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CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH
Te Pae Rangahau Taiohi

The effect of mass media and social network diversity vs. homogeneity on political attitudes and prejudice in Taiwan

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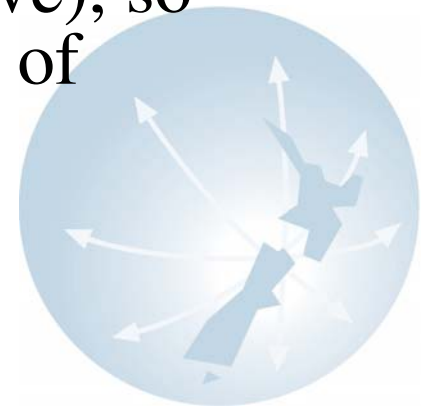
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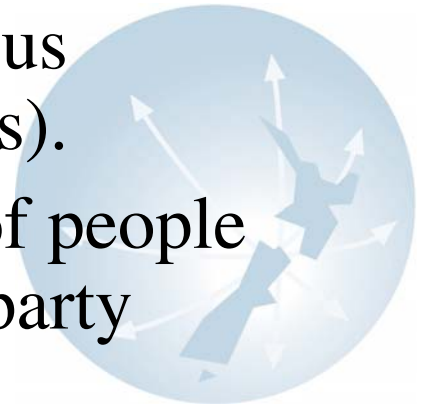
Social Capital

- Sociologist Robert Putnam defined Social Capital, as “the collective value of all 'social networks' and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other”.
- Civic, social, and civil associations between people are thought to be an essential ingredient for maintaining a good society.
- “Just as a screwdriver (physical capital) or a college education (human capital) can increase productivity (both individual and collective), so too social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups“ (Putnam, 2000)



Not all Social Relations are created Equal

- Putnam distinguishes between bonding capital, the associations that bring like-minded people together, and bridging capital, social relations that connect dissimilar groups.
- The focus of this talk is on the effects of bridging and bonding capital on political tolerance, an essential ingredient of democracy. We focus on comparing homogeneous vs. heterogeneous interpersonal political environments (IPEs).
- Homogeneous IPEs are social networks of people who share support for the same political party



Not all mass media are created equal

- In some countries, especially the younger democracies, like those found in parts of Latin America and Asia (and in the USA as well with Fox TV now!), television and newspapers can be associated with particular political views.
- In Taiwan, the most important political issue is whether to become independent or reunify with mainland China. It is possible to identify whether many TV stations and newspapers as supporting the DPP, an independence minded party, or the KMT a rapprochement oriented party.





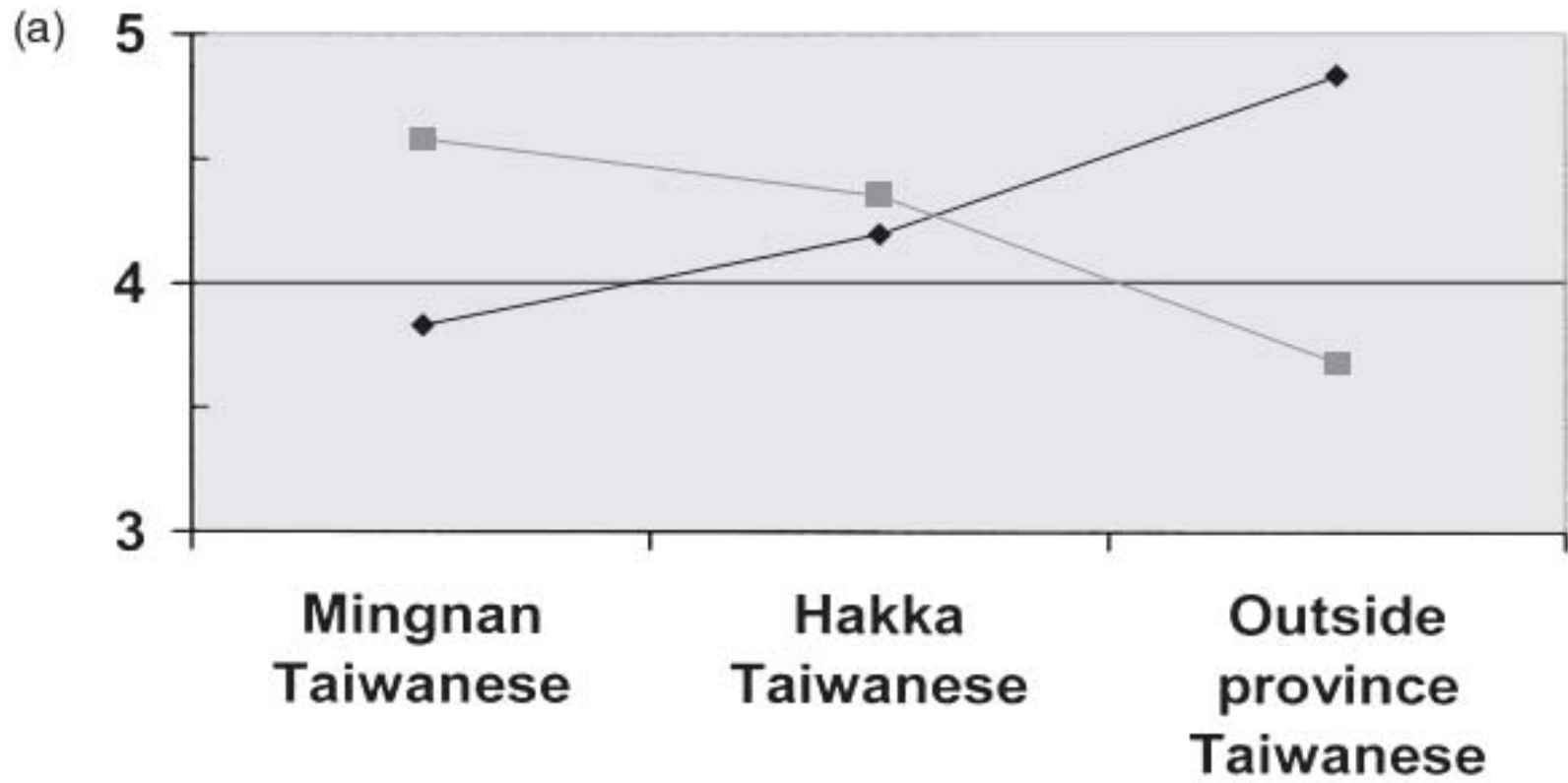
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Increasing polarization of Chinese vs. Taiwanese identity?

- Not only do political parties favor a position, this is backed by demographic groups and social identities. The KMT, supported by mainlanders ruled for 50 years after the war, with multiparty free elections beginning in the 1990s, and the first switch in power happening in 2000.
- When we began our work in 2001, towards the beginning of DPP, independence-oriented rule, Huang, Liu & Chang (2004) noted that Taiwan became polarized between Chinese and Taiwanese identity primarily around election time, but at other times cultural similarity led to positive associations between the two identities. There has been much inter-marriage between Mingnan and Outside Province people. Taiwanese identity comes from Chinese identity.

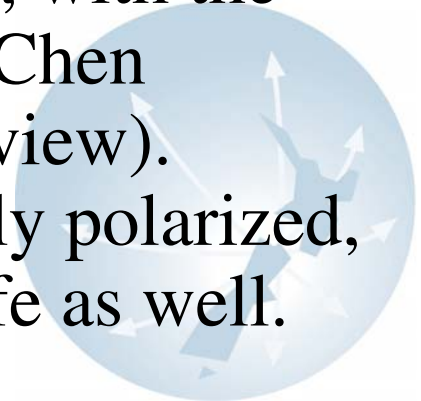


Chinese and Taiwanese identity by Demographic Group in 2001

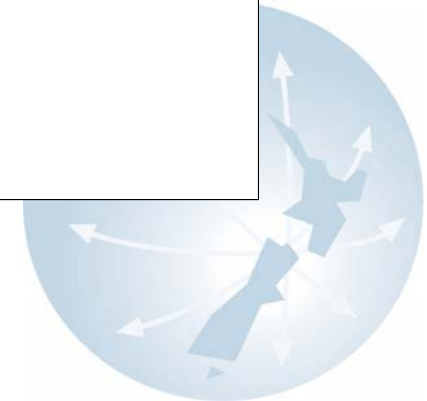
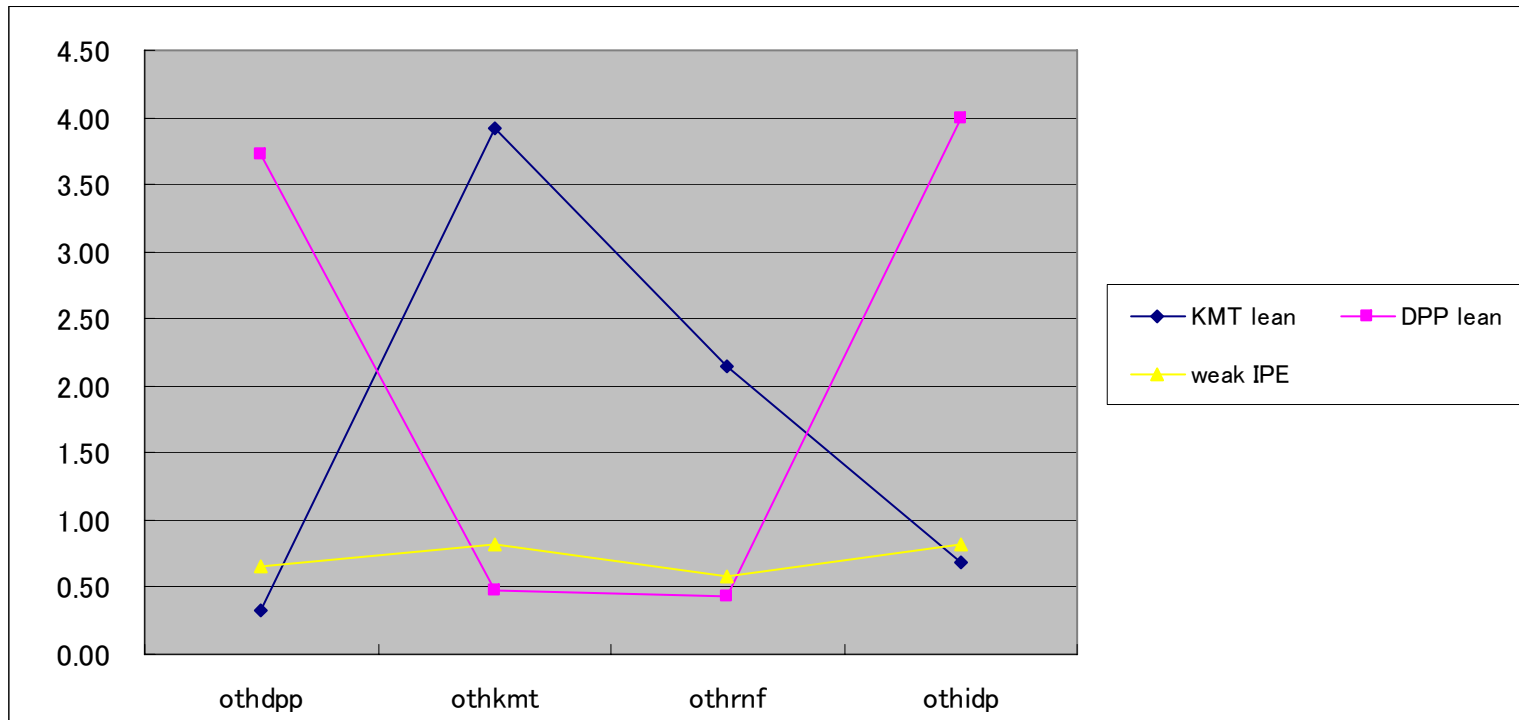


Correlations between Chinese and Taiwanese identity growing more negative

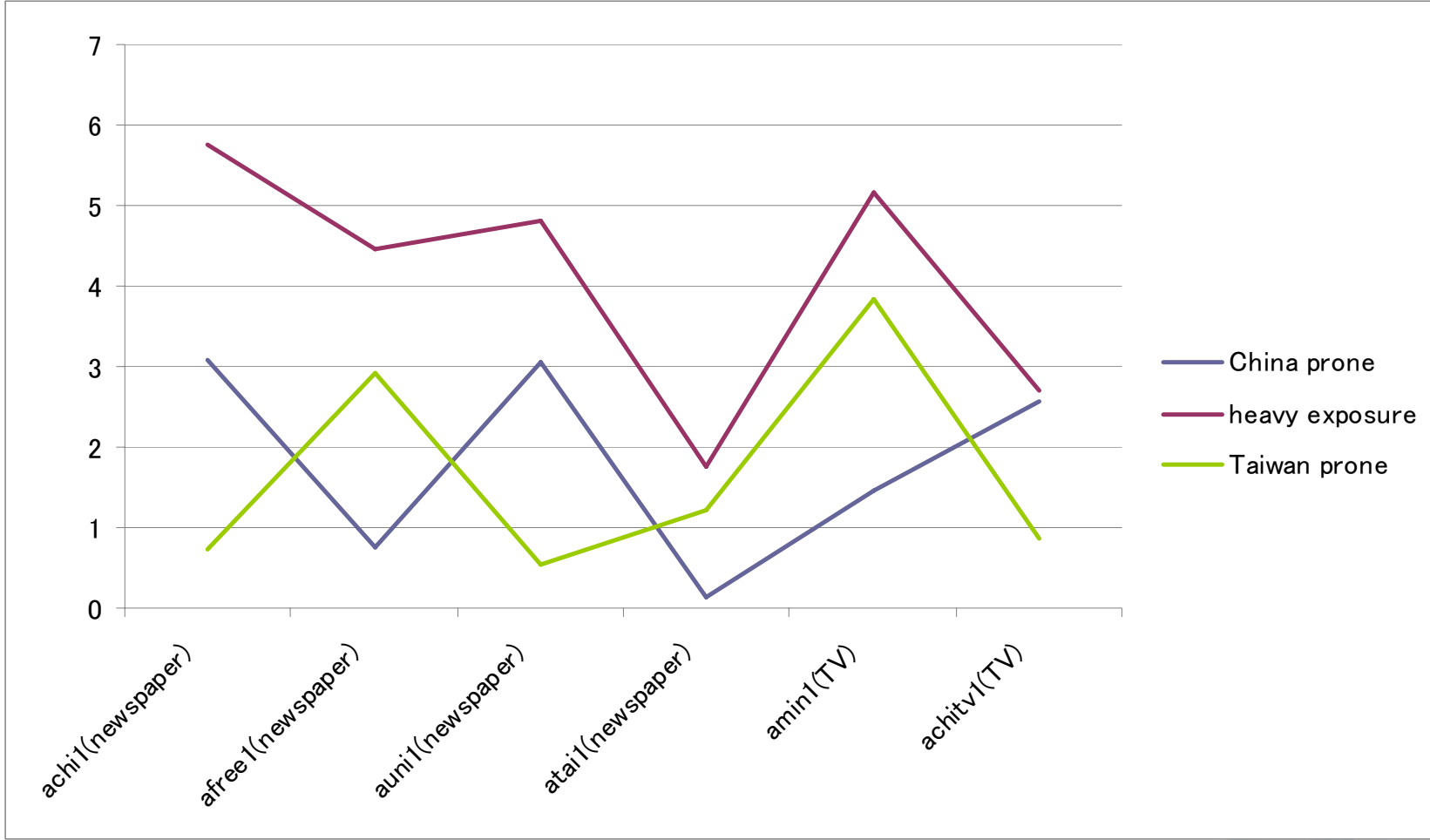
- In 2000-2001, we found the correlation between Taiwanese and Chinese identity to be a slight $-.10$ (large sample of 800+ students and adults)
- By 2004, the correlation had increased to $-.43$ pre-election, and then to $-.50$ post-election (smaller snowball samples of 400+ and 200+ respectively).
- Tension followed the disputed 2004 election, with the KMT refusing to accept the results of the Chen victory (Liu, Huang, & McFedries, under review). Taiwan was becoming increasingly politically polarized, and this appeared to be entering into daily life as well.



Interpersonal Political Environments (IPEs) in Taiwan

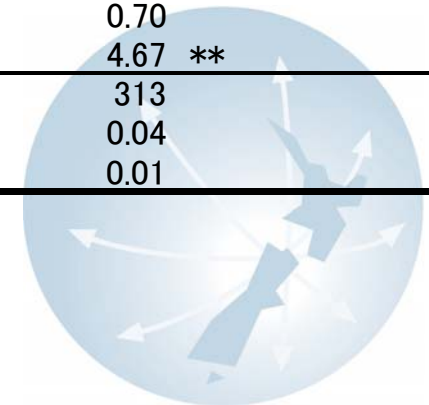


Media Political Environments

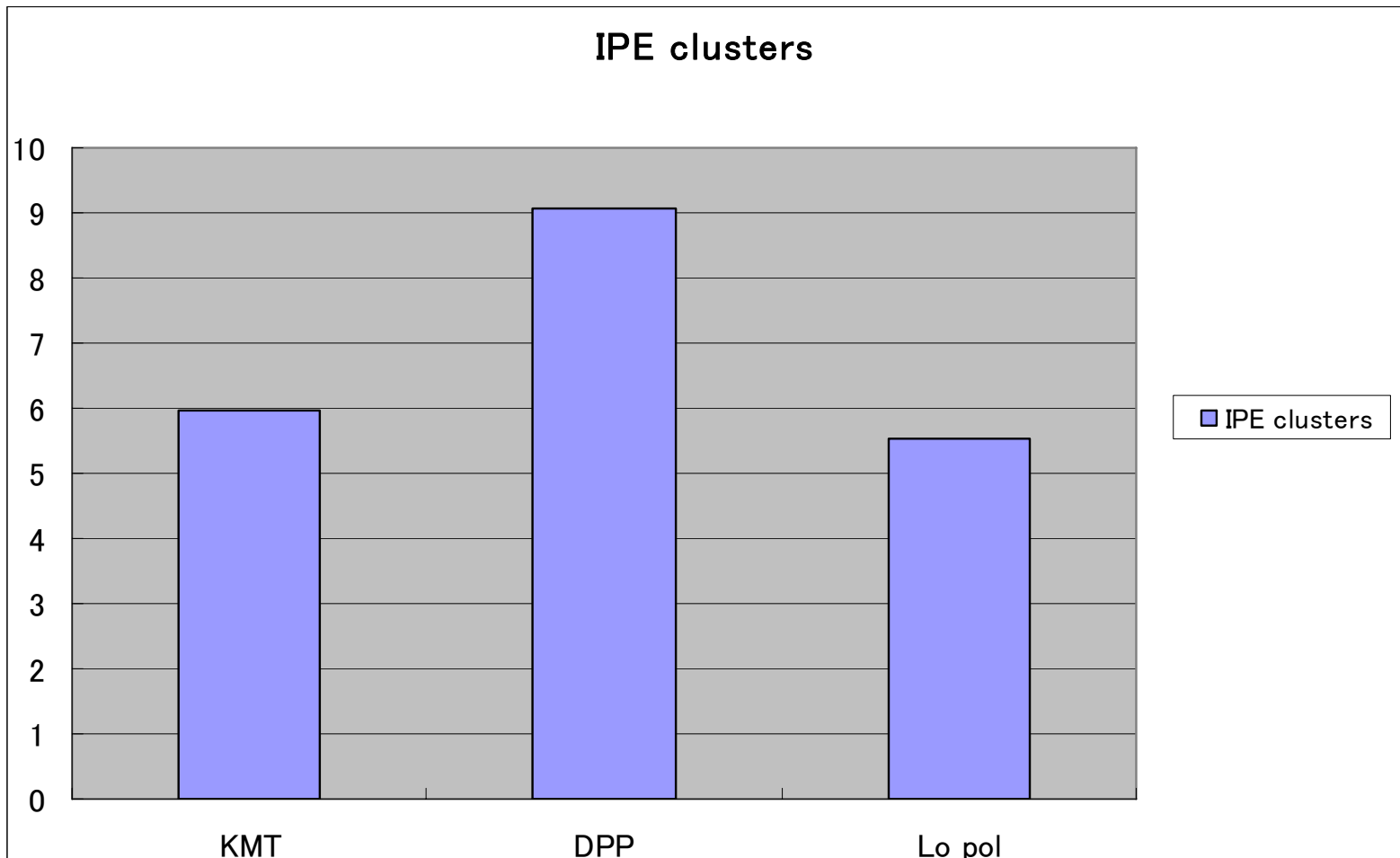


Effects of IPE and MPE on political tolerance

Dependent:	should use Mandarin	should use Taiwanese	political participation	political avoidance
	Coef.(B)			
Gender	-0.02	0.16	0.81 +	0.42
Age	0.00	0.00	0.04 *	-0.02
Education	-0.10	0.22 *	0.86 **	-0.04
(Region) Mid	-0.42	0.17	-0.09	0.05
(Region) South	-0.87 **	0.23	0.50	1.12 *
(Region) East	0.57	0.13	-1.61	0.80
Pay attention to politics	-0.02	-0.03	0.80 **	0.07
(IPE)1 KMT	0.25	-0.50 *	0.59	0.24
(IPE)2 DPP	-0.76 **	0.56 **	3.21 **	0.15
(MPE)2 KMT	0.20	0.27	1.44 *	0.19
(MPE)3 DPP	-0.53 **	0.72 **	1.52 **	0.70
Constant	5.76 **	2.14 **	-3.53 **	4.67 **
Number of obs	319	320	316	313
R-squared	0.21	0.19	0.37	0.04
Adj R-squared	0.18	0.16	0.35	0.01



DPP social networks increase political participation but not KMT





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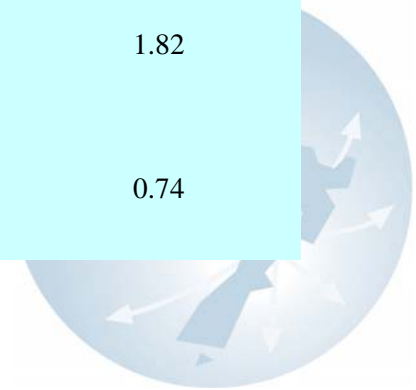
Interim Summary

- About 1/3 of the sample inhabited homogeneous KMT IPEs, 1/3 were in DPP IPEs, and 1/3 in low political IPEs.
- Only 17% inhabited high media MPEs, the rest split evenly between pro-KMT media clusters and pro-DPP media clusters
- KMT IPEs were associated with opposition to use of Taiwanese in public occasions; KMT MPEs associated with more participation.
- DPP IPEs and MPEs were more influential, being associated with opposition to public use of Mandarin, support for use of Taiwanese, and increased political participation

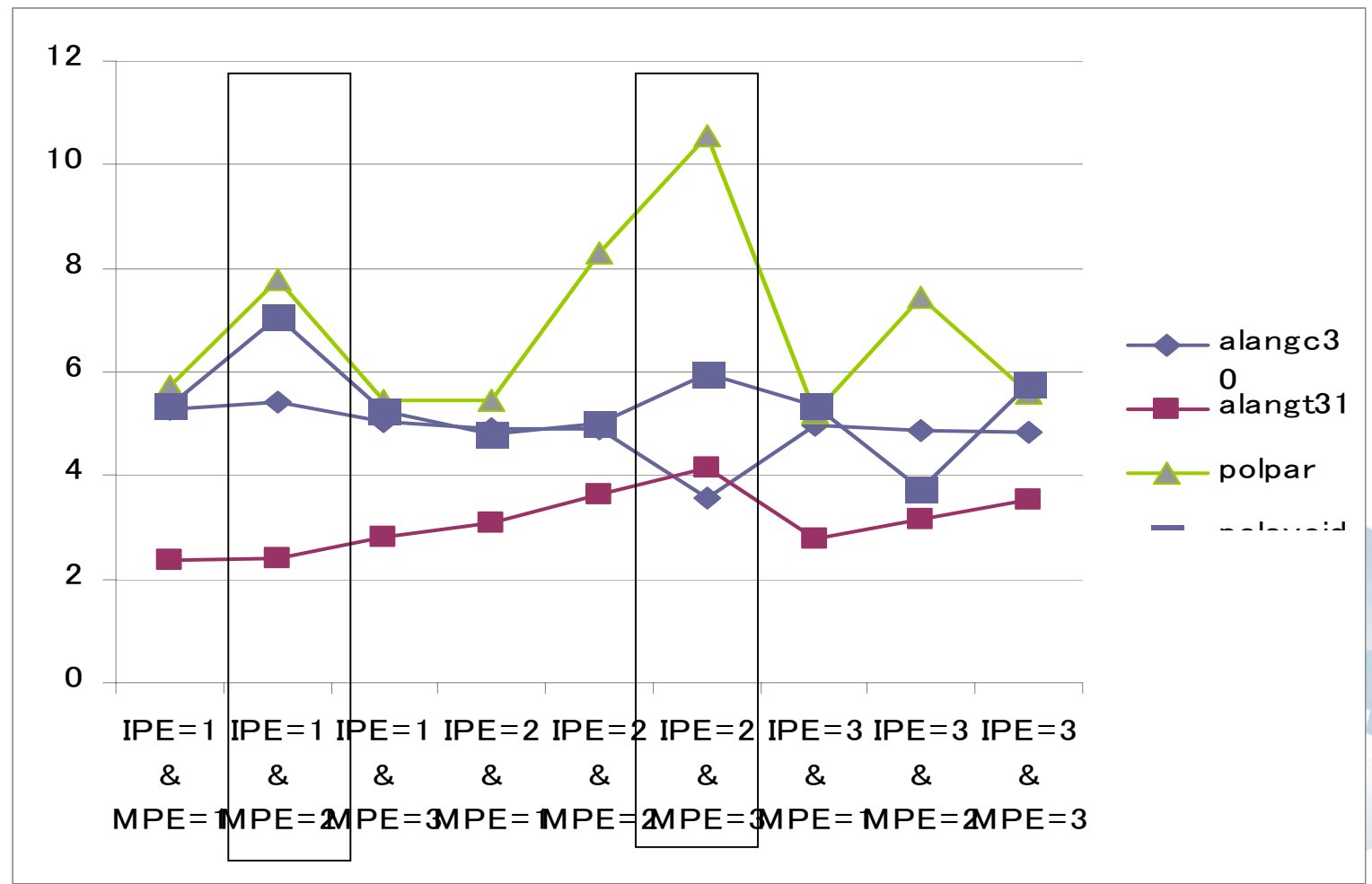


Interaction Effects between homogenous media and interpersonal networks

Dependent:	Use Mandarin	Use Taiwanese	Pol Participation	Pol Avoidance
	Coef.(B)			
(IPE)1 KMT *(MPE)2 KMT	0.25	-0.33	-0.18	3.31 *
(IPE)1 KMT *(MPE)3 DPP	-0.08	-0.31	-0.67	-0.54
(IPE)2 DPP *(MPE)2 KMT	0.11	0.16	0.62	1.82
(IPE)2 DPP *(MPE)3 DPP	-1.18 **	0.29	4.73 **	0.74

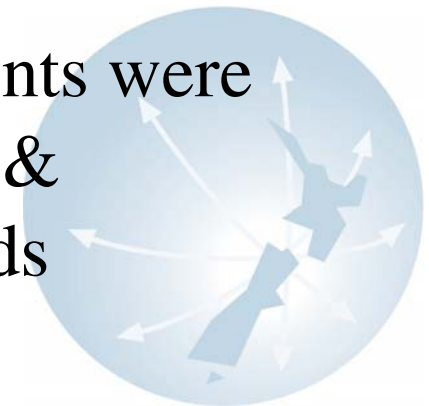


Homogeneous DPP IPE+MPE increases political participation, decreases support of using Mandarin for public occasion.
 Homogeneous KMT IPE+MPE increases political avoidance
 Mixed IPE/MPEs yield intermediate, “moderate” effects



Discussion

- Unlike in most mature democracies, Taiwanese could easily identify the political leanings of mass media (TV & newspapers), and most inhabited biased media environments as well as relatively homogenous interpersonal political environments. Most close relationship partners either had the same political leanings as themselves or their political leanings were unknown.
- Pro-Independence and Pro-DPP environments were much more influential on political projects & participation, reflecting a “zeitgeist” towards Taiwanese sovereignty.



Conclusion 1

- Bonding capital– homogeneous interpersonal political environments increased participation but ALSO support for political projects (e.g., use of language) that could marginalize members of another group. Without meaning to be intolerant, the *effects* of homogeneous IPEs in seeking to strengthen the in-group can lead to a polarizing spiral of political competition between groups.





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Conclusion 2

- Biased mass media consumption exacerbates this effect, creating a passionate (politically active) “political reality without dissent”.
- Future research will examine the extent to which the two factors interact longitudinally, answering more definitively the question whether Taiwan is a polarizing society.

