

The Political Incorporation of Taiwanese Americans and Irish Americans Compared

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Abstract

This paper reviews theories of immigrant political incorporation and compares the social and political adaptation of two very different ethnic groups in American history and contemporary politics. Immigrants and their descendants from Ireland are now considered a symbol of success in social integration and political incorporation by becoming 'white' in US racial politics. Taiwanese Americans, on the other hand, are considered part of the migrant population from Asia who has been paradoxically characterized as a 'yellow peril', a 'model minority', and the 'perpetual foreigner' throughout US history. What explains the paradoxical gaps in social and political incorporation among Taiwanese Americans? What accounts for the differences in political incorporation between Irish and Taiwanese Americans? And how can the Irish American experience help explain the prospect of political incorporation for Taiwanese (and other Asian) immigrants as well as the role of ethnic homeland politics in the process? We take stock of historical, institutional, and behavioral evidences related to the evolution of the two ethnic groups to challenge the validity of the conventional pluralist framework and liberalism's assumptions of immigrant incorporation for an emergent, non-white, and majority-immigrant community. We present empirical evidence and comment on the prospects of the political incorporation of Taiwanese Americans at the end.

Introduction

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, Irish Americans¹ and Taiwanese Americans² appear to be two very different and unrelated population groups in US

¹ The term 'Irish Americans' refers to US residents of Irish and Scotch-Irish descent who may or may not be American by citizenship.

² The term 'Taiwanese Americans' is here used broadly to refer to US immigrants from Taiwan and their US-born descendants, who may or may not identify themselves as Taiwanese or as Taiwanese Americans, who may or may not be American by citizenship. Due to the complexity in the transition of political power in China, especially after World War II, Taiwanese immigrants in the US today may include persons born elsewhere but latterly settled in Taiwan before migration to the US, as well as individuals who had ties to the KMT

society and politics. The two are set apart not only by racial and ethnic origin, dominant religion, population size, growth trend, and most other demographic characteristics, but also by citizenship status and political identity. The Irish have the reputation of being one of the oldest and most politically active immigrant-turned-ethnic groups in American history. The Taiwanese are part of the 'new' Asian migration that was mostly blocked between 1882 and 1965 and, despite having a model minority image, the community has been striving to gain a distinct identity and fair treatment in US polity and society. In the politics of counting by the US Census, in recent decades the former group has faced the problem of declining identification, while the latter has enjoyed a rising interest in identification. Nonetheless, both communities face the same challenge of formulating an accurate account and full understanding of its population. Scholarship on the immigrant incorporation of both communities also holds an increasingly dubious attitude towards the unconditional claim of 'success' in the country of settlement.

The two US populations also share a history of colonization and divided politics, in that their respective island homelands are situated next to an empire nation. The island of Ireland was partitioned into two jurisdictions by the United Kingdom in 1921. Today's Ireland became a free state in 1922, gained full sovereignty from the United Kingdom in 1937, and declared itself to be a republic in 1949. The political history of Northern Ireland, which remains a part of the United Kingdom, is more colorful and has an uncertain future as regards reunification with Ireland. Although Taiwan was freed from Japanese rule and returned to the Republic of China at the end of World War II, it was ruled continuously until 2000 by the Nationalist Party (KMT), which had retreated to Taiwan at the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949. Today, many consider Taiwan to be a *de facto* independent nation and a fully vibrant democracy. However, Taiwan is not officially independent, and the pursuit of political independence has been a controversial goal. The politics of ancestral homeland has been a subject that has both excited and divided the diaspora in the United States for both communities.

The similarities between the two US populations go beyond concern over group identity and the politics of homeland independence. Examining the history and experience of immigrants from Taiwan through the perspectives of ethnic Chinese in the United States, one finds an incredibly intertwined relationship with Irish immigrants, dating back to the mid-nineteenth century; this was when the first large wave of Chinese merchants and male laborers arrived in San Francisco to mine gold. The unequal treaties signed by the Chinese government with the British government at the end of the two Opium Wars (1839–1842, 1856–1860) led to the cession of Hong Kong, heavy taxation, and the Taiping uprisings (1850–1864). These were among the 'push' factors, in addition to famine and overpopulation, which led war-torn and impoverished Chinese to cross the Pacific from the late 1840s (Chan 1991). Their perceived economic competition with the Irish and other white ethnics, compounded by cultural differences and white racism, explained the hostility towards the Chinese workers seen in brutal and systematic 'ethnic cleaning' that resulted in their legal exclusion in 1882 (Pfaelzer 2007). This occurred even though immigration statistics show that the size of the Chinese

government in China prior to its relocation to Taiwan in 1949. These individuals may often be called Chinese Americans or Taiwanese Chinese Americans in other contexts.

population was only a fraction of that of the Irish, and even though Chinese workers were paid only half of what Irish workers earned when both were hired by the Central Pacific Railroad to build the first transcontinental railroad (Takaki 1989).

Despite interethnic conflicts, the two groups are nevertheless connected through a shared history of group discrimination, labor exploitation, as well as intermarriage. Compared to the Irish, the Chinese faced higher taxes, denials of citizenship and immigration, and were barred from testifying in court against white assailants. Compared with Anglos and Irish Protestants, Irish Catholics faced religious discrimination, economic subordination, and cultural denigration in the New World (Brown 1966; Jacobson 1998). During the first few years after the American Civil War, Irish and Chinese males were recruited from overseas as indentured workers to fill armies and build railroads (Nelson 2007). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Chinese male immigrants in New York City and San Francisco frequently intermarried with Irish immigrant women (Tchen 1999).

Some argue that the post-1965 immigration of highly educated and skilled individuals from Asia, and especially from Taiwan, is simply another, more contemporary form of globally recruited labor (Brodkin 2000). In recent US census data, Taiwanese Americans score a much higher level of educational achievement and *per capita* income than Irish Americans. However, the former also registered a much lower citizenship rate and a higher poverty rate than the latter. Moreover, the high skills, high education, and material resources of Taiwanese Americans do not seem to spare them from racial discrimination, nor do they lower the entry bar into mainstream American politics (Aptekar 2008; Toyota 2010). What explains the paradoxical gaps in social and political incorporation among Taiwanese Americans? What accounts for the differences in political incorporation between Irish and Taiwanese Americans? And how can the Irish-American experience provide insight into prospects for political incorporation by Taiwanese (and other Asian) immigrants, or into the role of ethnic homeland politics as part of this process?

Because migration to and from Taiwan are examples of movement in the Chinese diaspora and of the global transfer of labor, we maintain that a proper comparison of the political experiences of Irish and Taiwanese Americans will need to be situated and understood within the context of US racial politics and Asian/Chinese American experiences throughout US history. In this paper, we first define the meanings and discuss past research into the political incorporation of immigrants. We then take stock of historical, institutional, and behavioral evidence related to the evolution of the two ethnic groups, in order to challenge the conventional pluralist framework and liberalism's assumptions of immigrant incorporation as they relate to an emergent, non-white, and majority-immigrant community. Among topics we consider, we compare and contrast the significance of race and racialization in group history and in US policies towards the admission and naturalization of immigrants from Asia and Europe. We also examine the mediating role of political parties as agents of (re)socialization/incorporation as well as the role of ancestral homeland in the development of nationalist identity and consciousness which, in turn, may mobilize political participation across the Atlantic/Pacific. This is followed by an evaluation of the latest statistics collected by

US government agencies to help assess the current social and political status of the two communities and how the evidence sheds light on theories of immigrant incorporation. We close by taking a critical view of the current status of political participation by Taiwanese Americans. We believe that a comparison of the unlikely pairing of Irish Americans and Taiwanese Americans may yield empirically and theoretically interesting results for the advancement of Taiwan Studies, American Studies, international migration, and political science research as a whole.

A Review of Theoretical Frameworks on Immigrant Political Incorporation

What is political incorporation? In a recent critical review of the literature, Minnite (2009) finds a conceptually muddled and over-stretched field. This is result of American political and other social scientists striving to comprehend the experiences of post-1965 immigrants, who tend to possess racial and social backgrounds that are different from those of earlier waves of immigrants. Political incorporation may involve either the inclusion or the absorption of outsiders. It can be studied as a process or as an outcome, or as both, of how new or subordinated groups enter the political system. Beyond mere participation and representation, it can refer to the extent to which a marginalized group is able to exert influence within the political system. Although Minnite does not dispute Jones-Correa's (2005) observation that what is 'political' is often inconsistently conceived and applied, whether in relation electoral or non-electoral phenomena or both, she notes the relative neglect of the concept of 'incorporation' in scholarly deliberations. For her, 'to *incorporate* means to unite into one body, to mix thoroughly together, to put into or include in the body or substance of something else – to form one integral body' (53) under conditions set by the social contract in a liberal democracy. Because of this premise, she warns that we need to be aware of the biases in the two liberal assumptions regarding political incorporation: that all outsiders can be converted into insiders, and that outsiders want to be included in the liberal polity. If democratic institutions contain mechanisms that are considered discriminatory to a certain segment of the population, then insiders can be disincorporated and outsiders may be perpetually excluded. Thus, although incorporation is the expected outcome of the pluralist model of politics, and although it may be rational for outsiders to seek incorporation into the liberal polity under normal conditions, liberal assumptions may be wrong for some groups under certain conditions. In other words, political incorporation may be contingent, segmented, and reversible for some groups, with non-white, non-Christian, and non-Anglophone immigrant groups being more vulnerable to exclusion and marginalization than others.

Observers of American politics have typically invoked one of the two seminal works on political incorporation, depending on the centrality given to race in the experiences of the population(s) under investigation. Those who believe in the fairness and openness of the political system to all active and legitimate groups tend to cite Dahl's (1961) study of New Haven politics as evidence for the possibility that pluralistic democratic government can absorb the interests of the working-class, who are mostly of white European descent. Dahl argues that all immigrants will eventually be assimilated into the American political system

through the mechanism of ethnic politics. However, he also believes that ethnic politics is a temporary phenomenon and that once working-class immigrants and their descendants achieve upward mobility, their ethnic-specific concerns go away and political assimilation occurs. Other observers of (white) ethnic politics disagree. Glazer and Moynihan (1963), in their study of New York City politics, do not see class politics replacing ethnic politics. Rather, they see the two co-existing as invigorating elements in local urban politics. Wolfinger (1965) notes that ethnicity can be sustained past the first-generation, and becomes a core component of partisanship that can be passed on to the next generation. Parenti (1967) goes further in insisting that upward mobility in class status might reinforce the political salience of ethnicity. Gimpel and Cho (2004) examine the persistence of white ethnicity in over 1,500 New England towns in six states. They find that support for the Democrats in contests between 1992 and 2000 correlates closely with support for the party in elections between 1956 and 1964, suggesting that ethnic groups do not de-align or become assimilated over time. Rather, group identity may persist despite social mobility, even if the relationship to partisanship is weaker today than fifty years ago. Irish Americans, for instance, become less Democratic in partisanship once they move to the suburbs. All of these scholars, nonetheless, treat issues affecting immigrants and native minorities as ethnic factors, and they do not address the influence of a dominant, white-supremacist ideology on the structuring of political institutions in American political development (King and Smith 2005).

Scholars focusing on the political incorporation of domestic racial minorities often cite Browning, Marshall, and Tabb's (1984) path-breaking study of black and Latino politics in the San Francisco Bay area as a starting point. These authors were interested in the extent to which racial minority group interests are effectively represented in policy making. To them, the key to minority incorporation is mobilization, either by protest or by electoral strategy, and the formation of bi-racial or multi-racial coalitions in the governing process. This model has attracted a large following, in part because of innovations in the development of quantifiable measures of political incorporation. For instance, Wolbrecht and Hero (2005) suggest, in the introduction to their edited volume, that their concept of democratic inclusion, which is the incorporation, influence, and representation of various disadvantaged social groups within democratic institutions in the United States, can be measured by five sets of benchmark indicators: full access to participation; representation in important decision-making processes and institutions; influence on government decisions; adoption of public policies that address minority group concerns; and socioeconomic parity across groups. Acknowledging the sustained difficulties that face non-white groups in seeking incorporation, Hero (1992) postulates that there is a two-tiered form of pluralism: full incorporation for the racially whites and marginalization for the non-whites. Furthermore, he contends that while non-white groups are generally disadvantaged and less incorporated than whites, different non-white groups may occupy different positions in the continuum between fully incorporated and fully marginalized.

Although the *racial hierarchy model* is a considerable improvement over the *ethnic integration model* in understanding minority incorporation, critics point out that the racial model assumes group solidarity by race, and neglects intra- and inter- ethnic competition among non-black minority groups (Clarke 2005). Further,

minority elected officials may lack the resources to bargain, and are prone to co-optation during negotiations with the majority (Thompson 2006). Turning to the structural constraints of racial/ethnic change in local politics, Stone (1993) notes that powerful local regimes may not be easily dislodged through electoral mobilization alone. More importantly, this race-based model does not question the validity of liberal assumptions about racial minorities. Minnite (2009) notes that reliance on electoral strategy may be less useful for the incorporation of emergent immigrant communities who do not possess similar citizenship and voting rates or the same level of English language proficiency as more established groups. Moreover, incorporation does not necessarily shield contemporary immigrants and minorities from labor exploitation and political reversals and disincorporation, as happened to blacks in Los Angeles after the 1992 Riots (54).

None of the above models is based on examining the situation of an emergent, non-Christian, non-white, and immigrant-majority community that cannot be characterized working-class status alone. Questioning whether a black-based minority group model can be applied to the experiences of Afro-Caribbean immigrants, Rogers (2006) observes several major differences between African Americans and contemporary non-white immigrants. First, African Americans were for the most part involuntary immigrants, while most non-white immigrants came to the United States of their own free will. Second, the new generation of immigrants has the ability to maintain close homeland ties, due the availability and advancement of transoceanic transportation and communication technologies. Third, the history of and struggle against slavery is exclusive to the African-American community. Arguably, the tactics developed by the African-American community in their struggle for political incorporation are in many ways a manifestation of its historical bondage. This is a group experience shared by no other non-white immigrant group. Appreciating the roles of pre-immigration socialization and post-immigration re-socialization, Rogers advocates using the *political learning model* in conceiving immigrant minority politics. In this approach, experiences formed in the home country and learned in the host country are both keys influences in the success of immigrant political incorporation. Although he does not use the term, Rogers' model incorporates the concept of transnationalism, highlighting the key roles of home country ties and cues and their relationship to host country cues in the politics of immigrant incorporation. Nevertheless, he does look critically into the capacity and will of mainstream institutions to incorporate non-white immigrants, nor does he consider international relations between the home country and the host country as a factor, although these may have an impact on the opportunity for incorporation.

Scholars focusing on the political experience of Asian Americans, especially Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans, find it difficult to ignore the influence of negative images and perceptions of the homeland state in Asia, contentious US–Asia relations, and/or Asian ethnic groups' mistreatment in the host country of the United States. The internment of Japanese American residents on the US West Coast during World War II, including US-born citizens who made up two-thirds of the interned population, is a glaring example of citizenship violation due to presumed Asian homeland ties (Daniels 1988). The inept and corrupt Qing dynasty in nineteenth-century China and its racial violence against the US-Chinese is another. Ngai (2007) uses the term *alien citizen* to describe the unenviable

situation of US-born Asian Americans who acquire American citizenship by virtue of birth in the US but whose citizenship is suspect, if not denied, on account of the racialized identity of their immigrant ancestry. However, the issue of political disincorporation or exclusion is not restricted to the pre-1965 era. Gotanda (2001) links the 1996 US presidential 'Asian Donorgate' campaign finance scandal involving Taiwanese Americans with three US Supreme Court cases dealing with Chinese exclusion in the late nineteenth century to extend the theory of *citizenship nullification*, by which an individual is deprived of citizenship rights 'through the use of the implicit link between an Asiatic racial category and foreignness' (80). Looking also into the meanings and implications of 'Asian Donorgate' and the 1999 Chinese espionage case of Dr Wen Ho, a naturalized American born in Taiwan, Michael Chang (2004) uses the term *transnational citizenship* to refer to the nature of citizenship as flexibly construed and applied in the age of globalization. His book's primary theoretical framework is *critical transnationalism*, which specifically opposes celebratory discourses of transnationalism that wishfully foresee the end of world divisions and inequality in the era of globalization. Rather, as informed by prior conceptions of flexible citizenship (Ong 1999), racial formation (Omi and Winant 1994), and dual-domination and extraterritoriality (Wang 1995, 1998), Chang views as inevitable the emergence of new power hierarchies that may transcend national borders but still maintain the structures of inequality within each nation-state and other social and political boundaries. Because Chinese/Taiwanese and other Asian Americans are arguably the most transnationally-affiliated US population, Chang raises a grave concern, like the other scholars discussed above, about the possibility of non-incorporation and disempowerment for this relatively affluent but foreign and racially suspicious population.

This theoretical review shows that the concept of political incorporation can be variously defined, studied, and assessed. Due to the dramatic transformation of the racial, cultural, and social order of post-1965 America created by the influx of immigrants from Asia and Latin America, recent scholarship on political incorporation has increasingly been dissatisfied with traditional models that derive from observations of old, white European immigrant groups (such as Irish Americans) as well as old, US-born minority groups (such as blacks). Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad (2008), for instance, call for new models for understanding immigrant political engagement, taking into consideration the structural inequality of civic engagement and political organization across groups. Expressing their own dissatisfaction with the *status quo*, Hochschild and Mollenkopf (2009) propose a kitchen-sink model for understanding the political incorporation and non-incorporation of immigrant groups in both the United States and Europe. Schmidt *et al.* (2009) empirically assess the political incorporation of non-white immigrants in terms of four frameworks: individual assimilation, ethnic pluralism, bi-racial hierarchy, and multiracial hierarchy; they find each to have its followers and challengers. We wish to complement these previous efforts by trying to identify theoretical framework(s) that may be better able to capture the political incorporation of Irish and Taiwanese/Chinese Americans. In the next section, we take a quick walk through a tangled history to attempt to compare the fate of two visibly different ethnic groups in the US, the Irish and the Chinese.

A Tale of Two Communities: A Quick Walk Through History

Early Irish immigrants, many of whom came as semi-free indentured laborers, began arrive in the New World as early as the late 1500s. By 1790, there were approximately 400,000 people of Irish birth or decent residing in the US, making this the largest group of non-English immigrants during the colonial period (Blessing 1980). Being the first non-Protestant group to arrive in large numbers, the Irish often faced both religious and ethnic prejudice from the Anglo-Saxon population. The strength of the anti-Irish sentiment peaked in the mid-1850s, when the catastrophic Potato Famine (1845–1853) in Ireland triggered a mass exodus, in which the deliberate departure of the generally literate peasants also increased the chances of survival of those left behind. Many new arrivals were forced to work for low wages and lived in abysmal conditions. Anti-Catholic, particularly anti-Irish Catholic, feelings led to the formation of the Know-Nothing Party. Politically active from the early to mid-1850s, the party's prominent members included the Mayor of San Francisco, Stephen Palfrey Webb, and the Governor of California, J. Neely Johnson (Anbinder 1992). Anti-Irish sentiment also led to the *de facto* barring of Irish Americans from entering middle-class, white-collar professions, thus concentrating them in domestic service, building, and factory work. This was the situation when large numbers of ethnic Chinese workers recruited from Guangdong by industrial forces associated with British and American companies arrived at San Francisco by steamboat.

The number of immigrants from China in the 1850s was only 36,000, a figure 96.5 per cent lower than the number that emigrated from Ireland during the same period. However, in next decade the Chinese figure rose to 54,000, which was 87.4 per cent lower than Irish immigration, due in part to aggressive recruitment efforts by the railroad companies who needed cheap, hard-working, and tractable stoop labor for dangerous work constructing the first transcontinental railroad (Nelson 2007). While the Chinese were first hired to break the threat of strikes by white workers, Chinese workers were paid less than European immigrant workers and subjected to harsher work conditions. These included whippings and a ban on quitting. When the Chinese workers protested against this mistreatment in 1867, the strike they organized was met with the stoppage of payment and food supply (I. Chang 2003). Meanwhile, perceived economic competition from the Chinese gave rise to the formation of the Workingman's Party under the leadership of an Irish immigrant named Dennis Kearney in the 1870s. Herein, according to Saxton (1971), lies one of the ironies of US labor history. Whereas the Chinese were indispensable to the capitalists who needed cheap labor, they were also indispensable to the labor organizers who found that nothing united factions among whites more quickly than the cry of 'the Chinese must go'. This popular sentiment eventually led to the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which barred the entry of all Chinese with exceptions for the merchant class, teachers, students, and clergy. The Act also included a ban of the naturalization of Chinese immigrants which was not lifted until 1943.

Economic competition was not the only reason for Irish–Chinese tension. Racial anxiety was another. In a nation and society that legally discriminated against the citizenship of blacks and other non-whites through the 1790 Nationality Act, the Irish in their struggle for equality and an American identity were eager to align

themselves with the superior white Anglo race by denigrating the Chinese who were defined as racially inferior, the men as sexual predators and the women as prostitutes. Ironically, these were the same terms that were used to associate the Irish with blacks in pre-Civil War era in the North, where the two groups competed for the same low-skilled and low-waged jobs (Roediger 1999). Even in 1876, the popular press 'would place the Celt and the Negro on the same level of civic virtue' (Jacobson 1998: 55). The Irish-born found a convenient scapegoat in the Chinese-born for their unfittedness to assimilation and ineligibility for US citizenship. By defining Americanness as whiteness, Irish Americans were accepted into the white class while Chinese Americans were made into a permanently lower and excludable class. Facing high levels of racial discrimination, many Chinese workers turned inward to self-employment and thus created an ethnic niche in the laundry industry that was originally occupied by Irish women.

It would be unfair, however, to describe Irish-Chinese relations solely in competitive and hostile terms. Both were oppressed in their homeland by the same imperialist power, and both received similar mistreatment after their arrival in the US. Further, in the nineteenth century, the two populations differed significantly in the ratio of men-to-women. Few married Chinese women accompanied their men on the journey to the New Golden Mountain. The small number of Chinese women who traveled alone to the American West Coast could often only find work as prostitutes or undertaking menial labor (Tong 1994). In 1975, the perception and fear that Chinese, Japanese, and other 'Mongolian' women were entering prostitution after arriving in the US prompted Congress to pass the Page Act. The dearth of single Chinese women, in combination with an excess of Irish working-class women, more of whom had survived the Irish famine than Irish working-class men, led to a surprisingly high rate of intermarriage between Chinese men and Irish women (Tchen 1999). For example, between 1820 and 1870 in New York, there were 75 Chinese men, or roughly a quarter of the Chinese male population, who were either married to, or at least lived with, an Irish woman. Such Irish-Chinese unions, however, were not received well by white society, and 14 states passed anti-miscegenation laws to prohibit both Asians and blacks from marrying whites.

While both immigrant groups initially suffered from discrimination and injustice, the two groups eventually developed different experiences of political incorporation in their adopted country. Whereas the Chinese were racially excluded from American polity, the Irish had the right to US citizenship. Proficiency in English and Western customs and the establishment of American citizenship helped Irish Americans secure their white status by becoming politically incorporated through involvement and dominance in Democratic Party politics. According to Blessing (1980: 535), Irish immigrants were advantaged in their political mobilization through their participation in mass-based anti-British efforts in the homeland organized by Daniel O'Connell's Catholic Association. Their concentration in big eastern and midwestern cities (such as New York, Boston, and Chicago) enabled the operation of ward-based urban machine politics, where local ethnic politicians traded food baskets, coal in winter, access to governmental and legal assistance, and patronage for just a vote at election time. Meanwhile, the businessmen provided the bosses with bribes in return for favorable decisions or rulings. Though corrupt and undemocratic, these machines brought order to a fragmented city and

actively worked to incorporate working-class immigrant groups. Yet, this practice of political incorporation was selective and ethnocentric. Not only did the Democratic Party pass its first anti-Chinese resolution in 1852, only a few years after the group's arrival in San Francisco, but none of the new immigrant groups that arrived from Eastern and Southern Europe after 1890 benefitted much from machine politics. In fact, Erie (1988) observes that, throughout most of their history, urban machines controlled by Irish bosses did not incorporate immigrants other than the Irish. Because the machine's benefits were of a scarce nature, the Irish could not readily translate political power into group economic advancement; and whatever prize that was won was of a limited nature and guarded jealously; the Irish only sparingly accommodated the latterly-arriving Southern and Eastern European immigrants and African Americans (6).

The practice of selective mobilization by political parties is also seen in contemporary politics dealing with African, Latino, and Asian American communities (Jones-Correa 1998, 2005; Frymer 1999; Leighley 2001; Wong 2006; Kim 2007). Unlike the parties described in Dahl (1961) and other pluralists, which played a key role in incorporating the Irish, today's parties do not have the resources nor the interest to organize new immigrants, who happen to be largely non-white, into citizens and voters. Leighley notes that, because political parties are strategic institutions created to win elections, they seek to mobilize not voters in general, but supporters in particular. She finds that racial and ethnic minorities, especially small and emergent political communities, are exposed to substantially lower levels of campaign mobilization efforts than are Anglo whites. Even for established and proven minorities such as African Americans, Frymer contends that the Democratic Party would simultaneously expect the black vote while doing its best to keep race off the agenda so as to appeal to the median majority-white voters. Instead of political parties, Latino and Asian American communities have relied on community-based resources such as immigrant-serving organizations, church-based groups, and labor unions, to conduct citizenship classes, voter registration education campaigns, and get-out-the-vote drives. Inconsistent and limited funding support has rendered these organizations and groups unreliable and fragmented armies for political mobilization, which, in turn, hurts the chances of political incorporation for these communities.

Another issue worth investigating is the factor of homeland politics and its effects on immigrant groups in the United States. Immigrants' involvement in homeland politics is usually treated with suspicion because of the loyalty issue (Harrington 1980). However, in Irish American history, a paradoxical thesis has been advanced that links the development of Irish American nationalism to Irish American aspiration for incorporation in the host country. According to Brown (1956, 1966), the economic exploitation and religious prejudice experienced by Irish immigrants in mid-nineteenth century America contributed to feelings of homesickness and oppression that were in turn transformed into revolutionary nationalism for liberating the colonized homeland with an intensity and passion far beyond that which was felt by their kinsmen in Ireland. Their compulsive sense of inferiority, sensitivity to criticism, and yearning for respectability were rooted in their aspirations for equality, prosperity, and freedom in the New World. Instead, they found poverty and low status, which many blamed on the oppressive and discriminatory rule of the British. Consequently, many Irish Americans believed

that an independent Irish nation-state was necessary to help not only rid the Old Country of its oppressive ruler but also to help Irish Americans garner respect in American society (McCaffrey 1976).

Although Irish American nationalism had in many ways enabled the work of independence in Ireland, there were also moments of disjuncture in the nationalistic movements on either side of the Atlantic. In his detailed account of the Fenian movement in the United States, Brown (1956) contends that this movement reveals itself at times to be 'directed toward American and not Irish ends' (358). While many Irish American nationalist organizations existed at the time, such as the Fenian Brotherhood, it is often the case that 'a free Ireland would reflect glory on the Fenians'. The practical purpose of these associations was to act as pressure groups for improving the lives of the Irish in America. Focusing on the role of women in Irish American nationalism, Janis (2009) notes that although the Irish Ladies' Land League might have been founded to raise funds for the independence movement in Ireland, it quickly became an important forum for women to assert their own American-inflected concerns and convictions.

Irish Americans not only donated large sums of money to sustain every revolutionary and constitutional expression of Irish nationalism; some would cross the Atlantic in the hope of changing the fate of the homeland. Although the demise of Irish American nationalism came quickly after the treaty of 1921, which granted independence to the Irish state, fund-raising activities remained vigorous until 1937. In the late 1960s, as public unrest in Northern Ireland increased, nationalist activists staged a series of equal rights campaigns for Catholics. In the 1970s, influential Irish American Congressmen attempted to negotiate a united Ireland through visits and pronouncements (Harrington 1980). Since then, the activity of militant Irish nationalists in America has waned and the majority of Irish Americans are support the peace process through diplomatic means (Almeida 2006).

Homeland politics also played a key role in the development of Chinese American history. Chinese Americans in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century drew on a complicated network of transnational resources to fight racial injustice in the US immigration, social, legal, and political system, to negotiate their identities between being Chinese and being American, and to help improve the political and economic status of the homeland in the process (Chan 2006). Shehong Chen's (2006) research on the transformation in Chinese America after the Chinese revolution of 1911 found that immigrants' concern and frustration over homeland political development helped define and change their identity from being Chinese to being Chinese American. A further transformation occurred during World War II, when Chinese American women worked together with white women to solicit humanitarian aid for war-torn China and earned, in turn, respect as worthy allies and potential citizens (Leong and Wu 2008). Like Irish Americans, Chinese Americans saw an interlocking relationship between their fate in the New World and the political order in the Old World. Because of American racism, Chinese immigrants turned their struggle into a trans-Pacific effort by sending money from the United States to help strengthen and modernize their native homeland (Y. Chen 2006). The overseas community became a bastion of fund-raising for various projects dealing with homeland political change. Before the lifting of racist immigration quotas and the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, which opened the door for blacks and other

minorities to participate in US electoral process on a more equal footing, non-incorporation was the norm for Chinese Americans.

How the Present-day Communities Compare: A Snapshot through US Government Data

Immigrants from Taiwan do not have a recorded presence in data released by the US government until the 1950s, when a small number of mostly middle-class college-educated students entered to pursue graduate studies in elite universities (Ng 1998; Chee 2005; S. Chang 2006; Gu 2006; C. Chen 2008). Among this group were mainlanders who had been born in China and who had evacuated to Taiwan around 1949; others were Islanders or native Taiwanese whose families or ancestors had migrated from southern China and settled in Taiwan before 1945.³ The oppressive KMT rule, which featured a Mandarin-only language policy, compulsory military service, strict media censorship, ideological indoctrination, and the brutal handling of the 2-28 Incident in 1947, was a push factor for the exit of the latter group (Williams 2003). These students-turned-immigrants played a key role in founding the Taiwanese independence movement in North America (Shu 2002; Williams 2003; Lin 2006). For those who were displaced from China, their journey to America can be considered either a continuation of their exile or as a search for a second or third home (Fung 2002). The literature on these Taiwanese Chinese Americans is scarce, and their stories are both under- and misrepresented due to being lumped together with Chinese from mainland China, Hong Kong, and elsewhere (48–49). This is also the case with the few scholarly publications on Taiwanese Americans. Consequently, there has been hardly any scientific study of identity differences among immigrants from Taiwan or the factors which have an impact on their political attitudes and behavior toward homeland and host country politics (although see Lien 2006, 2007, 2008a, 2008b).

Immigration statistics published by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) show that there were 721 immigrants from Taiwan who were admitted as legal permanent residents between 1950 and 1959. That number grew more than eight-fold, from 15,657 in 1960–1969 to 132,647 in 1990–1999.⁴ This exponential growth partly reflected changes in US immigration policy made in 1965 that lifted discriminatory quotas and created an opportunity for highly-educated and highly-skilled individuals from Taiwan to emigrate as professionals. The normalization of

³ This mainlander-islander dichotomy is an over-simplification of the identity issue in Taiwan. Following Storm's (2008) argument, the preference for this usage, rather than a 'Chinese-Taiwanese dichotomy', is to emphasize the fragmentation and hybridity of both concepts (41). However, this formulation does not represent the identity of those who are in or from a 'third-generation mixed marriage'.

⁴ Statistics for legal immigrants only are recorded here. According to Zhao (2009), a further 649,000 to 780,000 Chinese persons from the PRC, Hong Kong, and Taiwan may have arrived undocumented by 2000. This represents 23–27 per cent of the Chinese population in the 2000 US Census for those who are either solely Chinese or in combination with other race and ethnicity. The majority of illegal immigrants are individuals who over-stayed their visa permit. Undocumented entry through routes such as people-smuggling is a relatively minor source.

US relations with the PRC and the signing of the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979 created another wave of emigration from Taiwan, tending to consist of middle- or upper middle-class families who sought stability and better educational opportunities for their children. Until Taiwan lifted its own emigration restrictions in 1980, seeking graduate education abroad was the only means of exit for the unconnected and those with fewer resources. The creation of a separate annual quota of 20,000 for Taiwan in 1982, heavily lobbied for by Taiwanese-American organizations, helped bring in large numbers of family members and relatives of immigrant professionals.

Between 1950 and 2008, the total number of immigrants admitted to the United States from Taiwan was 435,783, which is smaller than the comparable figure from Hong Kong (481,398), and much smaller than that from China (1,084,293). However, migration from Taiwan was about five times that of the number from China in the 1970s, and it peaked in the 1980s and 1990s when Taiwanese numbers exceeded those of Hong Kong. Between 2000 and 2008, there were significantly more migrants from Taiwan than from Hong Kong, although the number of migrants from China was almost tenfold the number from Taiwan. By contrast, there were only 12,670 migrants from Ireland⁵ in 2000–2008, which is just less than 98 per cent smaller than the figure from China. This is the opposite of the immigration pattern seen in the 1850s. These migration patterns beg the question of who the 'new' Chinese Americans from China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong are. How do they compare with the old Irish and the new Irish immigrants? More importantly, will we see a discontinuity in the political incorporation of the Taiwanese and the Chinese because of the removal of discriminatory laws and changing demographic patterns?

A brief methodological note is in order. The US Census provides the single best resource for studying US population groups. However, any attempt to study the two in a truly scientific manner is marred by methodological limitations, such as the unequal census enumeration method between the Chinese and the Taiwanese, as well as the challenge of declining interest in identifying with the ancestral origin of Irish. The collection of Irish-American data using an open-ended ancestral question (rather than a check-box under the racial question) may also add to the problem of under-counting the population. In addition, the practice of tabulating only the first two ancestral answers excludes multi-ethnic Irish Americans who do not list Irish as their first two responses to the ancestry question. The Taiwanese-American community has sought to alleviate the under-counting of the population in the census enumeration scheme, which provides a check-box for the Chinese but permits only a write-in option for those who identify as Taiwanese.⁶ Taiwanese Americans are urged by community advocacy groups such as the Taiwanese American Citizen League to check 'other Asian' in the section on Race and Ethnicity and to write in 'Taiwanese' to show a distinctive identity other than

⁵ This figure also refers solely to legal immigrants. Almeida (2006) estimates that about 50,000, or 15 per cent, of the new migrant population from Ireland may be undocumented.

⁶ An official with the Census Bureau admitted that 'Taiwanese' could not be listed as an Asian American category along with 'Chinese' due to political concerns over international relations with China (Kim 2007: 103–104).

Chinese. Readers are advised to keep these caveats in mind when reading the latest statistics regarding these populations.

According to the ancestry data reported in the Census 2000 Brief prepared by Brittingham and de la Cruz (2004), the percentage of Americans who identified as of Irish ancestry dropped from 38.7 million (15.6 per cent) to 30.5 million (10.8 per cent) between 1990 and 2000. Those of Scotch-Irish⁷ descent experienced a similar decline from 5.6 million (2.3 per cent) to 4.3 million (1.5 per cent). Meanwhile, the number of those who entered 'Taiwanese' in the ancestral question rose from 192,973 in 1990 to 293,568 in 2000, representing a 52 per cent increase, even if they were still no more than 0.1 per cent of the US population. The rise and fall of these populations is consistent with the pattern observed among the largest European and Asian ancestries. Holdaway (2007) uses the 5 per cent Integrated Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), and finds that the percentage among the Taiwan-born who report their ancestry as 'Chinese' decreased from 73 per cent in 1980, to 54 per cent in 1990, and to 32 per cent in 2000. Yu and Chiang (2009), using responses to the write-in race question in the US Census to study the phenomenon of the rising Taiwanese identity, find that both the older generation and recent Taiwanese immigrant arrivals, as well as those who live in Los Angeles, are more likely to identify as Taiwanese than Chinese. In contrast, those who are acculturated, more fluent in English, or who migrated to the States at a young age before the 1980s, are less likely to switch their identity from Chinese to Taiwanese. The authors suggest that entering 'Taiwanese' on the census form appears to be a political act of asserting identity and expressing solidarity with their compatriots in Taiwan.

To enable some sense of a systematic comparison between the Irish and the Taiwanese, as well as other related population groups covered in the literature review, we collect and report in Table 1 (see page 16) statistics from the 2006–2008 American Community Survey (ACS)⁸ three-year estimates, which are based

⁷ 'Scotch-Irish' is a term invented and used almost exclusively in North America. It refers to Protestant Irish immigrants, who came from the Province of Ulster primarily during the eighteenth century, and their descendants. The equivalent term in Britain for the same group is 'Ulster Scots'.

⁸ The American Community Survey (ACS) is an annual survey conducted nationwide in every US county and Puerto Rico, with the intention of providing the most current economic, social, demographic, and housing information about the US population. It uses a series of monthly samples to produce annually-updated data for the same small areas (census tracts and block groups) formerly surveyed via the decennial census long-form sample. Each year, approximately 3 million housing unit addresses in the US and Puerto Rico are selected for participation. The data collection operation for housing units (HUs) consists of three modes: mail, telephone, and personal visit. The ACS includes twelve monthly independent samples. Data collection for each sample is for a period of three months, with mail returns accepted during this entire period. In January 2006, the ACS was expanded to include the population living in group quarter (GQ) facilities such as college dorms, nursing homes, correctional facilities, and homeless shelters. Field Representatives collect data from approximately 195,000 GQ sample residents each year. To ensure the participation of non-English speakers, the ACS language assistance program provides translated instruments and other survey materials, the recruiting and training of bilingual interviewers, and the provision of

on data collected between January 2006 and December 2008. These represent average characteristics over a three-year period and have a larger sample size than the one-year estimates, although they are also less current than the one-year estimates. It is deemed the best dataset to date for comparing our populations of interest, due to the possibility of analyzing information by ancestry group, ethnic group, and country/place of birth (for the foreign-born) using data collected contemporaneously and by a rigorous and comparable research procedure.

To facilitate discussion from reading this fairly complex table, we have selected several pairs of groups for comparison as a starting point for assessing the relative social status and prospect for political incorporation in our populations of interest:

A. Between Irish and Scotch-Irish: Our data show that there are still two Irish Americas in the twenty-first century, separated by religion, partisanship, and class. Those Irish Protestants who identified as 'Scotch-Irish' are older, *per capita* more affluent, and better educated than those who identified as 'Irish'. Among the tiny foreign-born population, a much higher percentage of the Scotch-Irish population reported being born in North America than in Europe; the reverse is true among foreign-born persons identifying with Irish descent. Although the number of persons of Irish descent was seven-times higher than those who identified as being of Scotch-Irish ancestry, to this date only one of the 19 US presidents who have been able claim an Irish tie has been Catholic. Being non-Protestant may continue to be a hurdle in contending for the highest office in the US

B. Between Irish and Taiwanese: Compared to persons who identified themselves as Irish, persons who identified themselves as Taiwanese are slightly younger in age and predominantly foreign-born. Among immigrants, a higher percentage among the Taiwanese identifiers did not enter the US until 2000 or later. Despite their belated entry into the host country, the Taiwanese have a higher naturalization rate than the Irish. Still, only 77 per cent among the Taiwanese have US citizenship, compared to 99 per cent of the Irish. The heavy immigrant background among the Taiwanese identifiers is reflected in the high usage of a non-English language at home. Living up to the positive group image, Taiwanese identifiers are much better educated, have much stronger presence in professional/managerial occupations, especially among males, and are better-off in all economic indicators than Irish identifiers.

C. Between Taiwanese and Taiwan-born: Not all Taiwanese identifiers were born in Taiwan (only 69 per cent were), and not all who registered their country/place of birth as Taiwan would identify themselves as Taiwanese but as not Chinese. Given that the number of Taiwan-born is more than three times the size of Taiwanese identifiers, the numerical gap between the two may be more than an issue of census under-enumeration, as Taiwanese American lobbying groups would contend. It may be an issue of political preference. A 2007 survey of US immigrants from China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong shows that just over half of the native Taiwanese respondents (individuals from Taiwan who were born in Taiwan

telephone or Internet assistance in multiple languages. The ACS, CATI, and CAPI survey instruments are currently available in both English and Spanish. Interviewers can conduct interviews in additional languages if they have that capability.

	Ancestry Group		Ethnic Group		Country/Place of Birth					US Total
	Irish	Scotch -Irish	Chinese	Taiwanese	Ireland	China	Taiwan	Hong Kong		
Population	36,242k	5,326k	3,460,73	100,965	135,15	1,902,5	347,80	209,46	310,238k	
Age	38	46	36	34	57	44	44	44	37	
% Foreign-born	.7	.7	62	69	100	100	100	100	13	
– % Entered 2000 or later	14	15	26	23	11	28	20	13	28	
– % Entered 1990–1999	19	17	30	22	19	31	24	27	29	
– % Entered before 1990	68	68	44	55	70	42	56	60	43	
– Born in Europe	65	24	.3	.2	100	0	0	0	13	
– Born in N. America	25	63	.7	.3	0	0	0	0	2	
% Naturalized	58	51	59	66	66	58	69	78	43	
% Citizen	99	99	62	77	-	-	-	-	93	
– % Non-English only Household	2	2	76	82	11	92	92	88	20	
% Bachelor degree + (aged 25 or over)	32	39	50	73	30	50	70	53	27	
– Male	33	41	53	80	35	54	76	57	28	
– Female	31	37	47	68	26	46	65	50	27	
% Management /Professional Occupation	39	44	52	68	48	53	65	55	34	
– Male	36	42	53	74	47	55	70	58	32	
– Female	43	47	50	62	49	50	61	53	38	
Median Family Income (\$)	73,176	73,966	80,517	97,775	88,275	75,609	100,04	96,190	63,211	
Per Capita Income	31,366	34,097	30,303	38,087	51,210	36,024	47,186	48,888	27,466	
Mean earnings for full-time, year-round workers										
– Male	71,402	71,059	72,595	89,971	98,995	71,603	89,444	79,102	62,163	
– Female	48,325	49,089	57,460	64,839	65,318	56,415	64,199	65,068	44,020	

Source: *The 2006–2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates*, US Bureau of the Census

Table 1: Comparison between Irish, Taiwanese, and Chinese Americans by Ancestry, Ethnicity, and Country/Place of Origin, 2006–2008

and who have either of their parents born in Taiwan) but only 17 per cent of Taiwanese mainlander respondents (individuals from Taiwan who were either born in China or Hong Kong or were born in Taiwan but have parents born in China) would call themselves Taiwanese or Taiwanese American, while 58 per cent of mainlanders would identify themselves as Chinese or Chinese American (Lien 2008b).⁹ Alongside this observed ethnic identity gap, we note from Table 1 that if those who identify as Taiwanese in the US Census project a highly successful group image,¹⁰ those who were Taiwan-born in the same dataset may seem even more successful in their economic adaptation and citizenship acquisition, in spite of having a higher degree of language isolation and of being older.

D. Between Ireland-born and Taiwan-born: Using data in the country/place of birth columns, we attempt to provide fairer comparison of the evidence of incorporation between contemporary Irish and Taiwanese immigrants. Compared to the Taiwan-born, Irish immigrants were on average much older, have had a much longer tenure in the United States, and have the highest *per capita* income and mean earnings of all groups, especially among males. These are factors that should give the Irish immigrants an edge in becoming politically incorporated through naturalization. However, the Irish naturalization rate is actually three percentage points lower than for the Taiwanese. Politically-motivated migration from Taiwan and the desire to situate family members in a society with greater educational opportunities and a better quality of life may account for the greater Taiwanese naturalization rate. Compared to the Taiwan-born, the Ireland-born also have a much lower share of college-education as well as proportion of persons in professional/managerial occupations. This observation, that new Irish immigrants are less educated and have less occupational prestige than Taiwanese immigrants but enjoy a greater income reward, provides evidence supportive of the racial disadvantage thesis in the workplace for well-qualified Asian immigrants (Woo 2000).

Finally, we wish to make a few brief comments concerning the differences found between Taiwanese and Chinese as well as between the Taiwan-born and the China-born. Because of differing reasons for exiting and differing conditions of entry, immigrants from Taiwan are expected to have far better social and political standing than early immigrants from Guangdong. Taiwanese immigrants are not only voluntary immigrants who tend to be equipped with personal or family resources upon arrival, but they are eligible to seek naturalization and reap the benefits of US citizenship (such as voting and sponsoring immediate family

⁹ The Chinese American Homeland Politics (CAHP) survey was a telephone survey completed between October and November 2007, based on 603 US adults residing in Chinese-surnamed households who can trace their personal or ancestral origin to China, Taiwan, or Hong Kong. The sample was drawn from a national list of phone numbers of Chinese households identified by two different sampling firms through a listed surname approach. Due to the uneven distribution of the US Chinese population, the national sample was drawn to target five metropolitan areas with the heaviest concentrations of Chinese: Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Houston, and Chicago.

¹⁰ These statistical averages may obscure the class divisions within Taiwanese and Chinese Americans communities discussed by several authors (e.g., Kwong 1987; H.-S. Chen 1992; Zhao 2009).

members and relatives to the United States). The timing of their entry made them the first group of ethnic Chinese who have an equal opportunity to seek political incorporation in the US. The selective preference system in US immigration policies, combined with differences in the degree of development and affluence in the Asian homeland, may have contributed to the relatively high socioeconomic profile of the Taiwanese American community. Compared to immigrants from China, average immigrants from Taiwan (and Hong Kong) are better educated and have a higher occupational standing and income. The allowance of dual citizenship by the government in Taiwan may also help explain the higher naturalization rate of immigrants from Taiwan than from China, whose government prohibits dual citizenship. Nevertheless, we also note that the gender gap among Taiwanese immigrants and Taiwanese identifiers tends to be much wider than is found among immigrants from China and Chinese identifiers, with women receiving less college education and less income reward for their work. Women's economic subordination among Asian Americans may be the intersectional outcome of racism, sexism, and capitalism (Espiritu 1997). However, the wider gender gaps found among Taiwanese than among Chinese Americans is a curious phenomenon worthy of further investigation.

Assessing the Political Participation of Taiwanese Americans

To make a small advance toward assessing the political incorporation status of present-day Taiwanese Americans, we examine the extent their of political participation as voters, candidates, and public officials, as well as their involvement in political activities beyond voting, such as lobbying and contacting public officials, making donations to political campaigns, attending political rallies, protests, and demonstrations, and signing petitions. There are no publicly available mass opinion datasets gathered specifically for the study of Taiwanese Americans. However, there are datasets on Chinese, Asian, and other Americans that include persons from Taiwan or of Taiwanese descent that are used here. Because there is no mass opinion survey of contemporary Irish Americans, we use average figures regarding non-Hispanic white Americans as surrogate measures of their level of political participation.

Without a doubt, one reason why Irish Americans are considered a mainstay in US electoral politics is the presence of prominent American politicians of Irish-Catholic descent, such as the Kennedy family, as well as numerous Irish-Protestant Americans who have served as US presidents, US Supreme Court justices, US senators and representatives, and in other high government offices. Comparatively few Americans of Taiwanese descent or migrants from Taiwan have made it into the political arena. Among the pioneers are Lily Lee Chen, who was elected to the city council of Monterey Park, CA in 1982 and became a mayor in 1984, and S.B. Woo, who served as Delaware's twenty-first Lieutenant Governor from 1985 to 1989. In recent years, the election of David Wu (D-Oregon 1st) to the US Congress in 1998, and the appointment of Elaine Chao as US Secretary of Labor (2001–2009), are considered to be the high watermarks of Taiwan-born Americans in the national political arena. At the state level, John Chiang has been a popular California State Controller since 2006, and Ted Lieu, who has been a vocal California Assemblyman since 2005, recently came short in

a run for the position of state Attorney General. Both Chiang and Lieu are the sons of Taiwanese immigrants. Elsewhere in the nation, a Taiwanese immigrant named Jimmy Meng became the first Asian American to win a seat in the New York Assembly, in 2004. He was succeeded by Ellen Young, another immigrant from Taiwan, who was succeeded in turn by Grace Meng, daughter of Jimmy Meng. At the local level, John Liu, who emigrated from Taiwan at a young age, was the first Asian American elected to the New York City Council (in 2001), and he currently holds the position of New York City Controller (since 2010).

These examples show that Taiwanese Americans have been able to make small but increasingly significant political gains, despite their limited immigration history and population size and the declining role of political parties in mobilizing and organizing the ethnic vote. The lifting of racial restrictions to immigration, citizenship, voting, and other civil rights, the rise of candidate-centered politics, the availability of transnational capital and other resources, as well as the group's superior socioeconomic status, have made it possible for members from a previously excluded, non-native English-speaking, and non-Christian community to contend and win popular offices and key political appointments, even within the first generation. The electoral victories of well-qualified Taiwan-born candidates is a phenomenon not predicted even by Robert Dahl or by other advocates of ethnic pluralism and integration. In this case, Taiwanese Americans seem to face an easier time than Irish (especially Catholic) Americans in becoming politically incorporated into the adopted land. Nevertheless, their prospects for becoming fully incorporated may be overshadowed by the perpetual foreigner image and other factors not experienced by the preponderance of Irish Americans in the present-day. Previous research also demonstrates that being incorporated into the electoral process at the governing elite level is not sufficient to assume full, substantive citizenship for the ethnic community. Other necessary components include policy responsiveness and full access to political and social rights.

Data from the November 2004 elections show that, compared to non-Hispanic white Americans, Taiwanese Americans have an overall lower citizenship rate, but a higher naturalization rate among the foreign born (see Table 2, page 20). Because of the predominance of the foreign-born, voting-age Taiwanese Americans have significantly lower voter registration and voting turnout rates than voting-age whites. These racial gaps are significantly reduced when we examine eligible persons only (i.e., citizens eligible for voter registration and those registered for voting). Also, among the US-born, Taiwanese Americans are not less likely to become registered and have a voting rate only five percentage points lower than their white counterparts among the registered. Other entries in this table show that, compared to other Chinese respondents from China and Hong Kong, and to Asian American respondents as a whole, respondents from Taiwan are relatively more likely to become naturalized (except those from Hong Kong), to be more active in becoming registered, but to be less active in their voting turnout. This is true regardless of whether or not they were US-born. This is a curious phenomenon awaiting further investigation.

While voter turnout provides a preliminary understanding of the 'simplest' form of political participation, it does not fully illustrate the scope of political participation among the citizenry. As for other indicators of political activity, limited data from the

Place of Origin/Race*	Taiwan	China	Hong Kong	Asia n	Non-Hispanic White
Foreign Born	87%	88%	77%	76%	5%
Citizenship	78	64	85	69	98
Among Foreign born	74	59	81	59	60
Registration	48	32	38	36	74
Among Citizens	62	51	45	53	75
--Foreign born	60	47	44	53	70
--US born	74	66	47	52	75
Voting	30	29	33	31	66
Among the Registered	80	89	85	85	89
--Foreign born	80	90	85	85	91
--US born	84	87	86	85	89
Weighted N (x1000)	432	1,731	184	9,449	151,410

Source: US Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. *Current Population Survey: Voter Supplement File, November 2004* [Computer file]. ICPSR04272-v1. Washington, DC: US Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2005. Distributed by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], Ann Arbor, MI, 2006.

*Except for the Non-Hispanic white column, figures reported are for voting-age persons who either themselves or at least one of their parents was born in Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, or anywhere in Asia. All tests of significance are conducted with re-weighted data calculated by subtracting the mean adult weight from the final adult weight for each case, in order to adjust the size of standard errors.

Table 2: Voting and Registration in November 2004 Elections among Taiwanese and Other Americans

2000–2001 Pilot National Asian American Political Survey (PNAAPS) show that, among those who originated from Taiwan, 20 per cent report having done volunteer work with others to solve a community problem, 13 per cent report having attended at least one meeting or rally, and 11 per cent report having contacted government official(s). These figures are comparable to the average figures for Asian Americans, but higher than those for respondents originating from China or Hong Kong. Contrary to media stereotypes, ordinary Taiwanese Americans are among the least likely group to donate to political campaigns. Only 6 per cent report having donated to a political campaign in the four years preceding the 2000 election, which is half of the rate reported for Asian Americans as a whole and much lower than the average rates reported by white and black respondents in national surveys. Results from the 2007 CAHP survey, which differentiates between Taiwanese and mainlanders among Taiwanese Americans, show that only 8 per cent of Taiwanese report having made campaign donations to a US political candidate, in contract to 19 per cent of mainlanders. Rates of

campaign donations to candidates in Taiwan are in the same order, but at a smaller scale. For both Taiwanese and mainlanders in the US, the most common participatory act beyond voting is activism in ethnic community organizations and hometown associations (Lien 2010).

Conclusion

In this preliminary attempt to compare the process of political incorporation of the Irish and Taiwanese populations in the US, we make a case for the need to broaden the scope of inquiry into the historical construction of the white race and of the Chinese/Asian race, in order to contextualize the observed experiences. In addition, we see a need to take a more critical look into the theories and assumptions of political incorporation for racial minorities and immigrants. It is in the context of a white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant, and capitalist society that one understands the sources of conflicts between two working-class and culturally subordinated immigrant groups, the Irish and the Chinese, in nineteenth-century America. It is in the separate issues of immigration and citizenship policies, as well as in differential capacity and strategy of the major political parties (especially the Democratic Party) to mobilize the Irish and non-Irish groups, that one sees the different degrees of political incorporation by race and ethnicity, both then and now. And it is through their sense of a symbiotic relationship between oppression felt in the home country and discrimination faced in the host country that immigrants developed nationalistic feelings for the homeland which, in turn, helped immigrants develop their sense of being American. Because of these factors, we do not believe the political incorporation of Irish immigrants can be satisfactorily explained by the ethnic integration model. And we see that it is the combination of factors dealing with race, culture, and class that help to account for the exclusionary immigration and citizenship policies against early Chinese immigrants as well as, to a large extent, the continuing barriers to accessing equal citizenship and political rights among the very successful ethnic Chinese immigrants from Taiwan and elsewhere in the post-1965 era. In this sense, the political incorporation of Taiwanese Americans, when it happens, may be temporary, contingent, and reversible. Getting citizenship is a good beginning, but it is hardly sufficient and secure. An example for this is a current proposal to remove the birthright citizenship warranted to children of immigrants in the Fourteenth Amendment. If successful, it will have severe consequences on the predominantly foreign-born population. It will also send a very chilly message to all US minorities, foreign-born or not.

Except for the few who entered prior to 1965, today's immigrants from Taiwan entered United States at a time when equal rights are protected and naturalization is allowed and welcomed. They also arrived from a homeland that has undergone a profound but peaceful political transition from an authoritarian regime in the post-war era to an economically prosperous and vibrant democracy since the mid-1990s. Yet, even if today's Taiwanese immigrants may be very well connected with their homeland in Asia and show a high level of interest in and concern over politics in that homeland, unlike in the past it is difficult to imagine a mass mobilization of the overseas community based on homeland independence or some other political cause. This is because increasingly homeland-regarding

politics among Taiwanese Americans is divided along partisan ideological, ethnicity, and class lines. And, like Irish Americans, the middle- and professional-class background of today's Taiwanese Americans may make them more interested in the type of homeland politics that engages peaceful rather than radical means of change. Regardless of their internal differences, Taiwanese Americans may be expected to band together and work on enhancing the protection of immigrants and minorities in US laws, such as passing hate crime legislation and improving elements in US trade and immigration policies to facilitate business transactions and migration across the Pacific.

Given the preliminary nature of this investigation, we have hardly scratched the surface of the various other ways to measure political incorporation for Taiwanese Americans. Future research will need to explore other indicators of political incorporation such as interest representation in the making and implementation of public policies and the issue of equity in social outcome. So far as we can see, even though Taiwanese immigrants may have a much better opportunity for political incorporation than the earlier Chinese immigrants, their political fate is inseparable from the other ethnic Chinese in the country of settlement, as well as from those who were left behind. Their prospect of future success will depend as much on the degree to which their host county of the US moves away from white Protestant domination as on the degree of trust and respect the US government will extend to the homeland governments across the Pacific.

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