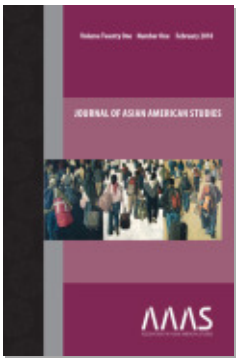
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UNPACKING CHINESE AMERICA

The Political Participation of Taiwanese Americans in the Early Twenty-First-Century United States

Pei-te Lien
Jeanette Yih Harvie

ABSTRACT. Who are (or can count as) Taiwanese Americans? To what extent and in what ways do they participate politically in the United States? This study attempts to unpack the concept of Chineseness by examining various formations of identity boundaries of Taiwanese Americans. We empirically assess their "success" in political participation and incorporation by analyzing patterns of political participation of U.S. voting-age adults who were born in or originated from Taiwan, as compared to those who were born in or originated from (Mainland) China and Asia as a whole. We argue that Taiwanese Americans occupy a distinct space in modern Asian American history and a better understanding of the experiences of this often overlooked and misunderstood community can further explicate the complexity of being Chinese in contemporary America. However, we discuss multiple sets of methodological challenges in systematically studying the population through U.S. census survey and several other types of quantitative data. Whereas we find immigrants originated from Taiwan to be generally more active in electoral politics than those from Mainland China, our findings challenge the pluralist assumptions of a linear process of political incorporation and reject an overtly simplistic characterization of Taiwanese Americans as a "model-minority" success story.

Who are (or can count as) Taiwanese Americans? To what extent and in what ways have members of this majority-immigrant community been able to participate in U.S. electoral politics? Although there has been a good amount of research and publications on Chinese Americans

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alone or within the context of Asian American studies, there has not been much research that treats the experiences of Taiwan Americans separately or as an integral but also distinct part of Chinese and Asian American experiences. The main purpose of this research is to begin unpacking the meanings of being Chinese in Chinese and Asian American studies. We argue that Taiwanese Americans occupy a distinct space in modern Asian American history and a better understanding of the experiences of this often overlooked and misunderstood community can further explicate the complexity of being Chinese in contemporary America. By systematically analyzing the political participation experiences of individuals who migrated from or have parents or ancestors who originated from Taiwan, as compared to those from (Mainland) China and Asia as a whole, we also hope to help debunk the "model-minority" myth by empirically gauging the degree of "success" in political incorporation for an immigrant community known to be highly successful in socioeconomic terms.

The impetus for our research is threefold. First, it deals with an important but often obscured aspect of Chinese American immigration history. Because of the anticommunist U.S. policy during the Cold War era, Chinese Americans associated with the Nationalist government and/or from Taiwan enjoyed the status of being the "good" immigrants.[1] In the early twenty-first century, statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau show that the distinct migration history and selective preference system in U.S. immigration policies combined with differences in the degrees of development and affluence in the Asian homeland contributed to the relatively high socioeconomic profile of Taiwanese American community as compared to that of Chinese, Asian, and the overall U.S. population (see Table 1). Although their relative share in Chinese American population has significantly dwindled because of the influx of immigrants from Mainland China after the 1980s, the Taiwanese American experience remains a central and critical component of the social, cultural, and political formation of the contemporary Chinese American experience.

Second, it offers an opportunity to engage in a critical understanding of immigrant political incorporation from the perspective of Asian Americans. In preeminent political scientist Robert Dahl's seminal study of immigrant political incorporation, he postulates that the political rise of European immigrants is a linear, time-dependent process, intrinsically tied to the acquisition of legal citizenship and advancement in social status from the poor, working class to the middle class.[2] Electoral politics is considered the last arena in gauging immigrant success of becoming assimilated or incorporated, and the transformation takes place not within the immigration generation but over one to two American-born generations. Dahl's

Table 1. Key Demographic Indicators of Chinese and Taiwanese Americans, 2010

	Chinese Americans	Taiwanese Americans	Asian America	U.S. Total
Population, 2010 (thousands)	3,795	230	17,321	308,746
% among Asians	22	1	100	n/a
% growth from 2000 to 2010	39	59	46	10
% foreign-born	61	68	60	13
% naturalization	60	67	57	43
% limited English proficiency	42	43	32	9
% in poverty	12	12	11	14
% high school degree	82	95	86	85
% homeownership	62	66	59	66
Per capita income ($)	30,061	38,312	28,342	27,100
Median family income ($)	68,420	77,596	68,549	51,369

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Census 2010; American Community Survey, 2009, 2007–9, 2005–9 estimates.

theory of pluralism has been criticized for its insensitivity to racial group differences and for overlooking the unique obstacles faced by nonwhite immigrants, among other reasons. However, his observation of the linkage between socioeconomic success and political success remains an intriguing topic, especially for immigrant groups arriving after 1965 when racial barriers to voting and immigration have been lifted and when education and job skills are part of the admission criteria. Our focus on the electoral experiences of Taiwanese Americans provides a unique opportunity to contribute to the discussion.

Third, through our research, which is mostly based on systematic observations of large-scale, quantifiable human behavior, we also hope to better engage quantitative social science methodology within the field of Asian American studies. While multidisciplinary in nature, scholarship in Asian American studies has been advanced mostly by research in the humanities and qualitative social sciences. A substantial portion of U.S. scholarship in political and other social sciences, however, has privileged research using scientifically collected data and analysis through quantitative methodology. Our hope is that, by conducting systematic evaluation comparing patterns of political behavior across ethnic groups, and after a critical review of prior research that employs both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in Asian American studies and other fields or disciplines, we may help advance knowledge and improve understanding of the distinctive political experiences of a scarce and ambiguously defined population that has been disputably conceived as located inside Chinese/Asian America, namely Taiwanese Americans.

In the following pages, we first define the boundaries of our investigation and provide a quick review of the migration history of Taiwanese Americans. This is followed by a discussion of the methodological challenges in systematically studying the population through both U.S. census data and several types of public opinion surveys. We then analyze the patterns of political participation by Taiwanese Americans, as compared to those of Chinese Americans, Asian Americans, and (non-Hispanic) whites, in terms of voting and registration between the 2004 and 2012 elections. We also analyze in the same vein their patterns of political ideology, partisanship, presidential vote choice, and participation beyond voting in U.S. and homeland politics. Last but not least, we provide a preliminary but unique profile of Taiwan-born elected officials as compared to their Chinese- and Asian-surnamed counterparts serving in 2015. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of our findings and the need for future research for better understanding the contours and consequences of political participation of this often overshadowed and relatively unknown population largely hidden within Chinese and Asian America.

Identifying Taiwanese Americans in Chinese/Asian America

For this research, defining boundaries of "Chineseness" is key to unpacking Chinese America in order to identify Taiwanese Americans. While being Chinese typically entails a common ancestry, homeland, mother tongue, and basic value orientation, Wei-ming Tu also points out that to define a Chinese merely as belonging to the Han race, being born in China proper, speaking Mandarin, and observing the code of ethics expected in a Confucian society generates an oversimplified conception of Chineseness that conceals as much as it reveals.[3] Rather than seeing it as being bounded by certain primordial ties, he prefers to define Chineseness as a layered and contested discourse whereby its meanings can vary depending on the context. Hence, ethnic Chinese born outside of China or non-Han minorities born in China, for instance, can be part of the discourse. This definition of Chineseness as a product of social construction resembles Ye Le Espiritu's idea of panethnicity, and mirrors Michael Omi and Howard Winant's notion of racial formation in contemporary Asian America.[4] The fluidity of this conception is captured by Andrea Louie, whose research on boundary crossings of Chinese Americans in China and the United States finds Chineseness to be a national/racial discourse on a scale that can be both transnational and local in scope for those in the diaspora.[5]

In a sense, the process for Taiwanese to become Chinese echoes the flexible and contested phenomenon of ethnic formation.[6] An intrinsic

feature of Taiwanese American identity, according to Chin-ming Wang, is its formation through the politics of dis-identification with its colonial past, symbolized by Chinese in Taiwan and Mainland China and, by extension, Chinese Americans in the United States. He cites efforts by Taiwanese American organizations such as the Formosa Association of Public Affairs (FAPA) and the Taiwanese American Citizens League (TACL) as practicing "civic transnationalism," for these U.S.-based Taiwanese community-based organizations have pursued a transnational political agenda through civic participation and affirmation of a distinct ethnic identity that is unmistakably non-Chinese.[7] If Taiwanese and Chinese American identities can be conceived as on the polar ends of a left-right continuum, the pro-independence and nationalistic stance taken by these organizations is located on the extreme left end of the identity scale. In contrast, the pro-unification stance and activities organized by the Chinese Nationalist Party- or KMT-backed Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) are positioned on the extreme right end of the identity scale, which is exclusively Chinese. However, most immigrants and their descendants from Taiwan are found to adopt an ethnic identity that falls between the two extreme ends.[8]

Whereas the boundaries of both Chineseness and Taiwaneseness are constantly changing and mutually constitutive, there seems to be a rising trend of identification with being Taiwanese(-only) American in recent decades, as evinced by their participation in the write-in campaign in census 2000 and in the renewed community lobbying efforts to create a separate count of Taiwanese for the 2020 census. However, this development has yet to be reflected in the extant scholarship on Chinese/Asian American studies, which tends to embrace Chinese as an encompassing term and lump Taiwanese—if they are mentioned at all—with Chinese, treating the former as a subcategory of the latter. Exceptions include Carolyn Chen, who believes that there is need to distinguish the two groups, for immigrants from Taiwan have enjoyed a distinct set of economic, political, and cultural experiences from those of their counterparts from China.[9] In addition, Angie Y. Chung notes that most Taiwanese make critical distinctions about their culture and political sovereignty from China. Hence, her research treats Taiwanese and Chinese immigrants separately, even if she also uses "the generic term 'Chinese' to refer to the entire sample of Chinese Americans when referring to their racialization, immigrant perceptions, and family structures."[10]

For our analysis, the term "Taiwanese Americans" broadly refers to immigrants from Taiwan and their U.S.-born descendants who may or may not identify themselves as Taiwanese or Taiwanese Americans and

may not be Americans by legal citizenship.[11] Due to the complexity in the transition of political power in Mainland China, especially after the World War II, non-U.S.-born Taiwanese Americans may include persons born elsewhere but last settled in Taiwan before migration to the United States. An example would be individuals who were born in Mainland China but had ties to the Nationalist (KMT) government prior to its retreat to the island of Taiwan in 1949. These individuals may often be called Chinese Americans or Taiwanese Chinese or Taiwanese Mainlander Americans, depending on the context.

To the U.S. government, which grants citizenship at birth based on the concept of "jus soli," or right of the soil, those who were born either in Taiwan or the United States proper but have ancestors born in or from Taiwan are called Taiwanese Americans. Those who migrated from Taiwan into the United States but were born in China are counted as Chinese Americans—even if their socialization in Taiwan may make them more likely to identify with Taiwanese than Chinese society and government.[12] Conversely, for some Taiwan-born but U.S.-raised individuals, their socialization in the United States under the one-China policy may make them more likely to identify as Chinese than Taiwanese. Meanwhile, some with the same background may be more likely than other Taiwan-born and Taiwan-raised individuals to identify as Taiwanese than Chinese. Reasons for identification as Taiwanese, especially for the U.S.-born, are multiple. One is exposure to the ideologies of the U.S.-based Taiwan independence movement either through family socialization or involvement in community organizations or networks advocating for self-determination.[13] Campaigns by community organizations such as FAPA and TACL to advocate self-identification as Taiwanese in answering U.S. census survey questions may also facilitate ethnic identity formation. In addition, Taiwan's own social and political transformation into a vibrant democracy in recent decades may directly contribute to community members' growing pride in being of Taiwanese heritage and consciousness of being an overshadowed minority in need of its own voice in the U.S. setting.

Regardless of their place of socialization and self-identity preferences, Taiwan-born Americans whose China-born parents came to Taiwan after 1945 are counted by the U.S. government as Taiwanese Americans even if they are considered not Taiwanese but rather Mainlanders by the current government and society in Taiwan. It is fully plausible for a family of immigrants from Taiwan to have some members identifying themselves as Taiwanese Americans and others as Chinese Americans or other ethnic labels.[14] As a result of the complex crossing of ethnic and national boundaries, systematic understanding of the migration histories of Taiwanese

Chinese or Taiwanese Mainlander Americans tends to be limited and misrepresented due to the lumping of this population with Chinese from (Mainland) China, Hong Kong, and elsewhere.[15]

Stemming from the difficulties of separating Taiwanese from a collective Chinese identity, what little scholarly publications that exist on Taiwanese Americans also tend to replicate this trend of combining those having (Chinese) Mainlander background with those of (Taiwanese) Islander background. Consequently, the identity differences among immigrants from Taiwan and the impact on their political attitudes and behavior toward homeland and host country politics have hardly been studied in scientific manners except for the possible exceptions of works by Tsung Chi and Pei-te Lien and her research associates.[16] This research updates and expands upon prior research efforts by taking stock of extant large-scale datasets that can be systematically analyzed to assess progress in political incorporation through multiple indicators of political participation, including success in winning electoral offices. Before presenting results from our statistical analyses, we would like to provide some context through a quick walk in immigration history, followed by some discussion of methodological issues in enumerating and surveying the political behavior of the ethnic population.

A Quick Review of History of Migration from Taiwan

Immigrants from Taiwan do not have a recorded presence in the data released by the U.S. government until the 1950s when a small number of mostly middle-class, college-educated students entered to pursuit graduate studies in elite universities.[17] Among this group of people were Mainlanders who were born in China and evacuated to Taiwan around 1949; some were Islanders or native Taiwanese whose families or ancestors had migrated from southern China and settled in Taiwan before 1945.[18]

The group of students initially lived in the United States to fulfill a temporary and specific purpose. In fact, the U.S. government maintained a long-standing collaboration with the Nationalist government during (and after) World War II to provide advanced technical training to Chinese students (and students from other developing nations) as a form of diplomacy.[19] The end of World War II and the sweeping changes that came with the exile of the KMT to Taiwan effectively made these students de facto refugees and displaced persons in need of resettlement, which they did receive through a special act promulgated by the U.S. Congress.[20] As for students with familial roots in Taiwan prior to 1945, when Taiwan was under Japanese colonization, their dashed hopes for liberation and

equality under the succeeding KMT rule, which featured a Mandarin-only language policy, compulsory military service, strict media censorship, ideological indoctrination, and the brutal handling of the 228 Incident in 1947, became push factors that caused their exit.[21]

As students from Taiwan continued to arrive during and after the 1950s and remained in the United States as legal residents after the conclusion of their studies, the pattern of Taiwanese American immigration began to emerge as one distinct from most other U.S. ethnic groups. Immigration statistics published by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) show that there were 721 immigrants from Taiwan who were admitted as legal permanent residents between 1950 and 1959. That number grew more than eightfold from 15,657 in 1960–69 to 132,647 in 1990–99.[22] This exponential growth partly reflected changes in U.S. immigration policy made in 1965, which lifted discriminatory quotas and created an opportunity for the highly educated and highly skilled individuals from Taiwan to enter through professional immigration. It was also influenced by U.S. foreign policies that recognized the Taiwan-based government as the sole legitimate Chinese government between 1949 and 1979 and allowed immigrants from Taiwan to claim the quota for China. The normalization of U.S. relations with the PRC and the signing of Taiwan Relations Act in 1979 created another wave of emigration from Taiwan of largely middle- or upper-middle-class families, who sought stability and better educational opportunities for their children. Until Taiwan lifted its own emigration restriction in 1980, the prospect of graduate education abroad became the only means of exit for the unconnected and the less resourceful. After arriving in the United States, these students-turned-immigrants took advantage of changing immigration laws to bring in their families through family reunification,[23] and some would later play a key role in founding the Taiwanese independence movement in North America and in the democratization process of the island.[24] Regardless of their identity as Mainlanders or Islanders in Taiwan, their exposure to the civil rights struggles of African Americans was cited as a reason for many to become (more) critical of the authoritarian control of the KMT government and more interested in exploring the independence issue in Taiwan in the late 1960s and 1970s.[25]

In all, migration from Taiwan was about five times greater than that from China in the 1970s and peaked in the 1980s and 1990s when Taiwanese numbers exceeded those from Hong Kong as well. By sheer numbers, the impact of immigrants from Taiwan on the construction of contemporary Chinese America in the 1970s and 1980s is an important but neglected aspect of Chinese and Asian American history. The timing of their entry made Taiwanese immigrants one of the first major groups of ethnic

Chinese immigrants who could seek the promise of equal opportunity in political incorporation in the post-1965 era. Immigrants from Taiwan not only tend to be equipped with personal or family resources upon arrival, but also are eligible to seek naturalization and reap the benefits of U.S. citizenship (such as voting and sponsoring immediate family members and relatives to the United States). Moreover, those who were socialized under the liberalized and democratized political environment in Taiwan after 1987 also became the first group of ethnic Chinese immigrants who tasted the fruits of competitive elections and freedom of the press in their Asian homeland. Consequently, their homeland socialization may have facilitated their greater participation in U.S. electoral politics compared to immigrants from Mainland China and Hong Kong.[26] The majority of these Taiwanese immigrants have been found to bypass the traditional urban ethnic enclaves, such as the old Chinatowns, and settled straight into middle-class suburbs. Over time, the (West) San Gabriel Valley of the greater Los Angeles metropolitan region has grown to become an "ethnoburb," with the highest concentration of Taiwanese American residents, banking institutions, and other businesses in the United States.[27]

As shown, Taiwanese immigrants occupy a distinct space in modern Asian American history and a better understanding of their experiences can further explicate the complexity of being Chinese in contemporary America. Yet, the scope and consequences of the role Taiwanese Americans played in structuring the "model-minority" image of Chinese and Asian Americans remain as research areas that need to be better appreciated and critically interrogated. Past research on Taiwanese Americans by scholars trained in history, English, sociology, anthropology, geography, urban studies, and related fields cited in the preceding pages has laid important and fertile ground for further research. We wish to contribute in building this knowledge base by focusing on assessing the "success" of Taiwanese Americans in immigrant political incorporation through their participation in mainstream electoral politics. We do so by reviewing evidence from various sources of quantitative data that exist to date. Our journey needs to begin, nevertheless, with a reality check of the limitations in conducting scientific research associated with enumerating a scarce, variously defined, and unevenly distributed population that is no more than 1 percent of the U.S. population in the best U.S. census estimates to date.

Who Counts as Taiwanese American?

The U.S. census provides, in principle, the single best resource for studying the demographic characteristics of any U.S. population, especially those

that are small in size and dispersed in settlement patterns. Yet, even with the best intentions and the use of sophisticated methodology in counting the population, the U.S. census has long been criticized in persistently undercounting ethnic minorities in the population. Advocates in Taiwanese American community sought to alleviate the undercounting problem in census enumeration scheme by promoting the write-in option for those who identify as Taiwanese instead of the standard check box option of "Chinese."[28] Specifically, Taiwanese Americans were urged by community advocacy groups such as the Taiwanese American Citizen League to check "other Asian" in the section on race and ethnicity and to write in "Taiwanese" to show a distinct identity from the Chinese. This discrepancy in enumeration of the Chinese versus the Taiwanese by the U.S. Census Bureau may have directly contributed to the large disparity in current population estimates between these two ethnic groups.

According to the ancestry data reported in the Census 2000 Brief prepared by Angela Brittingham and G. Patricia de la Cruz, the number of those who indicated that they are "Taiwanese" in the ancestral question rose from 192,973 persons in 1990 to 293,568 persons in 2000.[29] This was a 52 percent increase. A comparison of data on the Taiwanese population in the 2000 and 2010 censuses shows a growth rate of 59 percent in ten years (in Table 1). Studying changes in ethnic identification of the Taiwan-born population by using the 5 percent Integrated Public Use Microdata Sample, Jennifer Holdaway finds that the percentage among the Taiwan-born who reported their ancestry as Chinese decreased from 73 percent in 1980 to 54 percent in 1990 and to 32 percent in 2000.[30] Studying the rising phenomenon of Taiwanese identification in the write-in race question in the U.S. census, Zhou Yu and Lan-hung Nora Chiang find both the older and recently arrived Taiwanese immigrants as well as those who live in Los Angeles are more likely to identify as Taiwanese than Chinese. In contrast, those who are acculturated, are more fluent in English, or migrated to the States at a young age and before the 1980s are less likely to switch their identity from Chinese to Taiwanese. The authors suggest that entering "Taiwanese" on the census form appears to be a political act of asserting identity and expressing solidarity with their compatriots in Taiwan.[31]

With few exceptions, what influences the ethnic identification and other political orientations of Taiwanese Americans is an important research question that has not been explored much in the current literature. In fact, the entire field of Taiwanese American studies is basically missing from the curriculum of Chinese American, let alone Asian American, or American/ethnic studies. We argue that one important reason for the omission is the complex history and ambiguous status of Taiwan—considered by some

as an integral part of China in history and culture but as a separate entity by others. Moreover, the paradoxical identities of the majority of people in Taiwan as both ethnically Chinese but culturally Taiwanese not only are confusing to U.S. opinion leaders and researchers, but also present challenges to obtaining a full understanding of the content of a Taiwanese identity in the homeland in Asia.[32] This confusion has resulted in the neglect and marginalization of Taiwanese American studies. Some agencies, such as the U.S. Census Bureau and USCIS, have been increasingly sensitive to the need to make a distinction between Taiwan and China in recent years.[33] However, most other governmental entities, politicians, mainstream media, and U.S. society at large operate under the common ethnicity principle and treat the Taiwanese diaspora as part of the Chinese diaspora without regard to the volatile relationships between the two homeland regimes.

Additionally, the facts that Taiwan is not only a place of origin but also a place of settlement for U.S. immigrants born outside of Taiwan, and that those born in Taiwan may not have been necessarily raised in Taiwan while those born elsewhere may have been raised in Taiwan have made a precise definition of "homeland" and accurate counting of the Taiwanese American population nearly impossible tasks. According to the U.S. census, a total of 144,795 in 2000 and 230,382 in 2010 persons identified themselves as solely or partly Taiwanese. Although this growth rate is higher than the average rate of 46 percent for Asian Americans, these population figures are likely to be severely underreported, due in part to the cumbersome need for self-identification as Taiwanese American by rejecting first the traditional "Chinese" box *before* writing down "Taiwanese" under the "Other Asian" category. Indeed, when counting only the foreign-born population in 2010, regardless of self-identification, the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS, see below) reports a total of 358,460 persons born in Taiwan and residing in the United States, a figure that is 56 percent higher than the one reported in the decennial census.

The ACS is an annual survey conducted nationwide in every U.S. county and Puerto Rico that intends to provide the most current economic, social, demographic, and housing information of the U.S. population. It uses a series of monthly samples to produce annually updated data for the same small areas (census tracts and block groups) formerly surveyed via the decennial census long-form sample. While this data series yields the highest estimates of the Taiwanese population in the United States, the estimated figures represent only the foreign-born population and are vulnerable to greater sampling variability because of the larger sampling errors compared to the decennial census. However, based on a combination of single- and multiyear estimates of the ACS data reported in Table

1, we are able to verify that, compared to the Chinese and Asian American population in 2010, the Taiwanese American population was better educated and had higher rates of citizenship and homeownership, as well as per capita and median family income on average, even if both Taiwanese and Chinese population shared similar levels of limited English proficiency and poverty.

Improving Understanding of the Political Participation of Taiwanese Americans through Survey Research

To date, the primary data source for analyzing voting participation of Taiwanese Americans is the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement (CPS-VRS) files for November elections. The addition of new questions on nativity and place of birth starting in 1994 created the first (albeit limited)[34] opportunity for analyzing the roles of nativity, country/place of birth, and ancestral origin in structuring the voting registration and turnout rates of U.S. voting-age persons of Asian (including mixed racial) descent who either were born in Taiwan, Mainland China, or Hong Kong or have at least one of the parents born in these places.

Compared to the American National Election Study (ANES), a traditional data source for American voting behavior research, the CPS-VRS is uniquely equipped for studying the voting behavior of Asian Americans and its subgroups for several reasons. First, the CPS sample sizes are sufficiently large for research on the voting participation of all major ethnoracial populations in the United States. Second, continuous improvements in U.S. census sampling methodologies have made the CPS data less biased in representing low-income, nonnative, and nonwhite minorities in the resultant samples. Third, the CPS data have a smaller amount of inflation of self-reported voting and registration rates.[35] Although better socioeconomic status and exposure to preelection polling may largely account for the higher levels of reported turnout among ANES respondents, the nonpolitical nature of the census survey may help reduce respondents' propensity to misreport turnout.

Despite the superiority of the census data, their quality and utility in understanding minority political behavior may be jeopardized by the following factors. First, there is no validation of reported voting for the CPS respondents. Second, only a small number of questions deal with political participation and only on formal electoral modes. Third, the unique sampling challenges associated with the rapidly growing immigrant communities and/or language minorities may result in a substantial un-

dercounting of the number of Asians and other nonwhites in the samples. Fourth, besides undercounting, there may be a lack of consistency in the identification of certain ethnoracial minorities—as illustrated in our discussion of the various outcomes in the enumeration of Taiwanese American population. Last but not least, and as discussed earlier, the CPS does not collect information on the self-identity of Asian ethnic groups, forcing users to adopt indirect and incomplete measures to gauge the ethnic origins of Asian respondents.

Primarily because the main purpose of the CPS-VRS data series is for analyzing patterns of voting registration and turnout in November elections that occur every other year, we need to rely on privately collected public opinion surveys to provide a more complete assessment of the engagement of Taiwanese Americans in other areas of political behavior such as political ideology, political partisanship, presidential vote choice, and acts of participation beyond voting, including those dealing with Asian homeland politics. The three publicly accessible datasets that we employ in this category are the Pilot National Asian American Political Survey (PNAAPS), which was administered in the six weeks immediately following the 2000 general elections; the National Asian American Survey (NAAS) of 2008, which was administered between August 12 and October 29, 2008 (weeks before the general elections); and the Pew Research Center Asian American Survey (PAAS) of 2012, which was administered from January 3 to March 27, 2012. Data gathering for the first two surveys was fulfilled by the ISA (Interviewing Service of America), and that for the third one was by Abt SRBI.

All three datasets involve employing advanced opinion survey and sampling technologies to conduct large-scale multilingual telephone interviews of targeted Asian ethnic respondents selected from a sampling frame drawn by a combined method of multistrata random-digit dialing and listed ethnic surname sampling.[36] The PNAAPS is a seminational survey focusing on surveying respondents residing in six major metropolitan areas of the Asian population.[37] Both the NAAS and the PAAS are national in scope, with samples drawn from all fifty states. Each has a focus on gathering opinions from the top six Asian ethnic groups and offers at least four different Asian languages in addition to English for respondents who prefer in-language interviews. The three surveys do differ significantly in respondent size, with the PNAAPS being the smallest with 1,214 respondents and NAAS being the largest with over 5,000 respondents, while the PAAS has an *N* of 3,511 respondents. To maximize the number of respondents for our research purposes, we identify Taiwanese Americans by place of birth for the foreign-born and parental country of origin for the U.S.-born. Even with

these efforts, Taiwanese respondents account for only 2 to 5 percent of respondents in each of the Asian American surveys under study.

To help us better assess the participation of Taiwanese Americans in homeland politics, we turn to a proprietary dataset collected by the first author. The Chinese American Homeland Politics Survey (CAHP) of 2007 is the nation's first seminational opinion survey that focuses on gauging the contours of ethnic identity and participation in homeland politics for ethnic Chinese originated from three key homeland societies in Asia. Telephone interviews with 603 Chinese-surnamed adults were conducted in four languages between October 18 and November 8, 2007, using a stratified random sample of Chinese-surnamed individuals residing in 35 states, 285 cities, and 175 direct media areas. Respondents originated from Taiwan and Hong Kong were oversampled so that they consist of 33 and 20 percent of the final sample, respectively. Although the CAHP represents the best effort to systematically tap into the transnational political experiences of Taiwanese Americans to date, it is handicapped by the lack of questions that aim to gauge the adaptation experiences of immigrants in the host society, such as their patterns of political partisanship, political ideology, U.S. presidential vote choice, experiences of ethnic/racial discrimination, and positions on U.S. domestic policies dealing with race and immigration.

Finally, to provide a systematic profile of Taiwanese Americans in elective office, we turn to the Asian Pacific American Elected Officials (APAEO) database, which is a unique and ongoing project constructed by a team of graduate and undergraduate students on a University of California campus under the supervision of the first author. The purpose of the database is to create and maintain a complete and updated roster of the nation's elected officials of APA descent serving as members of Congress, statewide elected officials, state legislators, county commissioners or supervisors, city or town council members, and school board members. Based on the online roster of the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies secured in early 2014, we were able to update the roster and locate additional information in the public domain related to each of the elected officials in our database by employing smart search engines and investigative skills for online research. The resultant database contains each individual's personal information and background of political socialization. Elected officials who served in 2014–15 and were born in Taiwan, as compared to those identified by surname as Chinese and other Asian Americans, are the focus of analysis for the last section of this article.

Below, by employing the various types of quantitative data described above, we strive to provide a more comprehensive and transparent profile of the political participation of Taiwanese Americans as compared to that of

Chinese and other Asian Americans (as well as whites in the case of voting and registration) in early twenty-first-century America.

Patterns of Voting Registration and Turnout

In American political behavior research, two basic measures of political participation that can provide a good grasp on the extent of immigrant incorporation are voter registration and turnout. Based on prior research and with a prominent portion of the population being foreign-born, Taiwanese (as well as Chinese and Asian) Americans are expected to have lower voter registration and turnout rates among those of voting age than their white counterparts.[38]

As predicted, our analysis of the CPS-VRA datasets of 2004 and 2012 reveals a pattern of lower rates of voting for Taiwanese Americans than for (non-Hispanic) whites (Table 2). When we consider the registration rates only among citizens eligible to vote, Taiwanese Americans underparticipated in 2004 but not so in 2012, when there were no discernable differences between Taiwanese Americans and white Americans. In fact, a significantly higher percentage of Taiwanese American adults voted in 2012 than in 2004. However, under a closer examination, their voting rates among the registered are still lower than those of other groups in the table. Curious as to the reason, we broke down the data by nativity,[39] and the result suggests that a possible source of underparticipation lies in the significantly lower voting turnout rate among the U.S.-born Taiwanese in 2012, even if they registered at a significantly higher level than their foreign-born counterparts in the same election.

What these data on turnout and voter registration tell us is that Taiwanese Americans today are registering to vote at rates on par with those of white Americans; however, they do not always cast their votes, especially the U.S.-born. While some (in the pluralist camp) might suspect that the source of underparticipation lies in first-generation immigrants' lack of interest in and familiarity with the U.S. political processes compared to their U.S.-born counterparts, this assumption is not supported by the U.S. census data examined here.

Political Ideology

Another important aspect of deciphering the political orientations of Taiwanese Americans is to analyze their ideological preferences, major partisan affiliations, and presidential vote choices. To this end, we first consider how survey respondents place themselves in the five-point ideology assessment (from very liberal to very conservative) and by using the standard partisanship question in public opinion surveys.[40]

Table 2. Voting and Registration in November 2004 and 2012 Elections among Voting-Age Chinese and Taiwanese Americans (%)

Place of Birth/Race	China 2004	China 2012	Taiwan 2004	Taiwan 2012	Asian 2004	Asian 2012	White 2004	White 2012
Foreign-born	88	85	87	84	86	75	5	5
Citizenship	64	63	78	77	65	68	98	98
among the foreign-born	59	57	74	72	59	57	60	60
Registration	32	34	48	57	33	39	74	72
among citizens	51	54	62	74	51	57	75	74
Foreign-born	47	51	60	70	53	57	70	68
U.S.-born	66	64	74	88	46	58	75	74
Voting	29	30	30	46	28	32	66	63
among the registered	89	86	80	80	85	84	89	87
Foreign-born	90	85	80	83	85	84	91	85
U.S.-born	87	89	84	71	85	83	89	87
Weighted N (thousands)	1,731	2,197	432	347	8,523	13,323	151,410	158,278

Source: "Current Population Survey, November 2004 and 2012: Voting and Registration Supplement" (machine-readable data file) (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004, 2012).

Note: Frequencies reported are among voting-age persons, who, except for the (non-Hispanic) whites, are among individuals who themselves or at least one of their parents were born in Taiwan, China, or anywhere in Asia.

Using national survey data collected in 2000, 2008, and 2012, we arrive at several general observations about the ideological preferences of Taiwanese Americans, which are shown in Table 3.[41] The most striking of the findings is that among those who are surveyed, there is a substantial number of Taiwanese Americans who identified as being "middle of the road" across all time points. In particular, our analysis shows that at least 40 percent of those surveyed in 2000 and 2012, and 33 percent of those surveyed in 2008, considered themselves "moderate," which is consistently the largest bloc of ideological identifiers within the ethnic community.

Also, while the number of conservative identifiers within Taiwanese American respondents is small, there has been an increase in their proportion over time, growing from 11 percent to 20 percent of all Taiwanese Americans surveyed in 2012.[42] Additionally, if we compare only liberals versus conservatives, there is proportionally more Taiwanese American respondents who see themselves as strong/moderate liberals than strong/moderate conservatives. Finally, results from the 2008 NAAS show a substantial portion (31 percent) of Taiwanese Americans respondents as "unsure" of where they stand in terms of political ideology. This is important as the large proportion of moderates and those who are unsure may indicate a level of ambivalence within the ethnic community about the left-right ideological expressions in U.S. politics.

Comparing Taiwanese to Chinese and Asian American respondents, we see a slight but concurrent increase from 2004 to 2012 in the shares of those who identified themselves as politically "conservative" across the board. However, a more significant aspect of cross-group comparisons is the substantial presence of the "middle-of the-road" group, with one-third to two-fifths of respondents classifying themselves as such across all ethnic/racial groups.

Given these results, we note one clear political characteristic of Taiwanese Americans is their tendency to see themselves as political moderates and in the center (or middle) of the U.S. liberal-conservative political ideological schema. However, we also note the need to heed the substantial portion of respondents who were unsure of their political ideology, for it could mean several different things, such as political ambivalence or the lack of comprehension about the liberal-conservative political spectrum in the United States.

Political Partisanship and Presidential Vote Choice

Comparing Taiwanese to Chinese and Asian American respondents in terms of their affiliations with the two major parties, we show in Table 4

Table 3. Political Ideology among Chinese and Taiwanese Americans, 2000–2012 (%)

Birthplace or Ancestral Origin	China 2000	China 2008	China 2012	Taiwan 2000	Taiwan 2008	Taiwan 2012	Asian Total 2000	Asian Total 2008	Asian Total 2012
Very liberal	3	8	7	7	9	10	8	10	6
Somewhat liberal	24	12	27	39	9	22	28	12	25
Middle of the road	41	31	38	40	33	43	32	33	37
Somewhat conservative	12	6	17	10	10	17	18	10	21
Very conservative	2	4	1	1	2	3	4	6	3
Not sure	18	26	10	3	31	6	10	21	8
N	255	1,028	448	70	121	126	1,214	5,159	3,511

Sources: Data for the 2000 figures come from the PNAAPS 2000–2001. Data for 2008 come from the NAAS 2008. And data for 2012 come from the PEW Asian 2012.

that Democratic identifiers significantly outweigh Republican ones across groups and over time. The observed Democratic edge is not new and has been reported before.[43] However, the shares of Democratic identifiers are lower among Taiwanese than Chinese or Asian American respondents. Moreover, in the twelve-year span from 2000 to 2012, the shares of Independents in each community have skyrocketed, with close to half of the Taiwanese identifying themselves as Independent in 2012, which is the highest figure across the board.[44] Meanwhile, the shares of nonpartisanship (i.e., those who answered "no" or "not sure" of their partisanship identity) have shrunk in size across time and in each community. We believe these movements may signal a gradual (re)alignment of the Taiwanese and other Asian American communities in their affiliation with the two major parties.

Focusing on voters of their presidential vote in the three November elections of 2000, 2004, and 2008, we observe a significant Democratic edge across all communities in 2000 and 2008 in Table 5. However, the Democratic advantage is smaller among Taiwanese respondents than among Chinese or Asian Americans. In fact, the partisanship trend was reversed in 2004 when Taiwanese American voters gave higher support for the Republican than the Democratic Party candidate. Asian American voters, as a group, were actually just about equally divided in their support for candidates from the two major parties back then. Only time may tell if the 2004 phenomenon was an exception or the beginning of a possible partisan shift within the ethnic community.

Political Participation Other Than Voting

We use four survey measures to explore the extent of Taiwanese American participation in political activities besides voting—community volunteerism, making campaign donations, contacting officials, and attending protest or demonstration.

Given the relative affluence of the population, we expect Taiwanese respondents to have more resources to participate in these political activities that do not require U.S. citizenship or voting registration. Data in Table 6 support the prediction that, compared to Chinese and Asian Americans, those who either were born in or originated from Taiwan were generally found to have higher rates of political participation in activities besides voting, especially in 2008. Specifically, nearly a third of Taiwanese Americans reported having worked with others in the community to solve a problem, followed by one-fifth among Asian Americans, and one-sixth among Chinese Americans. About one in six Taiwanese Americans made campaign donations in 2008, which was a higher rate than that for other

Table 4. Political Partisanship among Chinese and Taiwanese Americans, 2000–2012 (%)

Birthplace or Ancestral Origin	China 2000	China 2008	China 2012	Taiwan 2000	Taiwan 2008	Taiwan 2012	Asian Total 2000	Asian Total 2008	Asian Total 2012
Democrat	32	26	30	27	20	23	36	31	35
Republican	9	7	18	19	9	18	16	15	18
Independent	4	30	35	3	33	46	13	21	31
No/not sure	55	39	25	51	36	13	35	30	15

Source: "Current Population Survey, November 2004 and 2012: Voting and Registration Supplement" (machine-readable data file) (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004, 2012).

Table 5. Presidential Vote Choice among Chinese and Taiwanese Americans, 2000–2008 (%)

Birthplace or Ancestral Origin	China 2000	China 2004	China 2008	Taiwan 2000	Taiwan 2004	Taiwan 2008	Asian Total 2000	Asian Total 2004	Asian Total 2008
For Democratic	66	56	72	46	33	64	55	44	65
For Republican	18	31	17	37	55	28	26	43	25

Source: "Current Population Survey, November 2004 and 2012: Voting and Registration Supplement" (machine-readable data file) (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004, 2012).
Note: The 2004 figures are retrospective responses of presidential vote choices by respondents to the 2008 NAAS. Similarly, the 2008 figures are from responses to the 2012 Pew Asian survey.

groups or in other elections. Just over one in ten Taiwanese Americans contacted their representative in both 2004 and 2008, but even fewer Chinese Americans did so. Participation rates in protest or demonstration were low and in the single digits for all groups. Overall, Taiwanese American respondents seem to be more politically active compared to the general Asian American respondents.

Participation in U.S. and Homeland Politics

Based on the 2007 CAHP data, we have an opportunity to examine the extent of immigrant participation in U.S. mainstream and Asian homeland oriented politics by their place of premigration socialization in the Asian homeland. This analysis (in Table 7) shows that Taiwanese Americans who were socialized as Mainlanders in Taiwan had much higher rates of acquiring U.S. citizenship, making campaign donations to U.S. and homeland candidates, and being political active before migration than those Taiwanese Americans socialized as Taiwanese in Taiwan. However, those socialized as Taiwanese are found to be more active in U.S. ethnic organizations and U.S. politics regarding the ethnic homeland; they are about as active in homeland associations and voting in homeland elections, when compared to those socialized as Mainlander. Based on the significant gaps in sociodemographic and political resources, it should not be surprising to find that both groups of Taiwanese Americans are more politically active in both U.S. mainstream and homeland orientated politics than those immigrant Chinese Americans socialized in Mainland China.

Although our focus is on Taiwanese Americans, similar findings about the significant role of premigration socialization in structuring immigrant political activism regarding both the host society and the ethnic homeland after migration can be found in studies of Latinos and other groups of Asian Americans.[45] In the case of Taiwan Americans, foreign policy concerns manifested in the persistent push for greater international recognition of Taiwan as a sovereign state as well as transnational efforts to help liberalize and democratize the homeland and to strengthen its democratic order are expressions of long-distance transnationalism that have not only fueled political participation of the overseas community but helped forge the distinct identity as Taiwanese Americans.[46]

Holding Elective Offices

Running for and holding popularly elected offices are typically considered the very last frontier for immigrant communities to conquer in the process of becoming politically incorporated. This is also an area where being of Tai-

Table 6. Participation Other Than Voting among Chinese and Taiwanese Americans, 2001–2008 (%)

Birthplace or Ancestral Origin	China 2000	China 2008	Taiwan 2000	Taiwan 2008	Asian Total 2000	Asian Total 2008
Worked with others in the community	16	16	20	32	21	22
Donated to U.S. candidates	9	7	6	16	12	14
Contacted representative	6	7	11	12	11	11
Attended protest or demonstration	4	4	4	6	7	5
Base *N*	255	1,028	70	121	1,214	5,159

Sources: PNAAPS 2000, NAAS 2008.

Table 7. Political Participation in U.S. and Homeland Politics by Premigration Socialization (%)

Premigration Socialization as …	Taiwanese	Mainlander	Chinese	All
U.S. citizenship	54	75	56	62
Donated to U.S. candidates	8	19	6	9
Active in political organization before emigration	18	35	14	16
Active in U.S. ethnic organization	25	22	20	21
Participated in U.S. politics regarding the homeland	9	4	3	5
Participated in hometown association in the United States	18	20	8	11
Voted in homeland elections	21	20	3	10
Donated to homeland candidates	5	9	0	3
Base *N*	147	69	234	580

Source: Chinese American Homeland Politics Survey, 2007.
Note: All respondents are Asian-born. "Taiwanese" refers to those Taiwan-raised individuals who were born in Taiwan and have either parent born in Taiwan. "Mainlander" refers to those Taiwan-raised individuals who were born in either China or Hong Kong or were born in Taiwan but have parents born in China.

wanese descent seems to have a clear edge over those of Chinese descent. For example, weeks ahead of the 2016 general elections, the Asian Pacific American Institute of Congressional Studies (APAICS) released a pamphlet showing the demographic breakdown of Asian Pacific American candidates running at the federal, state, and local levels.[47] In terms of the distribution of these candidates by ethnic origin, there were six Chinese American candidates and one Taiwanese American candidate out of a total of thirty-two Asian American candidates running for U.S. Congress. Additionally, there were eighteen Chinese American and six Taiwanese American candidates out of a total of 147 on the ballot. Given that Taiwanese Americans are only 1.24 percent of the Asian population in the 2010 census, the 3.9 percent share of candidates of Taiwanese descent among the 2016 class of Asian Pacific American candidates for federal and state offices well exceeds their ethnic population share. Meanwhile, the reverse is true among candidates of Chinese descent, who are only 14.5 percent of the same class of candidates, even if Chinese Americans (excluding Taiwanese) are 21.91 percent of the Asian population in 2010.

Looking back into history, because of the prolonged anti-Asian sentiment in U.S. society as well as strict immigration/emigration restrictions that were placed by governments on both sides of the Pacific, practically no (immigrant) Taiwanese Americans made it to the electoral arena until the early 1980s. Among the pioneers were Lily Lee Chen, who was elected to the city council of Monterey Park, California, in 1982 and became its mayor in 1984, and S. B. Woo, who served as Delaware's twenty-first lieutenant governor from 1985 to 1989. In recent years, the elections of David Wu (OR-1) in 1998, Grace Meng (NY-6) in 2012, and Ted Lieu (CA-33) in 2014 to the U.S. House of Representatives are considered high-water marks of Taiwanese Americans in the national political arena. At the state level, John Chiang, whose parents came from Taiwan, served as California state controller (2006–15) and is California's state treasurer (2015–) and recently announced his intention to run for California governor in 2018. On the East Coast and at the local level, John Liu served as the first Taiwanese/Asian American city councilmember in New York City between 2002 and 2010. Until his failed campaign for the mayoral office in 2013, Liu served as the city's comptroller (2010–13). In New Jersey, Dr. Shing-Fu Hsueh became the first Taiwanese/Asian American mayor of West Windsor Township in 1993 and has served numerous terms since then.

To put the experiences of these trailblazers into perspective, we analyze a unique dataset comprising the entire population of Asian-surnamed individuals serving in elective offices in 2015. In Table 8, we present preliminary findings that compare selected characteristics of U.S. elected of-

ficials who are Taiwan-born to those who are ethnic Chinese (by surname, regardless of place of birth) as well as those who are of any Asian surname regardless of ethnicity. The first and most conspicuous pattern from observing the top third rows of Table 7 is that women constitute the majority of the Taiwan-born elected officials in 2015, and that the proportion of female elected officials is significantly higher for Taiwanese-surnamed compared to Chinese- and Asian-surnamed elected officials, respectively. Second, these data also show that, somewhat similar to the mass survey findings, the share of Democratic identifiers is lower, while the share of Republican identifiers is higher, among the Taiwan-born compared to Chinese- or Asian-surnamed elected officials. Third, in terms of locality, two-thirds of the Taiwan-born and three-fourth of Chinese-surnamed individuals were elected from California alone, which is significantly higher than the 47 percent of Asian-surnamed individuals elected into offices from the Golden State.

The second half of Table 8 reports the frequency distribution in percentages on nativity, major partisanship, and officeholding patterns by gender. Here, we note that a slightly higher percentage of males than females among Chinese-surnamed elected officials were born outside of the United States; the reverse is true among Asian-surnamed elected officials. When analyzing partisanship by gender, we note that the lower Democratic and greater Republican identifications among the Taiwan-born can be attributed to Taiwan-born women's inclination to identify with the Republican Party and Taiwan-born men's inclination to identify with the Democratic Party. In contrast, a significantly larger proportion of Chinese- and Asian-surnamed males identified with the Democratic Party, while a much smaller share of Chinese- and Asian-surnamed females identified with the Republican Party.

When analyzing officeholding by gender, we notice the majority of the Taiwan-born women hold offices at the school board level, while half of the Taiwan-born men hold offices at the municipal level, and a higher portion of males than females hold offices in the state legislature. Although over half of Chinese-surnamed males also hold offices at the municipal level, only about one-third of Chinese-surnamed females hold offices at the school board and municipal levels. The distribution of the types of office held among Asian-surnamed officials is more balanced, especially among women.

In the end, the political profile of Taiwanese Americans, and especially of Taiwan-born women in elective offices, appears to be distinct from that of Chinese- and Asian-surnamed elected officials. We suspect differences in identity, socioeconomic resources, homeland political socialization, and

Table 8. Political Participation through Holding Elective Offices, 2015 (%)

	Taiwan-Born		Chinese		Asian	
Female	54		34		31	
Democrat	41		67		70	
Republican	50		23		23	
in Calif.	68		74		47	
N	22		133		397	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Non U.S.-born	100	100	38	36	34	40
Democrat	60	25	74	54	71	67
Republican	40	58	20	28	24	20
% in office						
School board	20	58	27	36	18	29
Municipal	50	25	53	33	44	31
State legislature	30	17	14	20	28	25
Congress	10	0	1	4	2	6
N	10	12	88	45	275	122

Source: Asian Pacific American Elected Officials (APAEO) national database, 2015, complied by the first author.

transnational ties may be part of the explanation. Additional structural and contextual factors observed in prior research on women and racial minorities, such as dealing with political parties' recruitment practices, strategic and idiosyncratic concerns of electoral campaigns, and activities by community-based organizations and other interest groups, may also offer plausible explanations that require future research and exploration.

Conclusion

This study aims to provide a more sophisticated and comprehensive set of understanding of the making of Chinese/Asian America in contemporary times by deconstructing Chineseness in Asian America, and by focusing on those of Taiwanese descent residing in the United States. In addition to voting and registration, we analyze their political participation in terms of political ideology, partisanship, presidential vote choice, activities beyond voting, and involvement in homeland politics. We also explore the electoral outcomes of Taiwanese Americans as a way to understanding how those in the ethnic community have fared in the final stage, as defined by pluralists, of immigrant political incorporation compared to Chinese and Asian American elected officials in recent decades.

Defying the pluralist ideas of a straight-line assimilation/incorporation model, our research shows that the ability for Taiwanese Americans to turn their socioeconomic resources into political participation in U.S. electoral politics is structured by U.S. electoral laws, their immigration backgrounds, and types of homeland socialization. We find that Taiwanese Americans have gradually increased their voter registration and turnout rates since the early 2000s. As recently as 2012, eligible Taiwanese Americans were registered at rates on par with (non-Hispanic) whites, even though their turnout rate still fell short. Furthermore, compared to those classified as Chinese, and despite the overall image of socioeconomic success, Taiwanese Americans are not necessarily more conservative in political ideology or consistently more likely to identify with the Republican Party. Rather, among those of voting age, more have come to identify as ideologically moderate and politically independent than partisans. Nonetheless, among voters, a higher percentage of Taiwanese than Chinese or Asian Americans voted for the Republican presidential candidates in recent elections.

Significant participation differences do exist among Taiwanese Americans based on homeland socialization. For instance, immigrants or families who were socialized as Mainlanders tend to be more politically active before migration, and they participate more actively after migration

in voting, registration, and other political acts beyond voting than those who were socialized as Taiwanese on the island. However, the latter are found to be somewhat more active in U.S.-based ethnic organizations and in exercising influence on U.S. policies toward the homeland of Taiwan. Nevertheless, both groups are equally active in their participation in hometown associations and voting in homeland elections.

On elective officeholding, our research shows that many Taiwanese Americans were considered trailblazers in Chinese and Asian American community (before the 1990s) by holding offices at the federal, state, and municipal levels. They continue to be disproportionally represented among Asian American candidates running in congressional and state legislative elections in the 2016 election cycle. Their apparent ability to score electoral gains is reflected in our study of current elected officials. Moreover, Taiwan-born officials are found to have higher proportions of female officeholders than among their Chinese and Asian American counterparts, even if many of these offices are held at the school board level. Rather than individual merits or group-based resources, we believe these results are intrinsically tied to the contextual elements of immigration policy, homeland history, political socialization, and civic transnationalism that are unique to the Taiwanese American community. Together, our findings reject an overtly simplistic characterization of the political participation and incorporation of Taiwanese Americans as a "model-minority" success story.

Our research has, thus far, provided a glimpse into the political world of Taiwanese Americans by analyzing the level, scope, and direction of their involvement in U.S. and homeland politics. Through the extensive use of quantitative data, we have helped outline the patterns of political participation and officeholding among Taiwanese Americans, which in many ways are distinct from those of Chinese and Asian Americans. Not only does our study fills a void in Asian American studies and political science concerning the political behavior of a vibrant but overlooked community in ethnic America, but the findings can also contribute to a better understanding of the complexity of ethnic identity politics in Asian America. Nevertheless, due to methodological challenges and data limitations, our findings reported here can only be considered tentative. Future research should aim not only to improve the representativeness of the survey data, but to extend the scope of investigation into the arena of political representation and examine more thoroughly ethnic differences in the trajectories to office, style of election campaigns, constituency makeup, and substance of policies proposed and/or passed by Asian American elected officials with origins in Taiwan and other places in Asia.

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19. Hsu, *Good Immigrants*, 200–201.
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27. Chang, *Global Silicon Valley Home*; Chen, *Getting Saved in America*; Wei Li, *Ethnoburb: The New Ethnic Community in Urban America* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008); Wendy Cheng, *The Changs Next Door to the Diazes: Remapping Race in Suburban California* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).
28. A government official with the Census Bureau admitted that it was due to political concerns over international relations with China that "Taiwanese" could not be listed as an Asian American category along with "Chinese." See Thomas Kim, *The Racial Logic of Politics: Asian Americans and Party Competition* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007).
29. Angela Brittingham and G. Patricia de la Cruz, "Ancestry: 2000," Census 2000 Brief (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).
30. Jennifer Holdaway, "China: Outside the People's Republic of China," in *The New Americans: A Guide to Immigration since 1965*, ed. Mary Waters and Reed Ueda (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 355–70.
31. Zhou Yu and Lan-hung Nora Chiang, "Assimilation and Rising Taiwanese Identity: Taiwan-Born Immigrants in the United States, 1990–2000," *Journal of Population Studies* 38 (2009): 115–60.
32. Iris Chang, *The Chinese in America: A Narrative History* (New York: Viking, 2003); Williams, "Who Are the Taiwanese?"; Denny Roy, *Taiwan: A Political History* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003); Melissa Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese? The Impact of Culture, Power, and Migration on Changing Identities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
33. USCIS stands for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services under the Department of Homeland Security. It is formerly known as the INS, or Immigration and Naturalization Service.
34. It is considered limited, for we are unable to identify by ethnic origin those Asian Americans who are in the third or more immigration generations. About one in ten voting-age Asians are estimated to belong to this category. It is also possible that, for social desirability and other reasons, nonnaturalized immigrants may overreport citizenship.
35. To the authors' knowledge, no study has been done on misreported citizenship, especially regarding Asians. Overreporting of citizenship may be less likely than overreporting of voting because of the legal sanctions associated with faking citizenship.
36. Details of the survey methodology of the PNAAPS can be found in the introduction chapter of Pei-te Lien, M. Margaret Conway, and Janelle Wong, *The Politics of Asian Americans: Diversity and Community* (New York: Routledge, 2004). Details of the survey methodology for the NAAS 2008 can be found in the appendix of Janelle Wong, S. Karthick Ramakrishnan, Taeku Lee, and Jane Junn, *Asian American Political Participation* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2011). Details of the survey methodology of the PAAS 2012 can be found at Pew Research Center, "The Rise of

Asian Americans" (2012), http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/06/19/appendix-1-survey-methodology-3/ (accessed April 14, 2016).

37. The term "seminational" denotes the fact that, given the highly skewed and dispersed settlement patterns of a relatively scare population in the national scene, as well as the limited resources to conduct the survey, we cannot claim that this is a truly nationally representative survey where every eligible person has an equal chance of being selected for participation regardless of geographic location. We do believe the resultant dataset is the best possible solution to the challenges in research design given the known constraints.
38. Lien and Harvie, "Political Incorporation of Taiwanese Americans"; Harvie and Lien, "Minority Voting in the United States."
39. Nativity is defined as whether one is native-born in the United States or not.
40. For the five-point ideology question, respondents are first asked, "When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as a liberal, a conservative, a moderate, or have not though much about this?" If a respondent chooses "liberal" or "conservative," interviewers continue to ask, "Would you call yourself very conservative/liberal or not?" If respondent replies "moderate," then interviewers ask, "Would you say that you are slightly liberal, slightly conservative, or neither?"
41. We recognize that the validity of these results is based on the assumption that respondents not only understand the "left-right" continuum of political ideology in the United States but also are able to judge and accurately place themselves (in the middle) of the spectrum. However, as Janelle Wong et al. point out, "Asian Americans are predominantly immigrants or the second generation, a common base of knowledge about and attentiveness to politics cannot be assumed" (*Asian American Political Participation*, 147). This statement also applies to the Taiwanese American population, which is predominantly first generation. Although our research shows that there is a level of ambivalence in their ideological orientation, we have to assume the integrity of these survey responses. We believe if dishonesty does exist, the influence is most likely systematic, across all groups and all times.
42. Those who are considered "conservative" include those who answered that they are "somewhat conservative" and "very conservative" in survey questionnaires.
43. Harvie and Lien, "Minority Voting in the United States."
44. The increase in political independents is also reflected at the national level, with a Pew Research Center report showing that over one-third of Americans describe themselves as such. Compared to 2004, the year 2012 saw an increase of 8 percentage points in those respondents who identified as an Independent. See Pew Research Center, "Partisan Polarization Surges in Bush, Obama Years—Section 9: Trends in Party Affiliation" (2012), http://

www.people-press.org/2012/06/04/section-9-trends-in-party-affiliation/ (accessed May 24, 2016).

45. E.g., Chris Collet and Pei-te Lien, eds., *The Transnational Politics of Asian Americans* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009); Patricia Landolt and Luin Goldring, "Immigrant Political Socialization as Bridging and Boundary Work: Mapping the Multi-layered Incorporation of Latin American Immigrants in Toronto," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 32, no. 7 (2009): 1226–47; Richard Kim, *The Quest for Statehood: Korean Immigrant Nationalism and U.S. Sovereignty 1905–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Sangay Mishra, *Desis Divided: The Political Lives of South Asian Americans* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).
46. Lien, "Homeland Origins and Political Identities"; Lien, "Places of Socialization"; Lien, "Pre-emigration Socialization."
47. Asian Pacific American Institute of Congressional Studies, "Asian American & Pacific Islander General Election Candidates" (2016), http://apaics.org/2016/10/05/2016-asian-american-pacific-islander-general-election-candidates/ (accessed October 8, 2016).