NOTIONS OF DISCONTENT AND DISTINCTION: REFLECTIONS OF YOUNG DIASPORIC TAIWANESE AMERICANS

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Abstract
In 1971, Taiwan lost its seat in the United Nations and has been vying for international validation ever since. The Kuomintang's (KMT) loss and the development of Taiwan's democracy has left millions with varying opinions pertaining to the status of Taiwan. It also brings up the importance of what it means to be Taiwanese and how Taiwanese people identify and distinguish themselves from China. For much of the Republic of China’s (ROC) existence in Taiwan the independence movement for the de facto nation-state has lived outside of its borders, making achievements and enduring hardships for Taiwan and Taiwanese Americans throughout Taiwan’s continuous struggles to find its place in our globalizing world.

It brings into question the sense of Taiwanese identity in Taiwanese Americans, especially those raised outside of martial law and whose parents have lived in both the martial law era and post-martial law era. For young professionals and students of Taiwanese American descent, what do they vie for when retaining intergenerational beliefs on language and independence, their attachments and thoughts about the island, their transnationality, and the commonalities and differences that Taiwanese Americans and Taiwanese inhabitants have? This thesis aims to contribute to discourse on Asian Americans, specifically addressing Taiwanese Americans, their identity in America and in Taiwan, issues pertaining to Cross-Strait relationships, its effect on Taiwanese Americans, and to help understand the importance of Taiwanese people in America. Taiwanese Americans point out several historical, ethnolinguistic, and political differences when talking about their identity and relationship with Taiwan.

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The notion of a multi-cultural society is derived from the concept of "Pluralism". During the colonial times, in the colonies, the concept of Pluralism was developed. It implied a colonial inherently unstable society, where the dominant society (alien) minority exercises control over the indigenous majority. After becoming united collective organizations, the formation of a diasporic identity was facilitated. In all narratives during the meetings of the associations, the notion of belonging to a different culture was the main issue. Here emerged the process of ethnicity.