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Racial Identities, Linguistic Proficiency, and Public Attitudes Towards Immigrants: Evidence From Two Surveys in Taiwan

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Abstract

Are host populations more accepting of immigrants who are racially similar and/or linguistically proficient in the host vernacular? The empirical focus in the literature has been largely dominated by Western democracies where the host society is white—and therefore the immigrants are often non-white. As such, we lack a theoretical explanation for how race moderates other markers—for example, language—when it comes to immigrant attitudes. To remedy this, we shift the focus to Taiwan, where the "New Residents"—a new catch-all census category for all post-1987 immigrants regardless of race, language, and national origins—offers an empirical opportunity to test our theory. In a conjoint experiment of Taiwanese attitudes and a survey of New Residents, we find attitudes are (1) most positive for *Han Chinese* who can speak a Taiwanese vernacular; (2) the least positive for *Han Chinese* who cannot speak a Taiwanese vernacular; and (3) relatively positive when immigrants are neither racially similar nor linguistically proficient. These findings, however, are conditional on the New Residents being from a non-politicized country (i.e., *not* China). The results have implications for how we study immigration, Taiwanese politics, and the Chinese diaspora.

Keywords

Chinese diaspora, immigration, New Residents, public opinion, race and ethnicity, Taiwan

In the past 50 years, global migration numbers have more than tripled (International Organization for Migration, 2019). Today, almost 4 percent of the global population lives outside their country of birth—a figure that is expected to increase in the post-pandemic years (Natarajan et al., 2022). This has implications for party politics (De Vries, 2018; Kriesi et al., 2008), government policies (Dennison, Kustov, and Geddes 2023), and intergroup relations (Kustov 2021). One common explanation for whether a host society tolerates or vilifies an immigrant population focuses on social threat. In this paper, we disaggregate this social threat—a multidimensional concept—into two markers and examine their interaction: race and language. Specifically, we ask: **Are host populations more accepting of immigrants when they are racially similar and/or linguistically proficient in the host vernacular?**

We focus on race and language for two reasons. First, from a social group standpoint, they are two of the most commonly used markers to define an imagined community (Anderson 1983). In the US, for example, per the 2021 Critical Issues Poll, 30 percent of Americans said they would be bothered by "an America where most people are not white." Likewise, more than 40 percent said they would be bothered by "an America where most people do not speak English at home." Second, from an individual standpoint, race and language are public markers (Chandra 2004). People can be identified and judged based on how they look with little effort; likewise, when people talk, how they talk allows for easy categorization. Conversely, other markers such as educational achievement, occupation, or even national origin can be hidden—or at a minimum, kept private. And while religion is arguably a visible cue (Choi, Poertner, and Sambanis 2023), we contend it *can be* hidden and rendered less public than either race or language. For

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example, people can "enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret" (Matthew 6:6, KJV).

In this paper, we examine the racial and linguistic boundaries between immigrants and the host population. While the literature on immigrant attitudes in developed democracies is rich, three related tendencies characterize these works. The first is a **normative** one driven by a negative development: The motivation behind many of these studies is the observed growing intolerance towards these newcomers (and by extension how we can address the resentment). The second is an **empirical** one: Much of the attention is on Western democracies. And as a result, we cannot easily infer whether the purported immigrant attitudes are generalizable to all host societies, democracies in general, or just those in the West. And the third is a **theoretical** one: Because the focus is often on Western democracies, the attention is usually about how white people respond to non-white immigrants. As a result, we do not have an adequate theory of how race moderates other social markers (e.g., language) and the interactive effects on immigration attitudes.

We address all three tendencies by shifting the attention to Taiwan—a country where public attitudes towards immigration have increased robustly and positively in the past decade (more than 60 percent support increasing immigration). Not only are there normative lessons and best practices to glean, Taiwan also offers an empirical opportunity for testing our theoretical argument: In 1987, the government opened up immigration after almost four decades of (nominally) closed borders and introduced a new census category called the "New Residents" (新住民). It is a pan-ethnic—but *politicized*—identity that would encompass all post-1987 immigrants regardless of their country of origin. Broadly speaking, today half of the New Residents are from China; the other half, from Southeast Asia. Here, it is important to recognize that not all immigrants from China are racially *Han Chinese*; there are 54 legally recognized ethnic minorities in China. Moreover, not all *Han Chinese* immigrants are (directly) from China. There is a large *Han Chinese* diaspora throughout Southeast Asia (Liu 2015). Additionally, (1) not everyone who is racially *Han Chinese*—whether they are from China or Southeast Asia—can speak one of the three Taiwanese vernaculars; but (2) since Mandarin is taught widely, non-*Han Chinese* immigrants can in principle speak a Taiwanese vernacular. In short, the New Resident category allows for the full crosscutting of race and language—without the congruence of national origins.

We argue—consistent with the literature—attitudes are most positive towards *Han Chinese* immigrants who can speak a Taiwanese vernacular; in contrast, attitudes are less positive when immigrants are racially non-*Han Chinese*. However, in a departure, we contend attitudes are the least positive when the immigrant is *Han Chinese* but cannot speak a Taiwanese vernacular. The mismatch between the visual marker of an ingroup with an auditory marker of an outgroup raises questions and fears. Finally, building on work focusing on South Korea—another non-Western democracy—we highlight how attitudes towards the racially similar and linguistically proficient immigrants can turn negative if the immigrant is from a politicized country of origin, that is, China.

We test our argument using two original surveys. The first is a conjoint experiment of Taiwanese people's attitudes towards New Residents. The survey—employing both within-subject and across-subject randomization—draws on a nationally representative sample (N = 2088). The second survey is a survey of New Residents and of their experiences in Taiwan (N = 780)—one of the largest to ever have been administered. The results highlight how immigrant attitudes and the experiences of immigrants are very much shaped by the intersection of racial similarities and linguistic proficiencies.

Explaining Immigrant Attitudes

In the immigration literature, there are two common arguments to explain host attitudes towards newcomers. One is about economic competition (Blumer 1958; Bobo 1988; LeVine and Campbell 1972). There is a tendency to see newcomers as threats when economic resources are scarce. These resources can range from jobs to capital, from land to market access. The other argument is about social conflicts. It is human nature to demarcate people around us into us-them categories (Tajfel and Turner 1979). When the two groups are culturally distinct, it is easy to see the other as a threat, thereby vilifying them (Gradstein and Schiff 2006). Of the two, it seems native attitudes are shaped more often by cultural concerns than economic ones (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014).

Cultural threats manifest in two ways. At one extreme, if an immigrant group is too different, it cannot integrate successfully. Even if it were able to, the host society will have changed too much—where the assumption is that change will be for the worse (Citrin, Levy, and Wright 2022; Citrin and Sides 2008; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004; Stephan et al., 2005). At the other extreme, if an immigrant group is too similar, the newcomers can blend in and steal resources that had been earmarked for those in the host society, for example, welfare benefits (Kim and Lee 2023; Tsuda 2003; Ward and Denney 2022).

And while cultural distance can be a threat, there are two concerns. The first is the **empirical** attention on Western democracies. When we focus on Western democracies, we cannot infer whether the purported

mechanisms are generalizable to all host societies, democracies specifically, or just Western countries. For example, Adida (2014) and Kim and Lee (2023) find that it is not the culturally distinct group that drives welfare chauvinism but rather those that are cultural proximate. The second is **theoretical.** Because the focus in the literature is often on Western democracies, the host population is therefore presumed to be white. And as a result, anti-immigration hostility is frequently directed at those who are racially different—that is, not white (see Bansak, Hainmueller, and Hangartner 2016; Clayton, Ferwerda, and Horiuchi 2021; Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015; Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto 2014; Jeannet, Heidland, and Ruhs 2021; Kustov 2021; Magni 2024; Sobolewska, Galandini, and Lessard-Philllips 2017; Ward 2019). But as we noted just above, there is work demonstrating how anti-immigration hostility can be highest when the newcomers are in fact foreign coethnics (Kim and Lee 2023; Tsuda 2003).

It is imperative to consider how race conditions other markers—for example, linguistic proficiencies—especially since genetic markers and language families often invoke geographical associations. Put differently, race and language are not randomly distributed globally. Thus, we cannot differentiate whether anti-immigrant attitudes are being driven by the phenotype, the vernacular, and/or the passport. While conjoint analyses (see Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015) can give us the necessary causal leverage, from an empirical standpoint, it is not always the case that the different markers always intersect—that is, there may be an empty cell. In this paper, we keep the focus on developed democracies but pivot to a non-Western democracy for external validity: Taiwan. Focusing on Taiwan also gives us leverage of an empirical opportunity where the immigrant population fills *all four cells* in a 2 × 2 matrix between race and language—and without congruence to national origins.

When Racial Identity and Linguistic Proficiencies Intersect

In Table 1, we consider the intersection between **racial identity** (i.e., *similar* versus *different*) and **linguistic proficiency** (i.e., *can speak* versus *cannot speak* host country vernacular)—yielding four cells. Let us start with the immigrant who is racially similar and can speak the host country vernacular. Here, we expect attitudes to be positive—in fact, the most positive. Locals are more likely to perceive these immigrants as "one of us." They are not visually seen as a threat to the national culture. Moreover, they are not cued from an auditory standpoint as an economic competitor.

Next, what happens when we shift to the diagonal cell—that is, when immigrants are racially different and cannot speak the local vernacular? From the outset, there is the visual cue that the immigrant is different. Interactions will expectedly be different. This may mean more gesticulation. There may be a tendency to slow down. There may be the need to pull out the phone and use a translator app. And if it turns out that the immigrant cannot speak the host country vernacular, there is no cognitive mismatch. The immigrant is clearly foreign—both visually and auditorily. Attitudes—from an absolute standpoint—may still be positive; they may also be negative. But from a relative standpoint, we argue attitudes in this cell will be more negative than if the immigrant were racially similar and linguistically proficient.

Let us now focus on the two remaining cells along the other diagonal (highlighted in gray). In both cells, there is a mismatch: One marker suggests the person is local; the other, the individual is foreign. Here, we argue the effects of the mismatch will depend on which marker is the one signaling the foreignness. When immigrants are racially similar, they can blend in; but if they cannot speak the host country vernacular, they cannot auditorily. In this situation, host societies respond negatively. The cognitive mismatch between the visual and auditory markers results in ostracization and mistrust. When locals see someone who looks racially similar, they expect to be able to engage as they normally would. However, if it turns out the other person cannot communicate, this forces locals to pause and reassess. One consideration is that the person is not a member of the host society but blends in—thus making them a social threat (Kim and Lee 2023; Tsuda 2003; Ward and Denney 2022). Another consideration is that the person is a member of the host society, but for whatever reason refuses to behave as norms would otherwise dictate (e.g., learning the language). This defection from the host society identity makes them social outcasts.

Table 1. Effects of Racial Identity and Linguistic Proficiency on Immigrant Attitudes.

	Linguistic Proficiency: *Can speak host vernacular*	Linguistic Proficiency: *Cannot speak host vernacular*
Racial Identity: *Similar to host society*	+	-
Racial Identity: *Different from host society*	0	0

In short, whether the psychology is fear or social outcast, attitudes are the least positive towards immigrants who are racially similar but not linguistically proficient.

In contrast, when an immigrant is racially different but can speak the host country language, this generates two possible responses. One is positive admiration. There is the appreciation of efforts to be a "good immigrant" and integrate (Hopkins 2015; Hsu 2015). Conversely, the other response is questions about why the immigrant can speak the local vernacular. Efforts to learn the host country language are seen with suspicion and as a threat (Grossman and Zonszein 2024). Given that the two responses are in opposite directions, we expect a neutral response in aggregate.

Taking these predictions together yields a rank ordering about host society attitudes towards immigrants. At the most extreme, attitudes are most positive towards those who are racially similar and can speak the language. Next are those who are racially different. This is regardless of their linguistic proficiencies—albeit for different reasons. And finally, the least positive are those who are racially similar but cannot speak the language. Our hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 1.1: Host society attitudes towards immigrants are the most positive when immigrants are *racially similar* and *linguistically proficiency in the host country vernacular.*

Hypothesis 1.2: Host society attitudes towards immigrants are the most negative when immigrants are *racially similar but linguistically not proficiency in the host country vernacular.*

The above discussion, however, assumes there has been no politicization. Yet we also know that not all outgroups are equally threatening: When governments and the media vilify certain groups, we see more exclusionary attitudes directed towards them. Hainmueller and Hopkins (2015), for example, find that Americans—regardless of their partisan ideology, economic situation, and ethnocentric preferences—are most negative towards those who did not have plans to work; those who entered the country without authorization; those who were from Iraq; and those who did not speak English. Similarly, in a series of papers, Hutchinson finds a jump in outgroup intolerance when the outgroup is associated with an external military attack (Hutchison and Gibler 2007); an internal insurgency campaign (Hutchison 2014); or an ongoing terrorist campaign (Peffley, Hutchison, and Shamir 2015). And likewise, we know that the politicization of a disease—whether it is cholera (Dutta and Rao 2015), COVID (Reny and Barreto 2022), Ebola (Adida, Dionne, and Platas 2020), HIV/AIDS (Devine, Ashby Plant, and Harrison 1999), trachoma (Daniels 1997), or typhus (Pierce 1917)—can result in exclusionary attitudes directed at those associated with the illness. In short, we would expect the following:

Hypothesis 2: Host society attitudes towards a politicized group are more negative than those of a non-politicized group.

Note, however, that the politicized group need not be an obvious outgroup—whether racially or linguistically. In fact, political elites can frame immigrants who are culturally similar to the host society—if not outright coethnics—as a threat. This threat can manifest because there is the belief that these individuals are taking from the state (Adida 2014; Kim and Lee 2023; Ward and Denney 2022) and in some cases without giving back—for example, doing military service (de Guzman 2022) or paying taxes (Goudenhooft 2017; Liu, Power, and Xu 2022). Additionally, these coethnics can be a threat because they are from an enemy state, that is, there is some additional national security dimension (Song 2023). Here, in contrast to those who either look racially different and/or sound linguistically foreign, the ability of an immigrant to blend in is precisely what makes them a threat—and thus subject to politicization.

Ethnic Diversity in Taiwan

Historically, Taiwan is an immigrant destination—for Asians of different races from different countries of origin. In general, there have been three contemporary migration waves (see Table 2). In the **first wave** during the Qing Dynasty (1760–1895), there were the *Han Chinese* from Fujian Province in China who spoke the *Minnan* vernacular; and (2) the *Han Chinese* from (mostly) Guangdong Province who spoke *Hakka*.

A few comments warrant discussion, especially for those not familiar with Taiwan or China. First, *Han Chinese* is the **race** often associated with modern-day China. While the *Han Chinese* constitute most of the population in China today (just over 90 percent), they are not the only racial or ethnic group in China. In fact, the current government in Beijing recognizes 54 minority groups including the Uyghurs. This is in stark contrast to how Westerners classify "Asian" as the race and "Chinese" as an ethnic group.

Second, while *Minnan* and *Hakka* are both "dialects" of the **Chinese language**, the two are in fact mutually unintelligible. The gap is much larger than British English versus American English. Instead, it is more akin to English versus Irish Gaelic (Liu 2021). Relations between the two *Han Chinese* groups have not always been amicable—and neither were relations between either group and the indigenous populations.

Table 2. Demographic Diversity of Taiwan: Locals Versus Immigrants.

Migration Year	Political Classification	National Origin	Race	Language	Population[a]
—	Original Resident (原住民)	Taiwan	Indigenous	Indigenous	2.5% (2023)
1760–1895	Benshengren (本省人)	China	*Han Chinese*	Minnan	74.5%
				Hakka	13.2%
1945–1949	Waishengren (外省人)	China	*Han Chinese*	Mandarin	9.9%
1987-	New Resident (新住民)	China	*Han Chinese*	Mandarin	2.5% (2023)
				Minnan	
				Hakka	
				Cantonese	
			Non-*Han Chinese*[b]	Mandarin	
				Minnan	
				Hakka	
				Cantonese	
				Non-Chinese vernacular	
		Southeast Asia	*Han Chinese*	Mandarin	
				Minnan	
				Hakka	
				Cantonese	
				Non-Chinese vernacular[c]	
			Non-*Han Chinese*	Mandarin	
				Non-Chinese vernacular[c]	

[a]Population numbers do not add up to 100 percent.
[b]Non-*Han Chinese* include Hui Zhuang, Hui, and Kazakh.
[c]Non-Chinese vernaculars include Vietnamese, Indonesian, and Filipino.

Following the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), Taiwan became a Japanese colony—and *Han Chinese* migration from China subsequently ceased. Under the Japanese, the *Minnans* and *Hakkas* were lumped together and afforded the same treatment (Ching 2001). Their linked fate would continue post-WW2.

In the **second wave,** with the Kuomintang's retreat from China to Taiwan, there were tensions between (1) the already-established *Minnans* and *Hakkas*—who were politically classified as "people of the province" (本省人; *Benshengren*); and (2) the newly arrived *Han Chinese* who spoke *Mandarin* (Wu 2021)—that is, the "people from outside the province" (外省人; *Waishengren*). Despite the numerical dominance of the *Benshengren*—constituting around 80 percent of the population—it was the *Waishengren* that dominated the political, economic, and social landscape for the next four decades. During the Kuomintang authoritarian period, there would be no cross-strait exchange between Taiwan and China, closing off immigration once again.

Regulations were subsequently relaxed in 1987—and thus ushering in the **third wave.** As Kuomintang leader Chiang Ching-kuo recognized his death was imminent, he expressed a desire for fellow *Waishengren* to be able to visit their ancestral homeland, bring over relatives who had been left behind, and if necessary for men to find wives who not only bore children but also looked after the elderly parents (Interview—May 2022). As a result, most of the initial newcomers were women—specifically, "foreign wives" (外籍新娘).

By 2003, one out of every six marriages in Taiwan involved a foreigner. Some were from China; others, from Southeast Asia. Here we should note that (1) just as not everyone in China is racially *Han Chinese*, (2) the *Han Chinese* racial group can be found outside of China. What drove the migration of *Han Chinese* men to Taiwan during the first wave (i.e., economic opportunities) was the same impetus for driving *Han Chinese* men to California during the Gold Rush—and to Southeast Asia. As we see in Figure 1, the *Han Chinese* diaspora—arguably the largest in the world (Tan 2013)—is spread far and wide, with large numbers of them from Southeast Asia. Given this discussion, when we note that half of the foreign marriages in Taiwan involve someone from Southeast Asia, many of them are of *Han Chinese* heritage.

While many of the third wave newcomers were foreign wives in arranged marriages, this was only the case at the outset. Over the subsequent decades, we see the expansion, evolution, and emergence of a politically salient census category known as the "New Residents" (新住民). Changes happened on two fronts. The first was the expansion to include other types of marriages including (1) Taiwanese men marrying foreign women through non-arranged channels; (2) Taiwanese women marrying

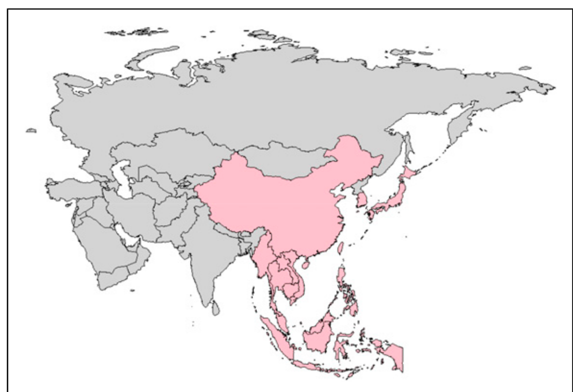

Figure 1. Han Chinese diaspora globally.

foreign men; and (3) same-sex marriages involving a Taiwanese and a non-Taiwanese. The second expansion was in occupation. Marriage was not the only mechanism available to newcomers—that is, newcomers need not be married to a Taiwanese. Instead, working in certain sectors can be another institutionalized channel for becoming a New Resident.

Today, the New Residents number totaled 579,861 (2.5 percent)—making them roughly the same size as the indigenous population (584,125). And while New Residents is an inclusive category, it is important to remember that it is fundamentally a very diverse group. There is diversity in the **national origin.** Half are from China; the other half are from mostly Southeast Asia, including Vietnam (20 percent), Indonesia (5.5 percent), and the Philippines (1.8 percent). There is also diversity in **racial/ethnic identities.** Among those coming from China, not everyone is of the *Han Chinese* race. There are Muslim Huis, Kazakhs, and Zhuangs. And among New Residents from Southeast Asia, as we noted previously, there is a sizable *Han Chinese* population. In fact, Southeast Asia is home to one of the largest *Han Chinese* diasporas globally (Liu and Ricks 2022).

And finally, there is diversity in **linguistic proficiencies.** At one extreme, it is possible that a New Resident cannot speak any Chinese vernacular; at the other extreme, it is possible that a New Resident can speak at least one of the three Taiwanese vernaculars (*Mandarin, Minnan,* or *Hakka*). Alternatively, it is possible that while a New Resident can speak a Chinese vernacular, it is not one that is used in Taiwan. The most common example here would be Cantonese. While Cantonese is a Chinese vernacular and is widely spoken throughout Southeast Asia and globally, it is not spoken in Taiwan—in stark contrast to the likes of *Minnan* and *Hakka*. The fact that it is mutually unintelligible to *Mandarin, Minnan*, or *Hakka* makes the vernacular as foreign as Vietnamese, Indonesian, or even Ukrainian. We see this diversity in Table 2.

In general, public attitudes towards New Residents are more positive than negative. This has not, however, always been the case (see Lee 2023). In 2003, the Taiwan Social Change Survey (TSCS) asked a question about immigration attitudes: "*Do you think the number of immigrants nowadays should be (1) increased a lot; … or (5) reduced a lot.*" Respondents were allowed to also indicate that they could not choose. The responses were astoundingly negative: Less than 5 percent said they supported increasing immigration numbers; in contrast, almost two-thirds of the respondents said they believed immigration numbers should be reduced (66.1 percent). Recall, all new post-1987 immigrants are classified as New Residents—regardless of their national origin. Since 2003, the TSCS has asked some variant of an immigration attitude question six times. As we see in Figure 2, positive attitudes towards immigration have steadily increased since 2010. And in fact, since 2013, the percentage of respondents with positive attitudes towards immigration has surpassed that of negative attitudes.

Study 1: A Conjoint Experiment on a Taiwanese Sample

To measure Taiwanese public attitudes towards New Residents, we fielded a conjoint survey experiment (IRB Study 00002773). We worked with Kantar, an international survey company that had an office in Taiwan. The survey was administered in May and June 2022 to a nationally representative sample of 2088 respondents online. The online format was the only option as Taiwan was experiencing a COVID wave during this period. The sample included quotas on age, gender, region, and income.

Experiment Design

Respondents were asked to choose between two immigrant profiles. The profiles differed on four attributes: **country of origin** (*none stated, China, Hong Kong, Vietnam*, and *Ukraine*); **race/ethnicity** (*none stated, Cantonese,* and *Hakka*); **occupation/visa status** (*none stated, spouse, blue collar, white collar*, and *refugee*[1]); and **Mandarin proficiency** (*none stated, no proficiency,* and *proficient*). A few comments merit discussion. First, it is possible for a profile to have no information on all four attributes.

Second, given the spread of the *Han Chinese* diaspora, Cantonese and Hakkas can be found throughout Asia. We wanted to leverage the identification of a *Han Chinese* heritage from outside China. However, at the same time, not all people of *Han Chinese* heritage are the same. There is a vibrant Hakka community in Taiwan—but the same

cannot be said for Cantonese. We see this in Figure 3. We wanted to identify differences in subethnic group attitudes despite both groups being racially *Han Chinese*.

Third, we list Ukraine as an originating country because we wanted a Western immigrant group that did not have a large population in Taiwan (e.g., Americans). An existing large population could risk endogenously skewing public attitudes. At the same time, we did not want a completely random group about which the Taiwanese would have no opinion whatsoever (e.g., Icelanders). Here, the Ukrainians magically fit the methodological criteria: While its population in Taiwan was small, it was not an unknown country. Russia's invasion of Ukraine had just happened a few months prior, and there was intense mutual cognizance—even if it were politicized—among the Taiwanese population of a larger, aggressive neighbor. The abstract notion of there being refugees from Ukraine was not foreign; in fact, Taiwan did support Ukrainian refugees. Note that since the likelihood of there being a Cantonese or Hakka Ukrainian is quite low (Liu 2021), we set up the conjoint design such that this combination is not possible.

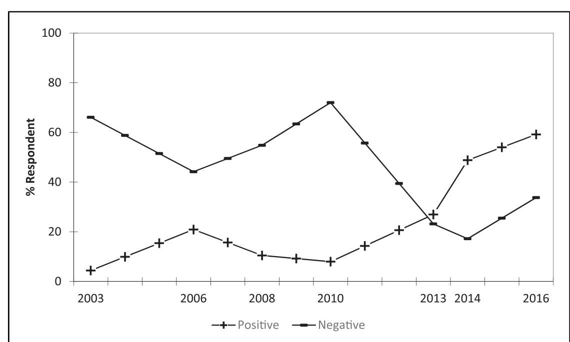

Figure 2. Public attitudes towards immigrants in Taiwan. (Source: Taiwan Social Change Survey).

After seeing each pair of profiles, respondents were asked about three different immigrant policies: one generalized, one specifically about the perceived threats of immigrants, and one specifically about the altruism to help. For each policy, respondents are asked to choose which immigrant they would favor benefiting from such policy. The policies are as follows:

Admission: *Should the Taiwanese government ease immigration policy for* Person A *or* Person B, *making the process for obtaining permanent residency easier?*

Healthcare: *Neither* Person A *nor* Person B *has permanent residency and is currently not eligible for nationalized healthcare. Should the Taiwanese government offer nationalized healthcare for* Person A *or* Person B?

Mother Tongue: *Should the Taiwanese government offer mother tongue language classes for* Person A's *or* Person B's children?

We ask these three policies because they holistically capture public attitudes towards immigrants. For example, a respondent may be generally okay with the idea of immigrants moving about in society, but not when it comes to competition over something that is zero sum. Likewise, someone may be willing to give immigrants some public good that everyone else in society gets but will draw the line at some private good that would benefit only the minorities (e.g., something that is culturally specific). Here, in addition to a general question about admission numbers, a question about healthcare allows us to examine possible welfare chauvinism (see Kim and Lee 2023; Ward and Denney 2022). In Taiwan, the nationalized healthcare insurance—a single payer system that has been largely successful (Cheng 2003, 2015)—is widely popular among the public (Scott 2020).

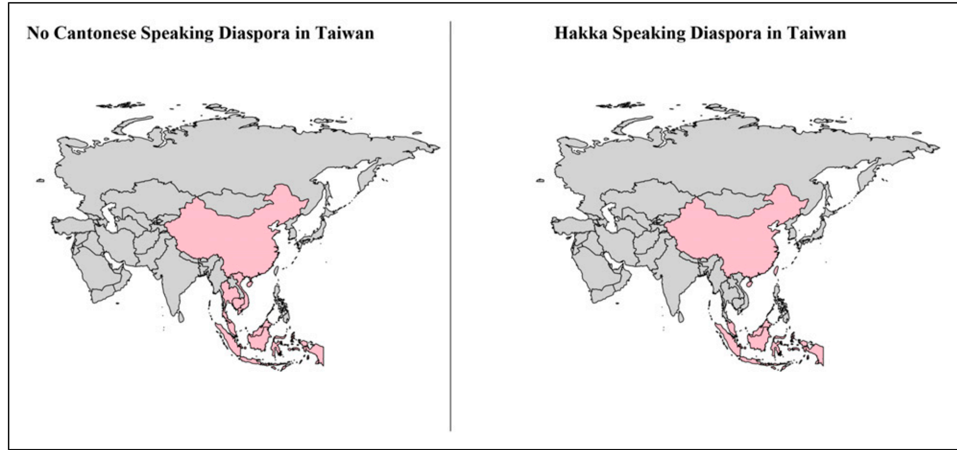

Figure 3. Cantonese speakers versus Hakka speakers globally.

Conversely, the question about mother tongue language classes allows for perspective-taking. During the authoritarian period, the government pursued an aggressive Mandarin-only language policy that prohibited the use of both Minnan and Hakka in public (Wu 2021). Since 2000, the government (regardless of partisanship) has promoted the rights of mother tongue education—whether it is an indigenous language or a New Resident language.

Respondents are then asked to repeat this exercise for five rounds. Following Leeper et al. (2020), we estimate marginal means—which are insensitive to the reference category choice—to provide a general summary of respondent preferences. We also report the average marginal component effects (AMCEs) in the Supplemental Materials (Figure S1.1). Mathematically, AMCEs are simply differences between marginal means at each attribute value and the marginal mean in the reference category, ignoring other attributes.[2] The unit of analysis is the immigrant profile, and the dependent variable is whether said profile was chosen by a respondent (1 if yes).

Regression Analysis

As we see in Figure 4, respondents generally express support for easing immigration policies, extending healthcare to New Residents who are not (for whatever reason) eligible, and offering mother tongue language classes for New Resident children. For **national origin,** there is positive support for those coming from Vietnam, Hong Kong, or Ukraine. The positive sentiment towards Ukraine is not surprising: Ukraine was in the news when the survey was being administered, and during this time, the Taiwanese population demonstrated strong sympathies for Ukraine. Conversely, respondents hold unequivocally negative views towards immigrants from China, who are preferred approximately 8%–10 percent less for all three outcome variables. We will examine the reasons behind these negative attitudes in greater detail below.

When it comes to **race,** we do not see evidence of a *Han Chinese* racial preference. What we do see, however, is that respondents favored Hakka immigrants to Cantonese ones. Recall, while Hakkas and Cantonese are both *Han Chinese,* only one (the former) already has a presence in Taiwan while the other (the latter) does not—even if it is sizable globally. The finding of a significant difference in subethnic group attitudes suggests all else being equal, there are preferences for immigrants who are not just racially similar but cultural-linguistically as well.

Likewise, for **languages,** there is a stronger preference for New Residents who can speak a Taiwanese vernacular—whether explicitly Mandarin or implicitly Hakka. There are two caveats. First, while there may be more support for easing immigration and offering healthcare for Mandarin speakers, when it comes to supporting mother tongue instruction for children of non-Mandarin speakers, the results seem flipped. We contend it is not. People who can speak Mandarin have a language

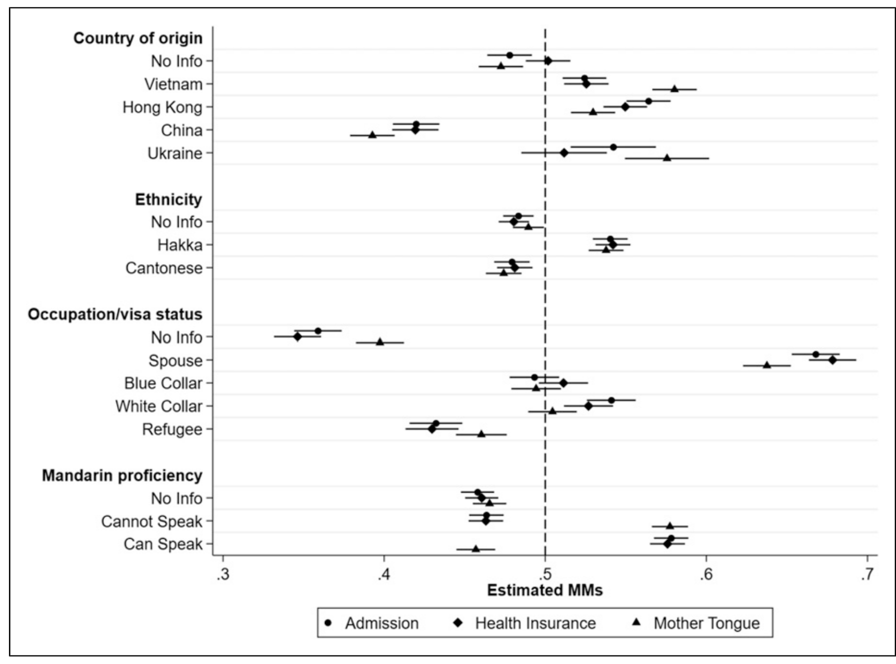

Figure 4. Marginal means (95 percent CI). **Note**: Estimates are marginal means with 95 percent confidence intervals. In our forced choice conjoint design, marginal means by construct average 0.5. Values above 0.5 indicate features that increase profile favorability, and conversely, values below 0.5 suggest features that decrease profile favorability.

for integration; in contrast, those who cannot speak Mandarin are perceived as needing more help. We see this support manifesting acutely (7.7 percent greater favorability, 95 percent CI = [6.6 percent, 8.9 percent]). In short, it seems respondents may prefer those who can speak Mandarin but are willing to support those who cannot. The second caveat is that respondents are more willing to support Vietnamese and Ukrainian mother tongue education than Cantonese. This is consistent with our argument: A Cantonese who can speak Mandarin does not need to have their mother tongue taught in schools; conversely, a Cantonese who cannot speak Mandarin raises concerns. Recall, when an immigrant is racially similar but cannot linguistically communicate, there are questions about the mismatch. Such concerns, however, are less present with a Vietnamese and a Ukrainian.

What generates the largest effects among the four attributes is being given some information about the New Resident's **occupation and visa status.** Unlike findings in the US and Europe (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014), there is little evidence of a class-based distinction. The differences in preferences for blue-collared versus white-collared are small, particularly for extending healthcare and offering mother tongue language classes (but not necessarily for easing immigration).[3] What draws the largest positive response is when respondents are told the individual is a foreign spouse. Here, no detail is given about gender, education, or income. Yet it seems the association of foreign spouse as a foreign woman from a lower socioeconomic background brings out the inclusive attitudes among the average Taiwanese respondent. And note that this result mirrors the figure we see from the TSCS in Figure 2.

What about the interactive effects between race and language? Here, we calculate the marginal means of interaction between conjoint attributes, which allow us to directly compare the favorability of immigrant profiles with different combinations of racial and linguistic features. Figure 5 reports the results of race/ethnicity and language. We find that the impact of race/ethnicity depends on Mandarin proficiency. The positive effects of Hakka and Cantonese immigrants—that is, those who are racially *Han Chinese*—are only evident among those who can speak Mandarin. Conversely, attitudes toward Hakkas and Cantonese immigrants who cannot speak Mandarin are less positive *but* note that it is only significant for the cannot-speak Cantonese. The reason why the Hakkas do not incur the same penalty is that they also speak Hakka—one of the other Taiwanese vernaculars. In contrast, as Cantonese is not spoken in Taiwan, the Cantonese who cannot speak Mandarin are punished. This is consistent with our argument that attitudes are most positive when immigrants are racially similar and linguistically proficient, but they are less—if not the least—positive when they are racially similar but not linguistically proficient.

Note, however, when we look at the effects for those with no racial information—that is, those assumed to be non-*Han Chinese*—we see similar favorability for those who are proficient in Mandarin. And while the positive effect disappears for those who cannot speak Mandarin, some suggestive evidence shows that they are still preferred over Cantonese immigrants who also cannot speak Mandarin.[4] Simply put, there is a reward for being linguistically proficient; and conversely, there is a penalty for not being so—especially when the immigrant is racially similar.

We also consider the interaction between national origin and language. Figure 6 shows that people prefer immigrants who have the requisite linguistic proficiency.[5] And while favorability decreases when immigrants cannot speak Mandarin, attitudes remain neutral if these cannot-speak New Residents are from Vietnam or Ukraine (i.e., those assumed to be non-*Han Chinese*). In contrast, immigrants from *Han Chinese* race are the least favored if they cannot speak Mandarin.[6]

These findings suggest that people prefer immigrants who share their racial background and possess linguistic proficiency. For those who are of the same race as the host society, they do incur a heavy penalty when there is no common vernacular. In essence, racial congruence alone is inadequate to overcome the linguistic barrier. Note, however, that Mandarin proficiency can overcome racial differences. As we saw in Figure 6, respondents are more supportive of Vietnamese and Ukrainian immigrants who can speak Mandarin than those who cannot.[7]

Unpacking the Politization Effect: Immigrants from China

These results are all consistent with Hypothesis 1. Recall, however, Hypothesis 2 argues that the effects are more negative when a group has been politicized. In the Taiwan case, it is those from China that have been politicized. As we saw in Figure 4, respondents exhibit the least preference for immigrants from China. This negative sentiment is statistically distinguishable from zero in almost all cases. To further consider the effects of politicization, we compare immigrant attitudes of respondents with different predispositions toward China. In the subgroup analysis, we estimate differences in conditional marginal means (Leeper, Hobolt, and Tilley, 2020).

Figure 7 reveals that respondents whose father is a *Benshengren* (in Taiwan, ethnic identity usually passes through the father—see Wu 2021) are much more

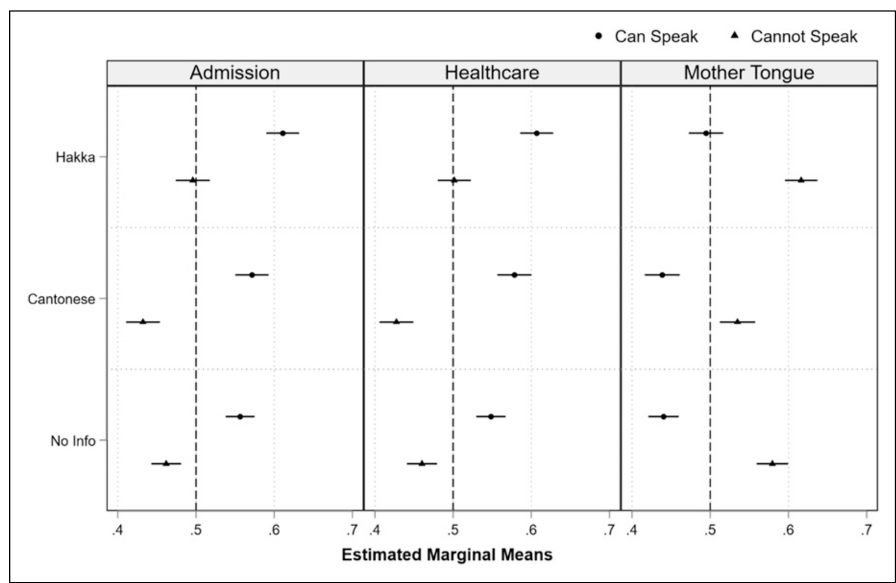

Figure 5. Interactions: Ethnicity and Mandarin proficiencies (95 percent CI). **Note:** We calculate marginal means for the interaction between ethnicity and linguistic proficiency. In our forced choice conjoint design, marginal means by construct average 0.5. Values above 0.5 indicate features that increase profile favorability, and conversely, values below 0.5 suggest features that decrease profile favorability.

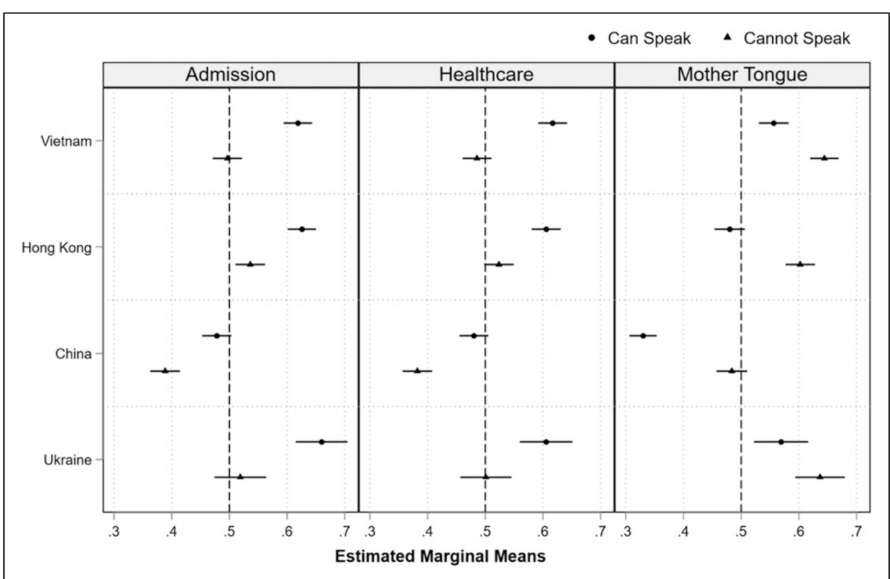

Figure 6. Interactions: National origin and Mandarin proficiencies (95 percent CI). **Note:** We calculate the marginal means for the interaction between country-of-origin and linguistic proficiency. In our forced choice conjoint design, marginal means by construct average 0.5. Values above 0.5 indicate features that increase profile favorability, and conversely, values below 0.5 suggest features that decrease profile favorability.

negative in their attitudes towards New Residents from China than those whose father is a *Waishengren*. This is to be expected: *Benshengren* are descendants of those who migrated before 1895; conversely, *Waishengren* are those who migrated—or descended from those who migrated—during 1945–1949. What is critical here is that the latter is more likely to have contemporary ancestral ties with China. Note that these differences are robust even when we consider using party ID instead of ethnicity (see Figure SI.5)

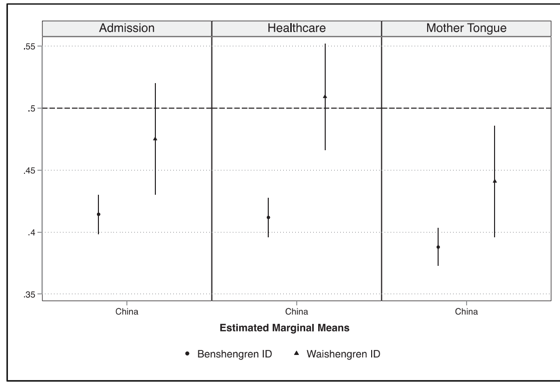

Figure 7. Subgroup differences in preferences of new immigrants from China. **Note**: We report the marginal means of China in the "Country of Origin" attribute. The coefficients are estimated using all conjoint attributes. *Benshengren* are Hans who migrated to Taiwan before 1896; *Waishengren*, between 1945 and 1949.

In short, this difference highlights how attitudes towards New Residents depend on the country of origin. Moreover, the vilification is due to a specific political process as opposed to a generalized fear of COVID vulnerability—a concern given when the survey was administered. Of course, this is not to deny that the Taiwanese government did not politicize China as the originating state for the virus. What we are contending, however, is that the effects manifested through political channels as opposed to epidemiological ones.

Study 2: A Survey of New Residents

To see how whether—and if so, how—government policies and public attitudes translate into New Residents experiences, we fielded a second survey over a three-month period (April–July 2022). This time we targeted the New Residents. The survey was available online in nine languages: traditional Chinese, simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Tagalog, Thai, Khmer, Burmese, and English. Almost half of the respondents (45 percent) took the survey in traditional Chinese.

Given COVID restrictions, systematic recruitment was a challenge. The sheer diversity of the New Residents population—not just in languages but also in spatial spread—made it difficult to draw a nationally representative sample. Instead, recruitment was based primarily on convenience and snowball sampling. We believed with a sufficiently large sample, one based on convenience would have the same effects as one drawn representatively (Coppock, Leeper, and Mullinix 2018). We met with (1) academics in the three largest cities (Taipei, Kaohsiung, and Taichung) who worked on New Residents and had connections to the community in their respective cities; (2) political figures at the national and local levels—many of them being New Residents themselves; (3) religious leaders including several Buddhist monks, multiple Protestant pastors, a Catholic priest, and two Muslim imams; (4) principals and teachers that taught Southeast Asian languages in schools; (5) medical professionals—that is, doctors and bureaucrats, both at the national and local levels; (6) law enforcement officers including a precinct captain who previously oversaw all matters pertaining to foreigners in their city; and (7) community organizers such as women's advocates. Survey respondents are from all over the island, with the central region being slightly over-represented given where we were based. In all, we collected $N = 780$ surveys.

Most of the respondents are female (79 percent) and between the ages of 30 and 50 (67 percent)—although they range from as young as 18 ($N = 4$) to over 70 ($N = 2$).[8] In terms of education, 31 percent (the plurality) had only a middle school education; another 25 percent had completed high school. Half reported making less than 34,000NT per month (51 percent). And more than half have been in Taiwan for anywhere between one and 10 years (54 percent).

In terms of national origin, the vast majority came from Southeast Asia: Vietnam (33 percent), Indonesia (28 percent), Thailand (6 percent), the Philippines (5 percent), and Myanmar (3 percent). Chinese respondents constituted only 19 percent of the sample—a proportion much smaller than that in the actual population (52 percent). There are two related explanations. First, while there may be a lot of Chinese New Residents, they tend to blend into Taiwanese society. This makes it harder to find them. Second, conversely, Southeast Asians are more likely to be concentrated in groups, tend to face similar challenges (thereby necessitating such civic organizations), and can visually stick out (e.g., people are more likely to know their neighbor is from "not Taiwan" if the neighbor were from Indonesia than China). This makes identification easier for surveying.

Independent Variables: Han Chinese Race versus Taiwanese Vernaculars

To measure whether someone is racially *Han Chinese*, we asked respondents not just their national origin but also their race/ethnicity. For example, multiple respondents from Vietnam, Indonesia, and Thailand indicated they were of *Han Chinese* descent, whether it was "Chinese," "Hakka," or "Teochew." We consider all these individuals to be *Han Chinese*. Conversely, while most respondents from China are racially *Han Chinese*, not everyone is. There were women of Muslim Hui descent; there were also those who identified as Kazakhs (from China) and

Zhuang. We did not code these respondents as *Han Chinese* despite their passports indicating they were Chinese. Using this coding scheme, 31 percent of the respondents are considered racially *Han Chinese*.

To measure Taiwanese vernacular proficiency, we asked respondents whether they knew *Mandarin, Minnan,* and/or *Hakka* before coming to Taiwan. We wanted to avoid asking about proficiency in *any* Chinese vernacular since being proficient in only Cantonese, for example, would result in the same linguistic barriers as being proficient in only Vietnamese. Likewise, we intentionally avoided asking exclusively about Mandarin since individuals proficient in *Minnan* or *Hakka* could still navigate their way around Taiwan with little difficulty. Respondents could self-identify as (0) not knowing, (1) knowing a little bit, or (2) knowing a Taiwanese vernacular. Most of the respondents did not know any Taiwanese vernacular before coming to Taiwan (56 percent).[9]

Dependent Variable

We asked multiple questions to tap into New Residents attitudes towards the Taiwanese state. One is about the interactions with the everyday bureaucrats, and another is about their overall satisfaction with being in Taiwan:

> Do you agree with the following statements? Civil servants in the local government offices are friendly and helpful to me.
>
> Do you agree with the following statements? I am satisfied to be in Taiwan.

For both questions, answers ranged along a four-point scale from "strongly disagree" (0) to "strongly agree" (3). Almost half (47 percent) of the respondents strongly agreed that civil servants in local offices are friendly. Additionally, 55 percent of the respondents are very happy with being Taiwan.

We also employ another measure. We ask respondents how much they trusted the following seven institutions: the president, the current ruling party, the national government, the local government, the police, the immigration office, and the national health insurance administration. For all seven organizations, the choices ranged from "strongly distrust" (0) to "strongly trust" (3). The alpha Cronbach score between the seven measures 0.95. The institution commanding the most trust is the national health insurance administration (2.6), and the ruling party as the least trusted of the seven (2.1). From these seven measures, we take the average (2.45).

Regression Analysis

We run a series of multivariate OLS regressions testing the effects of *Han Chinese* racial identity and Taiwanese vernacular proficiency—unconditionally and conditionally—on each of the three dependent variables (see Table 3). We also control for the respondent's gender, age, duration, education, income, and the extent of their daily interactions that is still conducted in their native language. We estimate the models with robust standard errors and with country-of-origin fixed effects.

At first glance, it seems being racially *Han Chinese* or being able to speak a Taiwanese vernacular—each on its own—has a negative effect on respondent's interactions with civil servants in the local government offices (Model 1), their overall satisfaction with being in Taiwan (Model 2), and their confidence of the political system in general (Model 3). Yet, it also seems their interaction—that is, being of *Han Chinese* race *and* being able to speak a Taiwanese vernacular—has a positive effect. To make better sense of these moderating effects, we plot the predictive margins.

We begin with the overall political confidence (see Figure 8) and then plot the predictive margins for each individual political organization. The pattern is robust. For respondents who identified as *Han Chinese*, their attitudes of the Taiwanese state improve as their linguistic proficiency increases. This is consistent with theoretical expectations: At this point, they can engage with society unencumbered. Interestingly—but consistent with theoretical predictions—a *Han Chinese* respondent who cannot speak a Taiwanese vernacular has the least positive experience. This suggests a double penalty. While the individual may look racially like a *Han Chinese,* their inability to talk like one makes them a black sheep. This incongruence makes them shunned—or at least to perceive being shunned. And this perception of being shunned is not unwarranted. Recall, in the conjoint experiment, the effects for the *Han Chinese* non-Mandarin speakers were statistically non-differentiable from the placebo.

Conversely, respondents who are not racially *Han Chinese* and who arrived in Taiwan without any Taiwanese vernacular proficiency have generally positive attitudes towards the state. On the one hand, this may seem surprising. On the other hand, it is consistent with government policies and interview responses. These individuals both look and sound like they are outgroup members. It is clear they need help. And to this end, the government does provide substantial resources—from translating government documents into their native languages to making interpreters available when visiting government offices. These bridging efforts do not go unnoticed, and it manifests as a positive experience (Jap 2024). Note that these exchanges—almost by default—are cursory. In contrast, if individuals can speak a Taiwanese vernacular, this means their contact with the state can be more extensive and regular. And as a result,

Table 3. Attitudes of New Residents Towards the Taiwanese State.

	Civil Servants Friendly	Satisfied: Being in Taiwan	Political Confidence
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Han Chinese	−0.459 (0.138)‡	−0.429 (0.122)‡	−0.457 (0.027)‡
Speak Vernacular: A Little	−0.303 (0.145)†	−0.683 (0.090)‡	−0.225 (0.029)‡
Speak Vernacular: Yes	−0.311 (0.132)†	−0.050 (0.088)	−0.252 (0.019)‡
Han × Vernacular: A Little	0.503 (0.213)†	1.160 (0.144)‡	0.601 (0.042)‡
Han × Vernacular: Yes	0.830 (0.202)‡	0.327 (0.150)†	0.807 (0.041)‡
Age Bracket	0.000 (0.018)	−0.021 (0.016)	0.008 (0.005)
Female	0.075 (0.070)	−0.149 (0.060)†	−0.044 (0.021)†
Years in Taiwan	−0.038 (0.021)*	−0.018 (0.020)	−0.009 (0.007)
Education Level	0.063 (0.027)†	0.013 (0.024)	0.010 (0.009)
Income Level	0.029 (0.013)†	0.030 (0.015)†	−0.006 (0.008)
Continued Native Language (%)	0.284 (0.080)‡	−0.386 (0.073)‡	−0.060 (0.027)†
Country Dummy: *Cambodia*	0.191 (0.182)	−0.023 (0.157)	0.326 (0.048)‡
Country Dummy: *Hong Kong*	0.270 (0.156)*	−0.015 (0.200)	0.099 (0.064)
Country Dummy: *Indonesia*	0.644 (0.096)‡	0.079 (0.086)	0.317 (0.040)‡
Country Dummy: *Japan*	0.793 (0.133)‡	0.418 (0.116)‡	0.419 (0.066)‡
Country Dummy: *Malaysia*	0.417 (0.116)‡	0.280 (0.118)†	0.253 (0.066)‡
Country Dummy: *Myanmar*	0.522 (0.162)‡	0.248 (0.144)*	0.121 (0.054)†
Country Dummy: *Philippines*	0.420 (0.124)‡	0.201 (0.123)	0.318 (0.042)‡
Country Dummy: *Thailand*	0.828 (0.111)‡	0.100 (0.083)	0.287 (0.054)‡
Country Dummy: *United States*	0.694 (0.121)‡	0.267 (0.119)†	0.247 (0.089)‡
Country Dummy: *Vietnam*	0.700 (0.101)‡	0.102 (0.084)	0.349 (0.042)‡
Constant	1.641 (0.201)‡	2.985 (0.161)‡	0.607 (0.057)‡
N	516	480	422
R^2	0.288	0.261	0.482

Note: Ordinary least square with robust standard errors. Reference category for Country Dummy: Mainland China. $^{*}p \leq 0.10$, $^{\dagger}p \leq 0.05$, and $^{\ddagger}p \leq 0.01$.

they are able to experience how linguistic recognition does not always translate into substantive accommodation. Even if the interactions are non-negative, there may be frustrations with how the state is not doing enough. As such, we see fewer positive experiences.

Sensitivity Analysis

These results—while robust—raise two caveats and possible concerns. The first relates to measurement. Racial identification is inherently hard to measure. There is ample evidence that racial identification can fluctuate differently between self- versus other-identification strategies (see Clealand 2023; Csata, Hlatky, and Liu 2021; Ostfeld and Yadon 2022)—with implications for public attitudes. To consider this, as an alternative measure, we also asked respondents to identify whether any of their four grandparents (father's father, father's mother, mother's father, and mother's mother) is racially *Han Chinese.* With this coding scheme, 35 percent of the respondents answered having at least one *Han Chinese* grandparent: 9 percent had one *Han Chinese* grandparent, 3 percent had two *Han Chinese* grandparents, 3 percent had three *Han Chinese* grandparents, and 20 percent had four *Han Chinese* grandparents. Correlation between the two measures is 0.67. The results in Table 3 remain substantively unchanged when we rerun the same models using this alternative identification measure (see Table SI. 1).

Identity is also hard to measure not just because of *who* is doing the measuring, but because of *which* identity is being measured—that is, what happens when there has been intergroup marriage? Consider that 15 percent of the respondents identified they had some combination of *Han Chinese* **and non-Han Chinese** grandparents. The potential measurement error is not just with these 15 percent. For New Residents from a place like Vietnam—where the border with China has been historically porous, migration rates frequent, and intermarriage rates non-trivial—it is possible that there is a respondent who (1) self-identifies as Vietnamese, (2) likewise identifies all four of their grandparents as Vietnamese, yet (3) is seen by the Taiwanese as being racially *Han Chinese.* To ensure these respondents are not driving our results, we rerun the models from Table 3 with respondents from Vietnam removed (see Table SI.2) and with respondents from any

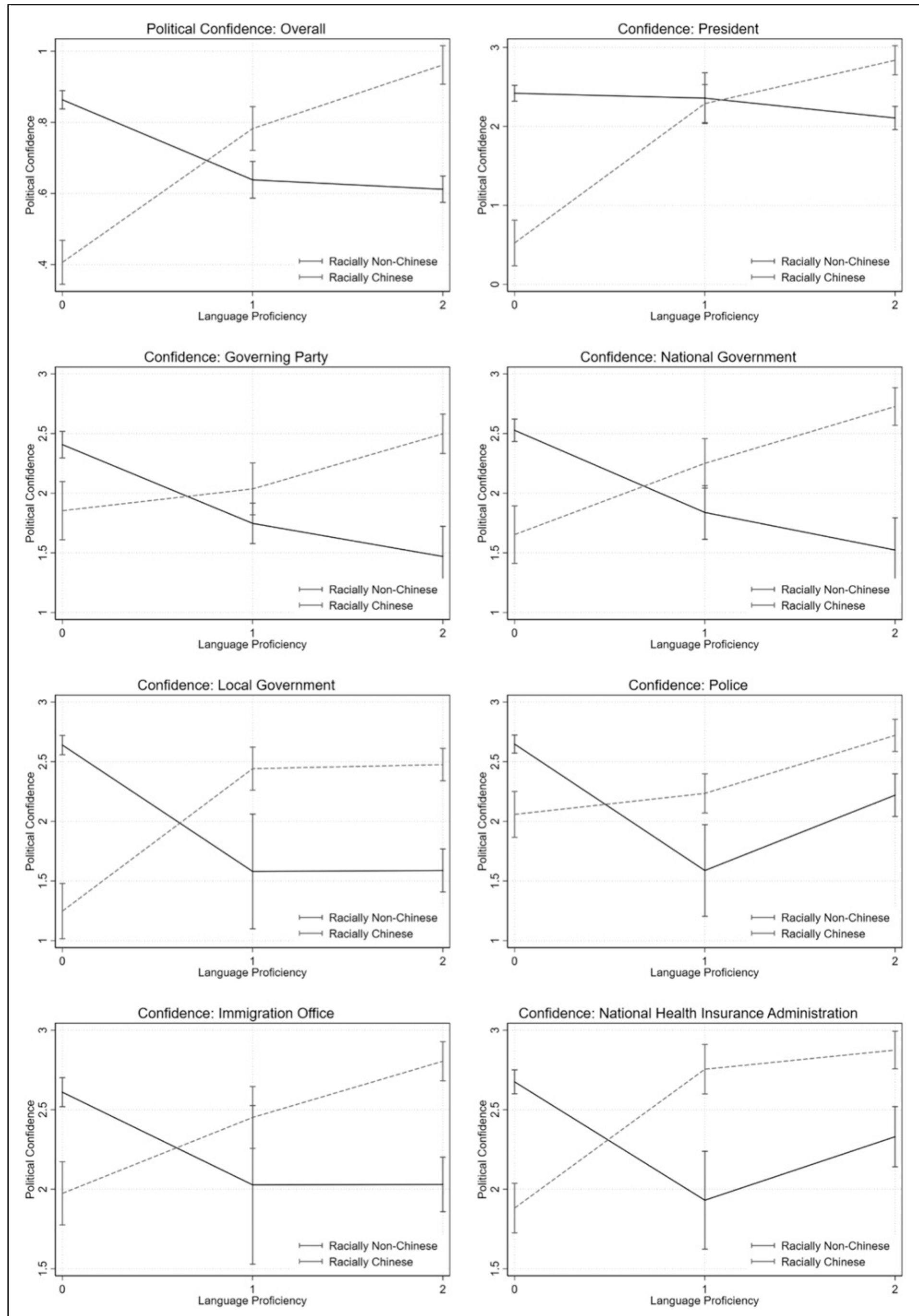

Figure 8. Predictive margins.

country contiguous to China removed (see Table SI.3). While we lose a large number of respondents (recall, Vietnam accounted for 33 percent of the respondents), our findings remain robust.

The other possible concern has to do with selection effects. Even when we see the most "negative" predicted values, this is strictly from a relative standpoint. From an absolute standpoint, the values are quite positive. In Figure 8, with only one exception, we see mean values above 1.5. This suggests even when political confidence is relatively low for a particular institution, it is still nominally positive. There are several explanations for this pattern. One is sincere: New Residents do indeed have positive experiences in general with the Taiwanese state. The other is about selection: Those who were not satisfied have left Taiwan—thereby rendering them missing from

the recruitment pool. Even if they have not left, they may be so disenchanted that they forgo filling out the survey even when recruited. As is, we have no way of deciphering exactly which mechanism is at play.

One way to tap at this is to look at other surveys administered in Taiwan and compare those figures to ours. Table 4 shows our survey results against three other surveys for the three dependent variables of interest. The first is the World Values Survey (2019). We see that about 82 percent of the respondents answered affirmatively that civil servants are friendly—and these numbers are largely consistent for both the full Taiwanese sample and the restricted New Residents only subsample. Likewise, more than half of the respondents had confidence in the political system.

Another survey we used is data from Liu et al's (2023) about the effects of Mandarin Chinese accents on welfare chauvinism in Taiwan. The results show that more than 80 percent of the respondents indicated satisfaction with their life in Taiwan. Interestingly, the figures are even higher for New Residents than the general population. The third and final survey is from Chew (2024). Across all three dependent variables, we see very positive numbers: more than 65 percent agree that civil servants are friendly, 75–80 percent are satisfied with their life in Taiwan, and just under 60 percent have confidence in the political system. For sure, from a relative standpoint, these numbers in the three other surveys are all lower than those from our New Resident survey. However, from an absolute standpoint, they are all quite high—and robust—for *any* democracy. Thus, even if there is some selection effect at play, it seems the baseline attitude among New Residents is quite positive—suggesting perhaps both mechanisms are in effect.

Discussion

This paper focuses on the New Residents population in Taiwan, leveraging their very diversity. There are two takeaway points. First, while (1) being racially *Han Chinese* and (2) being linguistically proficient in a Taiwanese vernacular can improve a New Resident's experience, the absence of both does not necessarily suggest a negative one. In fact, those that are unequivocally outgroup members are often beneficiaries of government help—for example, language assistance—and of public support—for example, offering mother tongue instructions. From a normative standpoint, this is a welcomed finding.

Second, while being racially *Han Chinese* and linguistically proficient in a Taiwanese vernacular can improve a New Resident's experience, there is an important caveat: Being from China can prove to be a formidable barrier. We see this in the conjoint experiment for the general population and in the survey among the New Residents from China. From a political standpoint, this finding suggests that social barriers between groups—no matter how small they are, even if nominally nonexistent—can be insurmountable when politicized.

These results, of course, raise questions about scope conditions. While the focus in this paper has been on the *Han Chinese* race versus Taiwanese vernaculars in Taiwan, our theory is generalizable beyond both those cleavages and the country. Our theoretical argument should be able to speak to any case where there is a diversity of newcomers, and where this diversity is the result of a visual marker and an auditory marker crosscutting—independent of country of origin. And while the Taiwan–China relations are certainly unique to Taiwan, neither the threat nor the politicization of the threat is. One comparable case would be Ukraine and its attitudes towards people from Russia versus Russian speakers. Russia is clearly a geopolitical threat to Ukraine, but the Russian diaspora likewise can be found outside Russia.

This paper contributes to three bodies of scholarship. The first is immigration studies. The focus has been largely dominated by developed democracies—namely, *Western* democracies (e.g., Adida, Laitin, and

Table 4. Public Attitudes Among Taiwanese and New Residents Across Surveys.

DV	New Resident Survey	World Values Survey	Liu et al. (2023)	Chew (2024)
Civil Servants Friendly				
New Residents Only	95.18% (*N* = *746*)	82.61% (*N* = *23*)		68.00% (*N* = *150*)
All Taiwanese		82.44% (*N* = *1219*)		65.33% (*N* = *1938*)
Satisfied: Taiwan				
New Residents Only	96.9% (*N* = *710*)		82.14% (*N* = *56*)	74.17% (*N* = *151*)
All Taiwanese			80.28% (*N* = *2054*)	79.28% (*N* = *2003*)
Political Confidence				
New Residents Only	73.06% (*N* = *542*)	52.17% (*N* = *23*)		54.00% (*N* = *150*)
All Taiwanese		51.83% (*N* = *1200*)		58.74% (*N* = *1951*)

Valfort 2016; Adida, Lo, and Platas 2018; Fetzer 2000; Fitzgerald, Curits, and Corliss 2012; Maxwell 2019; McLaren 2003; c.f., Chung 2020). Likewise, scholars working on Asia often end up missing Taiwan—even those focusing on within Asia (Amrith 2011; Hugo 2005; Oishi 2005). There are of course some exceptions (e.g., Chung 2020; Fong and Shibuya 2020; Lee 2023), but it seems Taiwan falls through multiple cracks (c.f., Lee 2023). Some of this is driven by the lack of recognition as an "independent country"—that is, the United Nations and many other international organizations do not collect data for Taiwan (see International Organization for Migration, 2019). But *de jure* politics of the "One China Policy" notwithstanding, Taiwan is de facto one of the most liberal democracies in Asia—one that Nancy Pelosi felt warranted defending with her visit in August 2022 (Pelosi 2022). Additionally, there is diversity in the diversity: The heterogeneity in the immigration population—from race to language to national origin, and not just in the contemporary—makes Taiwan an ideal natural laboratory for setting up a conjoint experiment to better understand immigrant attitudes. If we are interested in the attitudes of host societies towards newcomers, it is imperative that we test existing theories beyond our usual sample of Western democracies.

Second, this paper contributes to Taiwanese studies by drawing attention to the New Residents. While the New Residents are officially the second largest census category, they remain largely absent in the literature on Taiwanese ethnic politics. The focus has long been on *Han Chinese* versus indigenous, the *Benshengren* (Hans who migrated before 1895) versus the *Waishengren* (Hans who migrated during 1945–1949), or the *Minnan* versus the *Hakkas* (two Han ethnic subgroups). Yet, given that the New Residents have been in Taiwan long enough to have adult-aged children, it is imperative that we bring them into the same discussion (see Rich et al., 2022). This paper does this.

Finally, our project speaks to the *Han Chinese* diaspora studies by identifying new migration patterns. There are scholars studying the movement of *Han Chinese* to Southeast Asia more historically (e.g., Setijadi 2023; Tan, Storey, and Zimmerman 2007) and to North America, Australia, and Europe more contemporarily (e.g., Lien and Harvie 2018; Pieke et al., 2004). And while there is some more recent work looking at how the overseas Chinese identify with their host country vis-à-vis Beijing (e.g., Liu 2021), there has been very little attention to (1) how this community in Southeast Asia may have in fact immigrated to Taiwan or (2) how the community in China may be migrating directly to Taiwan. By focusing on the New Residents of *Han Chinese* heritage, this paper highlights the diversity of the Chinese diaspora.

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Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

All supplementary and replication material can be found on the authors' websites: https://www.jaykao.com/ and https://www.amyhliu.com/research.

Notes

1. While Taiwan technically has no comprehensive refugee law, the government does in practice accept refugees on a case-by-case basis (e.g., those from Hong Kong).
2. Using country of origin as the example, when "none stated" serves as the reference category, the AMCE of China is the difference between the marginal mean of China and the marginal mean of "none stated."
3. Note that two of the levels in this attribute (no info/spouse) explain nearly 40 percent difference in selection probability. This might therefore compress the variation observed for other levels. We thank a reviewer for pointing out this alternative explanation for non-distinguishable differences.
4. For easing immigration, the marginal-mean-difference is 0.030 (90 percent CI = [0.005, 0.054]), 0.033 (90 percent CI =

[0.008, 0.057]) for offering healthcare, and 0.045 (90% CI = [0.019, 0.070]) for mother tongue instruction.

5. The exception is China. But even for immigrants from China, people favor those who can speak Mandarin significantly more than those who cannot. See Figure SI.2 for full results.
6. The cannot-speak immigrants from Hong Kong are an interesting case. On the one hand, they are less favored than their can-speak counterparts, but on the other hand, the positive effect still exists.
7. One possibility is that these responses are capturing whether one supports immigration in general. To test this, we use two survey measures—respondent's travel experiences and foreign language proficiency—to gauge their immigration priors. Our analysis revealed no significant differences in immigrant preferences between respondents who had traveled to **Southeast Asia** (see Figure SI.3a) and **China (**see Figure SI.3b). Similarly, we found no differences in preferences between respondents who can speak a **Southeast Asian language** (See Figure SI.4a) or **English** (see Figure SI.4b). We thank a reviewer for pointing this out.
8. There were two second-generation New Residents in the respondent pool.
9. Only 6 percent still do not know any Taiwanese vernacular today. In fact, 97 percent use a Taiwanese vernacular at home.

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