

Ethnicity, Empowerment, and Political Trust: The 2005 Local Elections in Taiwan

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Ethnicity has long been a politically sensitive issue in Taiwan, especially the cleavage between the majority Taiwanese and the minority mainlanders. However, how does ethnicity affect political attitudes? Using data from the 2005 local elections survey, this study examines Taiwanese-mainlander differences in political trust in county/city government. It is hypothesized that increases in mainlander empowerment would affect the level of political trust among mainlanders and change the nature of Taiwanese-mainlander differences in governmental trust. The findings reveal that empowerment, as indicated by control of the magistrate/mayor's office, has a significant influence on mainlanders' political attitudes, and

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this confirms the hypothesis that, in high-empowerment areas, the degree of political trust in local government among mainlanders is relatively high. In low-empowerment areas, the sense of governmental trust among mainlanders is significantly lower, and ethnic disparities are not so markedly different.

KEYWORDS: political empowerment; ethnic politics; political trust; political attitude; sociopolitical participation.

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How does ethnicity or race influence political attitudes at the individual level? Behavioral research on sociopolitical participation has employed a variety of measures and found that attitudes are significantly associated with a wide range of political behaviors.¹ Furthermore, it is generally accepted that the distribution and intensity of the sociopolitical involvement of ethnic/racial minority groups are profoundly related to the stability, integration, and development of a political regime.² In the attitude-to-behavior process, the sense of political trust—"a basic evaluative or affective orientation toward the government"³—appears to be a primary orientation and an important theoretical component in studies

¹Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, *The American Voter* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1960); Lester Milbrath and M. L. Goel, *Political Participation* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1977); M. Margaret Conway, *Political Participation in the United States*, third edition (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1991); Seymour M. Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981); Warren E. Miller and J. Merrill Shanks, *The New American Voter* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996); Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America* (New York: Longman, 2003); and William F. Stone and Paul E. Schaffner, *The Psychology of Politics*, second edition (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1988).

²Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963); David Easton and Jack Dennis, "The Child's Acquisition of Regime Norms: Political Efficacy," *American Political Science Review* 61, no. 1 (March 1967): 25-38; David Easton, "A Re-Assessment of the Concept of Political Support," *British Journal of Political Science* 5, no. 4 (October 1975): 435-57; David Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); and William A. Gamson, *Power and Discontent* (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey, 1968).

³Arthur H. Miller, "Political Issues and Trust in Government, 1964-1970," *American Political Science Review* 68, no. 3 (September 1974): 952.

of individual attitude sets and belief systems.⁴

Following this argument, it is logical to assume that those who hold higher levels of governmental trust tend to be more active politically. In a democratic polity, citizens participate in various patterns of political activity in order to influence the structure of government, the selection of government authorities, and public policies. This activity could support existing policies, authorities, or structure, or may seek to change any or all of these. In general, the reason for participating politically is to affect the distribution of values. In a democracy, people have more opportunities to play key roles in deciding how to allocate social values than in other kinds of polities. Consequently, a higher sense of public trust in government can be viewed as a norm that supports a democratic political system.

This study is primarily aimed at investigating the connection between political empowerment and ethnic differences in public trust at local government level in Taiwan. Ethnicity has been a politically sensitive issue in Taiwan, especially the cleavage between the majority Taiwanese and the minority mainlanders. This work employs empowerment theory to analyze the influence that political empowerment has brought to bear on Taiwanese-mainlander differences in sociopolitical involvement. Simply put, when the mainlander elites are in power and hold office as county magistrates/city mayors, what is the extent of their influence on levels of political trust among Taiwanese and mainlanders?

The purpose of this study is to offer a systematic assessment of the influence of ethnic empowerment on Taiwanese-mainlander differences in public trust in local government. With this end in mind, my research explores four interrelated issues. It first reviews the relationship between

⁴Donna Bahry, Mikhail Kosolapov, Polina Kozyreva, and Rick K. Wilson, "Ethnicity and Trust: Evidence from Russia," *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 4 (November 2005): 521-32; Jack Citrin, "Comment: The Political Relevance of Trust in Government," *ibid.* 68, no. 3 (September 1974): 973-88; Stephen C. Craig, "Efficacy, Trust, and Political Behavior: An Attempt to Resolve a Lingering Conceptual Dilemma," *American Politics Research* 7, no. 2 (April 1979): 225-39; Stanley Feldman, "The Measurement and Meaning of Political Trust," *Political Methodology* 9, no. 3 (1983): 341-54; Marc J. Hetherington, "The Political Relevance of Political Trust," *American Political Science Review* 92, no. 4 (December 1998): 791-808; and John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

ethnicity and sociopolitical involvement, and following that, the theory of political empowerment and the way in which it is measured. Second, it provides a brief outline of ethnic issues in Taiwan and then clarifies the research insights in more detail. Third, it analyzes the 2005 survey data to ascertain the effects of empowerment on ethnic differences in political trust. In the conclusion, this study indicates the implications of the empirical results for interpretations of ethnic differences in Taiwanese society.

Empowerment and Participation

It is common to employ socio-demographic characteristics as explanatory variables for political participation, because an individual's social background is fundamental to the development of his/her political attitudes and behavior. Among the socioeconomic variables used to explain political participation, race or ethnicity is probably the most thoroughly researched factor.⁵ In the United States, African-Americans and other non-whites generally are less active in politics than whites. Previous studies have offered different explanations for the influence of race on political behavior. For one, historically, the political alienation of African-Americans was the result of legal and informal barriers, e.g., poll taxes, literacy tests, property requirements, registration procedures, gerrymandering, at-large elections, full-slate laws, place systems, majority vote requirements, etc. This shows that African-American interests have been purposely ignored by the authorities.⁵ More importantly, some members of minority groups believe that government, whether it is local, state, or federal, is impassive and unresponsive to their needs and interests and hence it is a waste of time getting involved in it.⁶ It goes without saying

⁵Richard L. Engstrom, "Racial Vote Dilution and the 'New' Equal Protection Clause: *City of Mobile v. Bolden*," *American Studies* 12, no. 2 (September 1982): 25-72; and Richard L. Engstrom, "Modified Multi-Seat Election Systems as Remedies for Minority Vote Dilution," *Stetson Law Review* 21, no. 1 (Summer 1992): 743-70.

⁶H. T. Reynolds, *Politics and the Common Man* (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey, 1974), 130-31; Matt A. Barreto, "¡Si Se Puede! Latino Candidates and the Mobilization of Latino Voters,"

that confidence in one's ability to influence political outcomes is essential for political motivation. Without such confidence people tend to be relatively apathetic toward politics.

In addition to the external obstacles, some scholars attribute African-American apathy to demographic characteristics. Empirical research shows that African-Americans generally are less educated and less informed, face worse economic conditions, and belong to a lower social class than whites.⁷ It is worth mentioning that it has been consistently demonstrated that once the effects of socioeconomic variables are controlled, political participation among African-Americans is equal to or even higher than that of whites.⁸

An expansion of the socioeconomic model is the psychological approach to explaining racial differences in political participation. This approach primarily consists of compensatory theory and racial community theory. According to compensatory theory, African-American participation in politics is mainly due to awareness of their disadvantaged group status which may make up for the negative impact of their worse socioeconomic conditions.⁹ The racial community theory emphasizes that some African-Americans tend to develop a strong psychological attachment and group identification. Stimulated by these sentiments, members of the group undertake collective actions to improve group consciousness, which in turn leads to a high degree of political participation.¹⁰

American Political Science Review 101, no. 3 (August 2007): 425-41; and Ismail K. White, "When Race Matters and When It Doesn't: Racial Group Differences in Response to Racial Cues," *ibid.*, no. 2 (May 2007): 339-54.

⁷Conway, *Political Participation in the United States*, 28, 32-34; Milbrath and Goel, *Political Participation*, 119-22; and Reynolds, *Politics and the Common Man*, 130-31.

⁸Rosenstone and Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*, 43-44, 58-60; Claudine Gay, "Putting Race in Context: Identifying the Environmental Determinants of Black Racial Attitudes," *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 4 (November 2004): 547-62; and Katherine Tate, "Black Political Participation in the 1984 and 1988 Presidential Elections," *ibid.* 85, no. 4 (December 1991): 1159-76.

⁹Cedric Herring, James S. House, and Richard P. Mero, "Racially Based Changes in Political Alienation in America," *Social Science Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (March 1991): 123-34; and Richard D. Shingles, "Black Consciousness and Political Participation: The Missing Link," *American Political Science Review* 75, no. 1 (March 1981): 76-91.

¹⁰Thomas M. Guterbock and Bruce London, "Race, Political Orientation, and Participation:

In contrast to the aforementioned historical, socio-demographic, and psychological explanations, some research literature underscores the influence of political empowerment on the participation of African-Americans.¹¹ Since the late 1960s, the increasingly successful bids by African-Americans to win mayoral elections in many large cities have drawn more attention to African-American political aspirations. This success has in turn led to the development of a burgeoning literature investigating how African-American mayors have addressed the needs of African-Americans in urban politics. Some researchers argue that policy responsiveness in the area of minority employment in city government is connected to the levels of electoral success by minorities.¹²

From the perspective of the empowerment approach, there are at least two reasons why it is important that African-Americans have gained political authority in city governments. First, a minority group or delegates of that minority group that gain political authority acquire greater capacity to influence public affairs and policies in favor of that group; therefore, African-Americans holding policymaking positions can make or influence

An Empirical Test of Four Competing Theories," *American Sociological Review* 48, no. 4 (August 1983): 439-53; Arthur H. Miller, Patricia Gurin, Gerald Gurin, and Oksana Malanchuk, "Group Consciousness and Political Participation," *American Journal of Political Science* 25, no. 3 (August 1981): 494-511; and G. Bingham Powell, "American Voter Turn-out in Comparative Perspective," *American Political Science Review* 80, no. 1 (March 1986): 17-43.

¹¹Susan A. Banducci, Todd Donovan, and Jeffrey A. Karp, "Minority Representation, Empowerment, and Participation," *Journal of Politics* 66, no. 2 (May 2004): 534-56; Jan E. Leighley and Arnold Vedlitz, "Race, Ethnicity, and Political Participation: Competing Models and Contrasting Explanations," *ibid.* 61, no. 4 (November 1999): 1092-1114; Marion Orr, "The Struggle for Black Empowerment in Baltimore," in *Racial Politics in American Cities*, ed. Rufus Browning, Dale Rogers Marshall, and David H. Tabb (New York: Longman, 2003), 255-77; and Michael Leo Owens and Michael J. Rich, "Is Strong Incorporation Enough? Black Empowerment and the Fate of Atlanta's Low-Income Blacks," *ibid.*, 201-26.

¹²Rufus P. Browning, Dale Rogers Marshall, and David H. Tabb, *Protest Is Not Enough* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Dennis R. Judd and Todd Swanstrom, *City Politics: The Political Economy of Urban America*, fifth edition (New York: Pearson Longman, 2006); Ivan Light and Carolyn Rosenstein, *Race, Ethnicity, and Entrepreneurship in Urban America* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1995); and Chung-li Wu, "Is Winning Local Office Comparable to Getting a Magic Lamp? Examining the Impact of Political Empowerment on the Employment Opportunities of African-Americans," *Southeastern Political Review* 27, no. 2 (June 1999): 341-61.

policies that advance African-American interests. Second, mayors and other elected officials have the power to offer financially rewarding and prestigious employment opportunities to other African-Americans.

Concerning the relationship between empowerment and sociopolitical participation, Bobo and Gilliam hypothesize that when African-Americans hold more positions of authority and greater political power, and have done so for longer periods of time, more African-Americans should be more active politically.¹³ It is reasonable to expect that the greater the political empowerment, the higher the levels of political trust, efficacy, and information African-Americans hold, and the more politically involved they become. Methodologically, Bobo and Gilliam defined a high-empowerment area as a primary sampling unit (PSU) in which the largest city has an African-American mayor, while a PSU without an African-American mayor or with an African-American mayor only in a smaller city is scored as a low-empowerment area. By analyzing the 1987 national survey data, Bobo and Gilliam demonstrate that African-Americans in high-empowerment areas are more active than either African-Americans living in low-empowerment areas or their white counterparts of comparable socioeconomic status. In summary, political empowerment influences the participation of African-Americans by increasing their attentiveness to public affairs and by contributing to a more trusting and efficacious orientation to politics.

Ethnicity in Taiwan

The population of Taiwan is composed of four ethnic groups. The largest group, approximately 70 percent of the total population, consists

¹³Lawrence Bobo and Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr., "Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment," *American Political Science Review* 84, no. 2 (June 1990): 377-93. See also Frank D. Gilliam, Jr., "Exploring Minority Empowerment: Symbolic Politics, Governing Coalitions, and Traces of Political Style in Los Angeles," *American Journal of Political Science* 40, no. 1 (February 1996): 56-81; and Frank D. Gilliam, Jr. and Karen M. Kaufmann, "Is There an Empowerment Life Cycle? Long-Term Black Empowerment and Its Influence on Voter Participation," *Urban Affairs Review* 33, no. 6 (July 1998): 741-66.

of native-born Taiwanese, who usually speak the Fujian (福建) dialect of Chinese (since 1949 customarily referred to as the Minnan [閩南] dialect). The second group, about 15 percent of the population, is the Hakka (客家), who mainly speak the Hakka dialect. These two ethnic groups are generally regarded as Taiwanese. The third group, roughly 12.4 percent, consists of mainlanders. In terms of nationality, all three groups are of Chinese descent. The aborigines, the fourth group, are descendants of the earliest inhabitants of the island and live mostly in the mountainous regions. They are racially non-Chinese and constitute only about 1.66 percent of the population; they are virtually without substantial influence in politics.¹⁴

Ethnicity has been a salient issue in Taiwan's political life, especially the sensitive relationship between Taiwanese and mainlanders. Although both groups have different attitudes and characteristics, politics has played the major role in generating ethnic consciousness. Ethnic tensions may be traced back to the February 28th Incident of 1947, which not only resulted in the deaths of a number of members of the Taiwanese elite, but also caused a loss of receptivity between the two groups. The unequal distribution of political power also heightened the discord. Tien's analysis of the 1969-88 statistics on the ethnic distribution of political positions led him to remark that "Taiwanese fare better in low-level positions and local government administration, whereas mainlanders control the national levels of power in both the KMT [Kuomintang, 中國國民黨] and the government."¹⁵

The political ecology has changed since the mid-1970s, when Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國) began to recruit more Taiwanese into the ruling circle, allowing political power to be increasingly shared by mainlanders and Taiwanese. Since the early 1990s, all representative bodies and major executive positions—except for that of the premier who is appointed by

¹⁴Peter R. Moody, Jr., *Political Change on Taiwan* (New York: Praeger, 1992), 37; and Alan M. Wachman, *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), 16-17.

¹⁵Hung-mao Tien, *The Great Transition: Political and Social Change in the Republic of China* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1989), 37-38.

the president—have been subject to direct popular election. Once the Taiwanese had significant political power, particularly after the elections of a Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, 民主進步黨) president, Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁), in 2000 and 2004, the mainlanders were no longer the politically dominant group.¹⁶

The issue of ethnicity has long been a critical factor in the political system in Taiwan, and it is also a significant variable determining people's political attitudes and voting behavior.¹⁷ The reason for this is that the ethnic issue is characterized, in Carmines and Stimson's terminology, as an "easy issue."¹⁸ The public does not need to incur high costs to obtain information on it, nor do they rely on a profound knowledge of politics; all they need is primordial characteristics to judge the issues. More important, since ethnic identity includes a high degree of sentiment, it can be handily manipulated by political parties and politicians in their appeals for political mobilization.

This study adopts the theoretical framework of political empowerment, with mainlanders as the research focus, and examines the extent of the influence of empowerment on governmental trust.¹⁹ Viewed in this light, it

¹⁶Chung-li Wu and Cheng-tai Hsiao, "Empowerment Theory and Ethnic Politics in Taiwan," *Issues & Studies* 42, no. 1 (March 2006): 105. See also Linda Chao and Ramon H. Myers, *The First Chinese Democracy: Political Life in the Republic of China on Taiwan* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 9, 21-22; and Dafydd Fell, *Party Politics in Taiwan: Party Change and the Democratic Evolution of Taiwan, 1991-2004* (London: Routledge, 2005), 110-16, 141-42.

¹⁷See A-chin Hsiao, *Contemporary Taiwanese Cultural Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 2000); Christopher Hughes, *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1997); Wang Fu-chang, "Zuqun tonghua yu dongyuan: Taiwan minzhong zhengdang zhichi zhi fenxi" (Ethnic assimilation and mobilization: an analysis of party support in Taiwan), *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan minzuxue yajiusuo jikan* (Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica) 77 (Spring 1994): 1-34; Wang Fu-chang, "Zuqun yishi, minzu zhuyi yu zhengdang zhichi: yijiujiuling niandai Taiwan de zuqun zhengzhi" (Ethnic consciousness, nationalism, and party support: Taiwan's ethnic politics in the 1990s), *Taiwan shehuixue yanjiu* (Studies on Taiwan's Sociology) 2 (July 1998): 1-45; and Wu Naithe, "Ziyou zhuyi he zuqun rentong: souxun Taiwan minzu zhuyi de yishi xingtai jichu" (Liberalism, ethnic identity, and Taiwanese nationalism), *Taiwan zhengzhi xuekan* (Taiwanese Political Science Review) 1 (July 1996): 5-39.

¹⁸Edward G. Carmines and James A. Stimson, *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), 11.

¹⁹I especially wish to thank one referee for her/his heuristic comment about whether em-

is hypothesized that, in any given county or city where the mainlander elite is in power, governmental performance and leadership effectiveness should enable that local government to find favor with mainlanders in its region, thus raising levels of political trust in local government among mainlanders. On the flip side, in a county or city in which the mainlander elite is not in power, the political trust of mainlanders should be lower, *ceteris paribus*.

Data and Preliminary Analysis

The data for this study come from "Taiwan's Election and Democratization Study, 2005-2008 (I): The Survey of County Magistrate/City Mayoral Elections in 2005."²⁰ This is a locally representative multi-stage probability sample of adults living in four administrative regions: Taipei County (台北縣), Taichung City (台中市), Yunlin County (雲林縣), and Kaohsiung County (高雄縣). Face-to-face interviews were conducted from January through April 2006, and a total of 612, 610, 661, and 618 eligible voters were successfully interviewed in each of these regions, respectively.²¹ Of the 2,501 respondents interviewed, 2,026 were Minnan,

powerment theory can be applied to an ethnic group which is not quite powerless. In other words, the core question is whether the mainlanders in Taiwan qualify as a vulnerable group. I am of the opinion that they are not a vulnerable group but, as noted in this study, they gradually lost their dominant political position, particularly after Chiang Ching-kuo began to recruit more Taiwanese elites in the mid-1970s, Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) became president and KMT chairman in the late 1980s, and Chen Shui-bian won the 2000 and 2004 presidential races. A researcher of ethnic politics has made a similar argument. See Shih Cheng-feng, "Taiwan minzhuhua guocheng zhong de zuqun zhengzhi" (Ethnic politics in Taiwan since democratization), *Taiwan minzhu jikan* (Taiwan Democracy Quarterly) 4, no. 4 (December 2007): 17. From the perspective of the empowerment approach, it is important to investigate the political attitudes of an ethnic minority group which used to have the political advantage.

²⁰Chi Huang, "Taiwan's Election and Democratization Study, 2005-2008 (I): The Survey of County Magistrate/City Mayoral Elections in 2005" (Final Report of the National Science Council Research Project NSC 94-2420-H-004-008-SSS, 2006).

²¹The survey data for Taipei, Yunlin, and Kaohsiung counties are weighted by the factors of gender, age, education, and sampling strata (based on the level of socioeconomic development), while the data for Taichung City are weighted by the variables of gender, age, education, and region. The population parameters are based on the official documents released by the Ministry of the Interior (內政部).

185 Hakka, 244 mainlanders, and 46 others (aborigines and others being excluded from all analyses). Details of the relevant questions and the scale scores for the measures are presented in the appendix.

My research hypothesis is that, when the mainlander elite is in power in a city or county, the degree of political trust in local government among mainlanders should be relatively high, and vice versa. According to the logic of empowerment theory, the impact of empowerment should also change Taiwanese-mainlander differences in the level of public trust. This study divides the four regions into two "high-empowerment areas" run by mainlanders: Taipei County led by Magistrate Chou Hsi-wei (周錫璋)²² and Taichung City led by Mayor Jason Hu (胡志強); and two "low-empowerment areas" led by Taiwanese: Yunlin County led by Magistrate Su Ji-feng (蘇治芬) and Kaohsiung County led by Magistrate Yang Chiu-hsing (楊秋興).²³ Based on differences in provincial affiliation, respondents are merely divided into "Taiwanese" and "mainlanders."²⁴ This study

²²I appreciate one referee's comment that classifying Taipei County as a "high-empowerment area" may be controversial. Theoretically speaking, when a minority group holds more political positions, and has done so for a long period of time, members of the minority group tend to be more active politically. However, Taipei County had been governed by Minnan politicians from 1989 to 2005 and Magistrate Chou was elected at the time the survey was conducted. One limitation of this study is that it is just a cross-sectional analysis, which cannot examine change in political trust among a minority group across time.

²³Chou Hsi-wei is a second-generation mainlander who was born in Taichung County but originates from Funing County, Jiangsu Province (江蘇省阜寧縣). Jason Hu is from Yongji County, Jilin Province (吉林省永吉縣), while Su Ji-feng is from Yunlin County and Yang Chiu-hsing is from Kaohsiung County. Note that this study is mainly concerned with the local executive's ethnicity, not with his or her party affiliation, and not with geographic region. However, I confess that one limitation of this study is that the variables of "executive's ethnicity," "executive's party affiliation," "socioeconomic development," and "geographic region" are completely multicollinear. Chou Hsi-wei and Jason Hu are KMT members, while Su Ji-feng and Yang Chiu-hsing are from the DPP. Furthermore, Taipei County and Taichung City are more developed regions, while Yunlin and Kaohsiung counties are less developed; it is reasonable to expect that the education levels and income in the former are higher than those in the latter. More important politically, Taipei County and Taichung City are located in north and central Taiwan, while Yunlin and Kaohsiung counties are situated in the south; the location differences are consistent with the common impression about geographic politics in Taiwan, "the north supports the pan-Blue, the south the pan-Green" (北藍南綠).

²⁴The reason for not making a distinction between Minnan and Hakka is that the empirical results would not be significantly different even if I did so. Since the research focus is on Taiwanese-mainlander differences in public trust of local government, the Minnan and Hakka peoples are combined and referred to as "Taiwanese."

Table 1
Correlation Coefficient (Kendall's tau-b) Matrix between Indexes for
Measuring Governmental Trust

	Index 1	Index 2	Index 3	Index 4	Index 5	Index 6
Index 1	1.000	.353**	.420**	.385**	.299**	.265**
Index 2		1.000	.377**	.279**	.332**	.294**
Index 3			1.000	.393**	.336**	.324**
Index 4				1.000	.373**	.315**
Index 5					1.000	.510**
Index 6						1.000

Note: ** $p < .01$; one-tailed test of significance.

also tests the joint effects of empowerment and a respondent's ethnicity, and therefore distinguishes between "mainlanders in high-empowerment areas," "mainlanders in low-empowerment areas," "Taiwanese in high-empowerment areas," and "Taiwanese in low-empowerment areas."

The dependent variable, political trust, is typically conceptualized as an indicator of the ethical qualities of public officials, the efficiency of government, and the correctness of its policies. The concept of political trust has prompted researchers to offer various techniques for systematic measurement.²⁵ In this study, six items are employed to tap the variable "political trust in local government" (see the appendix). Before going further, it is necessary to estimate the reliability of the measuring items. The correlations of Kendall's tau-b between the six items indicate that there is a tendency for measurements of political trust to be consistent and reliable, as shown in table 1. Although the coefficients for indexes 5 and 6 (.510) and indexes 1 and 3 (.420) are much higher than those for indexes 1 and 6 (.265) and indexes 2 and 4 (.279), the others are nearly .350. The results show, at the very least, an encouraging initial step toward a persuasive measurement of public confidence in local government.

²⁵Concerning the various measurements of political trust, see Feldman, "The Measurement and Meaning of Political Trust," 341-54; and Hetherington, "The Political Relevance of Political Trust," 781-808.

Table 2
Governmental Trust by Ethnicity

	Governmental Trust				Total
	High	Moderately high	Moderately low	Low	
Taiwanese	148 (16.4%)	317 (35.1%)	202 (22.4%)	235 (26.1%)	902 (100.0%)
Mainlanders	25 (23.8%)	37 (35.2%)	22 (21.0%)	21 (20.0%)	105 (100.0%)
Total	173 (17.2%)	354 (35.2%)	224 (22.2%)	256 (25.4%)	1,007 (100.0%)

Note: Pearson chi-square = 4.443; $p = .217$; D.F. = 3.

To offer a systematic assessment of the dependent variable, a respondent's score on political trust is the sum of his/her scores on each of the individual items. The trust index therefore ranges from 6 to 24. The larger the score, the higher the level of political trust; after recoding, scores of 6 to 12 are referred to as "low," 13 to 14 as "moderately low," 15 to 17 as "moderately high," and 18 to 24 as "high"; the valid percentages of the four categories are 25.5 percent, 22.0 percent, 35.0 percent, and 17.5 percent, respectively.

Cross-tabulation analyses involve the division of the respondents into subgroups according to the different categories of the independent variable. A chi-square test reveals no significant differences between Taiwanese and mainlanders in the distribution of political trust based on respondents' provincial affiliation (see table 2). Note that the political trust of mainlanders is relatively high, with there being 23.8 percent in the "high" and 20.0 percent in the "low" categories. In contrast, the political trust of Taiwanese is relatively low, with the percentages for the "high" and "low" categories being 16.4 percent and 26.1 percent, respectively.

I have further analyzed the empowerment variable, in order to examine the assumption that the mainlander elite being in power enhances the political trust of mainlanders. The results to some extent support this

Table 3
Governmental Trust by Ethnicity and Empowerment

	Governmental Trust				Total
	High	Moderately high	Moderately low	Low	
Taiwanese in low-empowerment areas	70 (16.6%)	124 (29.5%)	97 (23.0%)	130 (30.9%)	421 (100.0%)
Taiwanese in high-empowerment areas	78 (16.2%)	193 (40.1%)	104 (21.6%)	106 (22.0%)	481 (100.0%)
Mainlanders in low-empowerment areas	5 (16.7%)	10 (33.3%)	11 (36.7%)	4 (13.3%)	30 (100.0%)
Mainlanders in high-empowerment areas	20 (26.0%)	28 (36.4%)	12 (15.6%)	17 (22.1%)	77 (100.0%)
Total	173 (17.1%)	355 (35.2%)	224 (22.2%)	256 (25.5%)	1,009 (100.0%)

Note: Pearson chi-square = 24.835; $p = .003$; D.F. = 9.

hypothesis: in different empowerment areas the differences in relation to mainlanders are significant. In the "high-empowerment areas" 26.0 percent of mainlanders are in the "high" category and 15.6 percent are in the "moderately low," while in the "low-empowerment areas" the percentages are 16.7 and 36.7, respectively (see table 3).

The above analysis confirms the research hypothesis, at least initially. In a county or city where the magistrate or mayor is a mainlander, the mainlanders' feelings of public trust in local government are relatively high. By contrast, in a county or city where the local executive is Taiwanese, mainlanders' level of political trust becomes relatively low. The data yield some interesting findings, but cross-tabulation analyses, while illuminating, are not an effective technique for examining a number of variables simultaneously. The relative impacts of different variables on the dependent variable are approached better through multivariate analyses.

Discussion of Findings

Beyond the variables of ethnicity and empowerment, the literature on sociopolitical participation suggests that public trust is a complex function of various other factors. In relation to this, some determinants of political trust are considered. Individual-level variables, including gender, age, education, party identification,²⁶ Taiwanese/Chinese consciousness, unification/independence preference, and socio-tropic and pocketbook evaluations, are taken into consideration as control variables. The reason for employing socio-demographic characteristics as explanatory variables is the presumption that an individual's social background is central to the development of his/her political attitudes, including trust in local government.

As previously mentioned, the dependent variable of political trust is a four-category ordered polytomous variable, with a distinction being made between "high," "moderately high," "moderately low," and "low," with "high" being employed as the reference group. With regard to the independent variables, while age is a continuous variable, the remaining variables are categorical or ordinal variables. As for the statistical model, the dependent variable attributes are considered and ordered logit analyses adopted, with SPSS 14.0 being used to analyze the data.²⁷

The results of the multivariate estimates are displayed in table 4. In equation 1, the empowerment and ethnicity variables are included. In equation 2, only the multiplicative terms of ethnicity and empowerment

²⁶There should be six categories based on Taiwan's existing party system: the KMT, the DPP, the People First Party (PPF, 親民黨), the New Party (NP, 新黨), the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU, 台灣團結聯盟), and independents. However, in the TEDS 2005M, only 30 respondents identified with the PPF, 8 with the NP, and 44 with the TSU. The number of these valid samples is quite limited. Therefore, this research divides party identification into "pan-Green" (泛綠; i.e., DPP and TSU), "pan-Blue" (泛藍; i.e., KMT, PPF, and NP), and independents.

²⁷The ordered logit model is also known as the proportional-odds model because the odds ratio of the event is independent of the choice of category (j). The odds ratio is assumed to be constant for all categories. See Stephen E. Fienberg, *The Analysis of Cross-Classified Categorical Data*, second edition (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1980), 110; and P. McCullagh and J. A. Nelder, *Generalized Linear Models*, second edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1989), 151-55.

Table 4
Ordered Logit Regression Estimates for Governmental Trust

	Equation 1		Equation 2	
	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.
Cut 1	-.967***	.264	-.953***	.266
Cut 2	.103	.261	.117	.263
Cut 3	1.886***	.270	1.900***	.272
Gender (male)	.211	.129	.213 [#]	.129
Age	.015*	.006	.015*	.006
Education				
Primary school and below	-.577*	.293	-.577*	.293
Junior high school	-.668**	.223	-.672**	.223
High or vocational school	-.324*	.145	-.323*	.145
Ethnicity (mainlanders)	.314	.214	-	-
High-empowerment areas	.154	.131	-	-
Ethnicity × empowerment				
Taiwanese in high-empowerment areas	-	-	.170	.137
Mainlanders in low-empowerment areas	-	-	.448	.400
Mainlanders in high-empowerment areas	-	-	.430 [#]	.258
Party identification				
Pan-Blue	.204	.166	.204	.166
Pan-Green	.193	.178	.193	.178
Taiwanese/Chinese consciousness				
Taiwanese	-.006	.146	-.006	.146
Chinese	-.474	.432	-.475	.432
Unification/independence preference				
China unification	.273	.184	.274	.184
Taiwan independence	-.519**	.174	-.517**	.174
Retrospective national economy				
Gotten better	.013	.208	.013	.208
Gotten worse	-.198	.152	-.200	.152
Prospective national economy				
Get better	.123	.178	.125	.178
Get worse	-.296 [#]	.164	-.297 [#]	.164
Retrospective personal finances				
Gotten better	.607*	.256	.610*	.256
Gotten worse	-.261	.160	-.259	.160
Prospective personal finances				
Get better	-.328 [#]	.177	-.326 [#]	.177
Get worse	-.487*	.220	-.481*	.221
Log likelihood	2,205.950		2,205.783	
χ^2 statistic of overall model fit	74.991***		75.157***	
N	848.46		848.46	

Note: [#] $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; two-tailed test of significance.

are considered, in order to facilitate the comparison. Taken as a whole, the chi-squared statistics of overall model fit show, at the very least, an encouraging initial step toward a persuasive and respectable explanation of political trust. Six coefficients consistently reach statistical significance, and most of them run in the expected directions.²⁸

Equation 1 indicates that age, education, unification/independence preference, prospective national economy, and microeconomic evaluations are the significant factors associated with individuals' political trust in local government. After controlling certain variables, neither ethnicity nor empowerment has a significant effect on personal sense of political trust. However, it is worth noting that in equation 2, the joint effects of ethnicity and empowerment, "mainlanders in high-empowerment areas," on political trust emerges as statistically significant, with the extent of the influence of the remaining variables being much the same. It is somewhat surprising to find that the variables of party identification, Taiwanese/Chinese consciousness, and retrospective national economy are consistently weak and insignificant, thus revealing that these factors account for little variance in public confidence in local government.

As the data show, the variables of age and education have significant effects on the level of political trust. To be more precise, as age increases, the extent of people's political trust also gradually increases. The results also indicate that, compared to those with college or higher degrees, individuals with a lower level of educational attainment are more likely to have less trust in the government. This result is in accord with the research hypothesis.

As for the unification/independence preference, those who support Taiwanese independence rather than maintenance of the status quo tend to have less political trust in government. Without a doubt, the unification/independence issue is the one receiving the most attention in Taiwan's

²⁸Note that an examination of the correlation coefficients among the independent variables reveals that the partial coefficients are not highly multicollinear. Due to limitations of space, it is hard to present the data analysis in detail. Those who are interested in the data may contact the author who will be pleased to provide such information.

politics at present, and it is also considered to be a key variable in research on the political behavior of voters.²⁹ The fact that advocates of Taiwan independence are associated with a lower level of political trust is a field worthy of continued research.

The influences of prospective national economy and pocketbook evaluations very closely correspond to expectations. It is generally accepted that both retrospective voting³⁰ and prospective voting³¹ are leading theories in regard to evaluating the economy at the macro- and micro-levels, as well as the sociopolitical involvement of the public.³² Retrospective voting means that people's political attitudes and behavior are influenced by their evaluations of government performance in the past. By contrast, prospective voting involves an attempt by the people to compare and evaluate politicians' future policy plans and promises, from which political attitudes and behavior are formed. The results demonstrate that individuals believe that macroeconomic conditions will be worse in the future, and their feelings of public trust are therefore markedly low. In addition, those who believe that their personal economic status has improved tend to have a relatively high level of political trust, and vice versa.

Whether or not empowerment is capable of increasing mainlanders' political trust is the major concern of this research. As shown in equation 1, the coefficients for the variables of ethnicity and empowerment are weak and insignificant. However, one of the multiplicative terms of ethnicity and empowerment exerts a significant influence on political trust. Equation 2

²⁹Wu and Hsiao, "Empowerment Theory and Ethnic Politics in Taiwan," 120.

³⁰Morris P. Fiorina, *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1981); and Morris P. Fiorina, "Explorations of a Political Theory of Party Identification," in *Controversies in Voting Behavior*, ed. Richard Niemi and Herbert F. Weisberg (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1984), 406-26.

³¹Christopher H. Achen, "Social Psychology, Demographic Variables, and Linear Regression: Breaking the Iron Triangle in Voting Research," *Political Behavior* 14, no. 3 (September 1992): 195-211.

³²Donald R. Kinder and D. Roderick Kiewiet, "Economic Discontent and Political Behavior: The Role of Personal Grievances and Collective Economic Judgments in Congressional Voting," *American Journal of Political Science* 23, no. 3 (August 1979): 495-527; and Donald R. Kinder and D. Roderick Kiewiet, "Sociotropic Politics: The American Case," *British Journal of Political Science* 11, no. 2 (April 1981): 129-61.

indicates that the political trust of "mainlanders in high-empowerment areas" is higher than that of "Taiwanese in low-empowerment areas." Even though the levels of political trust of "mainlanders in low-empowerment areas" and "Taiwanese in high-empowerment areas" are higher than that of "Taiwanese in low-empowerment areas," the differences are not statistically significant. The findings of this study suggest that political empowerment retains a conditional connection with feelings of public trust. More explicitly, the results confirm the assumption that in Taipei County and Taichung City, where mainlander elites are in power, the degree of political trust in local government among mainlanders is relatively high. In contrast, in both Yunlin and Kaohsiung counties, where the local executives are Taiwanese, the degree of political trust in local government among mainlanders is lower, and accordingly the Taiwanese-mainlander differences are relatively small.

Conclusion

In Taiwan, the issue of ethnicity is salient and politically sensitive. By approaching the subject from the perspective of political behavior, this study attempts to understand the influence of ethnic empowerment on sociopolitical involvement. In contrast to previous research on ethnic politics in Taiwan, this study examines the impact of political empowerment on public trust in local government. There is one reason for focusing on the case of Taiwan in this respect: Taiwan is a robust, growing country undergoing broad social, economic, and political transition. In particular, it is moving from a Leninist-style regime with characteristics of a one-party authoritarian system toward a democratic regime with aspects of institutionalized electoral competition. For those who study sociopolitical evolution in newly industrializing countries, the Taiwan case might further their understanding of racial or ethnic politics in some of the developing countries, such as Bosnia, Chechnya, China, Turkey, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Rwanda, Liberia, Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, East Timor, and the Philippines.

What has emerged in this study is a somewhat complicated picture of the relationship between empowerment and participation. Empowerment theory, which was developed in the United States in a racial context, may produce different results when applied to ethnic politics in Taiwan, due to differences in the historical environment. While African-Americans in the United States and mainlanders in Taiwan each account for about 13 percent of their respective populations, the two groups differ significantly in terms of their political influence. In a sense, ethnic relationships in Taiwan may be more similar to racial politics in South Africa, where a minority ran an authoritarian regime that discriminated against the majority. Until Lee Teng-hui became president and KMT chairman in the late 1980s, the mainlander elites held a near monopoly of political power.

In the 1978, 1981, and 1983 surveys, the political involvement of mainlanders was generally higher than that of Taiwanese,³³ while in the 2001 and 2002 surveys, it was generally lower than that of other groups.³⁴ A possible reason for this could be the influence exerted by political empowerment. That is to say, in the past when the mainlander elites were in power, it was power that caused mainlanders to be more politically involved. Now that the Taiwanese elites are in power, the mainlanders have become less politically active.

Today this trend may have changed, however. Using more recent sample survey data, this study primarily examines the relationship between political empowerment and Taiwanese-mainlander differences in political attitudes. The findings reveal that mainlanders have equal or even higher degrees of political trust in local government than Taiwanese. When the variable of political empowerment is included, the level of governmental trust among mainlanders is even higher, and Taiwanese-mainlander differ-

³³Hu Fu, *Zhengzhixue de kexue tanjiu*. III: *Zhengzhi canyu yu xuanju xingwei* (Scientific explorations of political science, vol. 3: Political participation and electoral behavior) (Taipei: Sanmin, 1998), 77-78, 108, 128, 164, 170.

³⁴Chi Huang, "Taiwan's Election and Democratization Study, 2001" (Final Report of the National Science Council Research Project NSC 90-2414-H-194-028-SSS, 2002); and Chi Huang, "Taiwan's Election and Democratization Study, 2002" (Final Report of the National Science Council Research Project NSC 91-2420-H-194-001-SSS, 2003).

ences are statistically significant. To be more precise, the results confirm the research hypothesis, which is that in those regions in which a mainlander is the city mayor or county magistrate, the political trust of mainlanders is relatively high, being much different from that of Taiwanese. In contrast, in those regions in which the local executive is not a mainlander, the ethnic disparities are not so markedly different. This study has by and large confirmed empowerment theory by applying it to Taiwan's ethnic politics. Even so, it is based on a cross-sectional analysis, and I am of the opinion that longitudinal analyses should be of significant research value in examining the impact of political empowerment. In addition, attempts could be made to apply empowerment theory to other ethnic minority groups, even to the extent of making cross-national comparisons. Obviously there is still potential for future research in this field.

Appendix: Survey Questions and Coding of Variables

Political Trust in Local Government

1. "People have different ideas about the (city/county) government. We want to see how you feel about these ideas. Do you think the decisions made by the (city/county) government are always right?" (4 = *strongly agree*; 3 = *agree*; 2 = *disagree*; 1 = *strongly disagree*)
2. "Do you think that the (city/county) government officials waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes?" (1 = *strongly agree*; 2 = *agree*; 3 = *disagree*; 4 = *strongly disagree*)
3. "Do you think that when the (city/county) government decides important policies, its first priority is to protect the interests of the people?" (4 = *usually*; 3 = *sometimes*; 2 = *not very often*; 1 = *never*)
4. "Generally speaking, how good do you think the efficiency of (city/county) government is?" (4 = *very good*; 3 = *good*; 2 = *not very good*; 1 = *not good at all*)
5. "Generally speaking, how serious do you think corruption among the people running the (city/county) government is?" (1 = *very serious*; 2 = *serious*; 3 = *not very serious*; 4 = *not serious at all*)

6. "Generally speaking, is it a serious matter if the (mayor/magistrate) of (city/county) government considers personal connections to be more important than capability when he or she employs someone?" (1 = *very serious*; 2 = *serious*; 3 = *not very serious*; 4 = *not serious at all*)

Ethnicity. Ethnic background of respondent's father (1 = *mainlander*; 2 = *Taiwanese* [Minnan and Hakka])

Empowerment. The four cities and counties in this study are divided into two "high-empowerment areas" run by mainlanders, Taipei County by Magistrate Chou Hsi-wei and Taichung City by Mayor Jason Hu, and two "low-empowerment areas" led by Taiwanese, Yunlin County by Magistrate Su Ji-feng and Kaohsiung County by Magistrate Yang Chiu-hsing.

Ethnicity × empowerment. Respondent's ethnicity and empowerment factor (1 = *Taiwanese in low-empowerment areas*; 2 = *Taiwanese in high-empowerment areas*; 3 = *mainlanders in low-empowerment areas*; 4 = *mainlanders in high-empowerment areas*)

Gender. Respondent's gender (1 = *male*; 2 = *female*)

Age. Respondent's age measured in years (20 to 92)

Education. Respondent's level of educational attainment measured on a four-tier scale. (1 = *primary school and below* [through 6th grade]; 2 = *junior high school* [grades 7 to 9]; 3 = *high or vocational school*; 4 = *some college and higher*)

Party identification. "Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as close to any particular political party?" Those who classify themselves as independents are asked the following question: "Do you think of yourself as being a little closer to one of the political parties than the others? [If yes] "Which party do you feel closest to?" (1 = *Pan-Blue* [Kuomintang, People First Party, and New Party]; 2 = *Pan-Green* [Democratic Progressive Party and Taiwan Solidarity Union]; 3 = *independent*)

Taiwanese/Chinese consciousness. "In our society, some people say they are Taiwanese, some people say they are Chinese, and some people say they are both Taiwanese and Chinese. Do you think you are Taiwanese, Chinese, or both?" (1 = *Taiwanese*; 2 = *Chinese*; 3 = *both*)

Unification/independence preference. "Concerning the relationship between Taiwan and mainland China, which of these six positions do you agree with: (1) immediate unification; (2) immediate independence; (3) maintain the status quo, but in the future move toward unification; (4) maintain the status quo, but in the future move toward independence; (5) maintain the status quo, but in the future decide to move toward either unification or independence; and (6) maintain the status quo forever?" (1 = *China unification* [immediate unification and maintain the status

quo, but in the future move toward unification]; 2 = *Taiwan independence* [immediate independence and maintain the status quo, but in the future move toward independence]; 3 = *maintain the status quo* [maintain the status quo, but in the future decide to move toward either unification or independence, and maintain the status quo forever])

Retrospective national economy. "Would you say that over the past year, the state of the economy in Taiwan has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?" (1 = *gotten better*; 2 = *stayed about the same*; 3 = *gotten worse*)

Prospective national economy. "Would you say that in the forthcoming year, the state of the economy in Taiwan will get better, stay about the same, or get worse?" (1 = *get better*; 2 = *stay about the same*; 3 = *get worse*)

Retrospective personal finances. "Would you say that over the past year, your household's economic condition has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?" (1 = *gotten better*; 2 = *stayed about the same*; 3 = *gotten worse*)

Prospective personal finances. "Would you say that in the forthcoming year, your household's economic condition will get better, stay about the same, or get worse?" (1 = *get better*; 2 = *stay about the same*; 3 = *get worse*)

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