs have accompanied the people on both sides of the Strait as they grew up, forming common topics and memories. For Taiwanese listeners, these songs are from outside of Taiwan, but not *foreign*. Pop music on both sides not only belongs to the same musical genre *Mandopop*, but also crossing generational and political gaps.

However, the entertainment industry is still often embroiled in political issues. As in Croatia, where often has disputes over Serbia pop music Turbo-folk. The Mayor of Pula canceled the concert of Serbian and Bosnian singers scheduled for 25 March 2023 at the Pula Sport Center. The Municipality of Đurđevac stipulates that during the traditional cultural event *Picokijada* from 24 to 26 June 2023: In catering facilities located on Sv. Jurja Square and Starogradska Street in Đurđevac, only *proper, traditional and amusing music* can be performed.

In Taiwan, celebrities often need to be careful about what they say when it is related to cross-Strait affairs. For example, on 2 August 2022, the then U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan triggered strong discontent in Mainland China, the national television broadcaster, China Central Television (CCTV), posted a picture of *There is only one China in the world* on its official account on the social media platform Weibo, which was re-posted by a number of celebrities to show their patriotism, including many famous Taiwanese actors and singers. These Taiwanese celebrities were forced to make political statements to avoid obstacles to their careers because they need to cater to the official political position of the PRC government and the expectations of the Mainland Chinese people, but this has also caused discontent among the Taiwanese people. On the other hand, the Taiwanese celebrities who have Weibo accounts but did not re-post it were also condemned by Mainland Chinese netizens.

Music and TV series are the most prominent domains of cultural consumption on a daily basis across the Strait due to the popularization of internet. Consumption is the place where politically marginalized groups have sought to forge an identity (Stevenson, 2003: 134-135). Two sides of the Strait share a common culture in these domains, a common culture is an instituted culture of dialogue, rather than agreement (Stevenson, 2003: 145, cited in Williams, 1989), politics is not a concern for most of the cultural consumers who are simply enjoying entertainment.

## **Chapter Four: The Controversial Names and Symbols**

### **4.1 Josip Broz Tito: Old Borders and New Borders**

Until 2017, there were 38 streets and squares in Croatia named after Josip Broz Tito (Coma, 2017), although some of them have been renamed in the recent years. For instance, Trg Josipa Broza Tita (Square of Josip Broz Tito) in Karlovac has been renamed to Trg hrvatskih branitelja (Square of

Croatian Veterans) in 2017, Trg maršala Tita (Marshal Tito Square) in Zagreb was renamed to Trg Republike Hrvatske (Republic of Croatia Square), Trg maršala Tita (Marshal Tito Square) in Velika Gorica was renamed to Trg grada Vukovara (Square of Vukovar City) in 2021, the bust of Tito was also removed from the Office of the President in Zagreb in 2015. Tito was a charismatic leader and in power for 35 years, he built Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and brought modernization and economic development to his country since 1960s. He was also considered an authoritarian leader, who suppressed dissidents and had to be responsible for the mass-killings of members of the defeated (Ustaša and Homeguard) forces in Bleiburg in 1945. After his death in 1980, he remains a disputed but also popular figure in post-Yugoslav countries to this day. Some people of the older generations who used to live under Tito's rule, remember his era as a time of prosperity and have nostalgia for the old times. They admire Tito and miss the unity of all people in the region, Yugoslavia remains in heart as the country where they belong to. They also remember this period as one of peace and anti-nationalism, the period in which there were no major inter-ethnic conflicts. They also remember high reputation that Yugoslavia and Yugoslavs had abroad, largely due to his foreign policy of non-alignment with either of two blocs in the Cold War. Even some nationalists accept that he, as Croat himself, contributed to ever wider autonomy for Croatian within the Yugoslav federation – and in particular for introducing the “right to self-determination, including secession” in Yugoslav and Croatian Constitutions. In some people's memory, however, he was a vicious dictator who ruled with an iron fist and caused repression and exclusion from politics and society of his opponents – not only nationalists but people like Milovan Djilas, a progressive social-democrat highly respected abroad. In the democratic time today, commemorating a dictator seems not correct, the debates about renaming Tito's streets or squares are always going on, after they were renamed, the debates continue about whether they should change the names back.

With the removal of Tito's name in public spaces, the name is becoming invisible in people's daily life, it usually appears when the related debates are raised. To the younger generations that never lived in the communist time and do not have many affections or resentments towards Tito, while this name always appears with political issues, Tito seems to be only a subject of politics. However, compared to older generations, young people are less interested in politics. They rarely discuss politics with their families and friends, and are more reluctant to engage in political affairs – such as voting or joining a political party, than the generation of their parents. 62 per cent of Croatian

youth aged 14-29 are a little or not interested at all in general political affairs (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2019: 46-47). Thus, the controversial leader Tito in the last century that was either loved or detested by many people, today is not concerned by most of the younger people as much as before.

Of course, Tito's political career and legacy is taught in schools in Croatia, kids still have knowledges about him to a certain extent. Compared to the history textbooks in the socialist time, which was imbued with ideology and glorified Josip Broz Tito (Petrone, 2022: 73), the textbook in 2009 had a relatively neutral description of Tito's time, he as a person was not commented on (Petrone, 2022: 35), only the historical fact that his death was a turning point in the history of Yugoslavia was mentioned (Bekavac & Jareb, 2009: 230). The textbooks in 2009 and 2021 had more objectivity in the presentation of history, and taught the period of Yugoslavia more intensively (Petrone, 2022: 73). Thus, to the younger generations, most of the time, Tito is a name that either appears as a historical figure in the school textbooks, or is related to political arguments. When the generations that have personal sentiments towards Josip Broz Tito are all gone, controversy about him may remain, but he will be remembered without personal emotion in either positive or negative ways.

The older generations – the parents, do play a significant role in influencing their children's political opinions. The person learns the political thought first of all in the family, the idea that his parents are interested, voted, supported (Turan, 2017: 109). Specific traumatic experiences such as wars, economic crises, struggles for independence, etc. shape generational consciousness (Čačić-Kumpes et al. 2014: 242, cited in Edmunds & Turner, 2002: 12). In this sense, during the 20th century, every Croatian citizen at some point in his life lived through a traumatic experience of war or at least postwar period (Čačić-Kumpes et al. 2014: 242). Thus, it is assumed that the political orientation and party affiliation of the parents' generation was shaped to a greater extent than that of their children by traumatic events (Jović, 2020: 7). However, young people have access to a wide range of other sources of information that occupies their thoughts and participates in the construction of their attitudes (Jović, 2020: 48). Additionally, the younger generations do not have the experience of war or living in the postwar period, instead, they are living in the democratic and peaceful time, as well as in the time that Croatia being a member state of the European Union. With different personal experiences, children's political opinions are not shaped identically to their parents.



With the accession to the European Union in 2013, Croatians have a new identity as European citizens, which of course does not change anything on the nationality, but it influences the mindset of being part of the European integration. The concrete rights and benefits that EU citizens enjoy play a significant role in this regard, with the right to freely move within EU territories, a considerable number of Croatians move abroad seeking for employment. From 2013 to 2021, there are 303,692 Croatian nationals emigrated abroad, compared to the statistics from 2005 to 2012 before joining the European Union – 75,570 Croatian emigrants, it presents a growth rate of 302 per cent. Germany took the lion's share with 45 per cent of the emigrants in the 8 years after Croatia joined EU (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2021). When the younger generations that are not carrying too many sentiments from the history now have more opportunities seeking higher income and higher standard of living in a larger geographical scale, the old disputes are gradually being left behind with time, while the interest in the EU is growing.

#### **4.2 Chiang Kai-shek: The Name that Fades Away with Memory, Appears When Political Struggle Needs It**

On 5 December 2017, the Act on Promoting Transitional Justice was passed in the Legislative Yuan of ROC. The Act aims at the period of authoritarian rule, that is, during the Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo administration, martial law was imposed, pro-communists, suspected pro-communists, and Taiwan-independence supporters were purged by imprisonment, shooting, etc., namely White Terror. Article 5 of the Act stipulates: 'Symbols appearing in public buildings or places that commemorate or express nostalgia for authoritarian rulers shall be removed, renamed, or dealt with in some other way.'. According to the Transitional Justice Commission in 2019, there were 1075 statues and 97 portraits of Chiang Kai-shek, 39 statues and 24 portraits of Chiang Ching-kuo, and 579 places, such as streets, parks, schools, named after Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo in Taiwan. By 2021, 258 statues and 11 portraits in total have been removed. (Transitional Justice Commission, 2022)

As early as 2003, the statue of Chiang Kai-shek in the National Central University was vandalized, and to this day, vandalism of statues still occurs frequently all over Taiwan. Renaming the places named after Chiang also has been an issue, for example, in 2006, Chiang Kai-shek International

Airport was renamed Taoyuan International Airport. In 2007, the inscription on the gateway 大中至正 (dazhong zhizheng), referring to Chiang's *great neutrality and perfect uprightness*, was subsequently replaced with *Liberty Square* (Ko, 2008). This square is located in Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall, which has been disputed, and the statue in Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall was also vandalized with eggs and paint in 2015 and 2018. Discussion of the Chiang family and the vandalism of the statues peaks every year on the anniversary of the 228 incident.

Chiang Kai-shek led the National Revolutionary Army against the Japanese invasion and fought against the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) led by Mao Zedong during the KMT-CCP civil war. After the defeat, he retreated to Taiwan and continued to fight against the Communist Party, so that Taiwan was not ruled by the Chinese communists, for which Chiang Kai-shek is regarded as a national hero by some people. He however led the KMT by practicing one-party rule in Taiwan, severely repressing dissidents and molding a cult of personality with school education, mass media, patriotic songs, political symbols in public places (e.g., statues, names of places, etc.). Therefore, he was also called the executioner or dictator by some people.



Mali 2012 Stamp: Allied Leaders of WW2 - Tito & Chiang Kai-Shek

Chiang Kai-shek passed away in 1975, his son Chiang Ching-kuo inherited his political power. He lifted martial law in 1987 and promoted democratization in Taiwan. Chiang Ching-kuo proposed Ten Major Construction Projects and laid the foundation for the semiconductor industry. His presidency was also marked by social stability and rapid economic growth. According to a 2019

survey conducted by Global Views Monthly, 78.9 per cent of business owners believe that Chiang Ching-kuo contributed the most to Taiwan's overall development of any of the past presidents. Thus, although the Act on Promoting Transitional Justice covers Chiang Ching-kuo's period, most of the criticism and vandalism of the statues focused on Chiang Kai-shek.

The United Nations defines transitional justice as:

'...a society's attempt to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past conflict, repression, violations and abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation.'

Samuel P. Huntington gives guidelines for dealing with authoritarian crimes:

'...Devise a means to achieve a full and dispassionate public accounting of how and why the crimes were committed. Recognize that on the issue of "prosecute and punish vs. forgive and forget", each alternative presents grave problems, and that the least unsatisfactory course may well be: do not prosecute, do not punish, do not forgive, and, above all, do not forget.' (Huntington, 1991: 231)

Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo did contribute and harm Taiwan society, the harm done to the people by their authoritarian rule cannot be justified by their contributions. However, the difficulty of practicing transitional justice is that transitional justice often becomes a tool of political struggle, especially during election time, the history often becomes a material that stirs up hatred and further divides the society. A survey research of Academia Sinica in 2020 shows that 48 per cent of the respondents agree that transitional justice in Taiwan is helpful for reconciliation, while 52.5 per cent disagree. 43.4 per cent agree that transitional justice is only a political struggle between parties, 47.8 per cent disagree. 26.6 per cent agree to remove the statues of Chiang Kai-shek, 70.1 per cent disagree (Wang, 2022: 114-116).

The young generations born after democratization have no real-life experience of the 228 incident and party-state authoritarian rule. Their knowledge and understanding of authoritarian rule basically come from school textbooks, mass media, or the collective memory of family members, the younger generations have gradually entered the postmemory generation (Wang, 2022: 100).

Marianne Hirsch explains postmemory:

"Postmemory" describes the relationship that the "generation after" bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before – to experience they "remember" only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own

right. Postmemory's connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation.' (Hirsch, 2012: 5)

The most direct way for young generations to understand history that they have not experienced is school education. Taiwan's history textbooks have been revised several times over the years, and history has been interpreted from different perspectives in different eras and political backgrounds, education has therefore often become a tool serving politics. After the National Government of the Republic of China retreated to Taiwan in 1949, nationalism and national identity were the main themes of education. The high school history textbooks were divided into two parts, Chinese history and world history, with very little space devoted to Taiwan and which was included in Chinese history. In 1999, in response to the democratization in the decade after the lifting of martial law, the content of Taiwan history extended. In the 2006 textbooks, Taiwan history started to have a separate section. In the 2018 history textbooks, Chinese history was incorporated into East Asian history (Huang, 2021: 76-77), and the title in Taiwan history *National Government of the Republic of China Retreated to Taiwan* was changed to *The Entry of the Ruling System of the Republic of China*, which has been criticized as the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) bringing its own historical views into textbooks, educating students that the Republic of China is a foreign regime and China is a foreign country, in an attempt to de-Sinicize through education.

Through the background knowledge gained from schooling and the news seen in the mass media, the generations of postmemory create their own imaginations about history that they did not experience themselves. When transitional justice integrates history and politics, most young people who are indifferent about politics feel that transitional justice has nothing to do with them, while some young people who are exposed to information based on specific political positions may develop radical views.

When it comes to making decisions about real life, the role of the fading history gradually becomes insignificant. With the lack of personal experience in the authoritarian time, and being indifferent about politics, the harm and scars that authoritarian time left are out of most of the younger people's concern. In 2022, Chiang Wan-an, the great-grandson of Chiang Kai-shek, represented KMT in the Taipei City mayoral election. He was attacked by political opponents as a descendant of the Chiang family, but still won the election with 42.29 per cent of the vote, showing that historical figures and real life seem to have gradually decoupled.

## Chapter Five: Conclusion

Jiang Yi-huah discusses national identity in three domains:

- a. Ethnic Identity: referring to a person's sense of oneness with a particular ethnic group due to an objective blood relation or subjective ethnic identity. For example, the Jewish people relied on ethnic identity (and cultural identity) to maintain a certain kind of common existence during the millennium of exile. Many Chinese immigrants to the Americas still identify themselves as Chinese, which is also on the basis of ethnic identity. But a sense of community can be created by imagination. Borrowing the concept of Benedict Anderson (1983), ethnic groups are *imagined communities*, and for community identity to be possible, cultural identity is required.
- b. Cultural Identity: referring to a group of people who share common historical traditions, customs and collective memory, thus forming a sense of belonging to a certain community. Compared with ethnic identity, which emphasizes blood relations, cultural identity is usually developed by attaching to a fixed area of land. In the place where ancestors have reclaimed and lived, the descendants continue to live, and various customs, ceremonies, literature, music, and behavioral norms naturally formed over time. Even when individuals are far away from their homeland, it is still not easy to forget this cultural memory. However, collective historical memory can be subjectively constructed or reconstructed to a certain extent, so cultural identity may sometimes face changes or fragmentation.
- c. Institutional Identity: referring to a person's political identity based on a certain political, economic, and social system. For example, because of the diverse ethnic backgrounds of American citizens, it is not easy to form a deep common cultural tradition. Therefore, the U.S. government must maintain the patriotism of its citizens through a good political and economic system and reasonable social welfare. In a free and open country, the ratio of its immigrants and emigrants is the best indication of the role that the country's institutional system plays in its national identity. Many people from the Third World migrate to the United States as citizens, motivated not by ethnic or cultural motives, but by the attraction of the political, economic, and social systems in the U.S. (Jiang, 1997: 102).

It has been more than 30 years since Croatia became independent from the former Yugoslavia, and the identity of *Yugoslavian* that was created during the Yugoslavia time has gradually disappeared

with the passage of time, especially for the young generation that grew up after the independence and never had the identity of *Yugoslavian*. The 22 national minorities in Croatia may differ in their ethnic identity, but the majority of Croatian citizens identify themselves as *Croatian*.

In the domain of cultural identity, there is a certain degree of identity with the region of the former Yugoslavia. A common language forms a linguistic community, the common/similar languages are shared by the people of the region and as a carrier of songs, literature, television, movies, Internet forums and videos. The independence of the countries may have distanced the cultural development of the once-unified countries, and the diversity of religions in the former Yugoslavia, the cultural differences are thus notable. But compared to differences, similarities and commonalities are more directly received by sight and hearing. In particular, music and memes discussed in this thesis are entertaining in nature, which are already attractive and easy to spread, thus reinforcing the sense of the cultural commonalities. In addition, with the popularity of various online media platforms in the internet era, people who share the same cultural identity can share their common culture regardless of time and national borders.

In the domain of institutional identity, there may still be a small number of people who are nostalgic for Yugoslavia time because of its economic growth and stability, etc., but the institutional identity of Croatia today is less complicated than Taiwan, where there are still unresolved political disputes regarding the sovereignty. However, according to European Union's polling instrument Eurobarometer, 96 per cent of the respondents think the corruption problem is widespread in Croatia (European Union, 2023). 83 per cent of the respondents judge Croatia's economy bad, 43 per cent expect Croatia's economy will be worse in the next 12 months, 38 and 18 per cent expect it will be the same or better. 22 per cent of the respondents tend to trust the National Parliament, and 75 per cent tend not to trust it, 21 per cent tend to trust the National Government, while 76 per cent tend not to trust it (European Union, 2022). These data show that the majority of people are dissatisfied with the salary levels, standard of living, government effectiveness, and corruption problems, which has led to an increase in the number of Croatians moving abroad to study, work, and settle. This trend has become even more pronounced since joining the European Union and benefiting from the right of EU citizens to move freely within the EU territories.

Taiwan's ethnic identity is greatly influenced by politics (the fact that Taiwan's indigenous people have tribal identities in addition to their "Taiwanese" identity is not discussed here). In terms of

ethnicity, apart from the indigenous people, the majority of Taiwanese are Han Chinese who immigrated to Taiwan from China between the 17th and 20th centuries, among them, Hoklo and Hakka are the two main ethnic groups. After the end of the Second World War in 1945, it was further divided to two groups of people – *benshengren* who settled in Taiwan before the end of the war, and *waishengren* who moved to Taiwan after the war. The preferences of *benshengren* or *waishengren* used to play an important role in elections. *Waishengren* were usually considered to be less favorable to Taiwan and were rejected by certain voters. Today, social segregation and exclusion between *benshengren* and *waishengren* has gradually decreased, and the remaining sense of social exclusion seems to be a remnant of the previous stage of political development (Wu, 2002: 85). Today, the political issue that is argued the most in Taiwan is whether one considers oneself to be Chinese in addition to being Taiwanese.

In terms of cultural identity, Taiwan was influenced by Japanese culture to a certain extent due to its colonial history, but the fundamental culture is Chinese culture. Chinese language, literature, history, holidays (Chinese New Year, Mid-Autumn Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, etc.), temples and deities, Confucianism, and traditional arts, etc., constitute the daily life of every Taiwanese, which are highly overlapping culturally with Mainland China.

Institutional identity is the greatest divergence as well as the reason the Nationalist Government of the Republic of China retreated to Taiwan in 1949, as it did not accept the Chinese Communist Party's interpretation of *China* (Yang, 2019), while there are supporters of Taiwan Independence who believe that ROC is a foreign regime. Today, the main reason the cross-Strait issue remains unresolved is because most Taiwanese do not wish to be ruled by the Chinese Communist Party. There are merely 7.6 per cent of Taiwanese would like unification as soon as possible (1.6 per cent) or maintaining status quo but moving toward unification (6 per cent), 60.7 per cent would like to maintain status quo and decide at later date (28.6 per cent) or maintain status quo indefinitely (32.1 per cent), 25.9 per cent would like independence as soon as possible (4.5 per cent) or maintaining status quo but moving toward independence (21.4 per cent) (Election Study Center, National Chengchi University, 2023).

According to this survey, 88.1 per cent of the respondents would like to maintain the status quo (although 27.4 per cent in which have preferences of unification or independence), merely 6.1 per cent have strong preferences of unification or independence. It can be assumed that the majority of Taiwanese are satisfied with the democratic system in Taiwan (regardless of the satisfaction

with the current ROC government) and the peaceful time at the moment. They do not wish to be part of a one-party state and ruled by Chinese Communist Party, particularly when PRC's diplomatic suppression and frequent military threat to Taiwan (e.g., military drills and intrusions into Taiwan's air defense identification zone) are increasing the antipathy of Taiwanese towards CCP. However, they are also aware of the impracticability and risk of either Taiwan's or ROC's *de jure* independence, although PRC's policy on Taiwan issue is *Peaceful Reunification*, Xi Jinping, the president of PRC, also states that *no promise to renounce the use of force to unify Taiwan*, in addition, the U.S. declares that it does not support Taiwan Independence. Furthermore, part of the Taiwanese in this group do not wish ROC cease to exist (e.g., KMT), they oppose Taiwan Independence (e.g., establishing a state called Republic of Taiwan) given their political stance and the risk of war, they do not wish to be unified under the name PRC either, hence they also would like to maintain the status quo. In view of the public opinions in Taiwan, the disagreements on the political systems with PRC, and the insistence upon the existence of ROC (which is officially recognized by 13 states in the world up to 2023), are the major reasons for the current political status of Taiwan.

The cross-Strait issue has always dominated Taiwan's politics. The two main political parties, Kuomintang (KMT) and Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), are both pro-Western. KMT advocates maintaining friendly relations and dialogues (politics, economic and social affairs, etc.) with Mainland China, while DPP advocate *Taiwan Independence* and takes a hard line against Mainland China.

Throughout history, Croatians were often subordinated to other national groups in which they were part of the state, although the Republic of Croatia does not belong to the official classification of a postcolonial state. The period of post-socialist transition was the most frequent meeting point of Croatian identity formations (Matagić, 2022: 67). While Croatia is part of Europe and became a member of the European Union in 2013, it is also located in the Balkans or at least influenced by the Balkans – a term that is detested by some.

“Balkan” is a name: initially, the name of a mountain, used increasingly since the fifteenth century when it first appeared, until the nineteenth century, when it was applied to the peninsula and region as a whole. By the beginning of the twentieth century, it became a pejorative, triggered by the events accompanying the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, the Balkans began to serve as a symbol for the aggressive, intolerant, barbarian, semi-developed, semi-civilized, and semi-oriental



(Todorova, 2009: 193-194). Like the Balkans, Eastern Europe is often considered as a derogatory term with political connotations. Foreigners that are unfamiliar with Eastern Europe or the Balkan countries might be tempted to say these terms as geographical terms, but a number of people living in the region might be offended by them. After independence, Croatia is more eager to shed these labels and become a part of the West. By joining the EU in 2013, Croatia declared that it no longer belongs to the Balkans, not even to Western Balkans, the concept invented in 1997 to mark countries that are waiting for EU membership. It was an identity-based political “move” from the Balkans into Europe, where Croats claimed they belong. Many countries that are still building up their national confidence are particularly keen to be recognized from the outside, as can be seen in ordinary people’s attitude towards foreign tourists. Americans, French, Germans, etc. rarely ask foreign tourists *Do you like America/France/Germany?* while it is common that Croatians ask tourists *Do you like Croatia?*

During the Pacific War, Taiwan was a Japanese colony, but was not bombed by the U.S. military because of the U.S. Island Hopping Strategy. After the end of Japanese colonization in 1945, Taiwan was immediately confronted with the Civil War between KMT and CCP, and the Cold War between the Western and the Eastern Blocs. And the outbreak of the Korean War led to the PRC redeploying its forces to the Korean Peninsula, and the U.S. sending the 7th Fleet to assist in the defense of the Taiwan Strait. After several times of crisis in the Taiwan Straits, Taiwan has not been involved in a large-scale war, and has had rapid economic development and a fairly smooth process of democratization. Then soon, Taiwan faces the economically fast-growing Mainland China, which has become the second largest economy in the world. Looking at the ups and downs of Taiwan's history in the past less than a century, Taiwan indeed has had its fair share of good fortune, but up until now, the fate of the country has been in the hands of other countries.

If the Croatian national identity has been built and consolidated through independent state recognized by almost all other countries after 1990, Taiwanese people’s national identity is still under construction. Just as most Croatians prefer not to be called Balkan or Eastern European by foreigners, most Taiwanese do not favor to be called *Chinese*, because they do not want to be considered as the people from Mainland China. In addition, as like some people of the older generations in Croatia that miss Tito's time, some people of older generations in Taiwan also have nostalgia for the Japanese colonial time. In the quandary about the ethnic identity issue of being Taiwanese, or Chinese, or both, meanwhile being a democracy, Taiwan is eager to prove that it is

different from Mainland China and gain recognition from the West. Similarly, this mentality is reflected in ordinary people, it is also common that Taiwanese ask foreign tourists *Do you like Taiwan?* Taiwan has preserved the orthodox Chinese culture, but there is a divergence of cultural identity in the attitude towards Chinese culture. Some people are influenced by politics and tend to stay away from Chinese culture. More people are in a dilemma, not wanting to be mistaken as Chinese (of Mainland China), but unable to deny that they are actually cultural Chinese. According to the survey in 2023, 62.8 per cent of the respondents consider themselves Taiwanese, 2.5 per cent consider themselves Chinese, 30.5 per cent both Taiwanese and Chinese (Election Study Center, National Chengchi University, 2023).

External recognition plays an important role for young countries or countries that are still in the process of building a national identity. As of 2023, Croatia has established diplomatic relations with 187 countries, and mutually has embassies with most of the countries with diplomatic relations. Croatia joined the United Nations in 1992 with its country name *Croatia* and national flag without any dispute, and joined the European Union in 2013, became a member of the Schengen Area and introduced Euro in 2023. It is also a member of most of the important international organizations. Nationals can proudly watch their flags fluttering at major international sporting competitions, such as the Olympics Games or the World Cup, when they achieve success. These factual acknowledgments are factors in the construction of national identity. As for Taiwan, 13 countries have recognized Republic of China (ROC) as a state and have established diplomatic relations with it, and ROC is still at risk of losing its diplomatic relations. As for the Taiwan Strait affairs, since the two sides of the Taiwan Strait cannot be defined as state-to-state relations, they are not managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but by the *Mainland Affairs Council* and its counterpart in PRC, *The Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council*. Republic of China withdrew from the United Nations in 1971 and has been unable to join most major international organizations due to sovereignty disputes. Although it is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), it joined WTO under the title of *The Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu*. When participating in international competitions such as the Olympic Games, the title *Chinese Taipei* must be used, and the national flag of ROC cannot be used, instead, the Chinese Taipei Olympic Flag must be used. The absence of these national symbols causes Taiwanese people's uncertainty in constructing their national identity.

The painful history is gradually fading away, and the withering older generations are gradually being replaced by the younger generations. Some of them do not care about history and politics, while others have different feelings and opinions from the older generations. History can be interpreted in different perspectives, politics can be manipulated in different ways, but the geographical location cannot be changed. Croatia is located in *The powder keg of Europe* that has been called in Taiwan's geography textbooks – fortunately, it has been away from the wars, at least for the last 30 years. In recent years, Taiwan has appeared as a potential war hotspot in the titles in Croatian news, and appeared on the cover of the British newspaper *The Economist* in 2021 with the title *The Most Dangerous Place on Earth*, by any means it is unable to change the location that U.S. General Douglas MacArthur called *Unsinkable aircraft carrier*. Croatia and Taiwan have always had to face complex political issues brought about by their geographic locations.

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