

March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023

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Testimony for the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission  
Taiwan's Experience and Response to China's Influence and Interference

Good morning/afternoon, chairpeople and members of the commission. I am Puma Shen, an Associate Professor at National Taipei University with a research focus on CCP influence operations (CIOs). Additionally, I have the honor of serving as the Chairperson of Doublethink Lab, where I lead a team of researchers in exploring the complexities of CIOs. I am here today to testify about the critical issue of China's interference with Taiwan, which requires immediate attention.

### ***China's Primary Concern: Maintaining Stability and Legitimacy***

National rejuvenation is often cited as a key reason for China's desire to invade or interfere with Taiwan.<sup>1</sup> However, this belief is just an *excuse* that hides the underlying reasons for China's actions. At its core, China's primary concern is maintaining its own stability.

The Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) priority is to maintain legitimacy and ensure that the public believes CCP is the best option for the country. Previously, the CCP used the economy as a means of justifying its rule by promoting the idea that it made people rich.<sup>2</sup> However, China's economic growth is now waning, and the CCP needs to find another source of legitimacy. Under President Xi Jinping's leadership, national rejuvenation has become the primary source of legitimacy,<sup>3</sup> with Neo-Confucianism also being used to justify this policy.<sup>4</sup>

However, because China has chosen national rejuvenation as its new source of legitimacy, it is much more difficult for the CCP to persuade the Chinese public as to why Taiwan still exists. In the past, when the CCP used the economy as an excuse, it was much easier to justify its rule, as China viewed Taiwan as inferior. This made Taiwan relatively safe from the threat of invasion or interference.

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<sup>1</sup> Davidson, Helen. "China's plans to annex Taiwan moving 'much faster' under Xi, says Blinken." *The Guardian*, October 18, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/18/chinas-plans-to-annex-taiwan-moving-much-faster-under-xi-says-blinken>.

<sup>2</sup> Ringen, Stein. (2016). *The Perfect Dictatorship: China in the 21st Century*. Hong Kong: HKU Press, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Kingdom of Norway. "The Taiwan Question and China's Reunification in the New Era." August 10, 2022. [http://no.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zjsg\\_2/sgxw/202208/t20220810\\_10739670.htm](http://no.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zjsg_2/sgxw/202208/t20220810_10739670.htm).

<sup>4</sup> Shen, Puma. "Governing through Corruption: The Symbolism of the Death Penalty for Chinese Corrupt Officials" [藉貪腐統治：死刑對於中國貪污官員之象徵意義]. *National Taiwan University Law Review*, 16, no. 1 (June 2021): 81-118. <http://lawdata.com.tw/tw/doi/?doi=10.53106/181263242021061601004#>.

If the public is driven by the concept of national rejuvenation and genuinely believes in it, extreme patriotism among Chinese citizens can arise, making it difficult for the CCP to control.<sup>5</sup> In this context, the existence of Taiwan poses a threat to China's idea of rejuvenation. Taiwan serves as an example of a thriving democracy that does not adhere to the "Chinese system."<sup>6</sup> As a result, Taiwan's very existence is viewed as a challenge to China's legitimacy regardless of what Taiwan does. In essence, Taiwan is a symbol of everything that is opposed to China's idea of national rejuvenation.

To summarize this point, China's primary concern is maintaining its own stability both politically and economically as well as by ensuring the CCP's legitimacy as the ruling party. The concept of national rejuvenation has become a key source of legitimacy for the CCP under President Xi's leadership, and any challenges to this idea are viewed as a threat to China's stability and legitimacy. Taiwan, with its thriving democracy and non-adherence to the "Chinese system," is seen as a challenge to China's idea of national rejuvenation, and as a result, tensions between China and Taiwan are likely to remain fraught.

### ***China's Interference with Taiwan: Departments Involved***

In this section, I will explain how CCP interferes with Taiwan, which departments are involved, and who is targeted. CCP's interference in other countries can be classified into three categories: ideological interference, establishing dependence, and rule-making. Ideological interference involves manipulating media and academia to control people's thinking while establishing dependence means making other countries rely on China's economy and technology. Finally, rule-making includes things like diplomatic relations, military exercises, and joint law enforcement. Doublethink Lab has created an index based on these levels, which measures how closely each country is tied to China. More information can be found via the Doublethink Lab-led China Index project (<https://china-index.io/>).

To achieve the aforementioned interference, CCP employs two main approaches - *building connections* or *imposing pressure* - in countries across the globe, each leading to different effects. By comparing China Index data that measures PRC influence-related connections, pressures, and effects across countries, we can group key states into clusters. Some countries possess strong ties with China while experiencing little pressure and revealing moderate effects (figure 1), while others face significant pressure with low observations of influence effects (figure 3).

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<sup>5</sup> Associated Press. "Security tightened at Japanese embassy in Beijing as protests over islands go on." *The Guardian*, September 16, 2012. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/16/chinese-protests-japanese-islands-dispute>; Bloomberg. "China Canceled H&M. Every Other Brand Needs to Understand Why." March 14, 2022. <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2022-china-canceled-hm/>.

<sup>6</sup> Wu, Jieh-min, Tsai Hung-jeng, and Cheng Tsu-bang. *Anaconda in the Chandelier—Mechanisms of Influence and Resistance in the 'China Factor'* [吊燈裡的巨蟒—中國因素作用力與反作用力]. Taipei: ReveGauche, 2017.

While both Taiwan and the U.S. are facing pressure from the CCP, the China Index reveals that the U.S. is experiencing more significant pressure than Taiwan across a spectrum of influence battlegrounds from the economy to academia. Therefore, the U.S. is obliged to examine its own influence landscape in order to understand how to deal with pressure from China. However, the U.S. can still learn from Taiwan's experience by understanding the different mechanisms that CCP uses to influence Taiwan and how to counteract these tactics. To begin, it is essential to examine the departments in China responsible for global interference strategies.

China's departments that handle interference are not neatly separated from each other; rather, they overlap and compete for influence. To create a broad agenda, China forms multiple working groups every five years to investigate various issues. However, each working group competes with the others to shape the agenda about different topics.

For example, the Taiwan Working Group publishes its strategy for Taiwan every year, but only in a public version lacking many details.<sup>7</sup> The real specifics are contained in the "red-headed documents," which provide guidance for each department on how to carry out its tasks related to Taiwan.<sup>8</sup> These documents contribute to competition and overlap between departments, as they give each department a unique role to play. The departments then compete with each other to execute their respective tasks related to Taiwan.

To illustrate the mentioned overlap, the Chinese Ministry of State Security typically deals with underground criminal activities, but in Taiwan's case, the Taiwan Affairs Office may also deal with this area.<sup>9</sup> The United Front Work Department usually deals with religious groups, political parties, farmers' associations, schools, and other organizations, while the Taiwan Affairs Office is more like a "window" that deals with Taiwanese businessmen, students, religious groups, and underground organizations.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, other departments (as well as Chinese think tanks) often contact schools, alumni associations, and other educational organizations. As a result, these departments often have overlapping responsibilities.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *People.cn*. "2022 Taiwan Working Group Gathering in Beijing – Wang Yang Attends and Delivers Speech" [2022 年對台工作會議在京召開 汪洋出席並講話]. January 26, 2022. <http://tw.people.com.cn/BIG5/n1/2022/0126/c14657-32340150.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Horsley, Jamie P.. "China's Central Government Seeks to Rein in Regulatory Documents." Brookings Institution, June 28, 2019. <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/chinas-central-government-seeks-to-rein-in-regulatory-documents/>.

<sup>9</sup> SETN.com. "Manipulating Taiwan gangsters! Qiao's relationship, obtaining a license, revealing China's mysterious 'Managing Director'" [操縱台灣黑幫! 喬關係、拿執照 中國神秘「管處長」揭密]. September 29, 2017. <https://www.setn.com/news.aspx?newsid=299822>.

<sup>10</sup> Kuo. (1996). An Overview of the Chinese Communist Party's Organizational System for Dealing with Taiwan (中共對台工作組織體系概論). Investigation Bureau, Ministry of Justice.

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.moe.edu.cn/jyb\\_zzig/moe\\_350/201506/t20150618\\_190610.html](http://www.moe.edu.cn/jyb_zzig/moe_350/201506/t20150618_190610.html)

Singtao.com. "Li Qiang: China's Economy will "Brave the Wind and the Waves, the Future is in Sight" [李強：中國經濟「長風破浪 未來可期」]. March 14, 2023. <http://std.stheadline.com/daily/news-content.php?id=1769654&target=2>.

Dr. Lin from Academia Sinica (Taiwan's foremost research institute) has used Chinese official data to create graphs illustrating the social networks between Chinese departments and Taiwanese individuals and associations.<sup>12</sup> Despite the overwhelming number of connections, the key point is how the departments overlap with each other (see appendix).

### ***China's Interference with Taiwan: Targeted Groups***

Although China's interference with Taiwan involves various departments that have overlapping responsibilities, the targeted groups can generally be categorized as the "young generation" and the "grassroots" (the so-called 「一代一線:青年一代與基層一線」).<sup>13</sup> China seeks to influence Taiwan's youth, which explains why numerous teachers, students, and alumni are contacted. The grassroots category includes Taiwan's farmers' associations, village chiefs, and legislative assistants, among others.

In terms of the three levels of interference, China's interference methods in Taiwan primarily focus on establishing ideology and building dependence. For instance, they attempt to instill CCP propaganda in Taiwanese students and teachers and try to make Taiwanese businesspeople, gangsters, local officials, religious groups, and politicians dependent on China. While they have had some success with Taiwanese businesspeople and local elites, they have not been as successful with gangsters and religious groups.

Local chiefs (an elected leader who represents a community or neighborhood in Taiwan) in Taiwan are among the most vulnerable to China's interference tactics. They are frequently approached by China and may be introduced to pro-China fringe political parties, connected to the United Front Work Department, and invited on paid trips to China.<sup>14</sup> As a result, local chiefs are at risk of becoming overly dependent on China.

Gangsters and Taiwanese businessmen are also targeted by China due to their potential financial gains. However, the level of their vulnerability varies. Taiwanese businessmen may choose to relocate their entire family to China, making them more vulnerable to China's influence tactics than other groups. In contrast, many gangsters still have families in Taiwan and are reluctant to act against their local network.

It is worth noting that while businessmen have more options for relocating to escape Chinese pressure, it is still possible for China to exert influence over them. Conversely, for gangsters, it is

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<sup>12</sup> Lin, Thung-Hong: China's Authoritarian Sharp Power and Its Impacts on Taiwan (NSTC 110-2420-H-001-005, 111-2420-H-001-001).

<sup>13</sup> Yu, Yuan-jie. "'Three Middle and One Youth' to the 'One Generation and One Grassroot' in 30 Years of Cross-Strait Exchanges" [兩岸交流 30 年: 「三中一青」到「一代一線」之統戰分析]. *Qingliu Bimonthly*, March 2017. <https://www-ws.pthg.gov.tw/Upload/2015pthg/62/refile/9295/386371/75d01d67-1958-4bc6-93d3-b8f80f082b4d.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Bi, Hou-de. "Bold Local Chief: Who is Tasting the CCP's Carrots and Sticks?" [大膽里長]. *Taiwan Handout*, January 16, 2020. <https://taiwanhandout.org/archives/1078>.

difficult to escape from China once they become involved in its activities. This makes them more vulnerable to China's tactics. Ultimately, all three groups are at risk of being co-opted by China's influence tactics, but the level of vulnerability involved depends on the individual circumstances of each case.

Religious groups in Taiwan are highly localized and influential social groups comprised of diverse worshippers. Due to their strong sense of identity, religious groups in Taiwan are generally more resistant to China's attempts at manipulation. The temple system is democratic, with decisions made based on the opinions of all worshippers, including the deities they worship. This makes it difficult for China to exert control over a religious group, as they must convince a diverse set of individuals with varying opinions. In some instances, the temple system may reject China's request, citing the authority of the deity in charge, which is known to be an important factor in the decision-making process.<sup>15</sup> However, smaller temples in Taiwan are more vulnerable to China's influence tactics. They need to survive, and their earnings do not always rely on the worshippers. In such cases, it is much easier for China to buy their loyalty. However, if the temples are not strong enough to survive independently, it means that they are not particularly influential either.

If local chiefs, counselors, and religious groups that work closely with local politicians are all approached by China, this then becomes a red flag for Taiwan's security. Furthermore, if gangsters join a temple and become the majority of the temple's committee, then the entire district would be extremely vulnerable to CCP's interference. It is crucial that Taiwan remains vigilant and aware of China's tactics to protect its democratic institutions from being compromised by China's influence.

It is worth noting that farmers' and fishers' organizations in Taiwan are also targeted by disinformation campaigns, but not in the same way as politicians or grassroots organizations. Instead of infiltrating these organizations, the campaigns seek to influence them by offering economic incentives, such as allowing them to sell products to China.<sup>16</sup> By creating legitimate business relationships, China can exert pressure on these organizations and their members using the threat of economic sanctions to influence Taiwan's domestic politics. This can create the perception among Taiwan's citizens that their government is too radical and that Taiwan should take a more conciliatory approach toward China. While this is not a form of infiltration, it still constitutes a form of legal warfare that may require different strategies to be countered. However, this topic is beyond the scope of this testimony.

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<sup>15</sup> Shen, P. (2021). The blend of reality and illusion in temple culture. Mainland Affairs Council. Unpublished confidential document.

<sup>16</sup> Zhang, Zi-shao. "'Much Money is Spent, Words are Plentiful, Bait is Set.' Who will Bite in the CCP's Agricultural United Front Against Taiwan?" [「錢灑得多、話說得滿、餌咬得深」, 中共對台農業統戰誰會上鉤? ]. *The News Lens*, March 19, 2021. <https://www.thenewslens.com/article/148632>.

## ***Interference in Taiwan's Democratic Process: Offline and Online***

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) uses a range of both offline and online tactics to interfere with Taiwan's democratic process. While we have already discussed the United Front Work Department's offline activities, it is important to consider the role of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Communist Youth League in online disinformation campaigns.

Chinese cyber armies, which include members of the PLA and Armed Police, are capable of spreading vast amounts of disinformation online. My research has found that online disinformation can have a tremendous impact on Taiwan's democratic process, particularly when it reinforces offline rumors.<sup>17</sup>

For example, during the 2018 election, the largest Facebook group supporting a pro-China candidate was actually administered by a consultant of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the biggest content farm website spreading pro-China and anti-US messages was established by a fringe political party that was approached by China. Facebook ads for this candidate were also partially paid for by a support group in Taiwan that is linked to the United Front Work Department. These groups work together to create a positive image of a candidate, which can be greatly enhanced by the Chinese cyber army's disinformation campaigns. During the 2020 presidential election, this very candidate had twice the Internet presence of the current president.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, traditional media outlets play an important role in disseminating disinformation during Taiwan's election season. The Want-Want Group, which received a subsidy from the Chinese government, allegedly directed one of its TV channels to release disinformation targeting specific candidates through its news station. Furthermore, the candidate supported by this TV channel reportedly received coverage in 60-80% of the channel's daily news.<sup>20</sup>

During elections, Chinese disinformation campaigns often target people who are apolitical or have no strong affiliations with political parties, as they are the most vulnerable to believing Chinese propaganda. However, it is important to note that the impact of Chinese disinformation attacks may not be as significant if offline activities decrease. This was seen during the pandemic, when travel restrictions led to a decline in United Front Work Department activities. Additionally,

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<sup>17</sup> Shen, Puma. "How China Initiates Information Operations Against Taiwan. Taiwan Strategists," *Taiwan Strategists* 12 (December 2021): 19-34.

<https://www.airitilibrary.com/Publication/alDetailedMesh?docid=P20220613001-202112-202206130009-202206130009-19-34>.

<sup>18</sup> Shen, Puma. "The Chinese Cognitive Warfare Model: The 2020 Taiwan Election" [中國認知領域作戰模型初探: 以 2020 臺灣選舉為例]. *Prospect Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (January 2021): 1-65.

<https://www.airitilibrary.com/Publication/alDetailedMesh?docid=15601696-202101-202103190013-202103190013-1-65>.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Gong, Jun-wei. "'Korean Wave' Ignites the TV Viewership Battle: An Analysis of Han Guo-yu's News Hours" [「韓流」點燃遙控器戰爭: 韓國瑜新聞時數實測分析]. *The Initium*, April 24, 2019.

<https://theinitium.com/article/20190424-taiwan-remote-control-war/>.

a large amount of disinformation online does not necessarily equate to people being influenced. For instance, even during the 2020 election in which there was a significant amount of information supporting the pro-China candidate, he ultimately lost. The effects of Chinese propaganda can also be neutralized by other social and political events, such as China's aggressive behavior towards Taiwan, protests like those seen in Hong Kong, and reports of Chinese espionage in Australia.

Moreover, civil society groups and media outlets have been focusing on analyzing and exposing Chinese disinformation, raising public awareness about the issue.<sup>21</sup> This has led people to become more skeptical and critical of information coming from China, especially since the term "information warfare" became a buzzword in Taiwan in 2019.

Despite these limitations, swing voters who are not attentive towards significant events could still be swayed by Chinese disinformation. Therefore, the outcome of the election could depend on legitimate political debates between the KMT and DPP in Taiwan as well as on the success of China's disinformation campaigns.

### ***Understanding China's Changing Strategies for Spreading Online Disinformation***

The ways China spreads disinformation have changed over time, making it crucial to understand the evolving strategies involved. I use a "3I" framework to illustrate these changes, encompassing Direct Information Manipulation, Indirect Investment, and Ideology-Driven approaches.<sup>22</sup>

#### **Direct Information Manipulation: Information Flow**

The first strategy used by China is Direct Information Manipulation. This approach involves three different levels of information manipulation, each varying in scale and intensity. At the high level, the Propaganda Department and other committees set key themes that are often observed through state media or officials' Twitter accounts. Low-level information manipulation occurs through trolls and patriots who spread low-end fake news through social media and bot networks. Finally, the most harmful form of direct manipulation is connected-level information operations, which involve China-controlled content farms spreading biased reports and conspiracy theories through organic channels.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Kao, Shih-Shiuan. *Taiwan's Response to Disinformation: A Model for Coordination to Counter a Complicated Threat*. NBR Special Report no. 93. Seattle, USA: National Bureau for Asian Research, 2021. <https://www.nbr.org/publication/taiwans-response-to-disinformation-a-model-for-coordination-to-counter-a-complicated-threat/>.

<sup>22</sup> See note 17.

<sup>23</sup> Lee, Min-chen, et al. *Deafening Whispers: China's Information Operation and Taiwan's 2020 Election*. Medium - Doublethink Lab, October 24, 2020. <https://medium.com/doublethinklab/deafening-whispers-f9b1d773f6cd>

China has been successful in utilizing its infrastructure to disseminate content through the 50-cent party and its cyber police.<sup>24</sup> The Communist Youth League is also involved in inciting disinformation campaigns through cross-posting content farm articles on social media.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, China has established content farm channels on YouTube that utilize AI voice generators to read biased articles with traditional Chinese subtitles.<sup>26</sup> Understanding the relationship between the Propaganda Department, trolls, and YouTube channels is essential for combating these attacks.

### Indirect Investment: Money Flow

China's second strategy involves Indirect Investment, which entails providing financial backing to groups that can generate and disseminate disinformation. This approach includes investing in Taiwanese marketing companies, exerting economic pressure on influencers, and enticing live streamers to join the propaganda network via online donations. By separating the creation and distribution processes in this strategy, China can invest more covertly and indirectly, making it more challenging to detect their influence. This allows them to avoid direct confrontations and, instead, manipulate public opinion by spreading false information through trusted channels and influential figures.

### Ideology-Driven: Human Flow

The third strategy used by China is an Ideology-Driven approach, which involves establishing an "ideology market" to attract individuals who already have the incentive to criticize the government. In this approach, China manipulates information through volunteers who agree with anti-government messages and further spread disinformation in an organic way. The UFWD often shares videos or photos that can be manipulated within private messenger chat groups, where information is weaponized by citizens who voluntarily disseminate pro-China and anti-democracy messages.<sup>27</sup>

To conclude, China's changing strategies for spreading online disinformation require a multi-faceted approach to be combatted effectively. By understanding the 3I framework of Direct Information Manipulation, Indirect Investment, and Ideology-Driven approaches, individuals can better identify and combat disinformation campaigns around the world.

## ***How Taiwan Fights Back***

Taiwan has been able to develop an effective model for countering disinformation that has proven to be resilient and adaptive. This section will explore how Taiwan fights against

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<sup>24</sup> See note 18.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Shen, Puma. *New Variants of COVID-19 Disinformation in Taiwan*. Washington D.C., USA; National Democratic Institute, 2022. <https://www.ndi.org/publications/new-variants-covid-19-disinformation-taiwan>.

<sup>27</sup> See note 17.



disinformation with three different types of approaches: legislature, government task force, and civil society.

The first layer of Taiwan's approach to countering disinformation is legislation. In 2019, Taiwan passed the Anti-Infiltration Act, which is designed to counter China's attempts to influence Taiwan's political system.<sup>28</sup> The law has provisions that prohibit political donations from foreign entities, the use of illegal funds for political purposes, and espionage. However, the law has limitations and has not been entirely effective in countering disinformation campaigns. The law's provisions focus mainly on the conduct of Taiwanese political parties and candidates during elections and do not address the online spread of disinformation. This loophole has allowed CCP to continue to run disinformation campaigns and spread fake news online. The law has also been criticized as being a "punishment" kind of law (as opposed the "transparency" kind), which is not ideal for countering information operations.<sup>29</sup> This is because many information operations are covert, making it difficult for the law to be enforced effectively.

It is worth noting that some politicians in Taiwan have called for the use of the Social Order Maintenance Act to counter disinformation campaigns.<sup>30</sup> However, this approach has been criticized as too vague and overly broad. The Social Order Maintenance Act is a law that was derived from martial law and is primarily focused on maintaining social order and stability. It is not an appropriate tool for countering disinformation, as it could be used to suppress free speech and political dissent.

To address this limitation, some experts have suggested that Taiwan should consider implementing a registration act that would require individuals and organizations engaged in political activities to disclose their sources of funding and other relevant information.<sup>31</sup> This would increase transparency and accountability and could help to deter information operations that are funded by foreign entities.

The second layer of Taiwan's approach to countering disinformation is the government task force. Taiwan's government has established a dedicated task force to coordinate efforts to counter disinformation. The task force includes representatives from a range of different agencies, including the Ministry of Justice, the Central Election Commission, and the National Communications Commission.<sup>32</sup> The task force is responsible for monitoring disinformation campaigns, investigating their sources, and providing recommendations to the government for

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<sup>28</sup> See note 21.

<sup>29</sup> Shen, Puma. "Disinformation in Taiwan." In *Impact of Disinformation on Democracy in Asia*. Washington D.C., USA: Brookings Institution, 2022. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/impact-of-disinformation-on-democracy-in-asia/>.

<sup>30</sup> See note 21.

<sup>31</sup> Zhong, Chen-fang. "U.S. Expert: Taiwan should not allow China's Sharp Power to Invade its Public Debate Space" [美专家：台湾不应允许中国锐实力侵犯其公共辩论空间]. *VOA Chinese*, October 25, 2019. <https://www.voachinese.com/a/experts-on-how-taiwan-can-counter-chinas-disinformation-campaign-20191025/5138402.html/>.

<sup>32</sup> See note 21.

how to counter them. The task force has been effective in debunking fake news but has been less effective in countering conspiracy theories.

The third layer of Taiwan's approach to countering disinformation is civil society. Civil society groups in Taiwan have played a critical role in countering disinformation campaigns. Organizations like Doublethink Lab and the AI Lab have used artificial intelligence to analyze patterns in disinformation campaigns and identify potential sources.<sup>33</sup> These organizations have been able to provide valuable insights about the nature of disinformation campaigns and have helped the government to respond more effectively. Additionally, they have developed tools and platforms that allow citizens to report suspicious content and engage in the fight against disinformation. Organizations like TFC, Mygopen, Kuma Academy, and Cofacts have also worked tenaciously to promote public media literacy and critical thinking skills. These organizations have also developed a media literacy curriculum for primary and secondary schools as well as online courses for the general public.<sup>34</sup> In addition, they have established fact-checking platforms and have used technology to install bots in popular chat apps that can automatically debunk messages containing false information.<sup>35</sup>

It is important to note that civil society organizations in Taiwan operate independently from the government, as they need to gain the trust of the public in order to effectively counter disinformation. If civil society groups were seen as being too closely aligned with the government, they could be viewed as part of the government's propaganda efforts, which would undermine their credibility and effectiveness. Therefore, it is crucial for civil society groups to maintain a certain degree of distance from the government. This is crucial for the long-term success of Taiwan's efforts to counter disinformation campaigns.

## ***Recommendations***

1. It is recommended that the U.S. Congress facilitate the exchange of information and methodologies on countering CCP influence and disinformation operations with Taiwan, particularly regarding how to identify proxies and agents. Taiwan has experience countering disinformation campaigns and can provide valuable insights and best practices that could benefit the U.S. In addition, to enhance cooperation and better respond to the Chinese threat, the U.S. and Taiwan should consider establishing a "center of excellence" to analyze and address disinformation campaigns, including the investigation of IP addresses to uncover the source of campaigns. This center would be a collaborative effort involving the U.S. and Taiwan, similar to what the US does in NATO. By pooling resources

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<sup>33</sup> For Doublethink Lab reports, see <https://doublethinklab.medium.com/>; For AI Lab reports, see <https://ailabs.tw/blog/>.

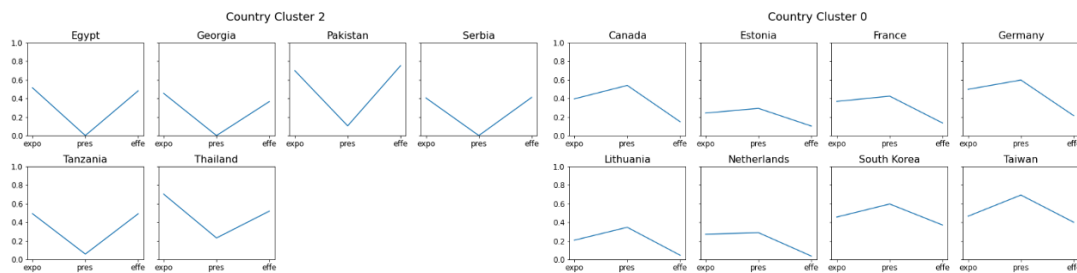
<sup>34</sup> See note 21.

<sup>35</sup> Tools include Auntie Meiyu, see <http://www.checkcheck.me/>, and MyGoPen's LINE messenger fact-checking tool, see [https://www.mygopen.com/p/blog-page\\_28.html](https://www.mygopen.com/p/blog-page_28.html).

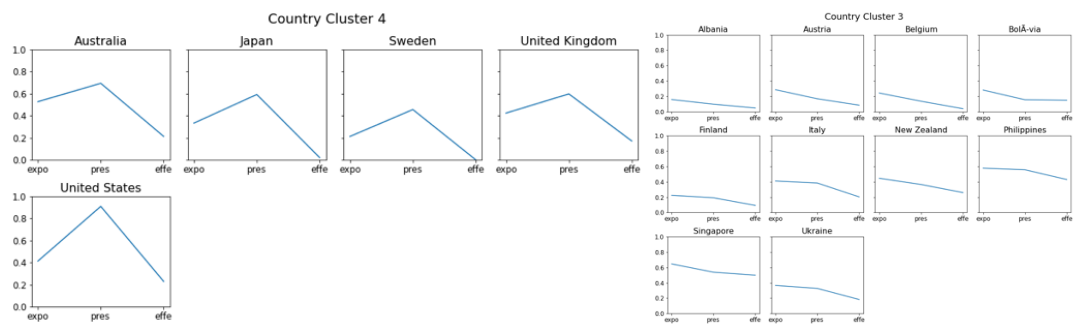
and expertise, the U.S. and Taiwan can better understand the nature of disinformation campaigns and develop effective strategies to counter them. Given the global nature of disinformation campaigns, it is also important for the U.S. and Taiwan to work together to develop international norms and standards to address this challenge.

2. U.S. Executive Branch agencies, including the U.S. State Department, should actively push back against China's propaganda and disinformation campaigns, which often aim to undermine the U.S.-Taiwan relationship by spreading anti-U.S. messages. The U.S. should take a leading role in countering Chinese disinformation campaigns—collaboration with Taiwan is crucial for achieving this goal. By working together, the U.S. and Taiwan can better understand the nature of these campaigns and develop effective strategies to counter them. The U.S. should also support Taiwan's efforts to build resilience against disinformation campaigns and help to promote a more transparent and open media environment in Taiwan. This would not only help to safeguard democratic institutions in Taiwan, but also strengthen the U.S.-Taiwan relationship.
3. Building resilience and preparedness in Taiwanese society is essential for countering China's aggression, and this requires strong military and robust civil defense capabilities. Taiwan's military requires more advanced weaponry, and civil defense groups should have more opportunities to engage with their U.S. counterparts to learn from their experiences and best practices.

## Appendix



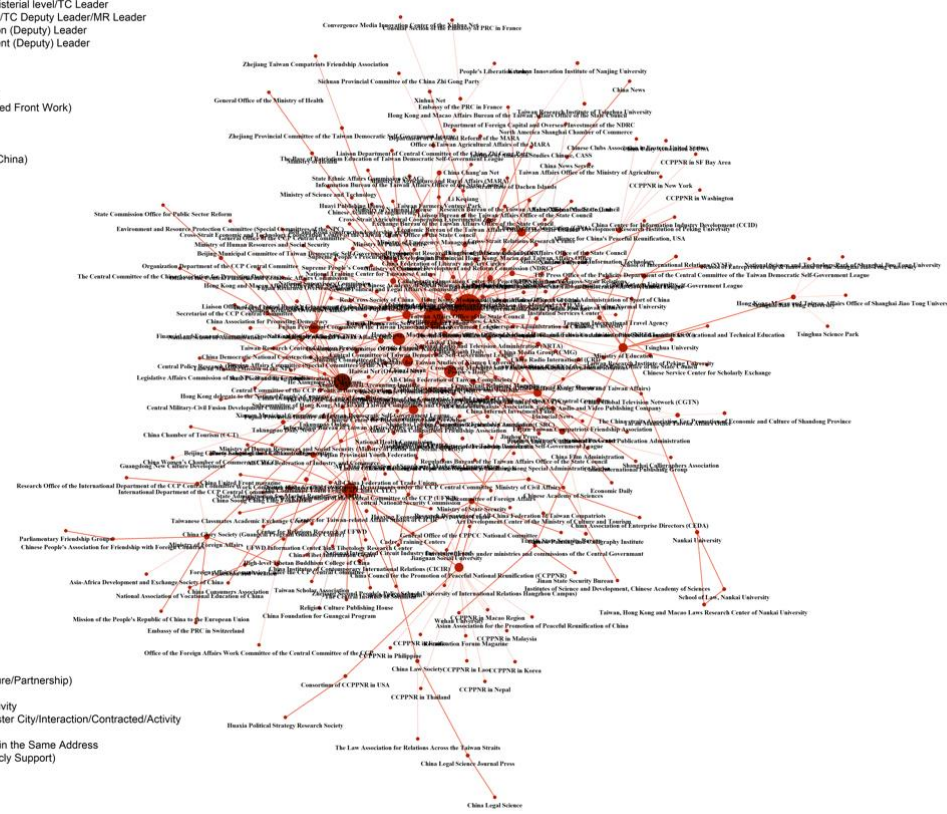
Figures 1 & 2



Figures 3 & 4

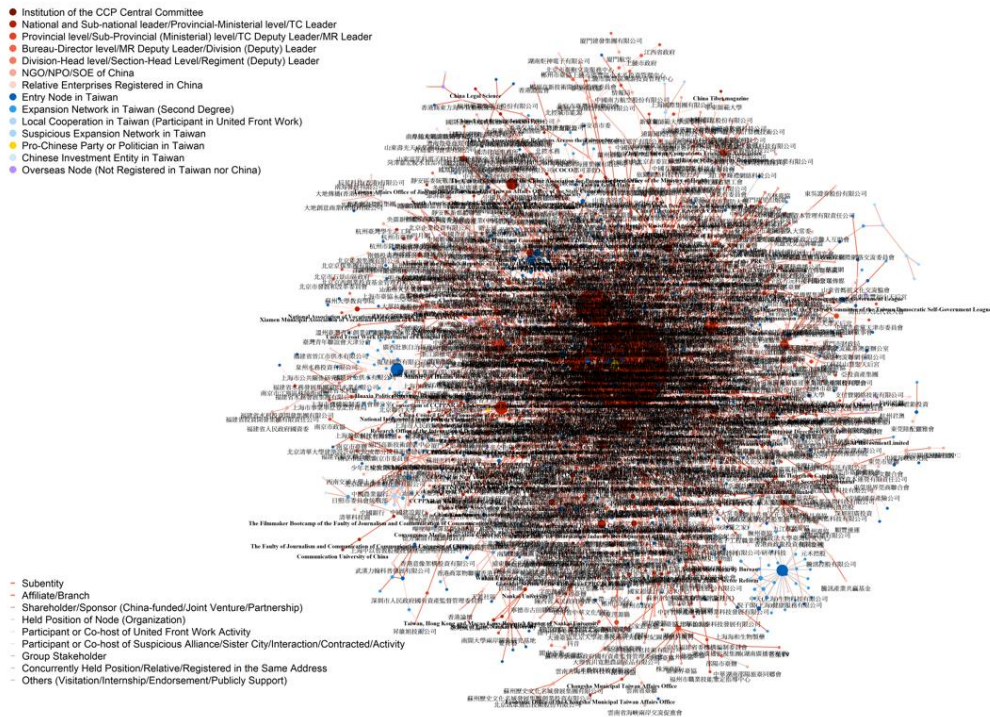
- Institution of the CCP Central Committee
- National and Sub-national leader/Provincial-Ministerial level/TC Leader
- Provincial level/Sub-Provincial (Ministerial) level/TC Deputy Leader/MR Leader
- Bureau-Director level/MR Deputy Leader/Division (Deputy) Leader
- Division-Head level/Section-Head Level/Regiment (Deputy) Leader
- NGO/NPO/SOE of China
- Relative Enterprises Registered in China
- Entry Node in Taiwan
- Expansion Network in Taiwan (Second Degree)
- Local Cooperation in Taiwan (Participant in United Front Work)
- Suspicious Expansion Network in Taiwan
- Pro-Chinese Party or Politician in Taiwan
- Chinese Investment Entity in Taiwan
- Overseas Node (Not Registered in Taiwan nor China)

- Subentity
- Affiliate/Branch
- Shareholder/Sponsor (China-funded/Joint Venture/Partnership)
- Held Position of Node (Organization)
- Participant or Co-host of United Front Work Activity
- Participant or Co-host of Suspicious Alliance/Sister City/Interaction/Contracted/Activity
- Group Stakeholder
- Concurrently Held Position/Relative/Registered in the Same Address
- Others (Visitation/Internship/Endorsement/Publicity Support)



Lin, Thung-Hong : China's Authoritarian Sharp Power and It's Impacts on Taiwan (NSTC 110-2420-H-001-005, 111-2420-H-001-001)

## Chinese Departments and Connections to Taiwanese Actors



Lin, Thung-Hong : China's Authoritarian Sharp Power and it's Impacts on Taiwan (NSTC 110-2420-H-001-005, 111-2420-H-001-001)

The Responsible Departments in China (red) and the entry nodes in Taiwan (blue)