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TAIWAN ´S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION:
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1. INTRODUCTION

The research presented in this paper is aimed at a better understanding of Taiwan's image building as part of public diplomacy in the EU, as observed through the communications of the periodical Taiwan Newsletter published on the Press and Information website of the Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium 駐歐盟兼駐比利時代表處. In recent years, Taiwan has been receiving increasing attention from the European Union, mainly for two reasons. On the one hand, cross-strait tensions have escalated several times due to Taiwan's government being more outspoken about de-Sinicisation and a reduction of economic dependence on Mainland China since 2016. At the same time, the EU's overall perception of and attitude towards the People's Republic of China has changed as a result of human rights and international law issues, but also because of growing economic asymmetries. In the context of these changing attitudes, it can be assumed that the Taipei government has not only deepened its emphasis on public diplomacy and image building abroad but also adapted the image and the identity that it wants to promote.

January 2016 marked a significant turning point in Taiwan's politics, as the Democratic Progressive Party or DPP 民主進步黨 secured their victory in presidential and legislative elections. While it was not the first time that Taiwan had a DPP president, it was the first time, however, that the DPP also gained a majority in the Legislative Yuan 立法院 and thus the control over both legislative and executive branches (deLisle & Dreyer, 2021: 1). Tsai Ing-wen 蔡英文, Taiwan's first female president, refused to follow the previous Kuomintang or KMT 國民黨 administration's compliance and promotion of the so-called "1992 Consensus" 九二共識 and the "One China principle" 一中原則 based on different interpretations, meaning that both sides of the strait consider One China to be under their regime and the respective ruling party. From the point of view of the People's Republic of China or PRC 中华人民共和国, Tsai's actions destabilised the foundation for a peaceful development of cross-strait relations and provoked confrontation.

When it comes to participating in the international space that is based on access to international institutions as well as formal relations with diplomatic allies and informal relations with major powers, Taiwan's challenges became further heightened (deLisle 2021: 239). The Republic of China or ROC 中華民國 on Taiwan is not officially recognised as an

independent state by the UN and by most countries worldwide. According to the CCP leadership in Beijing, Taiwan is a province of the PRC. Nevertheless, the ROC had been one of the founding members of the United Nations or UN and one of the permanent members of the Security Council in 1945. However, as a result of changes in the geopolitical situation and polarisation of the world into two blocks, UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 of 25th October 1971 switched the official recognition from the ROC to the PRC, meaning that the ROC on Taiwan withdrew from the United Nations. Since then, Taiwan has attempted multiple times to rejoin the UN (Rajczyk & Piechota, 2019: 233). The number of countries with official diplomatic relations with the ROC on Taiwan is diminishing¹, meaning that Taiwan's search for diplomatic recognition faces growing challenges.

Despite the lack of official recognition, the ROC could be considered a *de facto* state with considerable economic potential and competitiveness. Besides its position in the global market, its national image or brand plays another significant role. In a world characterised by mass communication and the development of content and social media, the importance of a country's image has been recognised in international affairs, where countries, their governments, as well as their citizens, put emphasis on utilising the global information system to their advantage and promote their interests (Rajczyk & Piechota, 2019: 234). The concepts of public diplomacy and soft power have, therefore, become increasingly important in international relations, especially in combination with the internet, which provides international actors with online platforms to engage with global audiences and communicate their messages directly to them.

In the context of growing challenges, such as the decreasing number of diplomatic allies for Taiwan, the PRC's strategy to undermine Taiwan's position, clashes between the US and PRC, as well as the PRC's internal instability facing Xinjiang and Hong Kong, one of the most important foreign policy instruments that Taiwan has to utilise is public diplomacy, which can be defined as the "communicative act of informing, engaging, and influencing publics overseas to advance national and strategic ambitions" (Rawnsley, 2020: 6). According to Rawnsley (2020: 6), there are three beneficial effects of public diplomacy for Taiwan. It can facilitate the increase of popularity and familiarity with Taiwan among audiences across the world. Secondly, it can create sympathy for Taiwan's exclusion from international politics, which can serve as a basis for greater support in the long run. Lastly,

¹ 12 at the time of writing

it can offer more general support for the government's political objectives. In the case of Taiwan, public diplomacy can also be effective in countering the narratives spread by the PRC. Whereas public diplomacy cannot persuade other states to switch recognition to Taiwan or get Taiwan readmitted to the United Nations, it can still shape the interactions between Taiwan and other countries and thus put Taiwan in a stronger position to preserve its national interests and security, as well as create more opportunities for Taiwan internationally (Rawnsley, 2020: 6–7).

In Europe, there is a growing awareness about the importance of Taiwan, which can be seen in the European Union's Indo-Pacific Cooperation Strategy of September 2021, as well as in the adoption of a Taiwan-related resolution in October 2021 by the European Parliament for the first time. While Taiwan has been attracting the attention of the world for many reasons, such as its effective handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, promotion of democratic values, fight against digital interference, and investment in emerging technologies like semiconductors, its visibility in media coverage is also connected to the beginning of the Tsai administration and the resulting political, economic, and military pressure by the PRC (Bondaz, 2022: 1–2).

As Taiwan's international status is characterised by a lack of formal diplomatic recognition that presents a major obstacle to joining the global community, the Taipei government has considered other ways of gaining recognition and securing international support by building the image of Taiwan. Public diplomacy is being utilised by the government as an essential tool to promote its foreign relations. To increase its visibility, the Taipei government is relying on its main channels of influence in the EU, namely the Taipei Representative Offices 台北代表處 in various EU countries, with the main one being in Brussels. Representative Offices were and still are established as a way of maintaining informal relations. In other words, the Representative Offices in the EU can be observed as actors of Taiwan's quasi-diplomatic engagement in the EU and a reflection of its current foreign policy. In this respect, part of the communication of the Representative Offices is aimed at foreign governments, while other parts are directed at foreign publics directly, which helps with building the image and identity of Taiwan, as well as increasing its visibility and soft power in the EU. The main channel of communication of the Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium 駐歐盟兼駐比利時代表處 is the Taiwan Newsletter 新聞信, which is a weekly newspaper published by the Press and Information Division 新聞組. The Press and Information

Division acts as an intermediary between the authorities in Taipei and the media outlets targeting foreign publics and ensures the regular communication and flow of information. Its tasks are to provide publications on culture, tourism, education, and politics, and to keep the public informed about all aspects of Taiwan (Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium, 2017).

The main Taipei Representative Office in Belgium has been publishing the Taiwan Newsletter since 2012, which was the beginning of the second term of Ma Ying-jeou's 馬英九 presidency, meaning that the government's communication to the European public was started by a KMT administration. Based on the premise that there are differences between the Ma (KMT) and Tsai (DPP) administrations, both in terms of their foreign policy and identity politics, this paper aims to answer the following research question:

In what ways and to what extent did communication and image building via the Taiwan Newsletter as part of Taiwan's public diplomacy in the EU differ during the second Ma Ying-jeou (2012–2016) and the first Tsai Ing-wen (2016–2020) administration?

For this purpose, a mixed qualitative and quantitative content analysis of selected Newsletters published between 2012 and 2020 will be conducted. Observing the changes that have taken place after the beginning of the Tsai Ing-wen presidency, this thesis fills a gap in the literature on Taiwan's public diplomacy that has not focused on public diplomacy efforts in the EU, especially for the period since 2016. Whereas the primary objective of the paper is to contribute to the existing literature on Taiwan's image building as a part of its public diplomacy efforts by analysing the Newsletter, the thesis intends to equally provide information on relations between the ROC on Taiwan and the EU, as well as on areas of shared values and interests.

1.1 Structure of the Thesis

With the aim of comprehending Taiwan's public diplomacy and image building efforts, the paper first discusses the relevant theoretical concepts in chapter two. Firstly, a definition of public diplomacy and a short historical development of the concept will be presented, which will then be followed by other sub-chapters that will discuss the new public diplomacy approach in relation to concepts including propaganda, national image, and nation branding. Additionally, a constructivist approach to the mentioned concepts, especially in connection to communication, will be presented in order to provide a basis for understanding Taiwan's communication via the Newsletter as part of its image building and public diplomacy. An additional concept, which is interrelated to public diplomacy, is soft power, which will also be defined and discussed based on Joseph Nye's first conceptualisation.

The ensuing two chapters will discuss Taiwan's foreign policy, cross-strait relations and the differences in handling by the two administrations, as well as Taiwan-EU relations. This will be followed by a literature review to establish the current state of research on Taiwan's public diplomacy in the EU and to identify the research gap that this paper will attempt to fill.

The methodological chapter will first discuss qualitative content analysis and introduce the primary source, the Taiwan Newsletter and its EU/Belgium edition. Due to the above-named large volume of the potential text corpus, the process of sampling will be discussed. Before starting the analysis, the units of meaning will be defined. The chapter will be followed by a coding process, throughout which a set of categories will be defined, and a set of coding rules will be developed.

Once the coding process is completed, the results will first be presented in quantitative values based on the frequency and dynamics of certain categories (e.g. an increase in articles on democracy or human rights). This will be followed by a discussion part, which will summarise the qualitative characteristics of the coded material and interpret key findings.

The paper will be concluded by reflecting on the research process, the implications and limitations of the results, and possibilities for future research on the topic of Taiwan's public diplomacy.

2. THEORETICAL APPROACHES

2.1 PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

2.1.1 Definitions of Public Diplomacy

Delaney (1968: 3; cited in Signitzer & Coombs, 1992: 138) defines public diplomacy as a way in which a government or other political or social actors directly or indirectly influence those public opinions and positions that influence the foreign political decision-making of another government or actor. According to Manheim (1994: 4), the purpose of public diplomacy is about explaining and speaking in favour of governmental policy, as well as about representing a nation to foreign publics (government to people).

National image building, foreign propaganda, and other activities that would now be considered as aspects of public diplomacy have existed for a long time and even the term “public diplomacy” itself appeared in the London Times as early as 1856, before gaining momentum from the 1960s onwards. (Melissen, 2005b: 3). It was reformulated by Edmund Gullion in 1965, as a part of his discussion on the conceptualisation and the establishment of the Edward R. Murrow Center of Public Diplomacy:

“Public diplomacy deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the process of intercultural communications. Central to public diplomacy is the transnational flow of information and ideas.” (Gullion, 1965; cited in Cull, 2020: 13)

Cull claims that the US Information Agency was at that time in need of alternative terms for the words “information” and “propaganda” since they carried rather negative connotations. This was the reason why the term “public diplomacy” was used more frequently after 1965. It also brought a respectable identity to the officers of the US Information Agency and distinguished them from the field of public relations, thus recognising their work as a

legitimate branch of diplomacy. Throughout the 1990s, public diplomacy as a concept spread across the ocean and became commonly used in foreign policies (Cull, 2020: 15–16).

According to d’Hooghe (2014: 17), it is recognised by most scholars that the main difference between public diplomacy and traditional diplomacy is that the former targets non-governmental publics, whereas the latter is based on government-to-government relations. The author also argues that there seems to be no widely accepted definition of public diplomacy and that its practice and concept are in constant development. Hans Tuch’s definition of public diplomacy describes the concept as “a government’s process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation’s ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as national goals and policies” (Tuch, 1990; cited in Melissen, 2005b: 11). In a slightly different definition, Malone (1985: 199) defines public diplomacy as “direct communication with foreign peoples, with the aim of affecting their thinking and ultimately, that of their governments.”

Pajtinka (2019: 24–26) offers a general definition from a theoretical viewpoint based on four characteristics, which could help to define and identify public diplomacy in practice. Firstly, the primary aim or purpose of public diplomacy is the advocacy and advancement of certain states’ foreign policies. This argument is based on the fact that public diplomacy is a part of diplomacy that is considered to be a tool of foreign policy realisation, so it is to be assumed that the primary purpose or motive of public diplomacy is the same. However, it is to be noted that the objective of public diplomacy might be of a more covert nature. This is because nowadays, the activities that are evidently associated with the advancement and promotion of foreign goals are perceived by the public with a certain amount of doubt and mistrust.

Secondly, the primary target group of public diplomacy is the foreign public. As mentioned above, this is different from traditional diplomacy, where the communication is on a governmental level and is done between two different governments. As a part of a process executed internationally, public diplomacy, similar to diplomacy, is based on the flow of communications from a certain state to another. However, it is to be pointed out that many experts agree on the importance of communicating with and influencing the state’s own citizens as well, as they might, in turn, contribute greatly to the perception and opinions of the foreign public.

The third characteristic described by Pajtinka (2019: 24–26) takes into consideration the method or way of operation, and he claims that scholars agree on the fact that in this aspect, influencing or swaying public opinion through the communication of information not only plays an important role in carrying out public diplomacy but also presents a distinguished characteristic of public diplomacy, especially in comparison to traditional diplomacy where the communication is direct and mostly based on the exchange of information among diplomats.

The last defining characteristic of public diplomacy is based on the realisation of it in practice, namely the means and technique. As a result of the previously described characteristic of public diplomacy, which emphasises influencing the public through communication, the technique of its realisation has also changed. Whereas traditional, government-to-government diplomacy utilises direct communication between diplomats through various strategies such as negotiation, public diplomacy mostly relies on mass communication to realise its goals in practice (Pajtinka, 2019: 24–26).

When it comes to the re-evaluation and further clarification of public diplomacy as a concept in the 21st century, Melissen (2005b: 15–18) argues that new public diplomacy's ² emphasis is on the dialogue or two-way communication with the public, as well as on the objective of building long-term relationships based on trust. Kathy Fitzpatrick (2007: 207) has redefined the worldview of the new public diplomacy, which was reflected in the previous soft power paradigm characterised by asymmetry and self-interest. In her perspective, dialogue and engagement are significant elements of the new public diplomacy, which are still based on the objective of advancing the institutions or country's self-interest when looking from the soft power perspective, rather than the dual interests of the country and foreign audience. Thus, the author proposes relationship management as the general theory of public diplomacy, which, in contrast to the one of soft power, is characterised by symmetry and mutuality. She claims that this would result in an objective of mutual understanding and

² When discussing the new public diplomacy, Melissen (2005b) and Fitzpatrick (2007) do not provide a clear time frame for the development of the new public diplomacy but rather discuss the characteristics that distinguish it from the old public diplomacy. Melissen (2005b: xx), for example, argues that 9/11 was an important instigator for a renewed discussion on public diplomacy and its consolidation. Fitzpatrick (2007: 194) presents the new public diplomacy as a reflection of the increased emphasis on public diplomacy in a diplomatic environment. Szondi (2008: 10), on the other hand, refers to the new public diplomacy as the 21st century diplomacy, situating it more clearly. He also acknowledges that even in the 21st century, some countries' public diplomacy relies on the traditional model.

benefit (Fitzpatrick, 2007: 207). With this, she refers to a “new” form of public diplomacy from the 21st century that is to be differentiated from the “old” one.

Szondi (2008: 11) contrasts the two types of old and new public diplomacy based on nine aspects. When it comes to conditions or context, the old public diplomacy was meant to be carried out in times of conflict and tensions between states, whereas the new one is to be a part of a peaceful environment. Further differences can be found in the different goals of the two approaches to public diplomacy. While traditional public diplomacy’s primary goal was to achieve political change in target countries by changing the behaviour of the public, 21st-century public diplomacy is keen on promoting political and economic interests as to create a friendly, approachable environment and a positive international reputation or image of one’s own country. Whereas the old public diplomacy relies on strategies such as persuasion and managing the public that are indicators of one-way communication or a monologue, the new public diplomacy strategies are oriented to building and maintaining relationships, based on dialogue or two-way communication and engagement with the public. The target of communication of the new public diplomacy and thus the participants of the so-called two-way communication include not only a well-defined, specific public abroad but also the domestic public. The old public diplomacy’s target audience is the public of the target nation only. In this sense, the previously clear line between domestic and international news spheres has been blurred by the new public diplomacy. There are further differences between old and new public diplomacy in terms of media and technology. While the old public diplomacy relies on mass communication such as television, radio or print media, the new diplomacy started putting more emphasis on new media such as the internet and social media. It is to be noted, however, that the new media can often be used together with the old, traditional media, also in the new public diplomacy. Finally, the context of messaging has changed from ideologies, interests and information to individual ideas, values and collaboration. Accordingly, the foundations of the two different approaches have changed from political advocacy and propaganda theory to corporate branding and network theory (Szondi, 2008: 11).

2.1.2 Public Diplomacy and Propaganda

Both public diplomacy and propaganda are two complex and multifaceted concepts that play a pivotal role in international communication. According to Melissen (2005b: 16), scholars often see public diplomacy as an outgrowth of propaganda and generally agree on their connectedness based on a broad and inclusive definition of propaganda, namely “the deliberate attempt to influence the opinions of an audience through the transmission of ideas and values for the specific purpose, consciously designed to serve the interest of the propagandists and their political masters, either directly or indirectly” (Welch, 1999: 24–6; cited in Melissen, 2005b: 16).

In Western languages, the term propaganda mostly carries negative connotations, which are related to the memories of historical propaganda such as Nazi and communist propaganda, Cold War tactics, and other psychological warfare operations. This makes historical baggage one of the key features of propaganda. In contrast, only a few would consider West European countries’ public campaigns aimed at civil society building, the rule of law, and the improvement of democracy as propaganda in contemporary diplomatic practice, as they are less aggressive and thus less objectionable in dealing with foreign publics. The popular understanding of propaganda as manipulation and deceit makes up the second key feature. It is important to note, nevertheless, that a certain country might employ a mix of both public diplomacy and propaganda, and still sell it as public diplomacy (Melissen, 2005b: 17).

Credibility plays an important role in the distinction between the two concepts. According to Zaharna (2004: 4), the persuasiveness of a government’s public diplomacy efforts is directly tied to its credibility, meaning that a credible message is more likely to be received positively by the target audience and that this will lead to more effective communication and thus a stronger relationship with foreign publics. On the other hand, propaganda’s techniques of deception, secrecy, and coercion might be effective in some contexts but generally result in mistrust, making it harder for a propagandist to accomplish their objectives in the long run.

In summary, while foreign propaganda can be perceived as a tool for mass persuasion and control, public diplomacy presents a more constructive approach to international relations. While they both aim to influence foreign publics, they do so by aiming at different goals. On

the one hand, public diplomacy seeks to build bridges, foster understanding, and promote dialogue. On the other hand, propaganda aims to manipulate, control, and dictate.

2.1.3 Public Diplomacy and Communication

Zaharna (2008: 88–91) differentiated between two ways of communication in public diplomacy, the informational and the relational approach. In the informational approach, mass communication is considered to be the most important instrument, and communication mostly starts from the governmental actor who designs and sends out a message to the targeted foreign public. In this case, the messenger or the governmental actor dominates and guides the message throughout its dissemination but does not have any control over the targeted group and how they will receive the message.

The second or relational approach emphasises two-way communication or exchange of messages, the building of relationships and the creation of networks. It is based on the argument that relations-centred communication occurs faster and is more flexible and versatile than informational communication. Zaharna (2008) argues that while the first approach uses a predetermined message, in the second or network approach, the initiator first establishes and determines the construction and dynamics of the different communication channels, but then allows those forming part of the channels to cooperate and create the message themselves. The author thus emphasises the great difference between the two approaches; the informational approach employs soft power, whereas the relational approach creates soft power. Furthermore, the relations-based approach might be able to look past cultural differences, dominate narratives, and increase legitimacy (Zaharna, 2008: 91–97). However, Zaharna's (2020: 97) later reassessment of the two approaches argues that due to social media, the field of diplomacy took a decidedly relational turn. Moreover, she argues that the differentiation between the two approaches could be considered old and more complex than initially discussed. While public diplomacy was previously observed through the lens of the relationship of a state actor with foreign publics, public diplomacy in practice now suggests a much larger context that includes domestic publics, the diaspora, other states and global structures such as international organisations, law, and trade (Zaharna, 2020: 97).

Nye (2008: 101–102) and Leonard (2002: 8–18) argue that public diplomacy is a complex process of delivering messages. Thus, they have developed a concept of three dimensions of public diplomacy. Additionally, Leonard (2002: 10) introduces the three dimensions in a

way that each of them also includes three different aspects: political or military, economic, as well as societal and cultural aspects. Whereas a certain country might emphasise the economic messages, some other nation might focus rather on a different aspect, or even on all aspects equally.

The first dimension of public diplomacy runs on a fast and immediate time scale, meaning that the messages are created and spread the fastest. Daily communication, or reactive news, is the dimension that manages communication on day-to-day issues, which includes explaining the context of domestic and foreign policy decisions. These so-called immediate reactions to news events are adapted in a way that makes them concur with the country's strategic goals. Additionally, Leonard (2002: 12–13) claims that traditional and public diplomacy are or should be aligned in a way that the same communication reaches both the foreign government or the elite, as well as the foreign public or the masses.

Secondly, strategic, or proactive communication as the second dimension develops a set of simple themes, which Nye (2008: 102) compares with political and advertising campaigns that are based on symbolic events and communications over the course of a rather longer period of time. The aim of these communications is to reinforce core messages and influence perception. In terms of time scale, in the second dimension, the planning period is several months. Leonard (2002: 14–16) claims that it is the totality of the messages that counts, and not individual topics in specific fields such as politics, tourism, or trade. The author also claims that in order to be effective, institutions engaging in public diplomacy should stick to a few, preferably even one message, since people are exposed to countless messages every day.

The third dimension of public diplomacy is based on building relationships and takes place over the course of many years. The relationship-building happens between key individuals through exchanges, conferences, training, scholarships, and seminars, which, in turn, build real and virtual networks. In contrast to traditional diplomacy, relationships are developed and maintained between peers such as academics, businesspeople, cultural entrepreneurs, and politicians (Nye, 2008: 101–102, Leonard 2002: 8–18).

The foundation of the above theoretical considerations is constructivist theory which defines the world as socially constructed and of our own making (Onuf, 1989; cited in Theys, 2018: 36). Nicholas Onuf (1998: 58), one of the first to study constructivism, pointed out that constructivism is a method of studying any type of social relations, also referring to relations

between states. Alexander Wendt's (1995: 71–81) main argument for constructivism is that the international system is not inherently conflictual or cooperative but that it is rather shaped by the meaning and identities that states assign to their interactions³.

Onuf's study of constructivism emphasises the importance of language and discourse, for which he wrote that they contribute to shaping the international system. He believed that words, symbols, and social practices construct the world around us. He further claimed that through speech acts and communication, actors construct their identities, interests, as well as the norms that control their interactions. The constructivist approach based on the importance of linguistics is especially relevant for understanding a certain nation's communication as its efforts to construct its own identity, interests, norms and consequently the world around it. Onuf understood identities as being representations of actors' understandings of who they are, which in turn also determines their interests (Onuf, 1998: 58–78). Communication and language, therefore, play an important role in this construction and creation of knowledge. According to Berger & Luckman (1966; cited in Carter, 2013: 2–3), language can rely on various channels of distance communication to convey a certain message, which enables people to build knowledge of something without being present or experiencing the event directly. In this regard, language has the ability to turn into reality and the media outlets can thus rely on framing to shape the audience's perception of reality through the images and messages they produce.

2.1.4 National Image and Nation Branding

Leonard (2002: 9) claims that public diplomacy is based on the concept of the image and reputation of the nation, which influences the building of relationships between countries. Also known as country branding, the concept of nation branding was first introduced by Simon Anholt in 1996 (Kaefer, 2020: 130). Kaefer argues that country or nation branding is closely linked to public diplomacy and that they both require close collaboration with foreign representations and cultural institutes. Furthermore, they both engage in the activity of listening within the country and abroad, with the objective to identify the topics relevant for target audiences (Kaefer, 2020: 131).

³ To support the idea of a socially constructed world, Wendt (1995: 73) provides an example; the United States considers 500 British nuclear weapons less threatening than five North Korean nuclear weapons. This is because these identifications are not caused by the weapons (material structure) themselves but by the meaning (ideational structure) behind them. In other words, the weapons do not have any meaning without the social context, which further proves the effect of ideas and beliefs on global politics.

Szondi (2008: 13–31) presents the relation between the two concepts in five different views. Out of the five, only the first one holds the two as completely unrelated concepts that do not have anything in common, having different goals, strategies, tools, and actors. The second view regards public diplomacy as part of nation branding. According to Szondi, a recent phenomenon that includes the commercialisation of foreign policy and public diplomacy has made foreign policy a subject of branding. In this view, the practice of nation branding has given new momentum to public diplomacy and made it more strategic. Simon Anholt also considered public diplomacy as a part of nation branding in his earlier discussion, which later evolved into a concept called “Brand Hexagon” (Anholt & Hildreth, 2004; cited in Szondi, 2008: 20) as a measurement tool of nation brands. The national brand strategy includes six points as the natural channels of communication through which people communicate with the world: tourism, culture, policy, people, brands, as well as investment and recruitment. The accumulation of the mentioned points results in a place brand. National brand strategy as a core of the hexagon was later replaced with the term ‘competitive identity’, which is defined as the “synthesis of brand management with public diplomacy and with trade, investment, tourism and export promotion” (Anholt, 2007: 5). The third view presented by Szondi (2008: 22–25) contrasts with the second view and regards nation branding as a part of public diplomacy. This approach is based on the notion that nation branding acts as an instrument of public diplomacy, or even on the notion that nation branding could be regarded as the economic dimension of public diplomacy. The fourth perspective of nation branding considers public diplomacy and nation branding as two distinct concepts that overlap. This approach is strongly supported by Melissen who discussed the two concepts in detail in his work. He argues that they can be boiled down to similar activities and that they best work in tandem (Melissen, 2005a, 2005b; cited in Szondi, 2008: 26). While nation branding requires greater efforts than public diplomacy and has a more ambitious approach, both concepts have the same objective, that is image creation. Other aspects in the overlapping area between the two concepts also include culture, identity, and values. The fifth view regards nation branding and public diplomacy as the same concepts and argues that they are based on the same activity, which is the promotion of the country with the identical objective of creating a positive image. Szondi (2008: 29) argues that this approach is lacking in a way that fails to mention important differences between the concepts. Furthermore, some scholars not only regard public diplomacy and nation branding as synonyms, but they even equate the terms with propaganda. This is based on the argument

that nation branding is a postmodern mutation of public diplomacy, which started as propaganda.

It is important to note that constructivism has a different approach to defining national image than the two other international relations theories, liberalism and realism. According to Li (2005: 23; cited in Zhang, 2012: 24), in a constructivist perspective, national image depends on the country, whereas realism contributes national image to power and influence, and liberalism believes that a country's image is a requirement for cooperation among international actors.

Based on Wendt's (1999; cited in Zhang, 2012: 24) approach, constructivist theory has two basic principles. First, the structure of relationships is mostly determined by shared ideas rather than material forces. Secondly, the identity of purposeful actors and interests is constructed from shared ideas, as opposed to being inherent. In this aspect, Zhang (2012: 26–27) discusses the similarities and draws parallels between constructivism and national image, which he said can also be formed as a result of interactions between states. National image is, thus, not primarily determined by material power or strength since it has the characteristics of social construction. When it comes to linguistic constructivism, discourse or communication has the power to construct social facts, as well as reproduce or reinterpret existing facts. This can also be compared to the national image, which is not based on physical properties but projected through language and symbols to represent its meaning.

2.2 PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND SOFT POWER

Previous theoretical chapters discuss public diplomacy in connection to communication and image building. However, public diplomacy also needs to be understood in the context of soft power (Snow 2020: 4). According to Nye, who was the first one to conceptualise and use the term soft power, power is “the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes one wants” (Nye 2008: 94). He identifies three aspects of power and how to get it: threats and coercion (“sticks”), inducement and payments (“carrots”), and attraction and co-optation, the last one being what has been described as soft power contrasting with hard power describing the first two aspects of power (Nye 2004: 94). A more extensive definition by Nye describes soft power as “the ability to affect others through the co-optive means of

framing⁴ the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes” (Nye, 2011: 20–21). He claims that there are three resources of a country’s soft power: its culture, its political values, as well as its foreign policies. Firstly, there are many aspects of culture, both high and popular, that present a set of practices, which create meaning for a society (Nye, 2008: 96). Nye also develops the idea of “smart power,” which is based on a conceptual relationship between soft and hard power. He argues that soft power can be an alternative or reinforcement to hard power (Nye, 2011; cited in Rawnsley, 2012: 124).

In his approach, Gary Rawnsley (2012: 123) discusses soft power based on a comprehensive explanation of soft power by Lee (2011: 11), who defined it as “a form of national power that is based on ideational and cultural attractiveness, which is intentionally or unintentionally realised by actors in international relations to achieve strategic imperatives” (Lee, 2011: 11). This builds upon the core concept presented by Nye but also touches upon the question about the motivation of engaging in soft power. This type of power is not as easy to strategise and is best understood as a byproduct of political as well as cultural appeal. It is thus based on the principles, values, and ideas of a certain government. It is important to know, however, that this attraction is derived from the perceived continuation and combination between the actor’s ideals and actions. In other words, the indicator of a successful soft power is thus credibility (Nye, 2011; cited in Rawnsley, 2012: 123).

When it comes to soft power’s connection to public diplomacy, Rawnsley emphasises that the two concepts are merely related in terms of both being part of communication activities. He states that “public diplomacy is the conscious act of communication with foreign publics, and therefore an important facilitator of soft power” (Rawnsley, 2012: 123). Other descriptions of the relationship between soft power and public diplomacy include e.g. Bátora (cited in Fitzpatrick, 2007: 195) who defined public diplomacy as the promotion of soft power, and Melissen (2005b: 3) who considers public diplomacy as one of the key instruments of soft power.

⁴ Goffman (1974) was the first one to develop the framing theory, which is based on the idea that a certain issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives. The issue can also be presented to have certain implications for different values or considerations. The word framing presents a process of people developing a certain conceptualisation of an issue or changing their thinking regarding a certain issue. As a result of framing, “framing effects” occur and influence public opinion. This phenomenon occurs in small changes in the presentation of an issue or an event, which later results in, sometimes much larger, changes in public opinion (Chong & Druckman 2007: 104).

3. THE CASE OF TAIWAN'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

3.1 TAIWAN'S FOREIGN POLICY AND CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS

3.1.1 1990s to early 2000s

Taiwan's foreign policy decision-making is, similar to any other government's foreign policy, influenced by a combination of internal and external factors (Istenič, 2018: 156). After its withdrawal from the United Nations in October 1971, Taiwan underwent several changes in the direction of its foreign policy. Most scholars agree that since the late 1980s, when martial law was lifted, ROC's foreign policy and its international space can be observed through the lens of a combination of Taiwan's domestic politics, cross-strait relations, and Taiwan-US relations (Huang, 2016: 476).

President Chiang Ching-Kuo's 蔣經國 plan of flexible participation in international affairs was followed by his successor Lee Teng-Hui's 李登輝 emphasis on adapting to the political reality and thus the so-called "Pragmatic Diplomacy" 務實外交. This more practical, forward-looking, and flexible approach helped Taiwan to break out from limited diplomatic space in the mid-1990s and establish diplomatic ties with some African, Central American, and Caribbean countries, which increased diplomatic engagement with Taiwan from 22 diplomatic allies in 1988 to 31 of them in the first half of 1996. Despite losing the recognition of some important countries such as South Korea and Saudi Arabia, Taiwan's international space also increased in the form of non-diplomatic engagements such as the mutual establishment of representative offices. The aim of Lee Teng-Hui's Pragmatic Diplomacy was to create and expand Taiwan's space for its survival and development, as well as to preserve national security, economic interests, and its status as an international legal entity. The ROC government therefore rechannelled its foreign policy programs to emphasise trade relations, economic cooperation, as well as civil society exchanges (Huang, 2016: 465–466).

After the first victory of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in presidential elections and the beginning of Chen Shui-Bian's 陳水扁 presidency in May 2000, there were expectations for a positive and peaceful development of cross-strait relations due to Chen's

vow to stabilise the domestic and cross-strait situation. During that time, Taiwan was successful in joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001, as well as in securing membership in eight intergovernmental organisations and observer status in seven (Glaser, 2013: 5). Yet, Chen Shui-bian later shifted to a different approach called “Scorched Earth Diplomacy” 烽火外交, pursuing a more aggressive policy towards the PRC with the aim to deplete Beijing’s resources. Chen would divert the PRC’s attention by pretending to approach some countries as non-diplomatic allies and then “attack” by targeting one specific country. Taiwan became more nationalistic and assertive towards Mainland China while experiencing negative consequences from a miscalculation of the international reaction. During this time, both sides of the Strait implemented “Checkbook Diplomacy” 支票簿外交, relying on gaining diplomatic support through aid and development funding. As a result of Chen’s confrontational foreign policy and Beijing’s strategy and pressure, Taiwan’s international space shrank, the number of diplomatic allies decreased, and relations between Taiwan and the US deteriorated (Huang, 2016: 466–467).

3.1.2 Ma Ying-Jeou Administration

In the 2008 Taiwan elections, Ma Ying-jeou convinced the nation, partially by pushing an economic agenda to strengthen trade links with Mainland China. Taiwan’s foreign policy was modified as to minimise the negative effects of previous cross-strait relations, as well as to improve mutual trust between the international community and Taiwan, especially since the PRC had become more influential than ever. During that time, the Ma Ying-Jeou administration adopted “Flexible Diplomacy” or “Viable Diplomacy” 活路外交, which was based on the strategy of allowing whatever appropriate means possible in order to secure international space for Taiwan. Although this approach consisted of four core principles, namely independence, dignity, pragmatism, and flexibility, it was acknowledged that occasional flexibility in sticking to the mentioned principles would be allowed. In other words, while the official approach could be kept flexible enough to benefit Taiwan in international participation and change the existing diplomatic space, the Ma administration was aware of its limits rooted in Beijing’s obstruction and the challenges that other countries and organisations faced when dealing with Taiwan. (Huang, 2016: 467–468).

Two primary initiatives were launched as part of the “Viable Diplomacy,” namely the “Diplomatic Truce” 外交休兵 and “proactive diplomacy” 積極外交, a new approach to

cross-strait relations that could be considered comparable to former President Lee's "Pragmatic Diplomacy." The former initiative, "Diplomatic Truce" had been implemented in 2008 between the two sides of the Strait for the first time since 1949. It was an important part of Ma's renewed attempt at a rapprochement policy towards the PRC. In this aspect, the Taipei administration aimed to focus on beneficial cross-strait relations and attempted to create a greater international space for Taiwan at the same time, while downplaying Taipei's struggle for diplomatic recognition. The previous "Checkbook Diplomacy" approach was abandoned through the implementation of the "Diplomatic Truce." While the consequences of the new approach were evaluated as generally positive by Huang (2016: 468), some, including Dr Chen Mu-Min 陳牧民, indicated the instability of the cross-strait relations and the lack of mutual cross-strait understanding regarding the approach, especially in case of a DPP's win in the next elections, which might end up taking advantage of Taiwan's expanded international space as a result of the reconciliation between the two sides (Cao, 2014; cited in Huang, 2016: 468).

Additional criticism emphasised the possible loss of Taiwan's sovereignty due to its tolerance of Beijing's impact on Taiwan's international participation. At some point, however, some countries⁵ reportedly approached Beijing to establish formal ties but were later rejected due to the PRC's concerns regarding the stability of cross-strait relations. In this regard, some observers started worrying about Taiwan's passive foreign policy. This was due to increasing Beijing's influence on Taiwan's international participation and thus the need for consent by Beijing to join international initiatives, which had restraining effects on Taiwan's sovereignty. Gambia's decision to switch diplomatic recognition to the PRC in 2013 was rather surprising. Moreover, the frequency and level of engagements and contacts between Taiwan's then allies, such as the Dominican Republic and Panama, and the PRC increased. Due to the rule previously established by the PRC leadership that states could recognise and interact only with either mainland China or Taiwan, Taiwan's international space became increasingly limited (Huang, 2016: 468–471).

The second primary initiative put forward by Ma that was a part of the "Flexible or Viable Diplomacy" is called "proactive diplomacy." Through this initiative, Ma emphasised the idea that "external policies should put Taiwan first for the benefit of the people" (Huang, 2016:

⁵ E.g. Panama (Huang, 2016: 469), El Salvador, Honduras (Cole, 2013) São Tomé and Príncipe (Reuters, 2013)

471). This idea was based on five dimensions or actions that were to be taken in consequent order: consolidation of relations with diplomatic allies, intensification of substantial ties with relevant non-diplomatic allies, participation in functional international organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) and International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), promotion of cultural exchanges, and help in revitalising the economy. For Ma, the first dimension was extremely important for Taiwan to be recognised as a sovereign country. This is why the Ma administration prioritised building a multilayer web of exchanges and assistance programmes to support the allies, which was visible from its efforts such as institutionalised aid programmes and emphasis on human diplomacy. Secondly, the enhancement of substantial ties with major non-diplomatic allies, namely the well-developed Western countries, some South Asian countries, and Japan, contributed to Ma's overall strategy. Furthermore, the third dimension focusing on participation in international organisations was advanced carefully by Ma. He succeeded in including Taiwan in the Government Procurement Agreement of the WTO in July 2009, sending two former ROC vice presidents Lien Chan and Vincent Siew to serve as his representatives at all Leaders' Summits at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum during his administration, as well as including Taiwan with an observer status in 2009 to the World Health Assembly (WHA) as "Chinese Taipei." In contrast, the Ma administration failed again when resubmitting a new proposal for joining the UN in September 2008. The fourth dimension, cultural diplomacy and exchanges, was promoted by the Ma administration to make Taiwan and its soft power visible and appreciated internationally. Lastly, help in revitalising Taiwan's economy as the fifth dimension was attached particular importance due to the financial crisis of 2008, which was followed by the Ma administration's struggles of negotiations on free trade agreements within APEC and WTO, namely between the US-led Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the heavily China-influenced Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Ma sought to add new pacts to the existing five free trade agreements with Central American allies. He sought to sign the Agreement of the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu on Economic Cooperation with New Zealand (ANZTEC), and with Singapore (ASTEP), which were signed in 2013 (Huang, 2016: 471–476).

3.1.3 Tsai Ing-Wen Administration

As the first female president, Tsai Ing-wen, DPP, was elected in the sixth fully democratic national elections in Taiwan, which marked another milestone for democracy, as her election victory was achieved together with the DPP's first-time majority in the Legislative Yuan (deLisle & Dreyer, 2021: 1). In this sense, the Tsai administration marked the "most significant immediate impact on Taiwan's internal and external relations" (Istenič 2018: 165). At the same time, her administration pursued a foreign policy that did not break away completely from those of her predecessors. The alterations that were made by her presidency were related to the developments in the Taiwan Strait, US-China relations, as well as Taiwan's corresponding role in the triangle and globally in that period (Drun, 2022).

The Tsai administration emphasised the strengthening of relations with Taiwan's diplomatic allies, as well as other like-minded partners including the US, Japan, Canada and EU. Furthermore, the new administration developed a "New Southbound Policy" 新南向政策, which targets ten countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), six countries in South Asia, Australia and New Zealand. Significant effort has been put into promoting Taiwan's right to participate in international organisations, as well as promoting a world discourse that stresses the geopolitical, economic, technological and ideological significance of Taiwan, its sovereign existence, and especially the liberal-democratic aspect of Taiwan. Regarding the PRC, Taiwan has been pursuing a so-called "Steadfast Diplomacy" 踏實外交 (Leksyutina, 2022: S1369).

Regarding the US relations with Taiwan, the previous deterioration of bilateral relations turned into a more positive development, where Tsai's approach to mainland China has been compatible with the interests of the US. The US was also able to recognise Beijing's increasing pressure on Taiwan and was not swept by Beijing's argument that Taiwan's newly elected president was planning on changing the status quo. However, relations were not completely stable, which was mainly due to the US's internal political instability and the new Trump administration. Trump's mixed actions towards Taiwan and mainland China such as sending congratulations to Tsai upon her election in 2016 but then later suggesting that he would use Taiwan as leverage to extract a concession from China, made the Tsai administration concerned about the future of bilateral relations (Bush 2021: 29). The hardening US views towards mainland China continued from Trump to the Biden

administration and indicated a bipartisan consensus on the PRC. Deepened relations between the US and Taiwan were expressed through several high-level engagements ⁶ (Drun, 2022).

The new administration changed the previously established official terminology by abandoning the concept of dividing Taiwan's partners into "diplomatic allies" and "non-diplomatic allies." It replaced the latter with "like-minded countries," highlighting the positive aspects of the respective relationships. With these countries, Taiwan cannot engage on the highest levels of government, which gives even more weight to mutual exchanges of parliamentary delegations that have turned into a routine form of Taiwan's interactions with like-minded countries, including the US, the European Parliament, France, Japan, Germany, Poland, Czechia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Sweden (Leksyutina, 2022: S1370).

Taiwan's policies towards mainland China, on the other hand, have resulted in increased tensions between the PRC and ROC, which started not long after Tsai's inauguration with the freezing of official relations between the two sides. Furthermore, there was said to be a lot of Chinese meddling in elections by using troll armies and fake news to manipulate public opinion in Taiwan, as well as financing pro-China groups in Taiwan and occasionally triggering clashes with political opponents. The previously agreed rhetoric of *Taiwan and mainland China both being parts of China* has now been changed by Xi Jinping to *Taiwan being a part of China*. The PRC also started referring to forceful reunification in terms of military invasion again. Tsai did not continue the previous administration's adherence to the "1992 Consensus" 九二共識 or the "One China principle" 一个中国的原则. At the same time, Taiwan's "New Southbound Policy" was established not only to further reorient Taiwan's foreign policy away from China and to reduce Taiwan's economic dependence on China but also to develop close relations with ASEAN countries, South Asian countries, Australia and New Zealand, as well as to create and promote a new narrative, which would situate Taiwan as a part of Southeast Asia. This would further counter China's sovereignty claim (Schubert et al., 2022: 70–71).

One of the Tsai administration's key features for expanding ROC's international space was robust public diplomacy efforts, including the use of social media platforms. DPP has, even before the elections, been successful in building solid followings of domestic audiences on

⁶ E.g. high-level visits such as the one from the cabinet-level official Alex Azar in 2020, which became possible as a result of signing the Taiwan Travel Act in March 2018 (American Institute in Taiwan, 2020).

Facebook and Instagram, and foreign audiences on Twitter. As a part of its public diplomacy efforts, the utilisation of the internet and social media intensified after the outbreak of COVID-19, which resulted in an overall increase in online presence globally. In this regard, the Taipei government grasped this opportunity to further expand its international space, emphasise Taiwan's helpful role in fighting against authoritarianism, intensify its engagement with like-minded countries, and voice its support for Ukraine after Russia's invasion (Drun, 2022). Furthermore, the Tsai administration's strategy of preventing marginalisation in world politics was to strengthen Taiwan's visibility and voice by promoting interaction with foreign media so as to convey Taiwan's narrative to the foreign audience and build a positive international image of Taiwan (Leksyutina, 2022: S1370).

3.1 TAIWAN-EU RELATIONS

All EU members have established diplomatic relations with the PRC and have, thus, developed only non-official ties with Taiwan. From the EU's point of view, its ties with Taiwan are to be maintained and developed solely in the areas of economy and culture and should not, at any point, insinuate Taiwan's independence or statehood. Taiwan-EU relations are characterised or rather limited by the EU's agreement to the one-China Policy, which does not allow any official political ties with Taiwan. However, the EU and Taiwan were able to utilise the potential of economic and cultural exchanges, leading to the establishment of representative offices. EU's non-official relations with Taiwan based on economic and cultural ties are to be differentiated from the ones of Japan and the United States, which built substantial non-official relations with Taiwan already during the 1970s. Unlike them, the EU has developed strictly non-official ties from the onset of their relations, whereas Japan and the US simply continued their historically substantial ties with Taiwan but on a non-official level (Mengin, 2002: 136–140).

The Taipei government started developing a network of organisations that were staffed by personnel from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 中華民國外交部 and were paired with offices with more economic roles. Moreover, the Euro-Asia Trade Organisation or EATO was established in 1975 in order to promote and facilitate commercial and economic relations between Taiwan and Europe. At a bilateral level, Taiwan representative offices were established. Before the 1990s, the representative offices and their designations were not coherent. However, due to the pressure of Taipei officials, some European countries agreed to changes of names, which resulted in three almost standardised designations, namely

"Taipei Economic and Cultural Office" 臺北經濟文化辦事處, "Taipei Representative Office" 台北代表處, and "Taipei Mission" 台北代表團. The establishment of the representative offices is one of the most significant steps in upgrading relations between Taiwan and the EU, as it marks the institutionalisation of their relations (Mengin, 2002: 141–142).

The longstanding foundation of relations between Taiwan and the EU is provided by their economic relationship, which has endured even Europe's switch of official recognition to the PRC. The EU's trade with Taiwan exceeded the one with the PRC in the early 1990s, despite Deng Xiaoping's reforms in 1979. Compared to Taiwan's trade with the US and Japan, trade with Europe was considerably smaller, however, it kept growing continuously in the 1980s and 1990s. Due to the financial crisis in 2009 and the European debt crisis in 2013, trade between the EU and Taiwan sharply declined. Nevertheless, the EU remained Taiwan's fourth largest trading partner in goods, after the PRC, Japan, and the US. Regarding investment, while Taiwanese investments in the EU remained relatively low, the EU turned into the biggest investor in Taiwan in the year 2004 based on new investments. Additionally, it held 25% of Foreign Direct Investment stocks in Taiwan by the end of 2007. Since 1981, the EU and Taiwan have held annual consultations on all trade-related matters (Wacker, 2016: 522–523).

In 2008, the EU officially welcomed the results of the parliamentary and presidential elections, praising Ma Ying-jeou's inauguration speech. From the European perspective, Ma Ying-jeou's victory brought relief, since the previous cross-strait tensions seemed to have diminished, and the positive trend of cross-strait relations was to lead to greater stability. A similar reaction by the EU followed the victory of Ma Ying-jeou and his second term in 2012. Positive developments between the two sides of the Strait led to the continuation of Taiwan-EU relations, with some different attitudes between the EU member states' governments and the EU commission on one hand, and parliaments on the other hand. Parliaments continuously showed more support for Taiwan and more criticism of mainland China. Wacker (2016: 521) argues that this is due to parliament's emphasis on values such as human rights and democracy, and the government's decision-making primarily based on national interests. In this regard, the European Parliament has a unique role in EU-Taiwan relations and is regarded by the Taipei government as the pillar of Taiwan-EU relations and thus an important target to gather support. Between the years 2009 and 2015, the European

Parliament passed a total of 10 resolutions in favour of Taiwan, including the ones expressing support for Taiwan's accession to the International Civil Aviation Organisation or ICAO and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change or UNFCCC (Liu, 2017: 54). Regarding Taiwan's participation in international organisations, the EU institutions, besides the Parliament, remained cautious in expressing its support. A further step to deepening Taiwan-EU relations followed in 2011 when the first decision to grant visa-free travel for Taiwanese citizens in the EU was made (Wacker, 2016: 520–521). During Ma Ying-jeou's presidency, the EU and Taiwan signed 97 agreements and Memoranda of Understanding or MoU, varying across fields such as trade, technology, and education. Cultural exchanges and the mentioned visa-exemption programmes count as notable achievements that contributed to the enhancement of Taiwan's global presence and cooperation with EU member states. Moreover, the establishment of the European Union Centre in Taiwan 臺灣歐洲聯盟中心 resulted in increased academic and cultural exchanges, leading to greater participation of Taiwanese in EU research projects as well as enrolment of European students in Taiwanese universities (Liu, 2017: 54).

With Tsai's victory, the political basis changed, and the previously discussed "1992 Consensus" and "One China principle" were discontinued by the new administration. This decision led to a suspension of cross-strait interactions, which impacted Taiwan's diplomatic and economic strategies. Tsai reoriented her focus on a desire to strengthen ties with the EU as a part of a broader de-Sinicisation strategy. Her administration started highlighting shared values such as democracy and sought to build greater political trust with the EU, while at the same time expanding economic cooperation, particularly in high-tech sectors such as smart technology and renewable energy. In this aspect, the Taipei government actively pursued trade and investment agreements with the EU. Moreover, the Tsai administration started to organise various activities, such as the European Innovation Week 歐盟創新週, to promote Taiwan-EU relations and enhance economic cooperation (Liu, 2017: 54-58). A significant moment for Taiwan was an effective COVID-19 response, which confirmed Taiwan's reputation in the EU "as a well-governed place that can bring a lot to the international community and global cooperation, both in terms of health protection and economic partnership" (F. Grzegorzewski, EU representative to Taiwan and head of the EETO; cited in Uznańska, 2020). On one hand, the pandemic revealed the EU's heavy dependence on the PRC, particularly when it comes to medical supplies. On the other hand,

Tsai was presented with an opportunity to enhance cooperation with like-minded partners in the EU (Uznańska, 2020).

In summary, the two administrations had different approaches to relations with the EU, which were strongly based on its relations with Mainland China. While the Ma administration built a robust foundation of economic and cultural ties with the EU, the Tsai administration sought to deepen relations with the EU by emphasising shared values while also expanding economic cooperation.

3.3 TAIWAN'S NATIONAL IMAGE AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

In his research on Taiwan's public diplomacy, national image, soft power, and external communication efforts, Gary D. Rawnsley has extensively dealt with the mentioned aspects throughout the last couple of decades. What could be considered a re-evaluation of Taiwan's public diplomacy slightly departing from the argumentation of his previous papers, Gary D. Rawnsley acknowledges the growing capacity of Taiwan's public diplomacy in his recent text *Taiwan, Public Diplomacy, and the World Health Assembly* (2020: 6). Despite the growing capacity of public diplomacy, the strengthening of its security threat management, significant soft power, as well as active engagement in the international society, the Tsai administration is faced with growing challenges, including the turbulent relationship between the United States and the People's Republic of China, losing nine formal diplomatic allies since the beginning of the Tsai administration, and China's reactive strategy against Taiwan.

According to Rawnsley (2020: 6–7), public diplomacy presents three primary positive effects for Taiwan. Namely, it raises awareness and familiarity of Taiwan amongst the foreign public, contributes to a growing sympathy for Taiwan's inability to participate in international politics, as well as supports the Taipei government's general political objectives. Furthermore, Taiwan's public diplomacy can counteract the PRC's dominating narratives. He, however, also points out that while public diplomacy might be greatly beneficial to Taiwan, it will not cause immediate, great changes, such as gaining formal diplomatic allies or being readmitted to the United Nations. He emphasises the importance of the World Health Assembly for Taiwan as it opens up a discussion on Taiwan's contributions and commitment to global health and working together with the international community, as well as its exclusion despite its great contributions and efforts. Thus, Taiwan's engagement with

the World Health Assembly acts as an important channel of Taiwan's public diplomacy (Rawnsley, 2020: 8–9).

When it comes to promoting its image and nation branding, Pelaggi (2019: 60–61) recognises Taiwan's difficulties in presenting a unique and distinct image to the European public. He argues that emphasis on national image could be based on specific points of interest directed to different subjects. As confirmed by cultural diplomacy experts, such an approach could be the most suitable solution for Taiwanese external communication in Europe, namely an approach that emphasises Taiwan's cultural distinctiveness and spirit, as well as Taiwan's technological and economic achievements together with its Chinese culture as a mix of ancient and modern culture. In *Public Diplomacy as Taiwanese Diplomacy's Essential Tool* (2019), Rajczyk and Piechota (2019: 239) argue that Taiwan includes media to provide the information devoted to the narration of the history of Taiwan, which puts the shift from the authoritarian rule to representative democracy in the foreground. In other words, the Taipei government wants to depict itself as a modern economy with a stable and liberal democracy. They reference Pisarska (2016) and her description of Taiwanese public diplomacy as being of a constructive nature. In contrast to previously described Taiwan diplomacy before Tsai's presidency as “flexible” or “pragmatic,” Tsai's diplomacy is described as “steadfast” diplomacy, which targets building robust relations with diplomatic allies and countries that share common values of freedom and democracy, as well as improving economic position and international visibility (Rajczyk and Piechota, 2019: 239). According to Osorio's (2021) paper on Taiwan's foreign policy and diplomacy under Tsai Ing-wen's government, Taiwan's image building and external communication efforts have aimed to shape a positive perception of Taiwan that cannot only compete with but even conquer China's generous economic incentives to Taiwan's allies, snatching them from Taiwan, e.g. Kiribati and Solomon Islands in 2019. Taiwan considers itself a “responsible global citizen,” however, Osorio (2021) criticises this description and emphasises the discrepancy between Taiwan's image promotion efforts and the fact that the Taipei government continues to have diplomatic ties and even agreed to grant substantial financial aid to the governments accused of violating citizens' rights and freedoms, namely Haiti, Nicaragua, and Swaziland (Osorio, 2021: 73).

In contrast, the Ma administration had put a lot of effort into cultural diplomacy and exchanges, in order to make Taiwan and its soft power visible and appreciated internationally.

Taipei government relied on various programs such as the Taiwan Academy 臺灣書院, the Taiwan Scholarship/Fellowship 外交部臺灣獎學金, as well as the Huayu Scholarship 教育部華語文獎學金. The cultural diplomacy of Taiwan was less political and targeted the wider population rather than the political and economic elite of a specific country (Huang, 2016: 471–475). Another relevant research by Grazyna Piechota (2015) explores promoting Taiwan's image in the international arena prior to the Tsai administration. Piechota aims to find the elements shaping the image of Taiwan and to analyse the influence of Taiwanese identity formation, ongoing democratic processes in the country, and other underlying factors in the construction of its image. Her case study works on selected global TV channels and their broadcasted material on Taiwan in order to find out about Taiwan's international image. This image is shaped by the issues that these TV channels cover extensively and the meaning behind the frequency of covering certain events. Moreover, her research indicates that Taiwan's image before the Tsai administration is strongly connected with its international status and the ambitions or aims of the Taiwanese to make their political position comparable to their economic position in the world. A primary method of creating the image is using a lot of soft power, popularising knowledge about Taiwan, and increasing its recognisability. In order to achieve that, Taiwan started implementing programs as a part of its public diplomacy for people from abroad, such as YouthTaiwan 臺灣青年 Fun 眼世界 and Taiwan Fellowship Programme 外交部臺灣獎學金, which allowed foreigners to learn about Taiwan, its culture, and development. Lastly, Taiwanese identity plays an important role in Taiwan's image at home and abroad and has been shaped through different narratives based on different historical socio-political events, such as living through Japanese occupation and the Kuomintang regime. Since the end of the Kuomintang regime, the Taiwanese are building their own identity that is based on separating themselves from the mainland Chinese. In summary, important elements of Taiwanese identity and consequently Taiwan's image before the Tsai administration are progressive democratisation, keeping of Chinese cultural identity while emphasising its own political identity, and actions aimed at international recognition to gain participation in the international sphere (Piechota, 2015).

Some scholars have observed Taiwan's image building through tourism (Huang, 2017; Tsai, 2014). Huang Shuling analyses Taiwan's official tourism discourse from the early postwar period until the present. Her extensive research argues that tourism not only plays an

important role in a country's national image but is also one of the ideological state apparatuses that are even considered to practice plain nationalism in hidden form. Additionally, she argues that tourism not only reflects the indigenisation of the culture but even participates in it. Lastly, the national branding through tourism shows that the economic logic of the market has surpassed the cultural logic of the nation, which resulted in a new nation of Taiwan. Overall, her study shows that the main emphasis of the discourse has gradually shifted from "nation building" to "nation branding" and that the direction of Taiwanese tourism changed from "Sinicisation" to "localisation" (Huang, 2017). A different approach is taken by Tsai Chia-Chi (2014) who observes Taiwan's image in the new media field by taking the website of the Tourism Bureau of the Ministry of Communications as the focal point of her research. Tsai's research emphasises the importance of the promotion of national image or tourism through celebrities and provides an insight into Taiwan's image and self-positioning under Ma Ying-jeou's administration. Although a traditional newspaper would be considered old media, Tsai's research categorises the website as new media due to its nature of being distributed online and therefore being an internet-based media. The evolution of media not only changed the channels and speed of the information flow but also had an effect on many aspects of human life, two of the greatest being consumption and tourism. Tsai concludes that the construction of Taiwan's image under the Ma administration consists mainly of emphasis on food, the beauty of Taiwan, and the virtue of Taiwanese people. Additionally, the author states that under the Ma administration, the key tasks of the Tourism Bureau's external publicity were to make Taiwan attractive to tourists, thus inventing slogans such as "Time for Taiwan" 旅行台灣，就是現在 and promoting various touristic aspects such as food, beautiful scenery, and night markets. Another aspect of Tsai's research considers the theoretical basis of tourism spokespersons and how they affect tourist destinations, thus emphasising the importance of the promotion of national image or tourism through celebrities (Tsai, 2014).

3.3.1 Democracy and Human Rights in Connection to Taiwan's Soft Power

Many scholars (Wang & Lu, 2008; de Lisle, 2010; Rawnsley, 2014, 2017; F. Larus, 2008; Krumbein, 2019) agree that democracy and human rights are crucial for Taiwan's soft power. As Wang & Lu (2008) and Rawnsley (2017) note, these values strengthen its alliance with mature democracies and help distinguish Taiwan from mainland China. However, Rawnsley (2017) suggested that Taiwan's public diplomacy had been ineffective in increasing

familiarity with the island among foreign audiences, attributing this to both internal and external factors. Wang & Lu (2008) and deLisle (2010) agreed that democracy was crucial to Taiwan's soft power, but Rawnsley (2014) suggested that political polarisation between Taiwan's major parties presented limitations on coherent communication with international audiences.

Krumbein's (2019) research employs role theory to analyse Taiwan's foreign policy and international identity. His work focuses on the country's achievements in the fields of democracy and human rights, arguing that these accomplishments have a significant impact on how Taiwan sees itself and how it is perceived internationally. Krumbein states that while there has been previous research done on Taiwan's soft power, it failed to analyse in detail Taiwan's policies in the areas of democracy and human rights. He agrees about the importance of democracy and human rights for Taiwan's foreign policy and its external relations. He argues that the two values are part of Taiwan's identity and role as a country and society. He relies on the roles of normative power, civilian power, and Global Good Samaritan, to connect role theory with soft power. What might come as a surprise is Krumbein's argument that while the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirm that democracy and human rights are part of Taiwan's foreign policy values and objectives, their promotion by the Ministry still does not play an important role in Taiwan's foreign policy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which does not have a department specialising in human rights, focuses on relations with its diplomatic allies, and as a new priority, relations with the countries of the New Southbound Policy that in part have worse human rights records than Taiwan and are not democracies. In this aspect, Taiwan limits itself in trying to influence or criticise those countries. On the other hand, Krumbein (2019) also argues that democracy in Taiwan results in nearly universal international support and that democracy and human rights play an important role in Taiwan's external relations because Taiwanese citizens and the political elite view these values as part of Taiwan's national identity and international role. The author acknowledges that Taiwan is faced with constraints regarding its international status. Thus, it uses mostly non-official instruments to promote democracy and human rights abroad, such as the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, whose main purpose is to establish a relationship with the global civil society and consequently increase Taiwan's international status. In this aspect, Krumbein (2019) argues that Taiwan can be at least partly seen as a normative power in Asia due to its status as a role model for democracy and human rights. In other words, Krumbein states that Taiwan's

promotion of human rights abroad is limited. Additionally, Taiwan's most effective tool for promoting its democratic regime and human rights in the long term is its existence since it is considered the first and only Chinese democracy and acts not only as proof of the possibility of combining Chinese culture and democracy but also as an example for a transformation into a democracy (Krumbein, 2019).

Wang and Lu's (2008) research traced the first appearance of the term soft power in Taiwan's mass media back to 1992 (Wang & Lu, 2008: 426). According to their findings, Taiwanese discourse has defined soft power in broad terms, which is based on economic power, combined with education, as well as cultural and political factors. Besides democracy, which was recognised by most Taiwanese as the most valuable soft power asset of Taiwan, the discourse on soft power has been further characterised by culture and diplomacy. However, while there is a consensus on democracy amongst the Taiwanese, culture presents a greater obstacle to agreement on the island. While the DPP puts emphasis on embracing the Taiwanese and aboriginal culture and aims to distinguish its cultural and political identities from the ones of mainland China, the KMT makes efforts to characterise Taiwanese as traditional Chinese culture through various means, including promoting the use of traditional Chinese characters on the island, in order to compete with mainland China over cultural soft power. Another issue of Taiwan's discourse on soft power is diplomacy, more specifically public and multilateral diplomacy, which includes Taiwan's civil society, international aid, and regional cooperation (Wang & Lu, 2008: 432–433).

Gary Rawnsley's earlier (2014: 164) research argues that there are both internal and external factors that lead to Taiwan's inability to project and use soft power, with the main factors being the absence of formal diplomatic relations with major powers., exclusion from the most important international organisations, a challenged national identity, international news reporting on Taiwan mostly through specific negative frames, and political divide between the two parties that pursue different agendas. Furthermore, internal factors, including government bureaucracy and deficient external communication, contribute to Taiwan's soft power. In this aspect, Rawnsley claims that the government misunderstands soft power and how it works and thus cannot recognise the best strategy for Taiwan (Rawnsley, 2014: 166). Additionally, while democracy is Taiwan's strongest soft power asset, it is also the divide between the opposing parties that affects coherent communication with international audiences and thus Taiwan's soft power. Rawnsley's conclusion from 2017 is based on a

similar argumentation. While Taiwan's soft power was rich since Taiwan had adopted a rather liberal democratic political culture and could use it as leverage for conducting public diplomacy, the implementation of the latter was rather poor. Still, he thought that Taiwan was supposed to make a clear strategic turn from political warfare to public and cultural diplomacy in order to increase familiarity with Taiwan among the foreign public.

When it comes to gathering support from Taiwan's most important ally, the United States, as well as other democracies, deLisle (2010: 494) also claims that soft power is Taiwan's crucial tool. Previously, anticommunism and economic achievements were important aspects of Taiwan's soft power. Now, democracy is a crucial value for Taiwan's soft power, which can be observed through the efforts of all democratically elected presidents of Taiwan and their administrations to emphasise democratic values and Taiwan's achievements in this regard (deLisle, 2010: 512–519)

3.3.2 Internet and Social Media – Digital Diplomacy

With the rise of the internet and digitalisation, recent research on Taiwan's public diplomacy often focuses on Taiwan's digital diplomacy and the use of media. Rawnsley (2017: 988–990) argues that, besides the emphasis on cultural diplomacy, there was also an evident shift under the Ma administration to digital diplomacy. Internet- and dialogue-based platforms and social media have not only transformed the communication landscape but also had an impact on diplomacy in general (Rawnsley, 2017: 988–989).

Rajczyk and Piechota (2019: 247) regard digital diplomacy as the most effective one since the internet has become the main means of communication. In the case of Taiwan, the Tsai government is putting a lot of effort into digital diplomacy, as well as into the content that is being released through these information channels. This is seen as an effective tool for the government to promote political goals and enhance Taiwan's international visibility. The authors state that digital diplomacy can include various aspects, such as tourism or trade promotion. Besides employing digital diplomacy in order to strengthen its external communications and increase its international visibility, the Taipei government relies often on non-state actors, official development assistance, and humanitarian aid. Additionally, they argue that the government puts effort into shaping and framing Taiwan's image through the foreign audience by issuing online versions of various periodicals such as Taiwan Panorama 台灣光華雜誌, Taiwan Today 今日台灣, Republic of China Yearbook, Taiwan at a Glance.

These periodicals aim to inform governments or citizens publicly. They are delivered to readers in a few foreign languages, and their content covers the most important events in Taiwan in various fields, including politics, culture, sports, economy, society, and environment. As these periodicals are available online and for free, everybody can access them. In this regard, the wide use of the internet can be considered an effective method of promotion, and digital diplomacy efforts might be helpful in persuading international public opinion and consequently change the foreign government's policy towards the host of digital diplomacy (Rajczyk and Piechota, 2019).

One of the recent insights into Taiwan's digital diplomacy efforts has been discussed by Eva Ermylina in her research on The Strategy of Taiwan Digital Diplomacy Association (TDDA)⁷ for Taiwan's International Presence (2023). The paper discusses the non-governmental and non-profit Taiwan Digital Diplomacy Association and its objective to promote Taiwan in the international community by utilising digital platforms and social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The author states that TDDA is clearly taking a role as an actor of public diplomacy, despite its grassroots organisation. It is classified as a civil society organisation, with the primary objective to represent Taiwan's national interest as well as increase its visibility in the international sphere and its soft power. In this aspect, TDDA puts efforts into promoting democratic values, human rights, and the cultural diversity of Taiwan. According to Ermylina (2023), TDDA as the first civil society actor that takes part in Taiwan's diplomacy voluntarily, is said to play two roles. As an innovator, TDD formulates new ideas and innovative strategies to find new ways to implement the concept of diplomacy. Secondly, TDDA, as Taiwan's global existence advocator, works to emphasise social issues and build support for a cause. Additionally, the organisation can be considered a link between Taiwanese and foreign audiences, besides collaborating with government agencies, academic institutions, and private sector organisations. TDDA also has the flexibility and freedom to promote Taiwan and spread positive information without the pressure of the information becoming politically problematic in the context of the One China Policy. When it comes to TDDA's strategy, the organisation acts as a third sector of Taiwan's government and helps Taiwan clarify any blurred information about Taiwan, as well as reflect and emphasise its accomplishments and contributions to the world by actively updating its activity on social media, thus raising awareness of Taiwan's positive image internationally (Ermylina, 2023).

⁷ The Strategy of Taiwan Digital Diplomacy Association 台灣數位外交協會

An insightful and recent thesis regarding public diplomacy and the use of social media under Tsai Ing-wen was written by Kong Yan-rong (2022), whose research is based on content analysis of 407 tweets by Tsai Ing-wen that were posted on Twitter from March 26, 2020, to December 31, 2020, as well as in-depth interviews with the management team. Considering the rising trend of world leaders using Twitter as a form of diplomacy, Kong's thesis researches how Tsai Ing-wen engages in public diplomacy, namely how she presents various diplomatic issues, develops diplomatic relations, and employs Twitter to conduct public diplomacy. Results indicate that when comparing the number of national and regional relations that were established by Tsai Ing-wen's Twitter and the number of Taiwan's diplomatic relations, the former greatly exceeds the latter. Namely, Tsai Ing-wen's Twitter communication objective or aim did indeed break through the diplomatic relations restrictions but did not lead to crucial results. For example, despite great Twitter communications and relations with the worldwide community, it did not result in Taiwan's participation in international organisations, such as the World Health Organisation. In this aspect, despite its successes, Taiwan still has great diplomatic challenges. Additionally, the results show that out of Tsai's 407 tweets, 17.46% were about democracy, which demonstrates how democracy is the most important element of Taiwan's national image to the international community (Kong, 2022: 103–108).

3.3.3 Taiwan's Public Diplomacy and Channels and Institutions of External Communication

As mentioned previously, Taiwan's external communication and the role of media have been researched extensively by Gary D. Rawnsley (2000, 2003, 2017, 2000), who has, amongst others, examined the role of Taipei Representative Offices in Taiwan's external communication efforts. His research also highlighted the shift towards digital and cultural diplomacy, with an increased use of social media platforms to enhance Taiwan's visibility. His work from 2000 provides a historical perspective on Taiwan's media and propaganda and discusses the transformation of Taiwanese media from channels of Cold War propaganda to vibrant agencies for diplomatic communication and public relations. Rawnsley sees structural and cultural factors at play, which influence Taiwan's ability to project and use soft power, especially pointing out the deficient external communication by government bureaucracy. Communication strategies and external factors affecting Taiwan's soft power have also been examined in Rawnsley's 2017 work, which discusses these aspects,

highlighting issues such as political polarisation, contested national identity, and the challenges posed by the international news environment.

In the chapter Taiwan's International Media and Diplomacy, Rawnsley (2000: 106–134) argues that Taiwanese media have been transformed from mere channels of Cold War propaganda to vibrant agencies for diplomatic communication and public relations. In this aspect, the author emphasises that the media plays solely a complementary role to diplomatic communication and cannot replace it. In his earlier texts, he emphasises the importance of print media, however, the Government Information Office or GIO of the Executive Yuan 行政院新聞局, which was responsible for all international media until its dissolution in 2012, started experimenting with publishing journals and magazines on the internet. Rawnsley (2000: 113) observed that various periodicals were published by the GIO in different languages, including Spanish, English, and French, with the most widely read being the English-language *Free China Journal* and *Free China Review*. Therefore, Rawnsley (2000: 113–116) claims that it is rather clear that these periodicals functioned as agencies of Taipei's informal diplomacy. The employees of the publications are considered to have dual identities, i.e. the one of a civil servant, and the one of a journalist. They insist that they did not engage in propaganda and were working independently, with some exceptions of occasional suggestions for stories by the GIO. However, the author suggests that the situation had been quite different and more overtly based on propaganda, before the arrival of Dr Shaw Yu-ming 邵玉銘, a professor of international relations in 1987, who realised the importance of downplaying the propaganda in order to make external communication more credible and effective. Additionally, Dr Jiang Ping-lun 江炳倫, as the then editor-in-chief of the *Free China Review* 台灣評論, was said to have done a lot for the magazines to turn to objective reporting. Regarding the topics, Rawnsley (2000: 117) claims that the ways of reporting had undergone a notable transformation, which reflected the changes in ROC's domestic, as well as international affairs. For example, from being focused on the Cold War and going back to the mainland, to a clearer distinction between the ROC and PRC in the sense of juxtaposition of the positive and negative. The discussed periodicals targeted foreign media, government, international businessmen, academics, and libraries, thus placing readers in powerful positions as potential influencers of public opinion. Rawnsley discovered that these periodicals held a greater influence than one might think. For example, one edition of the academic journal *China Quarterly* published at the time included seventeen references to the

Free China Journal. Nevertheless, Rawnsley points out that although the periodicals put effort into presenting ROC-related news in a factual and objective way, this could not change the fact that they were part of the GIO and thus intended to promote ROC's diplomatic objectives (Rawnsley, 2000: 106–120).

The role of Taipei Representative Offices was briefly discussed by Rawnsley in his text on *Selling Democracy: Diplomacy, Propaganda and Democratisation in Taiwan* (2003). He mentioned diplomats' work at the Taipei Representative Offices as a part of Taiwan's external communication efforts. According to Rawnsley (2003: 5), these ROC diplomats insisted that they did not engage in propaganda but rather just provided information based on facts, while emphasising that the PRC, on the contrary, did engage in propaganda only. As an example of ROC external communication through its representative offices, Rawnsley mentioned the former head of the Taipei Representative Office in the United Kingdom, Dr Tien Hung-mao 田弘茂, who sought to strengthen communication with the British media and would engage in regular interviews with the BBC, the Daily Telegraph, and the Economist. By doing so, he would establish a crucial connection between Taiwan's horizontal network of communication and the one in the United Kingdom⁸ (Rawnsley, 2003: 11).

More than a decade later, Rawnsley (2017) continued his observation of Taiwan's external communication efforts, this time under the Ma Ying-jeou administration. Rawnsley conducted semi-structured anonymised interviews between 2011 and 2016 with the members of Taiwan's relevant ministries, which were based on the triangulation of international relations, international communications, and diplomacy. The results indicate that there was a shift towards digital diplomacy, as well as cultural diplomacy. Internet- and dialogue-based platforms and social media have not only transformed the communication landscape but also had an impact on diplomacy in general. Rawnsley points to the example of the Taipei Representative Office in the US, which maintained an active social media presence on Twitter and Facebook because officials realised the importance of increasing the visibility of Taiwan, especially since the news media coverage at the time focused mostly on China and not Taiwan.⁹ According to Rawnsley (2017: 982), there were two key decisions or

⁸ Additionally, Dr Tien would regularly attend functions organised by the British-Taiwan Parliamentary Group, the Foreign Office, Britain's major political parties, and universities where he would gain a direct opportunity to lobby (Rawnsley, 2003: 11).

⁹ At the same time, the Taipei Representative Office in the UK was noticeably absent from Twitter and Facebook until 2017 (Rawnsley, 2017: 982).

aspects to consider in this context. The GIO was dissolved and its responsibilities regarding international communication were transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the new Ministry of Culture. Priority was given to cultural themes in Taiwan's external communications and a downplaying of more political-oriented narratives occurred. Apart from this shift, Rawnsley suggested that the rather outdated structural and cultural arrangements within Taiwan's government bureaucracy of the time continued to have a detrimental effect on international communication (Rawnsley, 2017: 997).

With a similar argument, Pelaggi (2019) argues that Taiwan's structures for cultural promotion in Europe are ineffective. The author notes that the lack of social media presence of Taipei Representative Offices in Europe hinders their communication efforts. In this aspect, Pelaggi claims that the ineffective communication in Europe is a consequence of a lack of guidelines, as well as multiple changes in the fundamental principles and values as a subject of Taiwan's promotion. He mentions that at the time of writing none of the Taiwanese representations in Europe had a Twitter or Facebook account and that MOFA did not have a Twitter channel until 2018 (Pelaggi, 2019: 103). However, it is to note that, contrary to the author's claims about the missing accounts on social media, the general Representative Office in the EU and Belgium set up a Twitter account in late 2018,¹⁰ and Taipei representation in Sweden, for example, set up their Twitter account already in 2010.¹¹

Although with a slightly different emphasis, Martin Mandl (2021) is one of the first researchers to explore the newsletter issued by the Representative Offices in Europe, more specifically in German-speaking countries, as a form of external communication. His research is based on the concept of gastrodiploacy, as well as on the premise that Taiwanese food could help to define Taiwan's national identity abroad and at home, and thus considers gastrodiploacy as an important factor in Taiwan's national identity-building. Furthermore, Mandl recognises the fact that even without being official diplomatic structures, Taipei Representative Offices act as de facto embassies and therefore function as important agents in shaping Taiwan's image abroad. Analysing the representation of food in the newsletter, Mandl seeks to identify the official gastrodiploacy efforts of the Taipei government via the Berlin, Bern and Vienna Representative Offices. He identified Taiwan's efforts to localise

¹⁰ Taipei Representative Office in Belgium and the EU. (December 2018). X/Twitter. Retrieved September 5, 2024, from <https://x.com/TaiwanEU>

¹¹ Taipei Mission in Sweden. (April 2010). X/Twitter. Retrieved September 5, 2024, from <https://x.com/TaiwanInSweden>

and indigenise its food, claiming that a blend of former Chinese and Japanese influences and its own indigenous food culture makes Taiwanese cuisine authentic. Mandl argues that this should be considered as an attempt to symbolise and build Taiwan's national identity and independence. The connection established between the cuisine and Taiwanese identity provides a useful insight into Taiwan's public diplomacy, its building of national identity and its efforts to distinguish itself from others (Mandl, 2021: 78–79).

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

Taiwan Newsletter July 2012–May 2020

As discussed previously, Taiwan's public diplomacy has been implemented by the government as an essential tool for supporting its foreign relations. To increase its visibility, the Taipei government is relying on the Taipei Representative Offices in various EU countries as its main channels of communication and influence in the EU, the main one being the Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium 駐歐盟兼駐比利時代表處 in Brussels. Part of the communication of the Representative Offices is aimed at foreign governments, while other parts are directed at foreign publics directly, which helps with building the image of Taiwan and increasing its visibility and soft power in Europe.

4.1 PRIMARY SOURCE AND SCOPE OF RESEARCH

4.1.1 The Taiwan Newsletter

Since the Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium is considered to be the one communicating most actively through their periodical English-language newsletter Taiwan Newsletter 新聞信, this newsletter is chosen to identify and discuss the changes in contents of public diplomacy communication in relation to the change from a KMT to a DPP administration in 2016. The Taiwan Newsletter is published by the Press and Information Division of the Representative Office and can be found in written text form online via the official website of the Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium¹². When it comes to publishing the Taiwan Newsletter, the Press and Information Division selects the most

¹² Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium 駐歐盟兼駐比利時代表. Press and Information Division. (2012–2020). *Taiwan Newsletter*. Last accessed September 5, 2024, from https://www.taiwanembassy.org/be_en/cat/8.html

interesting stories or important news related to Taiwan and the European Union, resulting in a weekly one-page Taiwan Newsletter including four articles on average. In this aspect, they select the stories with the aim of informing Europeans about the development of Taiwan-EU relations as well as the activities of the Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium. In order to reach the utmost number of interested readers, the Taiwan Newsletter is, besides being published on their website, also sent out by email to all of their subscribers and made available in print at their office.¹³ The Newsletter is being published in the English language, increasing the size of the target audience. In this regard, one can consider the Taiwan Newsletter as “an insightful window into how authorities represent Taiwan — or want it to be represented — in the wider world” (Mandl, 2019: 68).

In order to compare the Taiwan Newsletter communication with the foreign publics and governments of both presidencies, the analysis comprises Newsletters published in the second term of Ma Ying-jeou’s presidency (2012–2016) and the first term of Tsai Ing-wen’s presidency (2016–2020). In this period, there were in total of 350 Newsletters published, 161 during the Ma administration, and 189 during the Tsai administration. While the reason behind the quantitative discrepancy might be the fact that Ma Ying-jeou’s presidency began earlier (May 20, 2012) than the first Newsletter published (July 23, 2012, see Appendix A), it does not provide sufficient explanation as to why the discrepancy is as large as it is. This is interesting to note, especially if one looks at the frequency of the Newsletter from the perspective of the intensification of communication efforts by the Taipei government during the Tsai Ing-wen presidency.

Besides the four or more articles, the Newsletter also contains visual elements such as pictures mostly taken during significant events and meetings that, however, will not be taken into consideration during this analysis that will work on written text only.

Banners, which can be found at the top of the page and include the name Taiwan Newsletter, underwent four changes during the period of investigation. No change was made during the Ma administration when the banner included the Taiwanese and the European flags on each end of the banner, and images of various landmarks of both Taipei and Brussels, including Taipei 101, the Atomium, and the Manneken Pis (see Appendix A). The design of the banner

¹³ Information based on electronic correspondence with the Press and Information Division of the Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium, November 2023

underwent its first change during Tsai's first term on April 3, 2017 (see Appendix B). More simplistic than the previous one, the banner included the name and landmarks of only Taiwan and not Belgium or the EU. The third change of the banner occurred on November 9, 2018 (see Appendix C), which did not include any of the previously mentioned elements, except for the name. The banner was reformatted as a picture of a green landscape, which cannot be particularly attributed to any specific country. A further change of the banner that occurred on October 25, 2019 (see Appendix D) resulted in a similar design, this time with what appears to be a hazy picture of Taiwan's seaside in the form of a paint splotch and the name written on top of it. After the additional and final change on April 24, 2020, the last version of the banner (see Appendix E), which has stayed the same since then until the time of writing, includes the name on top of the nighttime pictures of Taipei 101 with the fireworks as well as the Rainbow Bridge.¹⁴

Previously, the Newsletter had been subdivided into categories such as Headline News, International (News), EU-Taiwan Relations, Miscellaneous, and Cross-trait Relations.¹⁵ However, from October 25, 2019, the categories were omitted, and the Newsletters were solely structured by the headlines or titles of the articles.

4.1.2 Sampling

For reasons of representativity and efficiency, every second Taiwan Newsletter issued in these two periods was coded, i.e. approximately two per month. However, there are slight limitations in terms of the quantitative comparability of the two presidencies. Since the publishing of the Newsletter began only in July 2012, and some of the Newsletters of the Ma presidency are not accessible via the link indicated above, the sample of units analysed for the second Ma presidency is smaller than the one for the first Tsai presidency. To solve the issue and keep results comparable, the frequency of codes will be presented in percentages. In total, from July 2012 (the first Newsletter published) to May 2020 (the end of Tsai Ing-wen's first term), there were 174 Taiwan Newsletters coded, with each containing four articles on average. 80 Newsletters of the Ma era were coded, which made 307 single

¹⁴ Interestingly, the decision to include the Rainbow Bridge as a part of the banner followed the legalisation of same-sex marriage in Taiwan in 2019, especially since the bridge itself was constructed in 2007. Although there is no explicit connection to the LGBTQ community and the bridge itself is predominantly red and not in rainbow colours, there are multiple pictures online of the bridge and a sculpture of the word love in rainbow colours in front of it.

¹⁵ The latter was present as a category only in the Newsletters published during Ma's presidency.

articles or evaluation units, and 94 Newsletters were coded from the Tsai era, which resulted in 367 articles or evaluation units. This analysis considers the single articles as evaluation units to keep a better thematic overview of them.

4.2 MIXED METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

To examine the changes in Taiwan's public diplomacy in the EU via the Taiwan Newsletter, the paper uses qualitative content analysis based on Kuckartz (2019) as an established methodological approach for this type of research. It intends to categorise a defined amount of text with the aim to recognise and describe qualitative and quantitative patterns in order to identify the respective differences between the two periods or presidencies. The results will be presented in the form of an elaborated category system, code frequencies, and qualitative descriptions of the relevant subcodes, thus adopting a mixed methodological approach that will present findings in both quantitative and qualitative forms. Program MAXQDA was used in the process of coding to keep a better overview of the codes and subcodes, as well as the coded units.

Categories, as described by Kuckartz, are a “commonality between certain things: a term, a heading, a label that designates something similar under certain aspects” (Kuckartz, 2019: 184). Seven thematic categories were established beforehand according to changes in public diplomacy related to the change of presidency as identified by secondary literature. The Newsletter articles, which were chosen as the evaluation or coding units, were assigned to these categories. Based on that, category descriptions were adjusted or refined, subcategories and new categories were established where applicable or necessary. Moreover, the units were coded with two different types of subcodes: thematic and evaluative subcodes. As evident in later chapters, evaluative subcodes could be applied only to two categories: Cross-strait relations and Mainland China, and Bilateral foreign relations of Taiwan. This is due to the reason that under all other categories, there were no evaluative aspects to be identified.

In total, 674 articles were analysed, which resulted in 1097 non-evaluative or thematic codes and 238 evaluative codes. There were 450 non-evaluative and 106 evaluative codes identified in Ma administration Newsletters and 647 non-evaluative and 129 evaluative codes in Tsai administration Newsletters. All articles were coded, except for the articles that included practical information e.g. for Mandarin courses, future events, and related

invitations. These articles, although they could be considered as a part of Taiwan's general public diplomacy in the EU, do not seem representative specifically of Taiwan's external communication efforts as a part of its public diplomacy in the EU. Additionally, coding these articles might lead to false representation of codes, as some of these events, of which invitation was included under the practical information, would be reported on in later articles, resulting in over-coded units of the same situation. In this aspect, these articles are not intentionally chosen by the Press and Information Division to build the image of Taiwan through external communication but serve rather as practical information and additional support to Taiwan's other public diplomacy efforts in the EU. Lastly, the complexity of the articles and communication efforts resulted in some articles being double-coded and assigned to more than one category. While this method is not a part of Kuckartz's method of coding, it is necessary in this case and can be justified with the aim to ensure that the depth of the data translates into final results.

4.3 MAIN CATEGORY DEFINITIONS

This chapter discusses the seven main categories, which were established based on secondary literature as a part of the deductive first step of the analysis. Their definitions were redefined through the coding process.

Category *EU-Taiwan relations* includes all articles that are related to relations between the European Union, its individual member states, and Taiwan. The category includes different aspects of EU-Taiwan relations, such as articles reporting on high-level engagements, various types of events in the EU or Taiwan, and different forms of cooperation between the two sides, including the signing of agreements or Memoranda of Understanding (MoU). The category does not only include articles reporting on the interaction between the EU and Taiwan but also all articles in which the EU and Taiwan are mentioned by the respective other either in official statements or reports, or expressions of support in other forms. All articles in this category present EU-Taiwan relations in a positive way. Due to Brexit, all articles mentioning the UK and its relations with Taiwan are included in this category only until January 31, 2020. Afterwards, they are included in the category *Bilateral foreign relations of Taiwan*.

The category *Taiwan in the international community* includes all articles that discuss Taiwan as a part of the international community, by either referring to Taiwan's participation in

international organisations, Taiwan's international status, Taiwan in world rankings, or international events that take place in Taiwan. This category includes articles that do not mention any bilateral relations of Taiwan with other countries or organisations and focus on the multilateral aspect of Taiwan's foreign relations. Besides the mentioned aspects of the category, articles reporting on any country that expresses support or calls for Taiwan's participation in international organisations are also included, since they refer to Taiwan as a responsible member of the international community. There are no evaluative codes in this category, as all articles focus on positive aspects of Taiwan's participation in the global community.

The category *Bilateral foreign relations of Taiwan* includes articles that report on Taiwan's bilateral engagements with other parties besides the EU and Mainland China, for example, Taiwan's foreign relations with the US, Japan, Pacific Islands, Southeast Asian countries, and Central American countries. While the focus is on the bilateral foreign relations of Taiwan, there are some articles included in this category that include multilateral engagement, for example, an article from June 21, 2019¹⁶, reporting on Taiwan-US-Japan trilateral cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. However, cases like this do not refer to Taiwan as a part of or participating in the international community, thus they are better represented in this category. This category includes evaluative sub-codes, as the articles do not always report positively on Taiwan's foreign relations.

The category *Taiwan's domestic affairs* includes all articles that focus on domestic affairs in Taiwan and do not provide any information on connections to other countries, organisations, or the international community. International events taking place in Taiwan are not included in this category but rather in the category *Taiwan in the international community*, since these articles present Taiwan as a member of a global community and thus its international status. Articles in this category mostly include official statements or speeches such as the National Day Addresses by the President, events in Taiwan, government-related activities such as a change of officials in government posts, various internal developments, and incidents such as natural disasters or other crises. Despite some negative news like natural disasters, the category does not include evaluative codes, since even the negative news presents Taiwan in a positive light. For example, in the case of natural disasters, Taiwan authorities are being praised for quick and efficient handling of the situation.

¹⁶ "President Tsai seeks expanded Taiwan-US-Japan cooperation in Indo-Pacific" (June 21, 2019)

Category *Cross-strait relations and Mainland China* includes articles reporting on relations between Taiwan and Mainland China. These articles do not always report on direct engagement between the two sides but also include any statements on or mention of Cross-strait relations or Mainland China by any party, including the EU, US, or the international community. This category includes evaluative codes since the secondary literature suggests a significant difference in Taiwan's relations with Mainland China between the two presidencies.

Category *Human Rights* includes articles that report on Taiwan's achievements and developments regarding various human rights issues, for example, women and gender equality, press freedom or journalism, indigenous people, and LGBTQ. In addition to the mentioned aspects of human rights, the category includes articles that do not refer to specific aspects of human rights but rather discuss human rights in general and emphasise them as an important value of Taiwan, which Taiwan also shares with like-minded partners.

The category *Democracy* includes articles mentioning Taiwan's democracy and emphasising it as a significant part of Taiwan's development and achievements as well as an important value that Taiwan shares with like-minded partners. Thus, this category also includes articles reporting on, for example, statements mentioning democracy and contrasting Taiwan's democracy to Mainland China's political system.

4.4 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

This chapter first presents results in the form of statistical data to get an overview of the main categories, subcodes, and their frequencies. As mentioned previously, the emphasis is put on the percentage value since the sample sizes under the two presidencies were not the same.

There are in total 1335 codes, 1097 thematic and 238 evaluative. There are 450 thematic and 106 evaluative codes in Ma Newsletters and 647 non-evaluative and 129 evaluative codes in Tsai Newsletters.

Table 1 compares the frequencies of the main thematic categories under both presidencies.

Furthermore, the results of the individual categories and their most significant subcodes, as evident in **Tables 2 to 8** (see Appendix F), will be first presented in statistical form. Statistical descriptions will be followed by definitions and examples of the significant subcodes, providing relevant information on the qualitative aspect of the results. Subcodes that account for less than 10% of the added value under both presidencies will be left out in the description part since they cannot be considered relevant enough to make an impact. Statistically, these subcodes will be considered as *other* since their omission would result in statistical bias.

Lastly, the statistics of double codes will be presented in **Table 9**.

4.4.1 COMPARISON OF MAIN CATEGORIES BASED ON THEMATIC CODES

Table 1

Overview of main categories based on thematic codes

Category	Ma Ying-jeou		Tsai Ing-wen		TOTAL Both presidencies
	Nr. of Codes	Percentage	Nr. of Codes	Percentage	
EU-TAIWAN RELATIONS	171	38%	94	15%	265
TAIWAN IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY	67	15%	176	27%	243
BILATERAL FOREIGN RELATIONS OF TAIWAN	64	14%	150	23%	214
TAIWAN'S DOMESTIC AFFAIRS	61	14%	110	17%	171
CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS AND MAINLAND CHINA	60	13%	40	6%	100
HUMAN RIGHTS	16	4%	37	6%	53
DEMOCRACY	11	2%	40	6%	51
TOTAL Nr. of codes	450	100%	647	100%	1097
Nr. of articles	307		367		674

Looking at the percentage value of categories for both presidencies, the most notable difference is the one between the frequencies of articles related to *EU-Taiwan relations*, which accounts for 23%. During Ma's second presidency, EU-Taiwan relations articles account for 38% of coded articles, while the same category takes up only 15% during Tsai's first presidency. The second biggest difference is evident in the category *Taiwan in the*

international community, where the difference is 12%, as 15% of total units were assigned to this category during the second Ma administration and 27% during the first Tsai administration. Moreover, the category of *Cross-strait relations and Mainland China* takes up 13% of articles during Ma's presidency and only 6% of articles during Tsai's presidency, resulting in a 7% difference. When it comes to *Bilateral foreign relations of Taiwan*, there is a 9% difference due to Ma's 14% and Tsai's 23% of coded units. A mere 3% difference is evident in the category *Taiwan's domestic affairs*, to which under Ma's presidency, 14% of the coded units and under Tsai's presidency, 17% belong. Lastly, the categories *Human rights* and *Democracy* overall account for the lowest percentages under both presidencies. Under Ma, the two categories account for 4% and 2%, respectively. Under Tsai, they account for 6% and 6%, respectively. Thus, there is a 2% difference in the *Human rights* category and a 4% difference for *Democracy*-related articles.

4.4.2 OVERVIEW OF SUBCODES ASSIGNED TO MAIN CATEGORIES

4.4.2.1 EU-TAIWAN RELATIONS

As mentioned previously, while this category takes up a relatively high percentage of units coded under Ma's presidency, it accounts for only around a quarter of units coded under Tsai's presidency. Looking at the subcodes in this category, the most evident differences in percentages are those for the subcodes *events* and *high-level engagement*. The former results in 15 %, the subcode taking up 39% of the category under Ma's presidency, and 24% of the category under Tsai's presidency. The latter subcode results in a 10% difference between the presidencies, as it accounts for 18% of EU-Taiwan relations under Ma and 28% under Tsai. Other significant subcodes include *education and research* (14% under Ma, 10% under Tsai), *statements* (10% under Ma, 14% under Tsai), *agreements* (8% under Ma, 8% under Tsai), and *economy* (5% under Ma, 11% under Tsai). 11% of subcodes under Ma and 16% of subcodes under Tsai are categorised as *other*.

The subcode *events* was assigned to articles that report on various types of events or activities, such as festivals, concerts, competitions, and prize ceremonies, that Taiwan participated in or co-organised with the EU and its member states, either taking place in Taiwan or the EU member states. The subcode mostly refers to non-political and people-level engagements between the EU and Taiwan, despite high-level officials participating in these events. Some

examples of these articles include: *“Taiwan Stand opens at Brussels Comics Festival”* (September 10, 2013), *“Taiwan wins silver medal at Ghent flower exhibition”* (April 25, 2016), *“Taiwan cinema in the spotlight in Berlin”* (February 13, 2017), and *“TRO [Taipei Representative Office] celebrates Lunar New Year with compatriots in Luxembourg”* (March 2, 2015).

As the second most assigned subcode, *high-level engagement* refers to articles that report on visits or other types of high-level engagement between Taiwan and the EU, including specialised delegations of different sectors, different types of high-level dialogue or consultations, and parliamentary visits. The code does not include any high-level representatives attending events, as those articles are included in the subcode *events*. Examples of this subcode include: *“President Ma receives Belgian parliamentary delegation”* (January 13, 2014), *“Taiwan and the European Union hold 2nd Human Rights Consultations”* (May 24, 2019), *“Taiwan-EU Labor Consultation staged in Taipei”* (May 10, 2019), and *“President Ma receives Italian delegation”* (November 25, 2013).

The subcode *education and research* includes all articles reporting on cooperation in the research and education sector including university exchanges, education fairs, as well as Chinese language learning that is targeted towards the EU member states, for example: *“TRO sends off 2017 scholarship recipients”* (August 17, 2017), *“Taiwan Spotlight at Ghent University”* (October 10, 2016), *“Educational exchange between Belgian and Taiwan High Schools”* (July 23, 2012), and *“Second TOCFL test in The Hague a great success”* (June 24, 2013).

The subcode *statements* refers to articles that report on various statements by the EU or Taiwan regarding the respective other, thus focusing on non-direct engagement. It includes various types of statements, such as congratulatory remarks, expressions of support, interviews, as well as mentions in resolutions and reports. These articles mostly report on the EU’s praise, support, and expression of gratitude towards Taiwan. Some examples of the subcode include: *“European Parliament praises Taiwan’s commitment to peace and stability”* (September 24, 2012), *“EU welcomes Taiwan’s humanitarian aid to the Western Sahara”* (April 1, 2013), *“Taiwan-EU relations report highlights flourishing economic ties”* (July 19, 2019), and *“MOFA thanks British-Taiwanese All-Party Parliamentary Group for support”* (January 18, 2019).

The subcode *agreements* was assigned to articles reporting on various types of cooperation between the EU and Taiwan, which are not limited to agreements, deals, and pacts that have been signed. Articles that mention prospects of signing an agreement have also been assigned to this subcode; for instance, the article “*President Ma calls for economic cooperation pact with EU*” (January 14, 2013). Other examples include: “*Taiwan-Belgium working holiday program set to begin*” (March 18, 2013), “*Taiwan, Europe team up on cloud certification system*” (September 29, 2014), “*Taiwan, Italy announce e-gate deal*” (September 27, 2019), and “*Taiwan signs scholarship MoU with KU Leuven*” (August 29, 2016).

Another significant subcode was assigned to all articles that refer to the *economic* aspect of Taiwan-EU relations. These articles often overlap with the articles assigned to other significant subcodes; for instance, articles reporting on economic cooperation through high-level engagement, statements, or agreements. Some examples include: “*Tsai calls for Taiwan-EU bilateral investment agreement*” (August 17, 2018), “*Trade delegation visits Luxembourg and Belgium*” (December 5, 2016), “*Taiwan's investment in EU hits record high in 2014*” (July 20, 2015), and “*Taiwan given EU seal of approval on tax*” (March 15, 2019).

4.4.2.2 TAIWAN IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Regarding the category *Taiwan in the international community*, most coded units were assigned to the following subcodes: *economy* (28% under Ma, 10% under Tsai), *culture* (15% under Ma, 23% under Tsai), *participation in international organisations* (10% under Ma, 23% under Tsai), *health* (7% under Ma, 14% under Tsai), *technology* (12% under Ma, 7% under Tsai), and *historical events* (10% under Ma, 0% under Tsai). Other non-significant subcodes, which are designated as *other*, account for 18% under Ma and 25% under Tsai.

Regarding the individual subcodes, the most assigned one, *economy*, refers to the economic aspect of Taiwan as a part of the international community. The subcode includes articles that report on Taiwan's international status in connection to its economy and trade achievements, and Taiwan's participation in organisations such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) or Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and international economic events taking place in Taiwan. Examples of such articles include: “*Taiwan prepares for APEC 2013*” (October 9, 2013), “*Taiwan's top digital content trade show concluded in Taipei*” (July 19,

2019), “*Taiwan joins WTO deal to cut tariffs on IT products*” (August 3, 2015), and “*Taiwan’s strong trade growth achieved for 2017*” (January 12, 2018).

Secondly, subcode *culture* refers to international non-political activities, for example, in connection to tourism, sports, and other cultural activities. These articles refer to international events taking place in Taiwan, Taiwan’s achievements in international competitions, and Taiwan’s international ranking in connection to the mentioned aspects. Although sports could be considered separately from culture, it is often a part of culture or at least closely intertwined with it. Since this subcode mostly refers to international non-political events or competitions, sports can be considered as a part of this subcode. Some examples of the articles assigned with this subcode are: “*Taiwan named top travel destination by The New York Times*” (January 27, 2014), “*Taipei Universiade concludes in great success*” (August 31, 2017), “*Taiwan human rights film festival to screen 11 works from home and abroad*” (August 30, 2019), and “*Taiwan welcomes 9 millionth foreign visitor*” (December 8, 2014).

The subcode *participation in international organisations* was assigned to articles that report on any calls or expressions of support by the international community, including the EU, or Taiwan itself for Taiwan’s participation in international organisations, including Taiwan’s calls for support regarding the PRC’s coercion in international organisations or to stop discriminatory exclusion from the international organisations. Additionally, the subcodes include articles that praise Taiwan’s meaningful participation in the international community and thus present Taiwan as an important member of the international community. Examples of the subcodes include the following articles: “*International Community called on to support Taiwan’s Meaningful Participation in ICAO*” (September 26, 2016), “*MEPs [members of the European Parliament] voice support for Taiwan’s ICAO observer bid*” (July 15, 2013), “*UN children’s rights convention implemented in Taiwan*” (November 24, 2014), and “*MOFA protests China’s efforts to force IATA, member airlines into changing Taiwan’s designation*” (June 1, 2018).

The subcode *health* refer to articles that focus on Taiwan’s participation in the international community in connection to health, including participation in the World Health Assembly (WHA) and Taiwan’s effective COVID-19 response, thus presenting Taiwan as a responsible member of the international community and important partner for cooperation. Additionally, this subcode includes articles reporting on Taiwan’s humanitarian aid, praising Taiwan and

presenting it as a major humanitarian provider in the international community. The inclusion of humanitarian aid under this subcode is due to health being a core sector of humanitarian assistance and a reliable measurement of its impact. Some examples include: “*Taiwan’s Minister of Health in World Health Assembly Again*” (May 28, 2013), “*ROC Health Minister meets US Health Secretary at WHA in Geneva*” (May 26, 2014), “*Taiwan’s efforts combating COVID-19 earn international praise*” (March 13 2020), and “*Taiwan tightens border inspections against African can swine fever*” (January 18, 2019).

The subcode *technology* was assigned to all technology-related articles, reporting on Taiwan’s participation, its achievements in technology and innovation, and its status in the international community in connection to technological sectors. Examples of this subcode include: “*HTC unveils new flagship phone*” (March 31, 2014), “*International 5G Summit held in Taipei*” (September 28, 2015), “*Taiwan remains the world’s largest IC [integrated circuit] materials buyer*” (April 10, 2017), and “*President Tsai envisions Taiwan’s digital future at WCIT [World Congress on Information Technology] opening*” (September 15, 2017).

The last significant subcode *historical events* includes articles that report on activities related to historical events or treaties in connection to the international community or international organisations, thus presenting Taiwan’s achievements through history. Some examples include: “*70th anniversary of Cairo Declaration celebrated*” (December 2, 2013), “*ROC holds military parade to commemorate end of Second Sino-Japanese War*” (July 6, 2015), and “*Foreign scholars laud President Ma’s speech at WWII anniversary event*” (July 13, 2015).

4.4.2.3 BILATERAL FOREIGN RELATIONS OF TAIWAN

Concerning evaluative aspects of the category *Bilateral foreign relations of Taiwan*, 85% of the units under Ma’s presidency were coded with *positive* and 15% with *negative*. Similarly, the coded evaluative units under Tsai’s presidency were 97% coded with *positive* and only 3% coded with *negative*.

The evaluative subcodes *positive* and *negative* include articles that present Taiwan’s bilateral relations with other countries or the country itself positively or negatively. Some of the thematic subcodes, such as *agreements*, overlap with the subcode *positive* due to their

inherent connotation of improved bilateral ties between Taiwan and other countries. In contrast, subcodes such as *territorial claims* inherently mean conflict or deterioration of bilateral ties and are thus considered under the subcode *negative*. Some examples of the evaluative code *positive* are: “*Foreign minister hopeful on resuming fishing talks with Japan*” (October 15, 2012), and “*Tsai pledges to deepen ties with Japan*” (15 November 2019), whereas some examples of the evaluative code *negative* are: “*Taiwan and The Gambia terminate diplomatic ties*” (November 25, 2013), and “*ROC rejects South China Sea arbitration award*” (July 18, 2016).

Thematically, coded units were assigned to the subcodes in the following order: *agreements* (35% under Ma, 20% under Tsai), *high-level engagement* (28% under Ma, 25% under Tsai), *US* (14% under Ma, 31% under Tsai), *statements* (9% under Ma, 15% under Tsai), *territorial claims* (14% under Ma, 1% under Tsai), and *New Southbound Policy* (0% under Ma, 8% under Tsai). This category does not include any subcodes under *other*, as there is only one subcode with a lower added value of 10%.

The subcode *agreements* includes articles reporting on various types of cooperation between Taiwan and other countries, excluding the EU member states. For instance, the articles include reporting on agreements, deals, Memoranda of Understanding, and foreign aid. Some examples of this subcode include: “*Taiwan and New Zealand ink economic agreement*” (July 15, 2013), “*St. Lucia planning to set up embassy in the ROC*” (February 16, 2015), “*Taiwan government partners with Microsoft in AI development*” (December 8, 2017), and “*Cultural treasures going to Japan*” (June 23, 2014).

The subcode *high-level engagement* refers to articles that report on visits or other types of direct high-level engagement between Taiwan and other countries, excluding the EU member states. The subcode includes articles reporting on conferences, forums, or other types of dialogues. Examples of this subcode are: “*Haitian President pays state visit to Taiwan*” (April 28, 2014), “*ROC President Ma visits Central American allies*” (July 7, 2014), “*Economic mission to Malaysia, Indonesia bears fruit*” (November 7, 2016), and “*President Tsai to visit Palau, Nauru and Marshall Islands*” (March 15, 2019).

The subcode *US* includes articles reporting on bilateral ties between Taiwan and the US, including high-level engagement, cooperation, statements regarding respective other, and other interactions. The subcode covers articles such as: “*Visa waiver seen as milestone in*

Taiwan-US relations” (October 29, 2012), “*Obama praises Taiwan for its nuclear non-proliferation*” (January 13, 2014), “*President Tsai engages with US President-elect Donald J. Trump*” (December 5, 2016), and “*Taiwan makes US\$1 million commitment to US State Department’s International Religious Freedom Fund*” (March 15, 2019).

The subcode *statements* was assigned to articles that report on various statements by other countries or Taiwan regarding the respective other, thus focusing on non-direct engagement. It includes various types of statements, including congratulatory remarks, expressions of support, interviews, as well as mentions in resolutions and reports. Some examples of this subcode include: “*East China Sea Peace Initiative lauded by US official*” (February 17, 2014), “*EU and US welcome Wang-Zhang meeting*” (February 17, 2014), “*MOFA thanks US Congress for passing legislation backing Taiwan*” (December 21, 2018), and “*ROC President Tsai responds to pope’s World Day of Peace message*” (January 30, 2017).

Lastly, the subcode *territorial claims* was assigned to articles that focus on territorial disputes between Taiwan and other countries, mostly referring to maritime conflicts, for example: “*Taiwan reiterates sovereignty over Diaoyutais*” (November 12, 2012), “*President Ma reaffirms efforts to protect fishermen*” (June 12, 2013), “*ROC government steadfast on Taiping Island scientific research*” (August 1, 2016), and “*ROC rejects South China Sea arbitration award*” (July 18, 2016).

4.4.2.4 CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS AND MAINLAND CHINA

In the category *Cross-strait relations and Mainland China*, there are notable differences between the evaluative units coded with *positive* and *negative* under both presidencies. Units coded with *positive* under Ma’s presidency take up 90%, while they account for only 9% under Tsai’s presidency. On the contrary, units coded with *negative* take up 91% under Tsai and only 10% under Ma.

When it comes to the thematic aspect, the most significant subcodes include *statements* (37% under Ma, 57.5% under Tsai), *incidents* (3% under Ma, 30% under Tsai), *economy* (23% under Ma, 2.5% under Tsai), *high-level engagement* (13% under Ma, 0% under Tsai), and *historical events* (8% under Ma, 2.5% under Tsai). 16% of subcodes under Ma and 7.5% of subcodes under Tsai are designated as *other*.

Evaluative subcodes *positive* and *negative* refer to articles that not only report on either positive or negative developments of the cross-strait relations, but also on Mainland China itself. Generally, any direct engagement or cooperation was coded as *positive* due to their inherent connotation of improved cross-strait relations or positive development of cross-strait relations. With a couple of exceptions, thematic subcode *incidents* mostly overlaps with the evaluative subcode *negative*. Examples of the *positive* subcodes are: “*Taiwan and mainland China sign service trade pact*” (June 24, 2013), and “*President Tsai pledges to maintain cross-Straits status quo*” (February 27, 2017). Some examples of the *negative* subcode are: “*Taiwan working to reduce trade reliance on mainland China*” (January 19, 2015), and “*ROC President Tsai urges Beijing to respect Taiwan’s businesses interests*” (February 13, 2017).

Thematically, the subcode *statements* includes articles reporting on cross-strait affairs based on non-direct engagement. These articles report solely on Taiwan’s statements regarding Mainland China or cross-strait relations, and not on any statements made by Mainland China since there were no such articles. Some examples of this subcode include: “*From Confrontation to Reconciliation: The Taiwan Experience*” (December 10, 2012), “*Ma calls for reconciliation and unity in New Year’s Day address*” (January 5, 2015), “*MAC [Mainland Affairs Council] urges Beijing to put aviation safety ahead of politics, communicate with Taipei*” (January 12, 2018), and “*Tsai urges China to respect Taiwan*” (January 17, 2020).

The subcode *incidents* was assigned to articles that report on individual cross-strait-related incidents or provocations, as well as incidents in relation to Mainland China, such as Hong Kong protests. Examples of this subcode include: “*MAC urges mainland China to listen to Hong Kong protestors*” (July 7, 2014), “*President Ma hopes mainland China will move toward democracy*” (October 13, 2014), “*Taiwanese rights activist pleads guilty in China*” (September 15, 2017), and “*Taiwan urges China to free Nobel Peace Prize winner*” (July 6, 2017).

The subcode *economy* includes articles reporting on various economic aspects of cross-strait relations such as events, cooperation, and high-level engagement. For example, the subcode was assigned to the following articles: “*Taiwan and mainland China sign service trade pact*” (June 24, 2013), “*Taiwan trade fairs in mainland China are a big success*” (December 23, 2013), and “*ROC President Tsai urges Beijing to respect Taiwan’s businesses interests*” (February 13, 2017).

The subcode *high-level engagement* was assigned to articles that report on direct high-level engagement or visits between Taiwan and Mainland China. All articles included in this subcode are also coded with *positive* since direct engagement between the two sides of the Strait inherently hints at the positive development of relations. Some examples of such articles include: “*Taiwan and mainland China hold historic meeting*” (February 17, 2014), “*KMT, CPC leaders set to meet in Beijing*” (April 27, 2015), and “*DPP official joins SEF [Straits Exchange Foundation] delegation to visit mainland China*” (April 13, 2015).

The last significant subcode *historical events* includes articles focusing mostly on commemorative events in connection to historical events in Taiwan or Mainland China such as the Tiananmen Square Incident and the Kaohsiung Incident, or in connection to cross-strait historical events, such as the Battle of Kinmen. The subcode includes the following articles: “*President Ma urges continued cross-Strait peace at memorial event*” (October 27, 2014), “*President Ma urges Beijing to embrace democracy*” (June 9, 2014), and “*President Tsai Ing-wen vows to keep safeguarding Taiwan’s freedom and democracy*” (June 7, 2019).

4.4.2.5 TAIWAN’S DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

Regarding the category *Taiwan’s domestic affairs*, the highest percentage of coded units under both presidencies is taken by the code *government-related activities* (32% under Ma, 26% under Tsai). Other notable subcodes include *culture* (13% under Ma, 11% under Tsai), *economy* (15% under Ma, 3% under Tsai), *education and research* (6% under Ma, 11% under Tsai), *environment* (6% under Ma, 7% under Tsai), *security* (3% under Ma, 10% under Tsai), *technology* (3% under Ma, 10% under Tsai), *health* (2% under Ma, 10% under Tsai), and *energy* (8% under Ma, 2% under Tsai). 10% of subcodes under Ma and 7% of subcodes under Tsai were designated as *other*.

The most assigned subcode *government-related activities* refer to all articles that report on official statements or speeches regarding domestic or internal affairs, as well as any activities that are solely connected to the government itself and not diplomatic relations, for example, a change of officials in the government, elections, and passing of new laws or acts. Some of the examples include the following articles: “*President Ma vows to boost economy in National Day address*” (October 22, 2012), “*President Ma resigns as KMT Chairman & reshuffles cabinet*” (December 8, 2014), “*ROC President Tsai outlines achievements and*

policy direction” (August 29, 2016), and “*President Tsai names Su Tseng-chang as premier*” (January 18, 2019).

The subcodes *culture, economy, education and research, environment, security, technology, health, and energy* include articles that report on Taiwan’s domestic affairs connected to these sectors. Examples of these subcodes include: “*Taiwan establishes national film center*” (August 4, 2014), “*Taipei’s largest temple festival kicks off*” (December 8, 2017), “*Taiwan’s exports to grow 3.58% in 2015*” (January 19, 2015), “*GDP growth hits 3.31 percent*” (February 14, 2020), “*MOFA organizes youth camp on international affairs*” (August 18, 2014), “*NTNU unveils online Mandarin program*” (April 15, 2013), “*Taiwan to ban use of Styrofoam cups*” (January 5, 2015), “*President Tsai: Taiwan’s Green Power on Track*” (October 18, 2019), “*ROC holds military parade to commemorate end of Second Sino-Japanese War*” (July 6, 2015), “*President Tsai Ing-wen inspects front-line air force base in Penghu*” (April 26, 2019), “*President Ma inaugurates new biomedical incubation center*” (December 22, 2014), “*Taiwan unveils indigenously developed self-driving electric mini-bus*” (August 30, 2019), “*CECC unveils new guidelines for combating coronavirus*” (April 8, 2020), “*Taiwan committed to combating Wuhan coronavirus*” (January 31, 2020), “*President Ma: Taiwan should leave all energy options open*” (February 2, 2015), and “*The wind rises: Formosa I leads charge to green energy*” (November 15, 2019).

4.4.2.6 HUMAN RIGHTS

There are five subcodes in the category *Human rights*, taking up the percentages of the coded units in the following order: *statements* (56% under Ma, 41% under Tsai), *gender equality* (25% under Ma, 16% under Tsai), *journalism and activism* (0% under Ma, 27% under Tsai), *LGBTQ* (13% under Ma, 5% under Tsai), and *indigenous people* (6% under Ma, 11% under Tsai).

The most assigned subcode *statements* include articles reporting on statements in various forms including reports that were made by Taiwan or other countries and refer to human rights. The term mostly showed in statements that praised Taiwan’s general human rights record and did not further specify. Some examples of the subcode include: “*Taiwan improves its human rights standards*” (March 2, 2015), “*MOFA praises EU for Nobel Peace Prize*” (October 22, 2012), “*President hopes to include human rights in Taiwan-Mainland dialogue*” (February 4, 2013), and “*Vice President stresses gender equality*” (April 24, 2017).

Other significant subcodes refer to different aspects of human rights, namely *gender equality*, *journalism and activism*, *LGBTQ*, and *indigenous people*.¹⁷ The examples of the mentioned subcodes include: “*President Tsai highlights Taiwan’s progress on gender equality*” (August 17, 2017), “*Tsai touts Taiwan’s democracy, press freedom*” (July 20, 2017), “*Tens of thousands join Taipei LGBT Pride Parade*” (October 30, 2013), and “*EP plays host to UNPO conference on Taiwan’s Indigenous People*” (December 10, 2012).

4.4.2.7 DEMOCRACY

The category *Democracy* includes three subcodes, of which the most assigned one is *shared value* (36% under Ma, 40% under Tsai). This is followed by *statements* (27% under Ma, 37.5% under Tsai), and *relation to Mainland China* (36.5% under Ma, 22.5% under Tsai).

The subcode *shared value* was assigned to articles that emphasise democracy as a value that Taiwan shares with its like-minded partners such as the EU and the US, thus praising Taiwan as a fully-fledged democracy, for instance in articles such as: “*President Ma praises robust EU-Taiwan ties*” (May 11, 2015), and “*MOFA thanks British-Taiwanese All-Party Parliamentary Group for support*” (January 18, 2019).

The subcode *statements* include all articles reporting on statements in various forms made by Taiwan or other countries and refer to democracy in general, not necessarily as a shared value. Such examples include: “*Outgoing EU Representative praises democracy in Taiwan*” (August 17, 2015), and “*President Tsai lauds transitional justice law as milestone for Taiwan’s democracy*” (December 8, 2017).

Lastly, the subcode *relation to Mainland China* was assigned to articles that mention democracy in connection to Mainland China, often contrasting the two sides of the Strait. These articles are often simultaneously categorised as *Cross-strait relations and Mainland China*. The subcode includes examples such as: “*President Ma hopes mainland China will move toward democracy*” (October 13, 2014), and “*The EU stands firm against China’s name-changing campaign*” (June 1, 2018).

¹⁷ The latter subcode, although it could be included in the category of articles reporting on indigenous people as a part of cultural activities, is rather included in this category due to these articles often emphasising the government’s respect for minorities and thus presenting it as one of the achievements in the area of human rights.

4.4.3 DOUBLE-CODED UNITS

Table 9

Overview of double-coded units

Code pairs	Ma Ying-jeou	Tsai Ing-wen	TOTAL Nr. of units
	Nr. of Units	Nr. of Units	
International & Foreign Relations	7	22	29
Human rights & Democracy	8	17	25
Democracy & EU- Taiwan relations	7	12	19
International & Domestic affairs	10	9	19
International & Human rights	2	16	18
Democracy & Cross-strait relations	4	14	18
International & EU-Taiwan relations	7	8	15
Human rights & EU-Taiwan relations	7	7	14
Cross-strait relations & Domestic Affairs	4	10	14
Democracy & Foreign relations	0	13	13
Human rights & Domestic Affairs	5	6	11
Foreign relations & Cross-strait relations	2	7	9
Human rights & Cross-strait relations	2	7	9
Cross-strait relations & EU-Taiwan relations	2	5	7
Human rights & Foreign relations	0	7	7
International & Democracy	1	5	6
International & Cross-strait relations	1	3	4
Foreign relations & EU-Taiwan relations	3	1	4
Domestic affairs & EU-Taiwan relations	2	0	2

As discussed previously, some units were double-coded to ensure the accuracy of the analysis. Out of these units, the most prominent pairs of codes, which appear 10 or more times in both periods combined, include *International & Foreign Relations* (7 under Ma, 22 under Tsai), *Human rights & Democracy* (8 under Ma, 17 under Tsai), *Democracy & EU-Taiwan relations* (7 under Ma, 12 under Tsai), *International & Domestic affairs* (10 under Ma, 9 under Tsai), *International & Human rights* (2 under Ma, 16 under Tsai), *Democracy & Cross-strait relations* (4 under Ma, 14 under Tsai), *International & EU-Taiwan relations* (7 under Ma, 8 under Tsai), *Human rights & EU-Taiwan relations* (7 under Ma, 7 under Tsai), *Cross-strait relations & Domestic Affairs* (4 under Ma, 10 under Tsai), *Democracy &*

Foreign relations (0 under Ma, 13 under Tsai), and *Human rights & Domestic Affairs* (5 under Ma, 6 under Tsai).

4.5 DISCUSSION

This section interprets the results of the analysis and situates them within the broader context of Taiwan's public diplomacy efforts and image building in the EU, as explored through secondary literature. Findings of each main category and related individual subcategories will be addressed and discussed to observe changes in communication via the Taiwan Newsletter between the two presidencies. General observations indicate that there was no article found that would portray Taiwan negatively, with some exceptions of reporting on natural disasters or similar incidents, in which the Taipei government was mostly praised for its quick and efficient response. Generally, articles were mostly highlighting Taiwan's achievements, status, and values and often presenting it as a responsible member of the global community and an important partner for cooperation.

4.5.1 EU-Taiwan Relations

The greatest, and rather surprising, difference between the two presidencies is the emphasis and reporting on EU-Taiwan relations during the Ma administration, and an obvious decrease thereof during the Tsai administration. This finding implies that while the Tsai administration changed the type of engagement and emphasis on EU-Taiwan relations, it did not necessarily increase it; or at least this was not visible in their communication efforts through the Newsletter. The analysis of the Newsletter indicates that the Tsai administration put more emphasis on reporting on engagement with other countries, despite Tsai's foreign policy's efforts to strengthen relations with like-minded countries, which would include the EU (Leksyutina, 2022: S1369); sharing democratic values in this case did not necessarily translate into greater direct engagement. One reason behind this discrepancy might be that the sample of analysed Newsletters, which only covers Tsai's first term, might not have been fully characterised by the strengthening of ties with the EU yet.

On the other hand, Ma's "Proactive Diplomacy" (Huang, 2016: 468–471) that included the intensification of substantial ties with relevant non-diplomatic allies might explain why the Newsletter was directed at European audience in the first place, and why its content was putting a lot of emphasis on EU-Taiwan relations. On the policy level, the two sides actually

signed 97 agreements and Memoranda of Understanding in fields such as trade, technology and, education (Liu, 2017: 54), despite the limitations of the one-China policy and the effect of cross-strait relations.

Regarding individual subcodes, efforts by the Ma administration to engage with the EU in the areas of education and research are evident from a slightly higher percentage than the one under the Tsai administration. On the other hand, the Tsai administration sought to expand economic cooperation with the EU (Liu, 2017: 54–58), which can be observed from the higher percentage of economy-related articles during Tsai’s first term. This can also explain the same percentage of articles reporting on agreements during both presidencies, since the Ma administration and the EU signed many of them, and the Tsai administration put a lot of effort into pursuing them. A noticeable difference between the number of reported events during both presidencies might be a result of Ma’s administration putting more effort into non-political engagement and cooperation under his “proactive diplomacy” (Huang, 2016: 471–476), thus resulting in the organisation of a greater number of cultural events. On the other hand, the engagement with the EU under the Tsai administration emphasises high-level engagement, which could be attributed to her administration’s active effort in high-level dialogue and cooperation such as the pursuit of trade and investment agreements (Liu, 2017: 54–58), parliamentary exchanges based on shared values such as human rights and democracy (Leksyutina, 2022: S1370), and efficient response to COVID-19 (Uznańska, 2020). Tsai’s efforts in pursuing a more political engagement with the EU can be observed by the slight increase in articles reporting on statements made by the EU and Taiwan, which often mention flourishing ties between the two sides or expressing gratitude for the support.

Additionally, the positive Taiwan-EU relations can be observed through the design of the Newsletter and its banners. Namely, the Newsletter kept the same design for the whole second term of Ma’s presidency, whereas the design changed three times during Tsai’s presidency. In this aspect, the banner of Ma’s Newsletter puts more emphasis on Taiwan-EU relations by including landmarks of Taiwan and Belgium, which is considered the EU capital, as well as flags by both the ROC and the EU. In contrast, Tsai’s Newsletter never included anything EU- or Belgium-related, which might imply her efforts to emphasise Taiwan and its landmarks, without focusing too much on Taiwan-EU relations.

4.5.2 Taiwan in the International Community

There was a notable increase in reporting on Taiwan as a part of the international community during Tsai's presidency, which could be discussed based on multiple reasons. First, Ma's administration adopted "Flexible or Viable Diplomacy" in the context of Mainland China's growing influence, which was based on a flexible approach that would benefit Taiwan in international participation while limited by Beijing's obstruction. In other words, Ma accepted Mainland China's influence and used the positive development of cross-strait relations to secure its ability to participate in the international community (Huang, 2016: 467–468). On the other hand, Tsai's government's approach resulted in increasing pressure from Mainland China and obstruction of Taiwan's ability to participate in the international community. Tsai's administration reacted to this by intensifying its efforts to gather support from like-minded partners, one of the ways for expanding the international space being public diplomacy efforts (Leksyutina, 2022: S1370). Reporting on Taiwan in the international context reflects Tsai's renewed commitment to calling for Taiwan's right to participate in international organisations as a part of its "Steadfast Diplomacy" (Leksyutina, 2022: S1369), which is visible through the Newsletter via the increased number of related articles. While there was a slight increase in reporting on topics and events including culture, tourism, sports, environment, crime, humanitarian aid and WHA, there was a drastic increase in highlighting democracy and human rights to the international community, which can be observed through an increase in double articles coded with International and Human rights, as well as International and Democracy.

Whereas there was no focus on trade-related topics under the Tsai administration, the reporting on economy-related topics was much higher during the Ma administration (almost a third of the category) portraying the efforts of Ma's presidency to downplay the struggle for diplomatic recognition and push the trade agenda (Huang, 2016: 468–471). This agenda resulted in Taiwan Newsletter articles emphasising Taiwan's economic achievements and status within the international community by highlighting its global rankings, as well as its commitment to cooperation in organisations such as WTO and APEC. Moreover, there was more reporting on technology-related topics and historical events and treaties, including commemorative events connected to historical events.

4.5.3 Bilateral Foreign Relations of Taiwan

As mentioned previously, in contrast to a notable decrease in reporting on Taiwan-EU relations since the beginning of Tsai's presidency, there was a considerable increase in reporting on foreign relations of Taiwan with other countries besides the EU member states, reflecting Tsai's emphasis on strengthening relations with the US and Japan. The most significant difference, namely double the percentage, is evident in regard to US-related articles, which indicates a new positive development of the previously deteriorating bilateral relations with the US that points to Tsai's attempt to adopt a Mainland China policy compatible with the interests of the US (Drun, 2022). Additionally, a new code appeared during Tsai's presidency, which has been named the New Southbound Policy according to the policy that was being reported on. In this subcategory, Taiwan's commitment to cooperation with ten Southeast Asian and Pacific countries can be observed (Leksyutina, 2022: S1369).

Moreover, double-coded articles reveal that under the Tsai administration, there is an increase in reporting on other countries' statements and expressions of support regarding Taiwan in the international community. Human rights and democracy also played a greater role in Taiwan's bilateral foreign relations. During Ma's presidency, the frequency of high-level engagement with other countries was relatively similar to the one during Tsai's presidency, with a lot of focus on existing diplomatic allies and much less reporting on the US, which corresponds to Huang (2016: 468–471)'s claim regarding the increased frequency and level of engagement and contact between Taiwan's then allies such as the Dominican Republic and Panama. During Ma's presidency, there was more negative reporting on Taiwan's foreign relations related to territorial disputes and loss of diplomatic recognition such as an article reporting on Taiwan's loss of diplomatic recognition by Gambia, which came as a rather surprising decision at the time (Huang, 2016: 468–471). Lastly, Ma's commitment to signing free trade agreements with Central American allies, Singapore and New Zealand resulted in more articles reporting on this topic, as well as other types of cooperation including foreign aid (Huang, 2016: 471–476).

4.5.4 Cross-strait Relations and Mainland China

The second greatest change in reporting from one presidency to the other is visible in the category Cross-strait relations and Mainland China. Under the Ma administration, the percentage of coded articles reporting on this topic was more than double that of articles published under the Tsai administration. However, the change in the frequency of reporting on the topic is still less drastic than the difference in the content of the reports. Ma Ying-jeou's presidency developed a new approach to cross-strait relations based on its attempts to develop beneficial cross-strait relations while downplaying Taipei's struggle for diplomatic recognition (Huang, 2016: 468–471). As a result, reporting on cross-strait relations and mainland China turned out mostly positive, reflecting increased high-level engagement and cooperation, particularly in the economic sector, reflecting Ma's economic agenda to strengthen trade links with Mainland China (Huang, 2016: 467–468). This is also the reason why economy-related articles in this category account for 23% under Ma's presidency and merely 2.5% under Tsai's presidency. Additionally, 13% of the articles under Ma's presidency report on high-level engagement, while there are no such articles during Tsai's presidency. When it comes to negative reporting, there were only five negative articles under the Ma presidency.

On the contrary, articles regarding cross-strait relations and the situation in Mainland China published under the Tsai administration were mostly negative, except for three articles that reported on official statements made by Tsai herself about her commitment to safeguard the status quo¹⁸, foster mutually beneficial economic ties¹⁹ and engage in positive dialogue with Mainland China²⁰. After those initial expressions of commitment and hope, articles became gradually more negative, which corresponds to the cross-strait developments and tensions of that period (Schubert et al., 2022: 70–71).

There was a drastic increase in articles reporting on incidents during Tsai's presidency, reflecting tensions between the two sides of the Strait (Schubert et al., 2022: 70–71) that were, amongst others, caused by incidents in China such as Hong Kong protests in 2014 and cross-strait incidents such as the detention of Taiwanese human rights activist Lee Ming-che by the Chinese authorities on September 2017.

¹⁸ "President Tsai pledges to maintain cross-Strait status quo" (February 27, 2017)

¹⁹ "ROC President Tsai urges Beijing to respect Taiwan's businesses interests" (February 13, 2017)

²⁰ "Tsai Ing-wen officially inaugurated as first female ROC President" (May 23, 2016)

Additionally, the topic of cross-strait relations and mainland China took up the whole article during Ma's presidency, and the articles were generally assigned to the Newsletter category called cross-strait relations. On the contrary, reporting on China during the Tsai presidency was often included only as a part of reporting on a topic covered by a different code, e.g. EU-Taiwan relations or Foreign Relations of Taiwan, which resulted in a higher number of double-coded units. In these articles, the PRC was mostly portrayed negatively. In this aspect, Mainland China became a commonly discussed topic during EU-Taiwan and EU-US engagement during the Tsai presidency, which corresponds to Taiwan's compatible interests with those of like-minded partners such as the US regarding Mainland China (Drun, 2022).

Regarding the rest of the double-coded units or articles, a significant difference between the two administrations is to be noted between the number of articles coded with Democracy and Cross-strait relations, as well as Cross-strait relations and domestic affairs. The greater amount of such articles under Tsai's administration indicates Tsai's emphasis on democracy, especially in connection with Mainland China, often contrasting the two sides of the Strait. Additionally, the double-coded articles in relation to cross-strait relations and Taiwan's domestic affairs mostly include Taiwan's official statements on Mainland China, with some of them including military and security aspects, for example, the development of Taiwan's security situation in the context of increased tensions with Mainland China. Increased tensions and Mainland China's reference to forceful reunification with Taiwan (Schubert et al., 2022: 70–71) correspond to the increased number of security- and military-related articles during Tsai's presidency.

4.5.5 Taiwan's Domestic Affairs

Under Tsai's administration, there was only a slight increase in the percentage of articles that reported on Taiwan's domestic affairs. It was previously mentioned that generally, no article was found that would highlight or report on Taiwan negatively, except for some articles on natural disasters or incidents in connection to crime. Despite having a negative context, these articles mostly highlight the government's effective handling of natural disasters such as typhoons²¹ and the government's commitment to fighting crime²², instead of discussing or presenting certain crime issues, so they cannot be considered negative. The lack of negative reporting reflects Taipei's public diplomacy efforts, which are to present

²¹ *"Taiwan recovers from Typhoon Soudelor"* (August 17, 2015)

²² *"President Ma demands prison reform in wake of hostage crisis"* (February 16, 2015)

Taiwan positively to the foreign public and highlight the government's achievements while not necessarily omitting negative domestic news, which is what makes their public diplomacy more credible yet covert.

Under the Ma administration, there are more articles reporting on official statements, speeches, and other government-related activities, such as changes of officials. Additionally, there were notably more energy-, economy- and crime-related articles, as well as articles reporting on tourism and culture. On the other hand, the domestic affairs situation under the Tsai administration is characterised by more reporting on military, security and defence, as well as health, technology, and innovation. Similar to other categories, the high frequency of economy-related articles during Ma's administration might reflect his efforts to build Taiwan's image by focusing on economic aspects also in connection to domestic affairs, in order to pursue his foreign policy that emphasised trade relations and economic cooperation (Huang, 2016: 465–466). In contrast, COVID-19 and Tsai's effective handling of the outbreak (Uznańska, 2020), which presented an opportunity for her to build the image of Taiwan as a responsible member of a global community and an important partner, can be evident through health-related articles.

4.5.6 Human Rights and Democracy

The two categories Human rights and Democracy present two values that have been dealt with separately in the secondary literature, hence the separate coding of the articles.

However, articles in the Taiwan Newsletter often mention them in connection with each other. Due to the strong overlapping of the two categories, they will be discussed together.

Human rights and democracy are values that Taiwan considers crucial for its soft power. They contribute to strengthening its alliance with other democracies and help distinguish Taiwan from Mainland China (Wang & Lu, 2008; Rawnsley, 2017). It is, thus, surprising to observe that a rather small percentage of articles mentioned the two values more than just briefly, especially considering that this Newsletter targets the EU, which is Taiwan's like-minded partner and a democracy. Nevertheless, they appeared in more articles under the Tsai administration, with democracy even more than human rights. This reflects Tsai's increased efforts to appeal to the European audience by highlighting the shared values as a part of broader efforts to strengthen its ties with the EU (Liu, 2017: 54–58).

Regarding human rights, more articles under Ma Ying-jeou reported on LGBTQ, as well as gender equality and women, while there were more articles during Tsai's presidency that discussed or highlighted Taiwan's respect for indigenous people, as well as a commitment to upholding the freedom of the press and support for activism. As the secondary literature suggests, DPP's increased emphasis on embracing Taiwanese and aboriginal culture resulted in more articles reporting on indigenous people (Wang & Lu, 2008: 432). Similarly, the increased number of articles regarding the freedom of the press and support for activism reflect Tsai's diplomacy efforts to build robust relations based on common values such as freedom and democracy (Rajczyk and Piechota, 2019: 239).

There was a notable number of articles reporting on statements where no specific aspect of human rights or democracy would be mentioned. However, in these articles, the two values would be mentioned, for example, when highlighting the commitment to human rights and democracy as an element of Taiwan's engagement with other countries. During Tsai's presidency, there was a considerable increase in highlighting human rights in connection to Taiwan's foreign relations and the international community, as well as cross-strait relations. Articles published under Ma Ying-jeou discussed democracy in relation to mainland China and emphasised it as a shared value with like-minded countries. In contrast, articles under Tsai's presidency highlighted democracy as a shared value more often than in relation to mainland China.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to find out the ways and the extent to which communication and image building via the Taiwan Newsletter as part of Taiwan's public diplomacy in the EU differed during the second term of Ma Ying-jeou's presidency (2012–2016) and the first term (2016–2020) of Tsai's presidency. In order to answer the research question, this thesis analysed the Taiwan Newsletter published by the Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium, which is considered to be Taiwan's main representative office in the EU and thus communicates with the European audience most effectively.

The overall numbers of published Newsletters, which were 161 for the second Ma and 189 for the first Tsai administration, indicate that communication via the Newsletter increased in the first term of Tsai's presidency. Rawnsley's (2017) argument that there was an evident

shift to digital diplomacy during the Ma administration can be observed through the government's decision in 2012 to establish direct communication with the European audience and thus start publishing the online Taiwan Newsletter. Nevertheless, secondary literature suggests that the EU-Taiwan relations were characterised by a positive development during the whole period of investigation, which might explain why the discrepancy between the number of Newsletters published during the two presidencies is not as large.

The finding that there were more reports on EU-Taiwan relations under the Ma administration than under the Tsai administration might be rather surprising in light of Taiwan receiving increasing attention from the EU in the past couple of years. However, it should be noted that the articles analysed were published during the first term of Tsai's presidency, which was mostly before the EU changed its perception of Mainland China and published the Indo-Pacific Strategy 2021 that directly mentioned Taiwan and recognised its importance. An analysis of the Taiwan Newsletters issued after 2020 would be required to find out whether these developments have led to a stronger focus on EU-Taiwan relations, combined with an emphasis on contrasting Taiwan's values with the situation in Mainland China.

Overall, this thesis demonstrates a correlation between the foreign policies of the two administrations and their communication via the Taiwan Newsletter. The most obvious example is the change of cross-strait policy during the first Tsai administration, which became visible through increased negative reporting on Mainland China in the Newsletter. In this regard, the decision to implement the evaluative subcodes in some of the categories, such as Mainland China and Taiwan's bilateral relations, has proven to be highly relevant, as it confirms the argumentation found in secondary literature. The articles in Tsai's period often contrast the two sides of the Strait by highlighting Taiwan's democratic system. At the same time, Taiwan's bilateral relations with the US improved during Tsai's presidency, which is evident from the increased number of mostly positive articles on and portrayals of US-Taiwan relations. The frequency of reporting on or mentioning the two values of human rights and democracy increased under the Tsai administration; however, it is interesting to see the lower percentage of LGBTQ-related articles under Tsai's presidency, especially considering that Taiwan was the first place in Asia to legalise same-sex marriage in May 2019. Lastly, Taiwan's introduction of the New Southbound Policy can be observed through

an increased number of related articles, which required the introduction of a new code or subcategory of that name. The findings of the Taiwan Newsletter analysis also show that, according to the foreign policy strategies of the time, the articles published during the first Tsai administration emphasised Taiwan's participation in the international community and its relations with like-minded partners.

As pointed out earlier in this thesis, Taiwan's public diplomacy has been discussed by quite a few scholars; however, there is a much smaller amount of secondary literature on Taiwan's public diplomacy in the EU. If we consider the definition of public diplomacy as a way in which a government or other political or social actors directly or indirectly influence public opinions (Delaney, 1968: 3; cited in Signitzer & Coombs, 1992: 138), with the aim to explain and speak in favour of governmental policy as well as represent a nation to foreign publics in a positive manner, the Taiwan Newsletter can be confirmed as a tool of public diplomacy. Its positive reporting on Taiwan and its situation in the world speaks in favour of the Taipei government and its foreign policy. Additionally, the Newsletter represents the Taiwanese nation to the European audience by emphasising its positive achievements and values. Providing mostly neutral information on the development of Taiwan-EU relations and different aspects of Taiwan, the Newsletter carries the connotations of credibility and steers clear of propaganda in the sense of manipulation of the readership.

The Taiwan Newsletter is an example of public diplomacy relying on mass communication to realise its goals (Pajtinka, 2019: 24–26), as the Press and Information Division of the Taiwan Representative Office utilises various means of distributing it in order to reach as many interested people as possible. Considering the three dimensions of communication introduced by Leonard (2002: 10), the Taiwan Newsletter can be understood as a case of the second dimension that encompasses all of the mentioned aspects, i.e. political and military, economic, as well as societal and cultural aspects. The analysis has confirmed it to be a tool of strategic or proactive communication that develops a set of simple themes over the course of a longer period of time, aiming to reinforce core messages of the government and influence the perception of the foreign public. Examples of long-term strategic communication and related core messages can be observed in articles reporting on Taiwan's participation in and as a responsible member of the international community under the Tsai administration, or in the articles reporting on positive cross-strait relations that imply

stability and thus invite the EU for greater cooperation with Taiwan under the Ma administration.

Looking at the Taiwan Newsletter through the constructivist lens, it is obvious that it aims to construct Taiwan's identity, interests, and norms through its communication, to convey a certain message, turn the language into reality, and construct Taiwan's national image among the European audience. The Press and Information Division builds Taiwan's image based on shared ideas and values, which contribute to shaping the relations between the EU and Taiwan. Considering the findings that imply less emphasis on direct reporting on Taiwan-EU relations but, on the other hand, imply more emphasis on reporting on democracy and human rights during Tsai's presidency, one can assume that Taiwan mainly utilises these shared ideas and values to build its relationship with the EU. Whereas in articles published during Ma's presidency, Taiwan's soft power and national image were based on a mix of ancient Chinese and modern culture with its democratic and economic achievements, Tsai's Taiwan is constructed as not only distinct from Mainland China but also technologically and economically advanced, as well as a responsible member of the international community.

This thesis has offered a new insight into Taiwan's public diplomacy in the EU through its Newsletter communication and illustrated the changes that have taken place as a result of the change of presidency in 2016. Whereas it has provided a good overview of the contents and communication strategies of the two periods, further research including the second term of Tsai's presidency could make a contribution to an up-to-date and even deeper understanding of Taiwan's public diplomacy in the context of increased interest in interaction with Taiwan by the EU.

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7. APPENDIX

Appendix A: Example Newsletter (first one published)

Monday, July 23, 2012



The header features the Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium logo, the title 'Taiwan Newsletter', and a collage of images including the Republic of China flag, a molecular structure, and European architecture.

Headline News

EU-Taiwan to propose further collaboration in advanced energy technologies

On July 11, Professor Jerzy Buzek, the former President of the European Parliament, received a Taiwanese energy technologies delegation, led by Professor Weng-Teng Wu from National Cheng Kung University.

Ambassador David Lin, Professor Jan Rogut from the Polish Central Mining Institute, and Mr. Marc Steen, Head of Unit from the EU Institute for Energy and Transportation, also attended the meeting. They discussed the very real prospect of expanding existing EU-Taiwan cooperation in science and technology.



A group of seven people, including officials and researchers, are standing together for a formal group photo in a meeting room.

Energy is one of the 8 thematic National Contact Points set up in Taiwan for the EU Framework Programme 7 (FP7). A close collaboration with the EU and its Member States on this theme will further strengthen research cooperation.

During the discussion, Ambassador Lin emphasized the importance of closer cooperation between Taiwan and the EU in future ICT and green energy development.

EU-Taiwan Relations

European Research Council promotes a funding program for research in Taiwan

An official from the European Research Council arrived in Taiwan on July 8 to promote a billion-euro funding program for research as part of the council's global mission to invest in the best talent in frontier research.

The program will make available grants totaling 1.8 billion euros for any individuals, including early-career and senior researchers, from around the world in all disciplines, said Donald Dingwell, secretary-general of the council.

"Taiwan is known, in these 50 years, as a research powerhouse of Asia," said Dingwell. He added that "having the best researchers in Europe will allow us to grow faster out of our financial problems."

The global mission, which began in February, has taken Dingwell to the United States, Canada, South Africa, South America and Asia.

During his three-day stay in Taiwan, Dingwell met with researchers, university representatives and officials to raise awareness about the council's funding schemes.



A group of people are gathered around a table during a banquet, with one person holding a certificate or diploma.

The banquet guests included Director Huei-wen Hsu of the Taipei Representative Office, Governor Denis Mathen, and Provincial Deputy responsible for education, Mr. Philippe Bultot. All the guests praised the students for their outstanding performance.

Ms. Ariane Warnon, Director of the school, even announced the students' names in Chinese to grant them their diplomas.

Culture

Belgium to star at 2013 Taipei book exhibition

The rich history of Belgium's book industry will stand front and center at the 2013 Taipei International Book Exhibition.

Belgium was named theme country for the 2013 Taipei International Book Exhibition, a decision expected to give one of Asia's most prestigious events for bibliophiles even greater luster, according to the Taipei Book Fair Foundation on July 16.

Belgium's publication-based creative industry, ranging from books to comics, will spark interest across the board in Taiwan, as world-renowned series such as the Smurfs and Tintin, both designed by Belgian authors, boast a strong local following.

Education

Educational exchange between Belgian and Taiwan High Schools

Ecole Hotelière Provinciale de Namur in Belgium welcomed, for the first time, 15 Taiwanese students for a 4-day intensive culinary course. On July 12, the course was concluded with a special banquet.

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Appendix B: Example Newsletter after the first change of the visual design



Monday, April 3, 2017

Headline News

President Tsai ranked 8th in Fortune's top 50 leaders

On 23 March, US magazine Fortune released its '2017 World's Greatest Leaders' report, in which ROC President Tsai Ing-wen was ranked 8th for her efforts in pursuing economic reforms, bolstering tourism and steering the nation's diplomacy. Tsai appears in the list of 50 leaders from the fields of art, business, government and philanthropy alongside figures such as Angela Merkel, Melinda Gates and Pope Francis.



According to Fortune, Taiwan's first female President captured global headlines in December last year after engaging in a telephone conversation with then-US President-elect Donald Trump, which the magazine characterized as a "bold move". Fortune also outlined Tsai's commitment to pursuing economic reforms, highlighting her enactment of a new labor law shortening the six-day workweek to five. In addition, Tsai was praised for her efforts to diversify the nation's visitor sources, noting that she has "sparked a tourism boom" from Southeast Asia since her inauguration in May 2016.

International News

VP vows continued efforts on sustainable development

During his meeting with a group of experts on sustainable development led by Alistair Edgar, Executive Director of the Academic Council on

the United Nations System (ACUNS) on 28 March, ROC Vice President Chen Chien-jen said that Taiwan will continue to work with foreign friends in contributing to the planet's sustainable development and tackling issues related to climate change. Though in a "delicate" situation diplomatically, Taiwan has never hesitated in taking on a proper role in global projects as a responsible member of the international community, he said. Chen spoke of how no country in the world can be immune from the impact of such major issues as global warming and sustainable development, adding that Taiwan, well positioned to offer assistance, should not be excluded from international efforts at achieving mankind's common goals.



Economic News

Quality & technology give Taiwan lead in global bike industry

With the vast success of the Taipei International Cycle Show, held March 22-25, Taiwan is seen to maintain its leadership of the global bicycle industry on the strength of its high-quality bikes and components, by employing the latest advances in such fields as electric, green and smart technologies. During her opening address, President Tsai Ing-wen said that the bicycle industry makes Taiwan proud, adding that Taiwan boasts the world's best bike R&D and manufacturing capacity. Giant and Merida are the best known of the more than 700

Miscellaneous News

Mazu pilgrimages showcase Taiwan's rich cultural heritage

Taiwan's rich cultural traditions took center stage recently in Taichung City, with the launch of two large-scale pilgrimages, celebrating the upcoming birthday of one of the country's most revered deities Mazu, the goddess of the sea. Mazu's birthday, falling this year on April 19, is a widely anticipated event offering a unique snapshot of local cultural and religious traditions dating back over 200 years. The Taichung processions, among the largest in the country, are estimated to attract 1 million devotees from both home and abroad. A statue of Mazu is placed inside a palanquin and carried by pilgrims on a nine-day, 330-kilometer round-trip procession, stopping at seven temples around the country. In 2009 UNESCO included 'Mazu belief and customs' in its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Believed to be home to more than 10 million Mazu devotees, Taiwan has over 500 temples around the island dedicated to the goddess.



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Appendix C: Example Newsletter after the second change of the visual design

Friday, November 9, 2018



Headline

President Tsai commissions US-built frigates in Kaohsiung

On November 8, President Tsai Ing-wen presided over the commissioning of two Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigates (PFG-1112 Ming Chuan and PFG-1115 Feng Chia) at Zuoying Naval Base in the southern port city of Kaohsiung, describing it as a milestone in government efforts to strengthen the defensive capabilities of the armed forces.



Amid the rapidly changing global political landscape, Taiwan is faced with traditional and nontraditional security challenges, including increased mainland Chinese military drills, cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns, Tsai said. Entry into service of Ming Chuan and Feng Chia underscores the government's unwavering commitment to safeguarding national sovereignty and protecting the people's free and democratic way of life, she added. According to Tsai, the commissioning of the vessels bolsters Taiwan's new military strategy based on resolute resistance and multiple deterrence. Going forward, the government will continue to take concrete actions to support the armed forces so as to ensure national security, she said. The American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) said the commissioning of the frigates, formerly the USS Taylor and USS Gary, respectively, will improve Taiwan's capabilities in current and future defensive efforts. Their entry into service will also contribute to political stability, military balance and economic progress in the Indo-Pacific, the AIT added.

International

Tsai, Moriarty meet in Taipei, talk Indo-Pacific cooperation

On November 5, President Tsai received James F. Moriarty, chairman of Washington headquartered American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), at the Office of the President. Making his fifth official visit since taking the helm of the AIT, Moriarty met with officials and attended the annual joint committee meeting of the Taiwan-U.S. Global Cooperation and Training Framework (GCTF).

Taiwan will continue making a significant contribution to the development of the region through such government initiatives as the New South-bound Policy, Tsai said. This far-sighted measure is also strengthening the country's ties with target countries via a raft of mutually beneficial cooperative relationships, she added.

According to Tsai, GCTF underscores the strength of Taiwan-U.S. ties founded on the shared values of freedom and democracy. The framework is a successful platform for both sides to beef up collaboration on major regional and global issues. Moriarty said GCTF recognizes how much Taiwan has to offer to the global community. The framework also represents an affirmation of U.S. support for finding ways to assist Taiwan in preserving and expanding its international space, he added.

Climate

MOFA video spotlights Taiwan's merits as partner for combating climate change

On November 5, the short film "A Promise to the Land" was released on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)-backed Trending Taiwan YouTube channel to spotlight the nation's merits as a valuable global partner in combating climate change and promoting sustainable development.

The film is narrated by 8-year-old Hemyantong and charts how his life

has changed since the International Cooperation and Development Fund (TaiwanICDF) installed a solar power system in his home village of Larkar in Sagaing Region in Myanmar.



A Promise to the Land
Trending Taiwan 趨勢台灣

The TaiwanICDF initiative developed solar minigrid systems in rural communities of Myanmar's Sagaing and Magway regions since 2016.

According to MOFA, the video showcases Taiwan's commitment to promoting environmental protection and sustainable growth around the world through sharing its development and technological expertise.

Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZvaC-sE5-I>

Culture

Taiwan teen actor shines at Minsk International Film Festival

On November 6, Taiwan's Chung Chia-chun from the Tao indigenous group won Best Young Actor for his role in local feature "Long Time No Sea" at the Minsk International Film Festival in Belarus.

The 14-year-old, who received no formal acting training, charmed judges for the festival's Children and Youth Film Competition with his natural and heartfelt performance, according to the production's distributor Taipei City-based Swallow Wings Films.

On the film's Facebook page, Chung expressed his joy and gratitude at receiving the prize and said he was surprised by his win. He thanked Heather Tsui, the director of the film, and his home of Lanyu for nurturing him.



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25 October 2019

Taiwan Newsletter

NETHERLANDS & TAIWAN TO DEEPEN TIES SAYS TSAI

President Tsai Ing-wen praised the bilateral partnership between Taiwan and the Netherlands, vowing to expand cooperation further across a range of areas including trade and technology. Tsai made the remarks during a meeting with a delegation from the Netherlands, including lawmakers and think tank professionals. The delegation was headed up by Henk Krol of the Dutch Parliament. Praising the staunch support Taiwan enjoys from the Netherlands House of Representatives, Tsai highlighted a bipartisan motion passed by overwhelming majority earlier this month urging the Dutch government to back Taiwan's international participation. Other examples of bilateral partnership include a mechanism for vice-ministerial dialogue on economic affairs; a mutual assistance agreement on customs; and a memorandum of understanding on science and technology cooperation, she said, also



pointing out that it was a Dutch firm that was instrumental in designing the impressive National Kaohsiung Centre for the Arts in Southern Taiwan. Ministry of Economic Affairs stats show that the Netherlands was the largest foreign investor in Taiwan in the first eight months of the year.

TAIWAN & EU TALK LGBTI

The EU-Taiwan LGBTI Human Rights Conference was held this week in Taipei City, reflecting the commitment of both sides to promoting marriage equality and protecting equal rights for all.

The two-day event was attended by 260 experts, officials and representatives from 31 countries and territories, including Chen Chien-jen, Vice President of Taiwan, MOFA Minister Jaushieh Wu and new head of the European Economic and Trade Office in Taiwan, Filip Tadusz Grzegorzewski.

Vice President Chen said that Taiwan and the EU have been working together on advancing gender equality and human rights protection since 2015. The two sides agreed a three year equality cooperation and training framework during the first Taiwan-EU Human rights consultation in Taipei last year.

Representing the EU, Grzegorzewski said the legalisation of same sex marriage reflects the efforts and determination of human rights activists as well as the political will and courage of the nation's lawmakers.

GLOBAL SUPPORT FOR TAIWAN IN INTERPOL



Eleven countries have sent letters calling for Taiwan's inclusion in Interpol to President of the organisation Kim Jong-Yang. Belize, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Kingdom of Eswatini, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Paraguay, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines all urged Kim to grant Taiwan observer status in the international policing body. Representatives also voiced support for Taiwan during the Interpol general assembly in mid-October. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) said this strong backing underscores the legitimacy of Taiwan's participation in Interpol, and reflects discontent in the international community about Taiwan's exclusion on political grounds.

TEAM TAIWAN WINS ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIP



Team Taiwan defeated Japan 5-4 to seal their victory in the Asian Baseball Championship. The team battled their way to success at the Taichung Intercontinental Baseball Stadium on October 20, giving them their first Asian championship title since 2001.

TAIPEI HOTSPOTS MUSLIM-FRIENDLY

Six popular tourist spots in Taipei have been officially certified as Muslim-friendly by the Taipei-based Chinese Muslim Association, among them the famous National Palace Museum and Taipei 101.

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24 April 2020



Vice-President Chen emphasises Taiwan's commitment to international cooperation in fighting COVID-19

Vice President Chen Chien-jen sat down for interviews over the past week with the British and American newspapers, The Daily Telegraph and The New York Times respectively.

In a sit-down discussion with the British broadsheet's Asia correspondent, Nicola Smith, the Vice President discussed Taiwan's experience battling the coronavirus outbreak; the country's extensive disease prevention strategies; and the impact of exclusion from the World Health Organization.

Likewise, in his discussion with The New York Times, Chen emphasised Taiwan's commitment to international coopera-



tion during the COVID-19 pandemic. "As a responsible member of the international community, Taiwan is willing and

able to share its expertise managing the COVID-19 pandemic with the rest of the world," Chen told the newspaper.

Ambassador Tseng discusses Taiwan's experiences in webinar with MEPs

In a webinar on April 23 with Members of the European Parliament, Reinhard Bütikofer and Jutta Paulus, Ambassador Harry Tseng, of the Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium, outlined the extensive measures the Taiwanese government has taken to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the course of the webinar, Ambassador Tseng laid out, in great detail, the policies that the Taiwanese government have taken at every step to prevent mass infection in Taiwan.

The ambassador also raised some points of difference between the Taiwanese response and that of many European countries, emphasising the importance of widespread use of protective face masks among the public, and the fact that Taiwan has not yet

been forced to deploy widespread testing, due to the strength of the country's contact tracing efforts.

Following the presentation, Bütikofer emphasised the need to include Taiwan fully into the work of the World Health Organisation (WHO) "on a very pragmatic basis", and bemoaned the influence of Beijing on the WHO's decision making.

The webinar comes in the wake of a joint letter initiated by Bütikofer, along with 21 other MEPs, addressed to the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell. The letter calls on the EU to "push energetically for a practice or a protocol that would allow Taiwan to be fully involved in WHO work against this pandemic."

CECC rolls out new measures combating COVID-19

The Central Epidemic Command Center (CECC) of Taiwan announced new measures April 18 to continue to safeguard the country against the spread of COVID-19.

The new measures are aimed at travellers who have visited Southeast Asia in the last 14 days, and come after a sharp rise in the number of cases reported in the region. Travellers from the affected area will be required to complete health declaration and quarantine notice forms

before boarding flights to Taiwan.

Such arrivals must also confirm that their residences satisfy home quarantine requirements; those whose homes do not, must check in to a quarantine hotel.

The CECC further announced, April 23, that restrictions on direct cross-strait flights will be extended, and that the ban on international airline transit through Taiwan, originally scheduled to be lifted on April 30, will instead be in place for the foreseeable future.

Taiwan-developed rapid screening reagent put into trial production

A team of researchers at Academia Sinica, Taiwan's most prestigious research institution, has developed a key reagent for a pioneering COVID-19 rapid screening test, according to an announcement made by the institution's president, James Liao, April 23.

The technology behind the screening test has already been transferred to seven companies, one or two of which will be chosen for possible mass production.

The reagent will be able to provide COVID-19 test results within just 15 minutes and has been developed at unimaginable speed, Liao added. The prototype was developed in just one month, as compared to the typical three to six months that such developments usually require.

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TAIPEI REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE IN THE EU AND BELGIUM

Appendix F: Overview of the subcodes assigned to main categories - Tables 2–8

Table 2: EU-TAIWAN RELATIONS

Codes	Ma Ying-jeou		Tsai Ing-wen	
	Nr. of Codes	Percentage	Nr. of Codes	Percentage
Events	67	39%	23	24%
High-level engagement	31	18%	26	28%
Education and research	24	14%	9	10%
Statements	18	10%	13	14%
Agreements	14	8%	8	8%
Economy	8	5%	10	11%
Technology	3	2%	3	3%
Environment	3	2%	2	2%
Funding	3	2%	0	0%
TOTAL	171	100%	94	100%

Table 3: TAIWAN IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Codes	Ma Ying-jeou		Tsai Ing-wen	
	Nr. of Codes	Percentage	Nr. of Codes	Percentage
Economy	19	28%	18	10%
Culture	10	15%	40	23%
Participation in international organisations	7	10%	38	21%
Health	5	7%	24	14%
Technology	8	12%	12	7%
Historical events	7	10%	0	0%
Environment	2	3%	10	6%
Education and research	3	5%	6	3%
Aviation	2	3%	8	4%
Security	2	3%	3	2%
Crime and terrorism	1	2%	6	3%
Gender equality	0	0%	5	3%
Astronomy	1	2%	0	0%
Journalism	0	0%	3	2%
ASIAN	0	0%	2	1%
Indigenous people	0	0%	1	1%
TOTAL	67	100%	176	100%

Table 4: BILATERAL FOREIGN RELATIONS OF TAIWAN

Codes	Ma Ying-jeou		Tsai Ing-wen	
	Nr. of Codes	Percentage	Nr. of Codes	Percentage
<i>Positive (total)</i>	46	85%	95	97%
<i>Negative (total)</i>	8	15%	3	3%
<i>Total of evaluative codes</i>	54	100%	98	100%
Agreements	22	35%	30	20%
High-level engagement	18	28%	38	25%
US	9	14%	46	31%
Statements	6	9%	22	15%
Territorial claims	9	14%	2	1%
New Southbound Policy	0	0%	12	8%
Total of thematic codes	64	100%	150	100%

Table 5: CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS AND MAINLAND CHINA

Codes	Ma Ying-jeou		Tsai Ing-wen	
	Nr. of Codes	Percentage	Nr. of Codes	Percentage
<i>Positive</i>	47	90%	3	9%
<i>Negative</i>	5	10%	31	91%
Total of evaluative codes	52	100%	34	100%
Statements	22	37%	23	57.5%
Incidents	2	3%	12	30%
Economy	14	23%	1	2.5%
High-level engagement	8	13%	0	0%
Historical events	5	8%	1	2.5%
Aviation	2	3%	2	5%
Panda diplomacy	3	5%	0	0%
Public opinion	0	0%	1	2.5%
Agreements	1	2%	0	0%
Energy	1	2%	0	0%
Fishery	1	2%	0	0%
Education	1	2%	0	0%
Total of thematic codes	60	100%	40	100%

Table 6: TAIWAN'S DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

Codes	Ma Ying-jeou		Tsai Ing-wen	
	Nr. of Codes	Percentage	Nr. of Codes	Percentage
Government-related activities	20	32%	29	26%
Culture	8	13%	12	11%
Economy	9	15%	4	3%
Education and research	4	6%	12	11%
Environment	4	6%	8	7%
Security	2	3%	11	10%
Technology	2	3%	11	10%
Health	1	2%	11	10%
Energy	5	8%	3	2%
Natural disasters or incidents	3	5%	3	2%
Crime	3	5%	1	1%
Historical events	0	0%	2	2%
Aviation	0	0%	2	2%
Public opinion	0	0%	1	1%
TOTAL	61	100%	110	100%

Table 7: HUMAN RIGHTS

Codes	Ma Ying-jeou		Tsai Ing-wen	
	Nr. of Codes	Percentage	Nr. of Codes	Percentage
Statements	9	56%	1	41%
Gender equality	4	25%	6	16%
Journalism and activism	0	0%	10	27%
LGBTQ	2	13%	2	5%
Indigenous people	1	6 %	4	11%
TOTAL	16	100%	37	100%

Table 8: DEMOCRACY

Codes	Ma Ying-jeou		Tsai Ing-wen	
	Nr. of Codes	Percentage	Nr. of Codes	Percentage
Shared value	4	36.5%	16	40%
Statements	3	27%	15	37.5%
Relation to Mainland China	4	36.5%	9	22.5%
TOTAL	11	100%	40	100%

8. ABSTRACT

In a world characterised by mass communication, the importance of a country's image in international affairs has become recognised. Public diplomacy and soft power have thus gained significance, especially in combination with the internet, which allows international actors to engage directly with global audiences. Taiwan faces the challenge of diplomatic isolation, prompting the Taipei government to use public diplomacy as a key foreign policy tool to shape its image. Following the change in Taiwan's ruling party in 2016, shifts in its image building efforts could be expected. Therefore, this thesis examines how communication through the Taiwan Newsletter, as part of Taiwan's public diplomacy in the EU, changed between the Ma Ying-jeou (2012–2016) and Tsai Ing-wen (2016–2020) administrations. Using mixed qualitative and quantitative content analysis, the study identified differences between the two periods, such as increased negative coverage of cross-strait relations and positive coverage of Taiwan-US relations during Tsai's presidency. The results thus indicate a correlation between the foreign policies of the two administrations and communication via the Taiwan Newsletter. The analysis of the Taiwan Newsletter proves that the Press and Information Division of the Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium aims to construct Taiwan's image in the EU based on shared ideas and values, as a contribution to shaping the relations between the EU and Taiwan.

In einer Welt, die durch Massenkommunikation geprägt ist, wird die Bedeutung des Images einer Nation in den internationalen Beziehungen zunehmend anerkannt. Public Diplomacy (Öffentlichkeitsdiplomatie) und Soft Power haben daher an Bedeutung gewonnen, insbesondere in Kombination mit dem Internet, das es internationalen Akteuren ermöglicht, direkt mit einem globalen Publikum in Kontakt zu treten. Taiwan steht vor der Herausforderung der diplomatischen Isolation, was die Regierung in Taipei dazu veranlasst, Public Diplomacy als zentrales außenpolitisches Instrument zur Gestaltung seines Images zu nutzen. Nach dem Regierungswechsel in Taiwan im Jahr 2016 können Veränderungen in den Bemühungen um den Imageaufbau angenommen werden. Diese Masterarbeit untersucht daher, wie sich die Kommunikation und der Imageaufbau über den Taiwan Newsletter als Teil der Öffentlichkeitsdiplomatie Taiwans in der EU zwischen den Regierungen von Ma Ying-jeou (2012–2016) und Tsai Ing-wen (2016–2020) verändert haben. Anhand einer gemischt qualitativ-quantitativen Inhaltsanalyse identifizierte die Studie Unterschiede zwischen den beiden Zeiträumen, wie beispielsweise verstärkte negative Berichterstattung über die Beziehungen zu Festlandchina und positivere Berichterstattung über die Beziehungen zwischen Taiwan und USA während der Präsidentschaft von Tsai. Die Ergebnisse deuten auf eine Korrelation zwischen den außenpolitischen Ausrichtungen der beiden Regierungen und der Kommunikation über den Taiwan Newsletter hin. Die Analyse des Taiwan Newsletters zeigt, dass die Presse- und Informationsabteilung (Press and Information Division) des Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium darauf abzielt, ein Image Taiwans in der EU zu schaffen, das auf gemeinsamen Ideen und Werten basiert und so zur Gestaltung der Beziehungen zwischen der EU und Taiwan beiträgt.