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Master's Thesis

**Mainland Spouses' local economical connections in Taiwan
and their social recognition**

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Abstract

This thesis explores the social engagement, democratic recognition, and economic connections of mainland Chinese and foreign immigrants in Taiwan. Utilizing survey data from the Academia Sinica's Basic Survey on Social Changes in Taiwan, a comparative analysis between these two immigrant groups is conducted.

The key findings indicate the two groups are similar in background and behavior. While political participation is limited, mainland immigrants demonstrate higher engagement in political organizations compared to foreigners. Both groups share positive perspectives regarding Taiwan's economic development and international exchange. However, mainland immigrants hold more conservative views on issues like income inequality and the increasing number of foreign workers. They also perceive Taiwan as becoming more chaotic. In terms of industries and occupations, both mainland and foreign immigrants are concentrated in manufacturing, accommodation/catering, and service/sales roles. The analysis reveals no significant difference in their occupational distributions.

Overall, this research highlights disparities in civic participation and political opinions between mainland and foreign immigrant groups. It underscores the importance of fostering inclusive policies that address discrimination while promoting immigrants' wellbeing and integration. Further examination of immigrants' contributions and challenges can guide evidence-based policies to build a more harmonious Taiwanese society.

Keywords: Social Engagement, Civic Participation, Democratic Recognition,
Mainland Spouses, Immigration in Taiwan.



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1. Introduction

Research Background

The primary aim of this study is to explore the social engagement and democratic recognition of mainland Chinese immigrants in Taiwan, and determine if they are different from their foreign counterparts. A deep understanding of democratic principles holds immense significance in shaping academic research and guiding public policy development. Notably, Taiwan's context adds a layer of importance to this exploration, as the nation has experienced a remarkable upsurge in immigration, largely driven by marriage and employment opportunities. Consequently, unraveling the intricacies of immigrants' social involvement and their receptiveness of democratic values, particularly among mainland Chinese immigrants as well as foreign counterparts, is a useful metric for scholars and policymakers alike. This understanding will provide insights into if mainland Chinese immigrant spouses could be treated the same as other immigrants for the purposes of marketing segmentation, economic contribution to Taiwan, labor force participation, and government policies.

Social engagement of immigrants can be understood as their inclusion and integration into the host society in terms of the economic, psychological, social, linguistic, travel, and civic spheres (IOM, 2023). Democratic recognition is a broad concept encompassing the acceptance of democratic ideals, institutions, and values. The active participation of immigrants can be beneficial to the host

society in a multitude of ways (IOM, 2023). For instance, when immigrants participate in community events, volunteer, or join local organizations, they contribute fresh perspectives, ideas, and skills that can enrich the community. Immigrants can foster a more representative and inclusive democratic process when they engage in political activism or vote.

In addition, when immigrants adapt to the language and customs of the host country, it can facilitate communication and understanding between different groups, promoting social cohesion (Amit & Bar-Lev, 2015; Örgütü, 2017). When immigrants familiarize themselves with the language and customs of the host country, it fosters better communication and understanding among diverse groups, promoting social cohesion. Economically, immigrants who work or start businesses stimulate economic growth and job creation (Quak, 2019). Hence, the active participation of immigrants can lead to the formation of communities that are stronger, more diverse, and more inclusive. By and large, immigrants' social engagement plays a pivotal role in fostering stronger, more diverse, and more inclusive communities.

Democratic recognition refers to the acknowledgement and acceptance of democratic principles, values, and institutions (Bassiouni, 1998; Besley & Persson, 2019). In theory, democratic recognition is a multifaceted concept that encompasses various aspects. It involves the public's recognition of states, governments, and a nation's democratic institutions. It is this recognition that provides legitimacy and a strong foundation for democratic governance. In addition, democratic recognition pertains to the recognition of individuals and groups within a democratic society, encompassing both normative and psychological dimensions. The act of recognition indicates the adoption of a

positive approach towards others and the assumption of responsibilities regarding how they are treated within a society. Theories of recognition shed light on the psychological processes underlying social and political resistance, highlighting how individuals deprived of adequate recognition are compelled to engage in a “struggle for recognition.”

Research Topics and Questions

According to survey-derived statistics, most of the Taiwan’s population, around 96% of the surveyed individuals, consider Taiwan to be welcoming towards foreign residents. Supporting this view, Taiwan was ranked as the top destination for expats in a 2021 "InterNations" survey (Freeman, 2022). Despite this warm reception, foreign residents still encounter instances of prejudice in Taiwan. As of the year 2021, the nation hosted more than 800,000 foreign residents, comprising 3.5% of the total population. The largest influx of immigrants is from Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines, with Southeast Asians making up the vast majority of the total immigrant population (Rich, 2019).

Without question, immigrant involvement and acceptance of democratic principles pose significant issues for Taiwan. Both mainland Chinese immigrants and foreign spouses continue to grapple with civil rights related challenges, such as political involvement, immigration, employment, and societal standing. Fearing national security implications, the Taiwanese government has instituted more restrictive measures specifically to manage the families of mainland Chinese spouses as compared to their other foreign counterparts. However, there is a lack of systematic research exploring both the

social engagement and democratic recognition of immigrants in Taiwan, particularly comparative studies between mainland spouses and their foreign counterparts. This research provides some insights as to if mainland Chinese immigrants act like other foreign immigrants in Taiwan.

Given these observations, this thesis proposes that the gaps in the research should be addressed by focusing on the local economic connections of mainland and foreign spouses, including areas such as foreign employment and job opportunities. Equally important is the need to study their social recognition, which includes involvement in religious groups, volunteer associations, sports and leisure activities, cultural groups, professional trade associations, and political organizations. Lastly, it's also vital to understand the perspectives of mainland and foreign spouses on Taiwan's democratization and other demographic and political aspects that influence their citizenship status.

This thesis explores potential differences between mainland immigrant spouses and other foreign spouses through the following research questions:

Question 1, Social Connections and Engagement: To what extent do mainland Chinese and foreign immigrants' levels of social connection and engagement with Taiwan reflect their degree of integration within the local society, especially in terms of involvement in civic organizations and political activities, and how are these levels potentially influenced by Taiwan's public policies and other external factors?

Question 2, Democratic Recognition: How do migrants' perspectives on access to citizenship, inclusion, residency, and other associated topics influence their concept of democratic recognition in Taiwan? How do these views align with or deviate from core democratic principles?

Question 3, Self-Confidence and Expectations for Local Economic Opportunities:

How do immigrants' recognition of democratic principles and their level of social engagement in Taiwan influence their self-confidence and expectations for local opportunities, and to what extent are these outcomes affected by variables such as an individual's degree of open-mindedness, conditions of the local labor market, and prevailing income inequality?

Research Strategy: A Comparison Analysis

The economic and social integration of foreign and mainland immigrants in Taiwan is influenced by various factors, with public policies and the overall environment playing critical roles. While existing literature has focused on the social and cultural consequences of immigration via marriage, there is a need to address the gaps in research on this subject by considering the social connections of mainland and foreign immigrants to Taiwanese society, including economic opportunities, civic engagement, and social recognition.

Intuitively, one might assume that Chinese immigrants appreciate Taiwan's democratic society more due to shared cultural and language similarities, but empirical evidence is required to support this claim. Therefore, the core research question of this paper is to investigate how social and legal recognition of foreign immigrants in Taiwan affects their civic engagement and views on Taiwan's democratic system. The study adopts a comparison approach, using mainland Chinese immigrants as the primary group of interest and other foreign immigrants as the study's baseline. Building on previous research on immigrant identity in Taiwan, this paper further examines how social engagement influences immigrant political views regarding Taiwan's

democratic system and local development. It specifically focuses on making comparisons between mainland and foreign immigrants in Taiwan, with a particular emphasis on analyzing the role of the Taiwanese government in promoting their well-being and integration, considering the historical cultural identity shared with China.

The study explores diverse democratic ideologies among mainland and foreign immigrants by examining their social engagement, democratic concepts, and Taiwan's democratic recognition. It sheds light on the challenges faced by these immigrants in Taiwan, including mainland and other foreign immigrants, in terms of their political integration, involvement in civic organizations, and levels of self-confidence, while also offering valuable insights for future policy development. Moreover, the research underscores the significance of comprehending the local social engagements of both mainland and foreign immigrants, encompassing their participation in civic societies, religious groups, volunteer associations, sports and leisure activities, cultural groups, professional trade associations, and political parties. Additionally, it seeks to delve into mainland and foreign immigrants' perspectives on Taiwan's democratization process and the demographic and political factors that may influence their citizenship status, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the immigrant experience in Taiwan and guiding informed policy decisions.

To examine these issues, the study employs a mixed-methods approach, utilizing a dataset from the Academia Sinica Humanities and Social Sciences Research Center's Basic Survey on Social Changes in Taiwan for 2020. The Social Changes Survey was initiated in the mid-1980s with the aim of tracking

long-term social changes in Taiwanese society through rigorous sampling and questionnaire design. This study is considered a mixed methods study in that it utilizes statistical, interview, and literature review techniques.

Since the first nationwide survey in 1985, the Taiwan Social Changes Survey has followed a 5-year cycle, rotating various survey modules to capture time-series trends across political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions. As of 2022, the Social Changes Survey has accumulated 70 surveys with over 143,000 face-to-face interviews over the past 30 years, making it one of the largest general social survey programs globally (Smith et al., 2006).

In addition to serving Taiwan's research needs, the TSCS also cooperates internationally through participation in comparative survey projects. This includes multi-country initiatives like the International Social Survey Program and the East Asian Social Survey. By combining local and international research interests, the Social Changes Survey provides robust, representative data capturing Taiwan's evolving social landscape. The present study employs the survey data to examine mainland and foreign immigrants, leveraging the Social Changes Survey dataset to yield valuable insights into this population's engagement, perspectives, and integration.

An accepted statistical method to determine if there are statistical differences in categorical responses to questions from two groups is the chi-square test for independence. The test formulates a null hypothesis that there are no differences between two groups with an alternative hypothesis that there are differences between these two groups. If the null hypothesis is statistically rejected by the chi-squared test, then the alternative hypothesis is accepted. By addressing these research gaps and employing a comprehensive approach, this

study endeavors to provide valuable insights that can aid policymakers in formulating more inclusive policies for the social and democratic recognition of foreign immigrants or nationals in Taiwan.

This study is organized into four sections. The first section outlines the research background, motivations, and issues. Section two presents a literature review, starting recent academic research with the focus of social engagement by immigrants and democratic recognition. The literature review also provides an overview of the landscape of mainland and foreign immigrants in Taiwan.

Section three focuses on social engagement and democratic recognition offers a comparative analysis of mainland spouses with their foreign counterparts by using data from the Basic Survey on Social Changes in Taiwan. It focuses on the challenges faced by mainland immigrants in terms of political integration, involvement in civic organizations, and levels of self-confidence, while exploring the perspectives of mainland immigrants on Taiwan's democratization process. Section four concludes this paper with a discussion of the main findings, the research contributions, the implications for Taiwan's public policy, and the limits of this study.

2. Literature Review: Mainland Immigrants in Taiwan

Globalization has facilitated the interconnections between different societies and cultures. Before the end of the 1970s, traveling between countries was costly and the exchange of information was not as fast and easy as it is today. Advanced technologies, such as mobile phones and social media, were non-

existent. Today, cultures intermingle effortlessly. Traveling internationally only requires a few hours and cultures are influenced by simply interacting on social media. This new level of accessibility has led to a surge in travel and a desire to experience foreign cultures firsthand, often leading to increased migration (Friedman, 2010).

Immigrant Social Identity and Engagement

Social engagement is a multi-dimensional issue, involving the mutual adaptation of migrants and of the host society, based on principles of protection of fundamental rights, respect, tolerance, and non-discrimination. For both immigrants and their host country, successful integration promotes social inclusion and good relations across diverse groups, which is what builds diverse societies that are also inclusive and cohesive (Ellis et al., 2021).

By looking at Somali young adult immigrants' civic engagement and antisocial attitudes/behavior in four North American regions, Ellis et al. (2021) found that their antisocial attitudes/behavior can coexist with civic engagement. For male immigrants, their sense of belonging to both Somali and American/Canadian communities was associated with lower levels of antisocial attitudes/behavior. In the same line of research, a case study of Peruvians in Santiago de Chile, Marzana et al. (2022) investigated the relationship between community engagement and the perception of integration of immigrants in a host country. The study suggests that immigrants who engage in social organizations have higher levels of integration than those who do not. In exploring why and how immigrants and refugees give back to their communities, the study identified several themes, including a desire to maintain

ethnic identity and connection, a sense of duty and obligation, and a measure of achieved success. In general, social engagement can play an important role in the integration and well-being of immigrants.

However, by looking at the newcomers in the United States, Weng and Lee (2016) point out the immigrants' sense of reactive ethnicity as a result of threats, persecution, discrimination, and exclusion. According to Cultural Theory, ethnic identity is important for ensuring the development and continuation of ethnic communities. Newcomers often view their ethnic communities as extended families and feel an obligation to contribute. Social responsibility means giving back to those left behind in one's native country as well as to others who share similar backgrounds in their new country. Providing a welcoming environment for immigrants can help immigrants start volunteering in their ethnic congregations. Further, organizations that are underfunded and understaffed may benefit from formal volunteer programs that recruit immigrants.

Migration has long been a hot topic in the social sciences. This is partly because of migrants' unique and dynamic transnational identities, which determine their level of integration into host societies. On a personal level, racial identity plays a role in identity formation, however, the perception of one's roots, which could be viewed as a geographical location, a nation, a government, or culture, is even more significant than racial identity. These identities are influenced by factors like race relations, public policy, diplomatic relations, and the influence of the government in their home country.

Regarding how native citizens view foreign residents, Chiu et al. (2005) suggest that native Hong Kong residents often possess negative stereotypes and

views about mainland immigrants. They are frequently blamed for taking away employment opportunities from locals and causing societal issues. Local Hong Kongers express concerns about mainland Chinese immigrants overwhelming the social welfare, healthcare, and educational systems, leading to a rise in local unemployment and social unrest. Consequently, these new immigrants find themselves further alienated within the local community, encountering significant challenges when attempting to adjust and assimilate into the local economy. Despite residents of Hong Kong and mainland Chinese immigrants sharing similar ethnic backgrounds, there still exists conflict and divisions within society, with discrimination further hampering mainland immigrants' ability to assimilate.

The cultural identity of mainland immigrants is an essential and integral part of their overall identity. This identity is comprised of three dimensions: the formation of the in-group and its characteristics, an individual's feelings towards the group, and the individual's perspective of how much their personal characteristics mirror those of the group. Cultural identity serves as a mirror for an individual's self-image as a part of a cultural group, denoted by a shared cultural heritage. The cultural identity shapes the immigrants' attitudes, behaviors, and their interpersonal interactions (Ngo & Li, 2016). It also acts as a pillar for self-esteem among immigrants, offering a sense of belonging and an understanding of their position in their new social environment.

Moreover, previous studies looking at immigrant identity in host countries confirm the complexity and multi-directionality of contemporary migration. Transnational identities have become more dynamic and contextualized. However, migrants often face challenges in their everyday lives due to

traditional border-based contexts such as their country of origin, host country, or ethnicity. In the face of societal expectations, they attempt to settle and shape their own identity. Conflict arises when the majority population of the host country has a limited understanding of the cultural background of foreign migrants.

Amit and Bar-Lev (2015) focus on immigrants' sense of belonging to the host society and propose a model where life satisfaction is a major predictor of immigrants' sense of belonging, explained by background variables including religious affiliation, religious motivation, native language proficiency, and ethnic segregation. The construction of the identity of Chinese immigrants in the United States is influenced by several factors, including the racial dynamics in the host country, US public policy toward Chinese immigrants, the diplomatic relationship between the United States and China, and the Chinese government's policies and influence on its overseas citizens (Wang, 1991).

Finally, studies also reveal the link between the role of information technology and social media in shaping immigrant identity. Previous research has made valuable contributions to the study of immigrants' identities in host countries through various methodologies and approaches. Park and Gerrits (2021) conducted a comparative case study on Korean migrants in Germany, revealing how various online social networks influence their transnational identities. Similarly, Alencar (2018) examined the uses of social media in refugee integration in the Netherlands, finding that online platforms play a crucial role in language acquisition, the development of cultural competence, and the establishment of social connections. These findings are further validated by the research of Kong et al. (2022), which explores how information

and communication technology influences immigrants' dual identity. Their findings indicate that immigrants often maintain dual identities, with technology shaping their sense of belonging to their host country. By using social media and communication technology, transnational immigrants are able to stay in contact with their home country while fostering a strong cultural identity and connection to the host country.

Challenges and Struggles of Mainland Immigrants in Taiwan after Naturalization

The post-naturalization situation of mainland immigrants in Taiwan reveals a complex landscape shaped by marriage-induced migration and evolving regulations. One particular motivation for migration, marriage, is highlighted by Momesso (2020). Taiwan stands as a significant example of marriage-induced migration. According to the literature, marriages involving Taiwanese and non-Taiwanese individuals are quite prevalent. In fact, as per Momesso (2020), in 2003, marriages involving non-Taiwanese citizens accounted for a substantial 31.38% of all marriages in Taiwan (Friedman, 2010). Friedman (2010) also noted that the late 20th century and early 21st century saw an uptick in migration and immigration in East Asia, including Taiwan, largely attributed to marital migration.

Regarding migration between China and Taiwan, the Peterson Institute for Economics found that initially cross-border movement was for short-term visits (PII, 2021). However, as time went on, many Taiwanese professionals sought employment and permanent residence in China. This occurred during a period

when China was experiencing a brain drain, with a notable shortage of skilled workers in fields such as Information and Communications Technology.

In contrast, despite the employment opportunities for Taiwanese in China, Taiwan enacted a law in 1992 that restricted employment for mainland Chinese immigrants in Taiwan. There were exceptions, particularly for spouses, but only in certain industries. According to the Peterson Institute for Economics, by the end of 2009, about 300,000 mainland Chinese immigrants had been granted residency in Taiwan, a figure slightly lower than the 400,000 non-mainland foreigners who had also received residency (PII, 2021). Of these non-mainland foreign residents, 80% were permitted to work in blue-collar jobs, whereas mainland Chinese with permanent residency were typically not. Interestingly, out of the 300,000 mainland residents in Taiwan by the end of 2009, 160,000 were women who had married Taiwanese men. Eventually, the restrictions loosened, allowing mainland spouses to work in blue-collar jobs if they were married to low-income families or had specific needs.

As the 21st century witnessed a surge in cross-border marriages in East Asia, spouses from mainland China started being perceived as a potential national security risk in Taiwan. The increase in marriages between Taiwanese nationals and foreigners led the Taiwanese government to establish regulations that managed the families of mainland spouses, as noted by Friedman (2010). Friedman also pointed out that Chinese spouses were subject to more stringent immigration and naturalization processes than other foreign spouses. Moreover, even after achieving naturalization or acquiring Taiwanese citizenship, mainland Chinese spouses continued to face heightened regulatory measures.

Over the past few decades, Taiwan has experienced a significant demographic shift resulting from the migration of Chinese women through marriage. Some Chinese wives choose to retain their Taiwanese citizenship, acquired through marriage, as it comes with certain benefits. However, there are perceptions that some mainland spouses' main objective is to obtain Taiwanese citizenship. In response to this stereotype, some female Chinese immigrants actively reject Taiwanese citizenship to counter the misconception about their immigration motivations, often driven by their identification with China (Liu, 2019). These differing attitudes among Chinese wives can be influenced by their roles and status within public or private spheres in Taiwan.

In addition to mainland wives, there have been several studies that have explored the concerns regarding the children of new immigrants. Tsou (2023) conducted semi-structured interviews and online surveys, revealing that there is no notable difference between the participating children of new immigrants and the general population concerning higher education attendance rate and annual income. Instead, a family's socioeconomic status is the primary factor influencing their trajectories of social mobility.

Practical factors such as legal limitations and forms of power – economic, social, and intellectual capital – are the primary motivators for immigrant families struggling for their rights. The public or private identity of a Chinese wife with Taiwanese citizenship heavily depends on her societal role (Liu, 2019; Momesso, 2020). Since legal restrictions prevent non-Taiwanese citizens from establishing civil organizations, their Taiwanese spouses can act as advocates in Taiwanese civil society. Thus, Taiwanese spouses play a significant role in increasing the civic engagement of their mainland spouses

by starting advocacy organizations and leveraging their local social network within Taiwan. Taiwanese spouses play a vital role in this context by understanding their country's legal system and advocating on their spouse's behalf with the government (Momesso, 2020).

Faced with discrimination and legal constraints, cross-strait marriage migrants found ways to navigate their challenges by establishing online forums where they could share their perspectives and experiences. They even organize protests and rallies to challenge government decisions. A significant development was the establishment of the Marriage Association of the Two Sides of China, a formal civic organization catering to the needs of mainland spouses. This organization became a platform for these spouses to express their needs, particularly regarding social and legal issues (Momesso, 2020).

Immigrants' Democratic Recognition: Understanding the Principles of Social Integration

The concept of immigrants' democratic recognition involves acknowledging democratic principles, values, and institutions as they relate to immigrants, encompassing various issues such as citizenship, inclusion, non-discrimination, family reunification, and refugee status. These issues are often discussed in the context of immigration to affluent democratic states in Europe and North America (Carens, 2012). Adman and Strömblad (2018) explore the influence of learning institutions on the recognition of political rights among immigrants in Sweden. The study's findings indicate that engaging in activities related to education, working-life, civil society, and political involvement can gradually

lead immigrants to adopt the principle that political rights should be recognized.

Carens (2012) discussed the ethical issues raised regarding immigration to affluent democratic states in Europe and North America, including questions about access to citizenship, inclusion, residents, temporary workers, irregular migrants, non-discrimination in admissions, family reunification, refugee status, and open borders. Laurentsyeva and Venturini (2017) further discuss how social integration can be understood from two perspectives: for immigrants, it means developing a sense of belonging to the host society by accepting and acting according to that society's values and norms; for the native population, it means accepting immigrants as members of society.

According to Wong et al. (2018), immigrants are attractive targets for the co-optation of authoritarian regimes. These immigrants tend to support the political status quo as a result of their self-selection, and their lack of exposure to local politics makes them less inclined to support the opposition. To illustrate their argument, Wong et al. (2018) analyze mainland Chinese immigrants in Hong Kong. Pro-establishment political parties and groups have actively sought to co-opt these immigrants since retrocession. The study also finds that without vote-buying, these immigrants are more likely to approve of the political and economic status quo, and less likely to vote for pro-democracy opposition parties than the natives. In addition, they find no evidence that exposure to political information can change immigrants' voting choices.

Political Integration of Migrant Wives in Taiwan: Perspectives from Political Engagement and Civil Society

The political integration of migrant wives in Taiwan has been a topic of discussion within political parties, and the recognition of mainland spouses within Taiwanese politics remains a complex issue. A separate study conducted by Momesso (2022) examined the political integration of migrant wives in Taiwan, focusing on the discourse surrounding foreign or mainland spouses within the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). To explore the changing political opportunities related to these spouses, Momesso (2022) analyzed historical articles published by the KMT and the DPP. The findings indicate that the DPP initiated discussions on this topic earlier than the KMT. The DPP had published 8 articles dating back to January 1994, while the KMT began publishing articles on the topic in January 2015, with a total of 16 articles.

The volume of press releases addressing the political rights of foreign spouses in Taiwan significantly increased between 2015 and 2019, with approximately 50 articles focused on political themes. Prior to that, earlier articles primarily emphasized the cultural and social contributions of foreign or mainland spouses to Taiwan. The KMT acknowledges the contributions of foreign immigrants to Taiwanese society, highlighting their role in making Taiwan more diverse and inclusive. The KMT has even established a New Residents Working Committee in 2015 – which focuses on enhancing care for new residents in Taiwan, supporting their integration, and addressing issues related to employment, education, and overall assistance (Committee, 2017) –

demonstrating its commitment to the rights and interests of immigrant wives, particularly Chinese spouses (Momesso, 2022).

On the other hand, the DPP founded the New Resident Affairs Committee in 2017 – which is a legislative organization that aims to tackle immigrant-related challenges, attract international talent, and foster a more welcoming environment to new arrivals (Chen, 2017) – taking a different approach from the KMT. This committee recognized the significant influence of immigrant spouses and included a representative of the children of cross-border marriages. Immigrant spouses were also invited to participate in consultative politics, reflecting the DPP's view of foreign spouses as a unique group capable of wielding political influence (Pachankis, 2022).

However, despite both parties recognizing the inclusion of new residents in Taiwanese society, their strategies for promoting political integration are noticeably different. Moreover, divisions can be observed among migrant spouses in their political affiliations, with mainland spouses often being viewed as a potential threat to Taiwan's national security due to suspicions of Beijing's overseas influence campaign. The KMT seems to offer a friendlier approach to mainland marriage migrants compared to the DPP, which resulted in mainland spouses leaning more towards the KMT's political ideology due to their Chinese patriotism and nationalism (Momesso, 2020). Civil society organizations also play a crucial role for mainland Chinese wives in fostering a sense of community and providing a platform for social and legal recognition.

Taiwan, Korea, and Japan are East Asian democracies known for their historical ethnic homogeneity and exclusionary immigration policies, despite becoming host societies for immigration. They share common demographic

challenges like aging populations, low fertility rates, and labor shortages. Nevertheless, compared to its counterparts, Taiwan had maintained strict regulations on immigration and naturalization until recently. In response to potential national security threats, the Taiwanese government enacted regulations inadvertently creating divisions among the population and undermining the constitutional principle of equality. Acknowledging the necessity of open immigration to address labor demands and considering mainland recognition of Taiwan's democratic system in cross-strait marriages, Taiwan is striving to establish a comprehensive immigration policy. However, mainland spouses continue to struggle for social recognition, which is crucial for their full integration into Taiwanese society and economic development. ((Lan, 2022; Lu, 2021); (IOM, 2023)).

Even after obtaining Taiwanese citizenship through marriage, mainland spouses continue to face challenges. According to Chung (2020), civic legacies, encompassing ideas, networks, and strategies derived from democratic struggles, play a crucial role in shaping immigrant advocacy, fostering collective identity, and empowering mainland spouses within civil society organizations.

3. Social Engagement and Democratic Recognition

by Mainland Immigrants in Taiwan: A

Comparative Analysis with Foreign Counterparts

This section presents survey data for 2020 from the Academia Sinica Humanities and Social Sciences Research Center's Basic Survey on Social

Changes in Taiwan. The empirical study examining the social and economic integration of mainland and foreign immigrants utilizes three main categories of survey data: Social Connections and Engagement, Democratic Recognition, and Self-Confidence and Perceptions on Economic Development.

Social Connections and Engagements

In this paper, the social connection and engagement of mainland and foreign immigrants within Taiwanese society are measured, with a particular focus on the extent of their integration with the local community. Immigrant engagement encompasses both civic organizations and political involvement, and is influenced by various factors, including host countries' public policies. The study includes respondents' participation in different types of groups, such as political parties, trade unions, industrial and commercial associations, professional or trade associations, religious groups or churches, sports, leisure or cultural groups, and other voluntary associations. Understanding immigrants' participation in these diverse types of groups provides insights into their local social connection and engagement. Recent research explores the relationship between social connection and engagement. Social media allows immigrants in Taiwan to express their sense of belonging and identity through various social networks (Alencar, 2018; Park & Gerrits, 2021).

In general, these findings based on the survey data suggest that while there are variations in engagement, most immigrants from both groups behave almost the same in that they have yet to actively participate and have disengaged from political groups. As shown in Table 1, a considerable proportion of both foreign and mainland immigrants, 93.62% and 78.57% respectively, did not join any

political groups. However, an examination of foreign and mainland immigrants' engagement in joining and participating in political groups reveal notable distinctions. The statistical analysis yielded a significant difference between the two groups, as indicated by the chi-squared test for independence ($\chi^2(3) = 8.36, P = 0.039$). A closer look at the figures demonstrates that 24.42% of mainland immigrants (including those less actively participating and ex-member, now absent) have experience participating in political groups, significantly higher than their foreign counterparts (2.13% actively participating and 4.26% ex-member, now absent).

Table 1 Participation in Political Organizations by Mainland and Foreign Immigrants: A Comparative Analysis

Immigrant	Actively participating	Less active	Ex-member, now absent	Never joined	Total
Mainland	0	3	3	22	28
%	0	10.71	10.71	78.57	100
Foreign	1	0	2	44	47
%	2.13	0	4.26	93.62	100
Total	1	3	5	66	75
%	1.33	4	6.67	88	100

In Table 2 presents an analysis of the joining and participation patterns of foreign and mainland immigrants in trade unions, industrial and commercial, or professional associations in Taiwan. The results indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups in terms of their involvement in these organizations. Both groups behave in a similar manner. A small portion of mainland immigrants actively participated (3.57%), while a

larger percentage participated less actively (14.29%), but most never joined (75%). There is a similar trend among foreign immigrants, with a small percentage actively participating (2.13%), a slightly higher percentage participating less actively (17.02%), and the majority having never joined these groups (76.6%). The chi-squared test for independence ($\chi^2(4) = 2.21, P = 0.239$) reveals no statistically significant difference between the two immigrant groups in Taiwan's trade unions, industrial and commercial associations, or professional associations.

Table 2 Involvement in Trade Unions and Professional Associations among Mainland and Foreign Immigrants

Immigrant	Actively participated	Less active	Ex-member, now absent	Never joined	No idea	Total
Mainland	1	4	2	21	0	28
%	3.57	14.29	7.14	75	0	100
Foreign	1	8	1	36	1	47
%	2.13	17.02	2.13	76.6	2.13	100
Total	2	12	3	57	1	75
%	2.67	16	4	76	1.33	100

According to the provided figures, both mainland and foreign immigrants in Taiwan exhibit varying degrees of participation in religious groups or churches. In Table 3, a majority, 75%, of mainland immigrants have never joined, while 7.14% participate actively, 10.71% less actively, and 7.14% previously joined but no longer participate. Among foreign immigrants, 8.51% participate actively, 14.89% participate less actively, 2.13% joined previously but no longer participate, and 74.47% never joined. The differences in

participation rates are relatively small, however. The findings suggest that both groups are relatively inactive in religious activities. The chi-squared test for independence ($\chi^2(3) = 1.34$ $P = 0.721$) reveals an insignificant statistical difference between the two immigrant groups in participating religious groups or churches in Taiwan.

Table 3 Religious Group Participation among Mainland and Foreign Immigrants

Immigrant	Actively participating	Less actively participating	Ex-member, now absent	Never joined	Total
Mainland	2	3	2	21	28
%	7.14	10.71	7.14	75	100
Foreign	4	7	1	35	47
%	8.51	14.89	2.13	74.47	100
Total	6	10	3	56	75
%	8	13.33	4	74.67	100

As highlighted in Table 4, among mainland immigrants, a majority of 75% reported never joining such groups, while 14.29% actively participated, and 10.71% had joined previously but were no longer active. Comparatively, foreign immigrants showed a similar trend, with 82.98% reporting never joining, 4.26% actively participating, and an equal 4.26% participating to a lesser extent. The chi-squared test for independence ($\chi^2(3) = 4.21$, $P = 0.239$) did not reveal a significant statistical difference between the two immigrant groups. These findings suggest that both foreign and mainland immigrants have comparable levels of involvement and interest in sports, leisure, or cultural groups in Taiwan.

Table 4 Participation in Sports, Leisure, and Cultural Groups among Mainland and Foreign Immigrants

Immigrant	Actively participating	Less actively participating	Ex-member, now absent	Never joined	Total
Mainland	4	0	3	21	28
%	14.29	0	10.71	75	100
Foreign	2	2	4	39	47
%	4.26	4.26	8.51	82.98	100
Total	6	2	7	60	75
%	8	2.67	9.33	80	100

As shown in Table 5, only a small proportion of mainland immigrants (10.71%) actively participate in voluntary associations, while the majority (89.29%) have never joined. Conversely, the participation rate among foreign immigrants is strikingly low, with no reported active involvement (0%). Furthermore, a substantial majority of foreign immigrants (97.87%) have never joined voluntary associations, while a small fraction (2.13%) declined to provide an answer. While the chi-squared test for independence ($\chi^2(2) = 6.98$, $P = 0.030$) reveals significant statistical difference between the two immigrant groups. These findings suggest that both foreign and mainland immigrants display limited engagement in voluntary associations, with mainland immigrants showing relatively higher participation rates but still falling short of substantial involvement.

Table 5 Participation in Voluntary Associations among Mainland and Foreign Immigrants

Immigrant	Actively participating	Never joined	Skip answer	Total
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Mainland	3	25	0	28
%	10.71	89.29	0	100
Foreign	0	46	1	47
%	0	97.87	2.13	100
Total	3	71	1	75
%	4	94.67	1.33	100

Table 6 shows that foreign and mainland immigrants in Taiwan have different social media preferences. There was a statistically significant difference between these two immigrant groups in terms of social media platforms preferred ($\chi^2(4) = 17.80, P = 0.001$). Facebook was the preferred social media platform of 46.81% of foreign immigrants. Mainland immigrants showed a stronger preference for LINE, with a significant majority of 64.29%. 21.43% of mainland immigrants using WeChat as their preferred platform. Both groups preferred YouTube, although to a lesser extent. Taiwan's foreign and mainland immigrants have diverse social media preferences, which highlights the need to consider these variations when designing digital communication strategies and platforms. To some extent, the above empirical result is in line with the previous studies, such as Friedman (2010), Park and Gerrits (2021), and Alencar (2018), in highlighting the role played by modern social media in terms of immigrants' sense of belonging.

Table 6 Preferred Social Media Platforms among Mainland and Foreign Immigrants

Immigrant	Facebook	LINE	WeChat	YouTube	Skip answer	Total
Mainland	2	18	6	1	1	28
%	7.14	64.29	21.43	3.57	3.57	100
Foreign	22	19	2	1	3	47

%	46.81	40.43	4.26	2.13	6.38	100
Total	24	37	8	2	4	75
%	32	49.33	10.67	2.67	5.33	100

Finally, the survey data and chi-squared test for independence analysis indicate that most of both foreign and mainland immigrants in Taiwan are not actively participating in political, trade union, religious, sports, leisure, cultural, and voluntary associations. However, there are some differences between the two groups. In comparison with foreign immigrants, mainland immigrants seem to have more experience in participating political associations. When it comes to trade unions and religious groups, there is no significant difference between the two immigrant groups in terms of their involvement. Both groups exhibit low levels of active involvement in these areas. In terms of social media preferences, foreign immigrants prefer Facebook, while mainland immigrants favor LINE and WeChat, with both groups having a lower preference for YouTube.

Self-Confidence and Foresight for local development

Laurentsyeva and Venturini (2017) suggest that immigrants' successful social connection and engagement in host countries have a direct positive impact on their self-confidence. There is an important interplay between immigrants' social engagement and their democratic recognition in the host countries. This study indicates that both self-confidence and foresight for local development can be influenced by immigrants' democratic recognition and

social engagement. Relevant measures may encompass individual immigrants' self-confidence, level of mindset openness, the labor market, and income disparity.

In terms of self-confidence, respondents' self-assessment was evaluated through several questions. They were asked to indicate their agreement level with the statement that their capabilities are inadequate in dealing with some issues, using a scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. This set of questions aimed to gauge individuals' perceptions of their own abilities in handling various challenges and tasks.

To understand respondents' perceptions of Taiwan's international openness, questions were posed regarding the increasing international exchange of people, goods, and capital. Two aspects were explored: the perceived benefits to Taiwan's economy and job opportunities resulting from this international exchange. Additionally, the impact of this exchange on the income gap between the rich and the poor in Taiwan was also considered. They were asked about their stance on increasing the number of foreign workers in Taiwan. These questions sought to assess respondents' views on the advantages and potential drawbacks of a more open and globally connected environment.

To gauge respondents' expectations for Taiwan's future, several survey questions were used. These questions evaluated their agreement with the description of social phenomena in Taiwan becoming more chaotic, with a disregard for laws and rules. In addition, their views on how income equality might impact people's motivation to work hard were explored. The survey also examined respondents' satisfaction with the current social welfare and security in Taiwan, and finally, their expectations for their own living conditions over the next five years were assessed. Through these inquiries, the study

aimed to gain insights into respondents' perceptions of the future and their overall outlook on the local societal and economic landscape.

Based on Table 7, we examined the perceptions of foreign and mainland participants regarding their capabilities in dealing with certain issues. In self-evaluating immigrants' capabilities in dealing with certain issues, among the mainland immigrants, a significant proportion (39.29%) expressed degree-5, while the rest of the participants were distributed across the other degrees of agreement. Similarly, the foreign participants demonstrated diverse viewpoints, with the largest proportion (27.66%) indicating degree-4. Mainland immigrants exhibited a higher average rating of 4.25 while foreign immigrants displayed a relatively lower average rating of 3.52 excluding three samples for “No idea”.

Table 7 Perceptions that Your Personal Capabilities in Dealing with Life Challenges are Inadequate (1 Strongly disagree – 7 Strongly Agree)

Degree	Mainland	%	Foreign	%	Total	%
1	2	7.14	5	10.64	7	9.33
2	3	10.71	5	10.64	8	10.67
3	4	14.29	11	23.4	15	20.00
4	3	10.71	13	27.66	16	21.33
5	11	39.29	6	12.77	17	22.67
6	3	10.71	3	6.38	6	8.00
7	2	7.14	1	2.13	3	4.00
No idea	0	0.00	3	6.38	3	4.00
Total	28	100	47	100	75	100
Mean	4.25		3.52		--	

However, the chi-squared test for independence ($\chi^2(7) = 13.10, P = 0.070$) reveals a statistically insignificant difference between the responses of the two groups. These findings suggest that both foreign and mainland immigrants share similar perceptions regarding their capabilities in dealing with issues, with no substantial disparities observed between the two groups.

Based on the survey data and the chi-squared test for independence, we can gain insights into the ideas and perceptions of foreign and mainland immigrants regarding the economic benefits of international exchange in Taiwan. The survey results indicate that most of both foreign and mainland immigrants hold positive views on Taiwan's international exchanges. A considerable percentage of respondents from both groups rated the impact of international exchange as "Good" or "Very good." However, it's worth noting that a small portion of respondents expressed mixed opinions or were unsure. The chi-squared test for independence ($\chi^2(6) = 2.32, P = 0.888$), which compared the responses of foreign and mainland immigrants, suggests an insignificant statistical difference between the two groups. This suggests that their ideas regarding the economic benefits of international exchange in Taiwan are relatively similar. Overall, these findings highlight the generally positive sentiments among both foreign and mainland immigrants, indicating a belief that increased international exchange positively contributes to Taiwan's economy. (Table 8)

Table 8 Perceptions on the Economic Benefits of Increasing International Exchange in Taiwan

Immigrant	Very good	Good	Moderately good	No change	Moderately negative	Unable to select	No idea	Total
Mainland	3	18	3	1	0	1	1	27
%	11.11	66.67	11.11	3.7	0	3.7	3.7	100
Foreign	7	28	5	2	2	1	2	47
%	14.89	59.57	10.64	4.26	4.26	2.13	4.26	100
Total	10	46	8	3	2	2	3	74
%	13.51	62.16	10.81	4.05	2.7	2.7	4.05	100

The survey data and chi-squared test for independence statistical analysis shed light on the perceptions of foreign and mainland immigrants regarding the impact of Taiwan's increasing international exchange on job opportunities. Overall, both groups expressed positive views, with a majority considering the international exchange to be beneficial. Among mainland immigrants, a significant portion (78.57%) viewed the international exchange as either very good or good for job opportunities in Taiwan. Similarly, a substantial majority (78.26%) of foreign immigrants shared this positive perception. The chi-squared test for independence ($\chi^2(6) = 10.72, P = 0.098$), however, reveals a statistically insignificant difference between the two groups, indicating that their opinions were largely aligned on this matter. These findings suggest that both foreign and mainland immigrants recognize the potential benefits of Taiwan's international exchanges as enhancing job opportunities. (Table 9)

Table 9 Perceptions on the Impact of Increasing International Exchange in

Taiwan on Job Opportunities

Immigrant	Very good	Good	Slightly better	Neutral	A bit worse	Worse	No idea	Total
Mainland	2	20	2	0	0	3	1	28
%	7.14	71.43	7.14	0	0	10.71	3.57	100
Foreign	6	30	5	2	2	0	1	46
%	13.04	65.22	10.87	4.35	4.35	0	2.17	100
Total	8	50	7	2	2	3	2	74
%	10.81	67.57	9.46	2.7	2.7	4.05	2.7	100

In terms of the impact of Taiwan's international exchanges on the income gap, a majority of mainland immigrants (53.57%) believe that the international exchange has contributed to increasing the income gap (Table 10). On the other hand, a smaller proportion of foreign immigrants (29.79%) share this view. The chi-squared test for independence ($\chi^2(5) = 6.46, P = 0.264$) indicates that there is no significant statistical difference between the two groups in their perceptions of the income gap. Based on the findings, it appears that both foreign residents and mainland Chinese immigrants hold diverse viewpoints, and the statistical analysis does not offer enough evidence to assert a significant difference in their opinions.

Table 10 Perceptions on the Impact of Increasing International Exchange in Taiwan on Income Inequality

Immigrant	High impact	Some impact	Reduce some	No impact	No comment	No idea	Total
Mainland	4	11	2	7	1	3	28
%	14.29	39.29	7.14	25	3.57	10.71	100

Foreign	3	11	1	20	2	10	47
%	6.38	23.4	2.13	42.55	4.26	21.28	100
Total	7	22	3	27	3	13	75
%	9.33	29.33	4	36	4	17.33	100

As shown in Table 11, a clear distinction can be observed between the perspectives of foreign and mainland immigrants regarding the issue of increasing the number of foreign workers in Taiwan. Mainland immigrants have a more conservative stance, with the majority (46.43%) expressing the view that the current number of foreign workers should be maintained. A considerable portion (25%) also believes that the number should be reduced. In contrast, foreign immigrants exhibit a varied range of opinions. The largest group is tied at 29.79% of respondents either supporting an increase in the number of foreign workers or maintaining the current level. A smaller percentage suggests reducing the number of foreign workers, with 6.38% advocating for a slight reduction and 2.13% suggesting a more substantial decrease. These differences are statistically significant, as confirmed by the chi-squared test for independence ($\chi^2(6) = 21.83, P = 0.001$). Overall, these findings highlight the diverse perspectives among foreign and mainland immigrants in Taiwan.

Table 11 Attitude on Increasing the Number of Foreign Workers in Taiwan

Immigrant	Increase more	Increase some	Remain the same	Reduce some	Reduce more	No comment	No idea	Total
Mainland	1	0	13	7	0	4	3	28

%	3.57	0	46.43	25.00	0	14.29	10.71	100
Foreign	6	14	14	3	1	5	4	47
%	12.77	29.79	29.79	6.38	2.13	10.64	8.51	100
Total	7	14	27	10	1	9	7	75
%	9.33	18.67	36	13.33	1.33	12	9.33	100

Based on the data presented in Table 12, there is a noteworthy disparity in opinions between mainland immigrants and foreign residents concerning the description of social phenomena in Taiwanese society becoming more chaotic. The surveyed data reveals that a higher percentage of foreign immigrants expressed disagreement with the statement that Taiwanese society is becoming more chaotic (44.44%) compared to mainland immigrants (33.33%). Conversely, mainland immigrants showed a slightly higher agreement rate (33.33%) compared to foreign respondents (6.67%). The chi-squared test for independence ($\chi^2(4) = 11.15, P = 0.025$) confirmed a statistically significant difference between the two groups, indicating that foreign immigrants tend to have a more positive view of the social conditions in Taiwan, whereas mainland immigrants are more critical.

Table 12 Perceptions that Social Order and Law Abidance in Taiwan is Decreasing

Immigrant	Agree highly	Agree	Disagree	No comment	No idea	Total
Mainland	6	13	9	0	0	28
%	21.43	46.43	32.14	0	0	100
Foreign	3	15	20	2	5	45
%	6.67	33.33	44.44	4.44	11.11	100

Total	9	28	29	2	5	73
%	12.33	38.36	39.73	2.74	6.85	100

Table 13 provides valuable insights into the perspectives of foreign and mainland immigrants regarding the relationship between income equality and work ethic. Among the foreign immigrants, 41.86% agree with the statement, indicating that they believe that if everyone has a more equal income, people, in general, will not work hard. On the other hand, 44.19% of the foreign immigrants disagree with the statement, suggesting that they hold the belief that income equality does not necessarily diminish work ethic. Additionally, a small percentage (4.65%) of the foreign immigrants strongly disagree with the statement, emphasizing their conviction that work ethic remains unaffected by income equality. 9.3% of the foreign immigrants express having no idea about the statement, indicating uncertainty or lack of clarity regarding their stance. Nonetheless, the chi-squared test for independence ($\chi^2(3) = 6.59, P = 0.086$) shows that there is no significant statistical difference between the ideas of foreign and mainland immigrants.

Table 13 Perceptions on Income Inequality and Strong Work Ethic

Immigrant	Agree that more equal income will lower work ethic	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No idea	Total
Mainland	12	16	0	0	28
%	42.86	57.14	0	0	100

Foreign	18	19	2	4	43
%	41.86	44.19	4.65	9.3	100
Total	30	35	2	4	71
%	42.25	49.3	2.82	5.63	100

As shown in Table 14, the dataset presents survey responses from mainland and foreign immigrants in Taiwan regarding their perception of the current level of Taiwan’s social welfare. Both groups share similar perceptions of the sufficiency of social welfare, with the responses categorized into six levels of sufficiency. Among the mainland immigrants, 50% perceived the social welfare and security as sufficient, while 3.57% thought it was “A bit too much.” For foreign immigrants, 48.94% considered it sufficient, with 23.4% having “No idea.” The chi-squared test for independence ($\chi^2(5) = 5.90, P = 0.317$) indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the two immigrant groups in Taiwan.

Table 14 Perceptions of Social Welfare and Security in Taiwan

Immigrant	Too much social welfare	A bit too much social welfare	Sufficient amount of social welfare	A bit insufficient	Very insufficient	No idea	Total
Mainland	0	1	14	5	4	4	28
%	0	3.57	50	17.86	14.29	14.29	100
Foreign	1	0	23	10	2	11	47
%	2.13	0	48.94	21.28	4.26	23.4	100
Total	1	1	37	15	6	15	75
%	1.33	1.33	49.33	20	8	20	100

Table 15 contains a dataset related to the question of whether respondents anticipate an improvement in their living standards in Taiwan over the next five years. The chi-squared test for independence ($\chi^2(5) = 2.24, P = 0.815$) indicates that there is no significant statistical difference between the expectations of the two groups, suggesting that both mainland and foreign immigrants hold similar expectations regarding the improvement of their living conditions in Taiwan over the next five years.

Table 15 Expectations of Living Standards in Taiwan for the Next Five Years

Immigrant	Much better	A little better	Same as now	Worse	Much worse	No idea	Total
Mainland	1	7	9	7	2	2	28
%	3.57	25	32.14	25	7.14	7.14	100
Foreign	4	17	12	9	2	3	47
%	8.51	36.17	25.53	19.15	4.26	6.38	100
Total	5	24	21	16	4	5	75
%	6.67	32.00	28.00	21.33	5.33	6.67	100

The survey data explored the perceptions of self-confidence and Taiwan's openness to the world among foreign and mainland immigrants in Taiwan. Both groups of immigrants demonstrated similar levels of self-assurance when dealing with various issues, with a noteworthy portion expressing positive views of their capabilities. The chi-squared test for independence revealed no significant difference between the self-evaluations of foreign and mainland immigrants, indicating that both groups had comparable levels of confidence in handling different matters. However, it's important to note that the survey did

not explicitly inquire about the participants' perceptions of Taiwan's openness. Nevertheless, their perspectives on international exchange and its impact provided valuable insights in this regard. Both foreign and mainland immigrants displayed optimistic views on the economic benefits of international exchange in Taiwan, implying a belief in the country's receptiveness to global interactions and trade.

Mainland immigrants in Taiwan generally hold more conservative views, with a majority preferring to maintain the current number of foreign workers, while foreign immigrants exhibit a more varied range of opinions on increasing the number of foreign workers, as indicated by a significant proportion supporting an increase alongside maintaining the current level.

In terms of foresight to Taiwan's development, both foreign and mainland immigrants generally expressed a positive outlook. They exhibited optimistic views regarding the economic benefits of international exchange and its positive impact on job opportunities in the country. While there were some differences in areas such as the income gap and the number of foreign workers, the chi-squared test for independence indicated no statistically significant disparities between the two groups' overall perspectives on Taiwan's development. The survey data suggested that both groups share relatively similar expectations regarding the improvement of their living conditions in Taiwan over the next five years. This indicates a generally positive outlook on Taiwan's future prospects and potential for growth among both foreign and mainland immigrants. However, mainland immigrants in Taiwan hold a somewhat more critical perception of the country's development and people's abidance not by the law and rules, as higher ratio of them agreed with the

description of social phenomena becoming more chaotic in comparison with their foreign counterparts' idea, indicating a statistically significant difference between the two groups.

Immigrants' industry and occupational backgrounds

Based on the survey data in Table 16, we can learn about foreign and mainland immigrants' current (or pre-retirement) job industries. Manufacturing, accommodation and catering, and educational services were the most common industries among the mainland immigrants surveyed. Meanwhile, foreign immigrants had a similar distribution, with manufacturing, accommodation and catering, and medical insurance and social work being the most common. According to the chi-squared test for independence analysis (likelihood-ratio $\chi^2(11) = 11.99$, $P = 0.365$) there was no significant difference between the industries that foreign and mainland immigrants work in. The similarity in proportions across industries for both foreign and mainland immigrants suggests that they share similar occupational backgrounds.

Table 16 Distribution of Respondents' Current and Pre-Retirement Jobs by Industry

Industry	Mainland	%	Foreign	%	Total	%
Farming	0	0.00	2	4.26	2	2.67
manufacturing	5	17.86	8	17.02	13	17.33
Wholesale and retail sales	2	7.14	6	12.77	8	10.67
Accommodation and Catering Industry	5	17.86	7	14.89	12	16.00
Professional, scientific, and technical services	0	0.00	1	2.13	1	1.33
support services	1	3.57	2	4.26	3	4.00
Public Service	1	3.57	0	0.00	1	1.33

Educational service industry	2	7.14	2	4.26	4	5.33
Medical insurance and social work services	1	3.57	7	14.89	8	10.67
Arts, entertainment, and leisure services	1	3.57	0	0.00	1	1.33
other services	2	7.14	5	10.64	7	9.33
skip answer	8	28.57	7	14.89	15	20.00
Total	28	100	47	100	75	100

Examining the backgrounds of foreign and mainland immigrants reveals some interesting patterns based on survey data and chi-squared test for independence analysis (Table 17). Survey respondents were classified into occupations. Service and sales occupations accounted for 46.81% of the respondents among foreign immigrants. 6.38% of foreign immigrants were professionals and engineers. Mainland immigrants showed a more diverse distribution of occupations, with service and sales workers comprising the largest group at 21.43%. The chi-squared test for independence (likelihood-ratio $\chi^2(10) = 16.38$, $P = 0.089$) shows no significant difference in occupational distribution between foreign and mainland immigrants. Based on the chi-squared test for independence, both foreign and mainland immigrants have similar occupational backgrounds.

Table 17 Distribution of Respondents' Current or Pre-Retirement Occupation

Occupation	Mainland	%	Foreign	%	Total	%
Managers: supervisors, supervisors	3	10.71	1	2.13	4	5.33
Professionals & engineers	1	3.57	3	6.38	4	5.33
Assistant professionals	3	10.71	1	2.13	4	5.33
clerks & equal skill level	1	3.57	0	0.00	1	1.33

Service & sales workers	6	21.43	22	46.81	28	37.33
Farmers Workers	0	0.00	2	4.26	2	2.67
Technical workers	1	3.57	4	8.51	5	6.67
Machinery operators & assemblers	1	3.57	2	4.26	3	4.00
unskilled workers	3	10.71	5	10.64	8	10.67
soldier	1	3.57	0	0.00	1	1.33
skip answer	8	28.57	7	14.89	15	20.00
Total	28	100	47	100	75	100

For sum, based on the information provided, it is difficult to directly infer the self-confidence levels of foreign and mainland immigrants in Taiwan as it was not explicitly addressed in the survey data. However, we can indirectly gather some insights based on their backgrounds and ideas on local development. Both groups of immigrants, although diverse in their perspectives, demonstrate varying degrees of self-confidence in relation to their capabilities in dealing with life challenges. The survey data suggests that both foreign and mainland immigrants express positive views regarding the economic benefits of international exchange and job opportunities in Taiwan. This suggests a level of self-assurance and belief in their potential contributions to the local development of the country. While foreign immigrants tend to have more critical views on social phenomena in Taiwan, mainland immigrants display a slightly more positive perception, indicating differing levels of self-confidence within the two groups. Nonetheless, it is important to note that self-confidence is a complex and multifaceted construct that cannot be fully captured by the limited information provided.

Discussion: Mainland Immigrants' Characteristics in Taiwan

Drawing from the empirical analysis, we can outline significant differences between mainland immigrants and their foreign counterparts in Taiwan across various aspects. In terms of social engagement, mainland immigrants have more likely to participate in political organizations in Taiwan. However, there is no statistically significant difference between these two immigrant groups in other aspects of social engagement. The reasons for this disparity in political engagement can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, mainland immigrants may have a stronger sense of political identity and interest due to their background and experiences in China.

Coming from a country with a different political system and restrictions on freedom of expression, mainland immigrants may be more motivated to engage in political activities in Taiwan, where they have more opportunities for political participation and expression. Secondly, mainland immigrants may have a greater stake in Taiwanese politics and democracy. As individuals who have chosen to migrate to Taiwan, they may have a vested interest in shaping the political landscape to ensure that their rights and interests are protected. This sense of investment and belonging may be what is driving them to actively participate in political organizations. Lastly, mainland immigrants face unique challenges and restrictions in Taiwan, which can motivate them to engage in political activities as a means of advocating for their rights and addressing their concerns. This includes issues related to social integration, employment, and cultural identity (Liu, 2019). By joining political organizations, mainland immigrants can have a platform to voice their concerns and work towards addressing these challenges. Overall, the higher participation of mainland immigrants in political organizations in Taiwan can be attributed to their political background, sense of investment in Taiwanese politics, and the challenges they face as immigrants in the country. These factors contribute to

their greater engagement in political activities compared to their foreign counterparts.

Moreover, both immigrant groups have a different social media preference. In comparison with their foreign counterparts, mainland immigrants prefer to adopt “LINE” which is prevalent in Taiwan society, while continuing to use WeChat, which is the primary social media platform in mainland China. These empirical results align with the idea that immigrants use different social media platforms as a way of expressing cultural preferences and connecting with their existing social network. Research done by Alencar (2018), Park and Gerrits (2021), and Kong et al. (2022) shows that information technology and social media, particularly WeChat for mainland immigrants in Taiwan, have a notable impact on shaping immigrant identity. This technology allows for easier language acquisition, cultural integration, and the formation of social connections, enabling immigrants to maintain dual identities and a sense of belonging to both their home and host countries.

More importantly, mainland immigrants are distinguished from their foreign counterparts in their democratic recognition of Taiwan by displaying a more varied perspective. Compared to their foreign counterparts with a higher level of support and endorsement for democracy, the surveyed mainland immigrants do not consistently view democracy as the most preferable system and while also placing a strong emphasis on democratic principles. A notable portion of mainland immigrants consider authoritarianism as a potentially viable alternative under specific circumstances. This indicates that mainland immigrants have a more nuanced and diverse range of opinions regarding the governance system they find suitable. When evaluating the implementation of democracy in Taiwan, foreign immigrants exhibit a wide array of opinions, showcasing a diverse range of viewpoints, while mainland immigrants remain

consistent in their level of moderate satisfaction with Taiwan's democratic system.

In this paper, most of surveyed mainland immigrants were working class according to Tables 16 and 17. According to Chunlong (2004), Chinese middle class has the highest level of support of democracy, but that the Chinese working class has exhibited a lower level of support of democracy compared with the middle class. The younger well-educated Chinese generation is more ready to accept democratic values. Given these differences among the Chinese population, the empirical results are not all that surprising.

To a certain extent, mainland immigrants may adopt more complex and cautious stances on Taiwanese politics due to the political sensitivity between China and Taiwan. They might lean towards neutrality or support a more China-friendly political approach. The cross-strait relationship is not an issue that all mainland immigrants study in depth but still feel deeply about. Their perceptions of the cross-strait relationship may impact their perceptions of Taiwanese society and political system while impacting their life decisions. Conversely, foreign immigrants may feel freer to express their political viewpoints, benefiting from fewer political constraints.

To some extents, the above findings may be consistent with Wong et al. (2018) with a case study of mainland Chinese immigrants in Hong Kong. That is, immigrants are susceptible to the influence of authoritarian regimes, and tend to support the political status quo due to self-selection and lack of exposure to local politics.

Moreover, the survey analyzed the perceptions of self-confidence and Taiwan's openness to the world among foreign and mainland immigrants in Taiwan. Both groups displayed similar levels of self-confidence in dealing with various issues, with a significant proportion expressing positive views of their personal capabilities, indicating comparable levels of self-assurance. The

participants' views on international exchange and its impact suggest a positive outlook on the economic benefits of global interactions and trade. In terms of foresight to Taiwan's development, both foreign and mainland immigrants expressed positive perceptions, particularly regarding the economic benefits of international exchange and its impact on job opportunities. There is no statistically significant disparity between the two groups' overall perspectives on Taiwan's development, indicating that both share relatively similar expectations regarding the improvement of their living conditions in the country over the next five years.

Although there are many similarities between both foreign and mainland immigrant groups, mainland immigrants hold a more conservative stance on issues. In terms of allowing more foreign workers into Taiwan, mainland immigrants are more critical of developments in Taiwan. In addition, mainland immigrants viewed Taiwan as becoming more chaotic and lawless. Regarded as one possible perspective, the differences between China and Taiwan in social norms, values, and behaviors may lead to mainland immigrants' perception of social chaos. Moreover, mainland immigrants are concerned with their challenges and difficulties in adapting to a new environment, especially related to different political cultures. The process of migration and integration can be stressful and overwhelming, and mainland immigrants may encounter various obstacles such as cultural differences and discrimination. These challenges may contribute to a perception of chaos and instability in their new surroundings.

Additionally, political and social tension between China and Taiwan may influence the perception of chaos among mainland immigrants. The complex relationship between the two regions can create a sense of uncertainty and instability, which may be reflected in their perception of Taiwanese society. It is important to note that these are speculative explanations, and further research

would be needed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of why mainland immigrants view Taiwanese society as becoming more chaotic.

Mainland immigrants in Taiwan hold a more conservative stance on issues such as allowing more foreign workers into the country. They are also more critical of developments in Taiwan, viewing the country as becoming more chaotic and lawless. There are several possible explanations for this perception, as follows: First, mainland immigrants may perceive Taiwanese society as more chaotic due to cultural and social differences. To some extents, cultural values can play a role in shaping political trust in both Taiwan and China. Shi (2001) suggests that cultural norms can affect people's attitudes towards government independently of institutions. In democratizing Taiwan political trust is more contingent on government performance. In Mainland China political trust depends more on traditional values. In societies where people view hierarchical relationships with authorities positively and prioritize social harmony over personal interests. This difference in social norms may lead to a perception of chaos. Mainland immigrants may face challenges and difficulties in adapting to a new environment. The process of migration and integration can be stressful and overwhelming, and mainland immigrants may encounter various obstacles such as cultural differences, and discrimination. These challenges may contribute to a perception of chaos and instability in their new surroundings. Political and social tension between China and Taiwan may influence the perception of chaos among mainland immigrants. The complex relationship between the two regions can create a sense of uncertainty and instability, which may be reflected in their perception of Taiwanese society. It is important to note that these are speculative explanations, and further research would be needed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of why mainland immigrants view Taiwanese society as becoming more chaotic.

4. Conclusion

In this thesis, the research questions focus on various aspects of immigration and social integration in Taiwan. The first question examines the social connections and engagement levels of mainland Chinese and foreign spouses in Taiwan, assessing their degree of integration within Taiwanese society, especially in terms of civic and political organizations. The second question focuses on migrants' perspectives on democracy, exploring how individuals from diverse backgrounds recognize democratic development in Taiwan and how their views align or deviate from democratic principles. Finally, the third question investigates how recognition of democratic principles and social engagement impact immigrants' self-confidence and expectations for local economic opportunities in Taiwan. Open-mindedness, labor market conditions, and income inequality are identified as potential variables affecting these outcomes. Understanding these aspects is crucial for fostering inclusive policies and promoting the integration and well-being of migrants in Taiwan.

The research adopted a mixed-methods approach to explore these research questions, utilizing a dataset comprising of questionnaires and personal interviews. For the quantitative analysis, the dataset was sourced from the Academia Sinica Humanities and Social Sciences Research Center's Basic Survey on Social Changes in Taiwan in order to conduct an empirical study on the integration of mainland and foreign immigrants. Our empirical study focuses on three key aspects: social connection and engagement, democratic recognition, as well as self-confidence and perceptions on Taiwan's

development. To assess the disparities between foreign and mainland immigrants based on the survey responses, a chi-squared test for independence was applied as part of the data analysis process.

Research Findings

This thesis finds only a few differences between these two studied groups. Foreign and mainland immigrants in Taiwan boast diverse backgrounds and work in various industries. According to survey data, mainland immigrants tend to be prominent in the manufacturing, accommodation, catering, and educational service sectors, while foreign immigrants are prevalent in service and sales occupations.

This study sheds light on the social engagement and democratic recognition of both mainland Chinese and foreign immigrants in Taiwan, revealing several key insights. First, despite Taiwan's overall friendliness towards foreign residents, discrimination remains a challenge for immigrants, including both mainland and foreign individuals. Second, while political participation is limited for both groups, foreign immigrants show slightly higher rates of active engagement in political groups. Third, social media preferences differ, with foreign immigrants favoring Facebook, and mainland immigrants preferring LINE and WeChat.

The paper also highlights disparities in political views. Foreign immigrants tend to be more supportive of Taiwan's political leadership and acknowledge the importance of shared values, while mainland immigrants exhibit a wider range of opinions. Notably, there is a significant difference between the two groups regarding their perspectives on democracy, with

foreign immigrants showing stronger support for democracy compared to mainland immigrants, who may be more open to considering authoritarian governance in specific cases. Foreign immigrants also view Taiwan's democratic political system more favorably compared to mainland immigrants. Both groups share positive views on the economic benefits of international exchange in Taiwan. Although there are differences in opinions on various aspects, such as job opportunities, income inequality, social phenomena, and work ethic, these dissimilarities are not statistically significant.

Overall, this study emphasizes the importance of recognizing the diverse views and experiences of immigrants when shaping policies and promoting inclusive development. Addressing discrimination, enhancing political participation, and fostering social integration for both mainland and foreign immigrants are crucial steps that Taiwan should take towards building a more inclusive and harmonious society.

Research Contribution

The implications of marriage-based immigration for Taiwanese society have been the subject of much debate in recent years. There is a lack of comprehensive studies on the implications of marriage-based immigration for Taiwanese society, and bridging these gaps in understanding is crucial. Comprehensive research efforts that consider social connections, economic opportunities, civic engagement, and social recognition together are needed to address this gap in the literature. This paper aims to bridge some of the research gaps surrounding mainland immigrants' integration in Taiwan. The overall environment in Taiwan and its impact on the integration process of mainland

and foreign immigrants remain understudied. There is a lack of understanding regarding their involvement in various aspects of Taiwanese civil societies and even political organizations. Furthermore, there is limited research on the perspectives of both mainland and foreign immigrants concerning Taiwan's democratic system, which could provide valuable insights into societal dynamics.

By exploring these aspects more thoroughly, this paper can gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by these immigrant communities and their contributions to Taiwanese society. By drawing on extensive data and statistical analysis for comparison studies between mainland and foreign immigrants in Taiwan, this paper intends to offer nuanced insights into the social engagement and democratic recognition of mainland immigrants in Taiwan.

These public policy measures at the root of national security would limit the opportunities for mainland immigrants to fully integrate into Taiwanese society and reach their full economic potential, which in turn affects their perception of Taiwan's democratic system. To some extent, these regulations have inadvertently fostered divisions among its populace and threaten to undermine Taiwan's constitutional principle of equality.

Managerial Implications

In addition to public policy insights, this research also carries meaningful implications for managerial practice across private sector contexts such as corporations and small businesses. By developing a well-informed understanding of immigrant groups based on the study's findings, organizations

can craft appropriate strategies for attracting talent, engaging consumers, guiding decision-making, and keeping up with societal changes.

Specifically, the nuanced insights this analysis provides into differences and similarities between mainland and foreign immigrant experiences allows for tailored programs regarding recruitment, training, consumer marketing, and community outreach initiatives. Human resources departments could leverage the data on immigrant occupational backgrounds and social media preferences for segmentation purposes and designing inclusive onboarding processes. Marketing units may utilize the information on immigrant consumer patterns to optimize campaigns. Public relations teams can establish partnerships with immigrant advocacy organizations to boost public trust and reputation.

Furthermore, an understanding immigrant challenges and perspectives enables businesses to mitigate risks related to labor shortages, turnover, and societal tensions while preventing issues with discrimination. The diverse viewpoints that immigrants contribute to the workplace can also enhance creativity, innovation and balanced policymaking. Overall, thoughtfully applying this study's research takeaways allows companies to embed corporate social responsibility, uphold ethical standards, and expand into new markets. As Taiwan continues to evolve into a diverse society, the private sector must keep pace with changing social realities. By understanding the similarities and differences of immigrant groups, companies can better engage their employees and consumers through data-driven strategies and allow them to gain a competitive advantage. The managerial implications from this analysis provide guidance for firms seeking to expand in Taiwan.

Future Research

While this study makes valuable contributions, several promising avenues exist for future research to build upon these findings. First, conducting in-depth interviews with larger mainland and foreign immigrant samples could provide richer qualitative data to complement the survey-based analysis. Comparing immigrant viewpoints across different cities and regions within Taiwan is another area worth exploring. Examining the policy impacts once amendments to citizenship laws come into effect also deserves examination and would provide a stronger indication of the effect of certain policy changes. On the economic front, future studies can investigate what leads immigrants to become entrepreneurs in Taiwan and how this contributes to the overall economy.

Future studies can also investigate how technology usage and social media platforms influence immigrant experiences and behavior in Taiwan. Comparative studies between foreign talent and labor could reveal the differences between underlying factors and resulting contributions to the economy. Such studies between foreign labor and talent is essential for developing effective policies and strategies to manage migration and maximize the benefits of both populations.

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Appendix A

This chart depicts the similarities and differences between mainland spouses and foreign spouses in Taiwan. It depicts that the two populations are more similar than dissimilar.

Similarities	Differences
Table 2	Table 1
Table 3	Table 5
Table 4	Table 6
Table 7	Table 11
Table 8	Table 12
Table 9	
Table 10	
Table 13	
Table 14	
Table 15	
Table 16	
Table 17	

APPENDIX B

To supplement the quantitative findings presented in this paper, interviews were conducted with three mainland spouses to gain qualitative insights into their experiences and perspectives living in Taiwan. This section presents a thematic summary of the key points that emerged from these interviews.

The three interviewees have resided in Taiwan for extended periods, ranging from 7 to 25 years. In recounting their personal journeys, common themes included overcoming early difficulties regarding work restrictions and lack of rights, the value of local community ties in facilitating cultural adaptation, perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of Taiwan's democratic system compared to China, desires for equal treatment and opportunities, and an overall appreciation for building a life in Taiwan.

For instance, Ms. Dong and Ms. Dai endured challenging beginnings marked by stringent regulations and unfair treatment but came to feel integrated over time with help from Taiwanese friends. Ms. Dai specifically highlighted joining a church to build social connections and learn about Taiwanese culture. All three viewed Taiwan's democracy positively in areas like open elections, while noting potential weaknesses like inefficiency compared to China. Regarding future hopes, reducing discrimination and gaining equal chances to thrive were common goals.

These firsthand experiences of mainland spouses reinforce key survey findings on social engagement, democratic perspectives, and development outlooks. The interviews lend qualitative weight regarding mainland spouses' journey towards adaptation, the value of local community participation, evolving views on Taiwan's political system, and aspirations for an egalitarian, inclusive society. As supplemented by these insights, the paper's policy recommendations are further bolstered.

Case Report 1: Ms. Dong

1. Personal background

Ms. Dong, aged 48, possesses a junior high school education and has resided in Taiwan for approximately 25 years. Presently, she is a housewife.

2. Experience in Taiwan

Ms. Dong came to Taiwan at the end of 1999 and initially found employment in Kaohsiung. Later, she moved to Hualien after getting married because of a friend's introduction. When she first came to Taiwan, due to immigrant status restrictions, she could only engage in part-time jobs and temporary jobs, such as recycling old clothes. Despite all the difficulties, she is grateful to the Taiwanese for their help and friendship and feels that there are many noble people who are willing to teach her and support her along her journey.

3. Social connections in Taiwan

In Taiwan, Ms. Dong met some friends, mainly people from the mainland. Although she has Taiwanese friends, mainlanders make up much of her social circle. Ms. Dong mentioned that one of her motivations for coming to Taiwan is her belief that there are many opportunities to make money. However, the reality of her life in Taiwan did not align with her expectations, leading to feelings of regret.

4. The personal impact of cross-strait relations

Although cross-strait relations have worsened in recent years, Ms. Dong said that she is not very concerned about this. She feels that she is just an ordinary person and does

not want to get involved in political affairs. Regarding Taiwan's democratic system, she said that she doesn't know much about politics, and she does not want to study it in depth but hopes to live a simple and stable life.

5. Development in Taiwan

Ms. Dong is mainly engaged in hourly wage jobs in Taiwan. She has worked in housekeeping and other jobs and said that the salary in Taiwan is higher than that in the mainland. However, she is not considering entering the corporate world or seeking opportunities for professional growth. As for the rights and interests of foreigners in Taiwan, she said that her current level of work and medical insurance are not bad, but she has no further understanding of the issue of rights and interests restrictions on mainlanders living in Taiwan.

6. Expectations for the future

Ms. Dong hopes that there will be no war between China and Taiwan, and hopes that the two sides can engage in exchanges that would reduce restrictions and discrimination. She hopes to live a simple and happy life, not to participate in politics and groups, and to concentrate on her own life.

Conclusion

Ms. Dong is a mainland spouse married to a Taiwanese and has been in Taiwan for 25 years. She has experienced various difficulties in Taiwan, but she is grateful for the help and friendliness of the Taiwanese. She looks forward to the peaceful development of cross-strait relations and hopes to live a good life without restriction. She is mainly engaged in hourly wage jobs in Taiwan and has not paid much attention to politics or

to the rights and interests of immigrants. Ms. Dong's story reflects part of the lives of mainland spouses in Taiwan, and also echoes the impact of cross-strait relations on personal life.

Case Report 2: Mr. Tang

1. Personal background

Mr. Tang came to Taiwan from Shanghai with his father when he was a child. He is a 25-year-old man with a university degree and has lived in Taiwan for 7 years.

2. Motivation for coming to Taiwan

Mr. Tang's motive for coming to Taiwan is to obtain Taiwanese identity, which is easier for children to do than adults. His family wants him to live in Taiwan, and he is currently working for the family business.

3. Work experience

Mr. Tang used to work in the rubber industry, but now he has switched to renting out factories and managing assets in the family business. At the family business, he is mainly responsible for the company's finance and accounting. Mr. Tang often travels between Taiwan, Shanghai, and Hong Kong for business.

4. Views on Taiwan

Before coming to Taiwan, Mr. Tang's view of Taiwan was similar to that of cities in mainland China. He used to feel more inclined toward living in Hong Kong. After living and working in Taiwan, Mr. Tang underwent a shift in perspective. He now recognizes

the differences between Taiwan and Hong Kong in terms of culture and political atmosphere, giving him a deeper and more nuanced understanding of Taiwan.

5. Social connection

Mr. Tang currently maintains more contacts with friends in mainland China, but less contact with friends in Taiwan. When he was in school, he participated in departmental activities and had exchanges with Taiwanese people, but after graduation, due to work, military service and other reasons, his contact with Taiwanese friends decreased and became infrequent.

6. Military experience in Taiwan

Having served as a soldier in Taiwan for a period of 4 months, Mr. Tang shared his evaluation of Taiwan's military service system. From his perspective, during relatively peaceful times, the military service system might be perceived as too time-consuming. However, he expects that the system to become stricter in the future.

7. Views on Taiwan's democratic system

Mr. Tang believes that Taiwan's democratic system is relatively open and transparent, with everyone having the right to vote, but he also raised some concerns about the system. He believes that too much emphasis on democratic transition may lead to populist tendencies.

8. Expectations for the future

Mr. Tang hopes that the Taiwanese government can simplify the procedures for mainlanders to obtain Taiwan citizenship and provide more rights and protections. He

believes that the restrictions on mainland spouses and other people should be more reasonable, so that these people can obtain a better life in Taiwan. Regarding the development of Taiwan's democratic system, he hopes that the government will respect different opinions more and engage in more mutually beneficial communication.

Conclusion

Mr. Tang's perspective on cross-strait relations highlights the importance of effective communication and mutual benefits between Taiwan and the mainland. He expresses the possibility of returning to the mainland if Taiwan fails to improve relations with China. Mr. Tang's belief in Taiwan's limited development space and his lack of strong emotional attachment to life in Taiwan lead him to view of the island as only a temporary place of residence.



Case Report 3: Ms. Dai

1. Personal background

Miss Dai is a 60-year-old woman from Changsha, Hunan, has lived in Taiwan for 25 years. She is a mainland spouse, with a high school education, who is currently working as a housekeeper in Taiwan. In the interview, Ms. Dai shared her perspectives on Taiwan before and after she came to Taiwan, her experience of gradually integrating into Taiwanese society, and her views on Taiwan's democratic system and the treatment of land allocation.

2. Advocacy for mainland spouses in Taiwan

Before coming to Taiwan, Ms. Dai knew almost nothing about Taiwan, she heard that

Taiwan is a “beautiful treasure island.” When she came to Taiwan she learned about the complexity of cross-strait relations. According to government policy, mainland spouses suffered from various restrictions in Taiwan, including waiting a long time for citizenship as well as work restrictions. Ms. Dai was one of the early protesters against these unfair regulations. Later, the Taiwanese government gradually relaxed these restrictions, allowing mainland spouses to work legally and receive health insurance and other benefits.

3. Social connection and church experience

Ms. Dai said that when she first came to Taiwan, she was not used to the local culture, such as eating habits. Later, she joined the church and became a Christian, which helped her build a social circle in Taiwan. In the church, everyone is treated equally regardless of race, occupation, or status, giving her a sense of warmth and belonging. In the church, she made more Taiwanese friends and strengthened her ties with Taiwanese society.

4. Views on Taiwan's democratic system

Ms. Dai agrees with Taiwan's democratic system and believes that Taiwan's democracy has advantages over the mainland's political system. For example, the electoral system allows the people to choose their own leaders. However, she also pointed out that Taiwan's excessive democracy may lead to lower efficiency, especially in land planning and other aspects, resulting in a lack of urban planning and local development.

5. Treatment of mainland spouse in Taiwan

Ms. Dai admitted that she was discriminated against and restricted by Taiwanese when she came to Taiwan in her early years. Mainland spouses faces many difficulties in

employment, salary, education, and public services, leading to feelings of being unfairly treated. However, she hopes that the Taiwanese government can reduce discrimination, treat mainland spouses equally, and give them more opportunities and room for personal development.

6. Expectations for the future

Although Ms. Dai encountered many difficulties living in Taiwan, she said that she has settled in Taiwan and has no plans to return to the mainland in the future. She believes that Taiwan is more suitable than the mainland in terms of pension and quality of life. She also hopes that the Taiwanese government can further improve the treatment of mainland spouses so that they can better integrate into Taiwanese society and develop their own future.

Conclusion

Ms. Dai's 25-year journey as a mainland spouse in Taiwan has been marked by significant transformation and integration into Taiwanese society. Throughout this time, she has witnessed the growth of Taiwan's democratic system and values it greatly. However, she remains hopeful that the government will take further steps to eradicate discrimination against mainland-based marriages, providing them with more equitable opportunities. Ms. Dai's story serves as a poignant reflection of the diverse experiences and aspirations within the mainland immigrant community in Taiwan. Her profound observations and perspectives on Taiwan's social development and immigrant relations offer valuable insights into the ongoing evolution of Taiwanese society.