

IDEOLOGICAL FRAMING IN TAIWANESE MEDIA: ANALYZING EDITORIAL  
RESPONSES TO COVID-19 INCIDENTS

BY

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THESIS

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## ABSTRACT

This study critically analyzes the editorials of two Taiwanese newspapers, the China Times and the Taipei Times, regarding their portrayal of three incidents that occurred during COVID-19, which led to domestic political disputes. These incidents include Taiwan's exclusion from the WHA meeting, the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government's mask diplomacy, and the debate surrounding the potential renaming of China Airlines. The selected articles have been translated from Mandarin to English. The theoretical framework for this study utilizes the five generic news frames proposed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), the concept of textual silence by Huckin (2002), and the emphasis and de-emphasis strategies identified by Rosulek (2014). The analysis examines how the publishers frame the events, the information presented to readers, the information excluded, and what is given greater emphasis. This approach helps to identify how the newspapers uphold their ideological stances through various linguistic techniques. The findings indicate that the China Times frequently frames events by suggesting misconduct by the current government. At the same time, the Taipei Times tends to frame incidents in terms of moral obligations or emotional appeals to foster empathy and encourage timely governmental action.

Furthermore, the China Times includes and emphasizes cross-strait relations or international risks, often excluding or downplaying Taiwan's success in managing COVID-19 and gaining international recognition. Conversely, the Taipei Times highlights Taiwan's contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing more detailed information on these topics. However, their editorials rarely address the political constraints and potential repercussions that may arise from advocating for national identity recognition. These insights underscore the need for further research to uncover the underlying ideologies in newspaper editorials, highlighting the pervasive nature of media bias and the importance of media literacy.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The media play a fundamental role in shaping public perception by reporting events and constructing narratives that reflect particular ideological perspectives. Through language and rhetorical strategies, newspapers influence how individuals interpret political, social, and economic issues, ultimately affecting public discourse and decision-making (Dijk, 1998; Kress, 1985; Taiwo, 2004). This phenomenon is particularly evident in politically sensitive regions such as Taiwan, where the press operates within a highly polarized media landscape. Taiwanese newspapers often exhibit partisan biases that align with distinct political factions, influencing how the public frames and understands key events. Given that news reports are often perceived as objective accounts, it is essential to critically examine the linguistic and framing techniques that contribute to selective portrayals of political events.

This study explores how two Taiwanese newspapers, the *China Times* and the *Taipei Times*, frame three significant political incidents that arose during the COVID-19 pandemic: Taiwan's exclusion from the World Health Assembly (WHA), the ruling Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) mask diplomacy, and debate surrounding the potential renaming of China Airlines. These events sparked widespread domestic and international political debate, making them valuable case studies for examining media representation. The *China Times* is known for its pro-Kuomintang (Nationalist) stance and is often critical of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), the main opposing party in Taiwan's political environment. On the other hand, the *Taipei Times* is aligned with a pro-Taiwan independence perspective, supporting the policies of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). As such, their coverage of these events provides insight into how political ideologies influence the framing of news narratives.

Despite growing research on media bias, a gap exists in understanding how Taiwanese newspapers strategically employ language to shape political discourse, particularly in different linguistic mediums. This study seeks to address this gap by applying a combination of critical discourse analysis (CDA). Specifically, it employs Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) five generic news frames, Huckin's (2002) concept of textual silence, and Rosulek's (2014) emphasis and de-emphasis strategies, to investigate how different newspapers selectively present, exclude, or highlight information to reinforce their ideological stances. This study aims to demonstrate how easily these linguistic features can be manipulated to influence readers' perceptions of political

events. Through systematic analysis, this study highlights how these subtle yet powerful linguistic choices are strategically employed to legitimize particular perspectives while marginalizing others. Qualitative content analysis is applied to a corpus of editorials from the *China Times* and the *Taipei Times*. Since the *Taipei Times* publishes in English, while the *China Times* is written in Mandarin, selected articles from the *China Times* were translated into English for comparison. Although translation presents inherent challenges, efforts have been made to ensure that the original meaning and rhetorical choices are preserved as accurately as possible. While this may introduce minor discrepancies, the comparative analysis remains valuable in revealing broader trends in ideological framing and selective representation.

By using different newspapers to frame the same events in contrasting ways, this study highlights the mechanisms through which ideological biases are embedded in news discourse. It underscores the necessity of approaching news critically and encourages further exploration of media bias in foreign environments. This thesis is structured as follows: Chapter 2 reviews the literature on media framing, ideological bias, and critical discourse analysis. It also introduces the theoretical framework that guides this research, including headline framing, textual silence, and emphasis/de-emphasis strategies. Chapter 3 details the methodology, outlining the data collection process and qualitative analysis. Chapter 4 presents the findings and discussion, illustrating how the two newspapers construct narratives through linguistic choices and the broader implications of these findings, particularly concerning media literacy and public perception. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes the study by summarizing key insights and suggesting avenues for future research.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

News media discourse provides a valuable data source for analyzing strategic linguistic choices. News media are often the first to report breaking news and developments as they can access first-hand information. Hence, how the media describes the situations can significantly impact the public's opinion (Van Dijk, 1992). However, since news production involves multiple editing stages, the linguistic choices are subject to conscious manipulation to impact the readership (Dijk, 1998; Kress, 1985; Taiwo, 2004). In other words, news discourse is rarely devoid of subjective interpretations; instead, it actively constructs reality in ways that align with the underlying ideologies of the newspapers and their target audiences. While seemingly inconspicuous to the innocent reader, these patterns can be revealed through systematic analysis, thanks to the development of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

The roots of CDA can be traced back to Critical Linguistics (CL), which was developed in the 1970s by scholars such as Roger Fowler, Gunther Kress, and Theo van Leeuwen. These scholars believed there is an inherent relationship between linguistic and ideological processes and focused on examining how language is used to maintain and reproduce social power structures through vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. For example, Fowler et al. (1979) illustrated how syntactic transformation, such as passivization, allows the responsible agent to be omitted, which can obscure accountability or shift focus away from the actor. Compare the following sentences:

The government failed to provide sufficient medical supplies during the pandemic.

Sufficient medical supplies were not provided during the pandemic.

In the active sentence, "the government" is explicitly mentioned as responsible for the failure. However, in the passive version, readers do not know who failed to provide the supplies —the agent's omission creates ambiguity. This erasure is a strategic linguistic choice often used in news reporting or political discourse to depersonalize responsibility, making events seem neutral rather than deliberate actions.

In the early 1990s, with the convergence of the approaches primarily due to the work of Norman Fairclough, Teun van Dijk, and Ruth Wodak, the 'Critical Discourse Analysis' (CDA) emerged as a more defined field. CDA extends beyond textual analysis to examine discourse as a social practice, integrating historical, political, and ideological dimensions. By considering context, power dynamics, and audience interpretation, this approach examines how linguistic features in spoken and written discourse function to reflect and shape social hierarchies. Fairclough (1992; 1995) observed that broader changes in society and culture manifest in changing media discourse practice. For instance, Fairclough and Mauranen (1997) looked at interviews over 35 years ago. They noticed an apparent change from a formal and strict interviewing method to one that feels more like everyday conversation. Recent political interviews show a more relaxed approach, using casual language, informal address, and repetition. They compared Margaret Thatcher's speaking style in 1983 with Harold Macmillan's in 1958, showing that Thatcher's conversational style in the 1980s has spread into everyday speech forms to gain influence and greater acceptance of authoritative voices. To Fairclough, this development in political discourse indicates a broader change in discourse in contemporary societies.

Van Dijk perhaps provides the most comprehensive discourse, ideology, and media analysis. Public text and talk serve as essential means through which ideologies are produced and continually reproduced. In modern times, mass media has largely taken this role from the family, the Church, and the school in permeating ideologies. (Fowler, 1991; Golding, 1992; Hall, 1982; Van Dijk, 1995). Van Dijk (1993) introduced the study of discourse, power, and racism, focusing on how elites and institutions use language to shape public opinion. Those in politics, media, education, and business often utilize the respective discourse genres to which they have access to perpetuate racism subtly. Van Dijk examined the Western parliament's debate about immigration and ethnic affairs. The results showed that politicians often employ positive self-presentation and many forms of negative other-presentation to help perpetuate their narrative, such as “apparent sympathy (we make these decisions for their own best interest), populism or apparent democracy (the people do not want more immigration) and blaming the victim (they are themselves to blame for, e.g., discrimination, unemployment, and so on)” (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 268). This illustrates how the media can also play a central role in reproducing dominant elite ideologies. Since the parliaments hold the highest authority, their access to the parliament speech and the fact that they

would be broadcasted allows them to shape public opinion. With access to public eyes, their party's views could persuade others and justify their policies. Their statements, often amplified by the media, can reinforce racist ideas by spreading negative portrayals of immigrants and minorities. Without strong counter-narratives, the audience may accept these perspectives. Through this influence, politicians can influence attitudes and decisions to justify and sustain white dominance, perpetuating inequality. Similarly, other research has found evidence that ethnic communities are systematically negatively othered and stereotypically portrayed by popular media (Flowerdew et al., 2002; Teo, 2000).

In addition to demonstrating how ideologies uphold the interests of dominant groups, CDA can highlight differences in how the media covers the same event, showcasing how language can subtly influence interpretation in supposedly unbiased reports. Research has shown how language use in news reporting can be embedded with political ideology through observing how different newspapers label and interpret similar events differently, depending on their ideology. Fang (1994) examined rhetorical strategies in the coverage of “riots” and demonstrations by mainland China’s nation-run newspaper, *Renmin Ribao* (the *People’s Daily*). The results showed that whether conflicts occurring in foreign countries are labeled as a “riot” or a “demonstration”/“protest” reflected whether China viewed these countries and their governments as hostile or friendly. Lee and Craig (1992) By comparing US news- papers' coverage of labor disputes in two very different political and ideological systems (i.e., Polish and South Korean), Lee and Craig (1992) have also observed ideological influences in the press by comparing how US news reported labor disputes in Poland and South Korea during the cold war. The US publishers blamed the government and, therefore, Communism for Poland's labor problems. On the contrary, since South Korea has a similar ideology to the United States, the press depicted the workers who went on strike as 'deviant and violent.' These examples show that the linguistic choices used to describe the same issue are not arbitrary but intentional and tend to be loaded with ideological bias. There are several strategies where newspapers can achieve these effects, explained below as the focus of the research.

## **2.2 Headlines**

Newspaper titles are crucial in framing news events and public perception. Headlines serve as a shortcut to the content, a quick summary of news stories that try to attract the audience's

attention, making the audience interested (Scacco & Muddiman, 2020). Since headlines serve as the first contact between the news story and the audience, they can easily influence how readers interpret the news articles or opinion pieces before engaging with the complete writing. Several news discourse analysts, such as Cohen and Young (1981), Van Dijk (1983), and Bell (1991), have pointed out that news in daily newspapers is arranged based on relevance or importance, with stories presented in order of decreasing significance according to the overall structure. This means that readers can quickly grasp the main idea of an entire article just by looking at the headline or the opening sentences. In newspapers with limited space, news headlines must be written using the fewest words while conveying the most information. Because of this, each word in a headline is selected and organized thoughtfully to have the most significant impact. As a result, headlines often reflect ideological views and attitudes. By examining headlines, researchers can gain insight into the more profound ideological messages behind newspaper reporting (van Dijk, 1988; 1991).

The study will adopt the five generic news frames proposed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), including attribution of responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic consequences, and morality (Table 1). This deductive approach involves pre-determined frames to observe how much frames appear in the news. This approach was chosen because it is easy to replicate and can cope with large samples.

**Table 1. Five Generic News Frames**

News Frame	Coding Scheme
Attribution of responsibility	Direct public attention to individuals, groups, or governments responsible for causing or resolving the issue.
Conflict	Focuses on conflicts between individuals, groups, or institutions to gather the public's interest.
Human interest	Adding a human perspective or emotional aspect to the issue.
Economic consequences	Portrays potential or actual economic consequences of the issue on individuals, groups, institutions, regions, or countries.
Morality	Frames the issue within "religious tenets or moral prescriptions."

## **2.3 Exclusion and Inclusion**

Whether a piece of information is included or excluded is important in discourse analysis. While much emphasis is put on present information, absent information is just as important. Research has consistently shown that in discourses of an ideological nature, the selection of information included is influenced by bias to affect the representation constructed. Van Leeuwen (2008) found that social actors were omitted according to who the text's intended audiences were. In discourses about schooling, fathers were entirely erased in texts for teachers, while children's books for the upper classes left out people whose hierarchy was lower than the teacher. This selection constructs a reality for the intended viewers, which group is deemed irrelevant to the schooling process. One particular silence this research will focus on is manipulative silence.

### **2.3.1 Manipulative Silence**

There are different categories of silencing (Huckin, 2002). Presuppositional silences are where writers omit information, assuming that the information would already be known to the consumers or could be retrieved from the writing context. Agent omissions are common in such cases, like the sentence "Murderer sentenced to death." Although it was not stated who did the sentencing, the meaning of sentencing implies that law enforcement was included, particularly a judge. Because of this connection, most readers assume that a judge did the sentencing. On the other hand, genre-based silences are omissions following genre rules, which can sometimes be cultural. For instance, job applications in the US mostly omit personal background information, such as nationality or ethnicity, while these categories might be commonplace in other country's resumes. Finally, discreet silences exclude sensitive information to avoid offending the reader or protect the privacy of a person of interest. This research will mainly focus on deliberately concealing information— manipulative silence. In these cases, information that benefits the speaker or writer's ideologies is kept, while other relevant information, albeit important, is excluded from the receiver.

Manipulative silence is typical in various public discourses, such as advertisements, public campaigns, public monuments, and even court arguments. Seemingly "healthy" snacks, such as vegetable chips, may be marketed as healthy by focusing on one positive aspect (fiber-rich) while failing to mention the unhealthy components (oil-frying and high sodium). Historical monuments

also tend to represent historical facts to influence public perception selectively. Loewen (2019) pointed out that many states paint women as absent in their historical markers. In one of the cases, in the Arkansas History Commission Portrait Gallery, the number of men's and women's portraits was significantly imbalanced. This might seem reasonable, as women were not allowed to be as prominent as men during that period. However, even in the feeble few portraits of women, most were depicted as “appendages” to men. While the men get lengthy plaques describing their achievements, the women are only given titles like “wife of...” or “niece of...” Although they might have made important contributions behind the scenes, they are silenced and kept from the public's eyes.

In addition to textual format, manipulative silence can also be observed in verbal legal arguments, especially in the case of closing arguments. In the case of a sexually abused child, Rosulek (2008) found that the prosecution highlighted the specific sexual actions of the defendant while the defense silenced them. In addition, the defense often brings up the defendant's feelings and attributes, making them more unique and more personable to the jurors, but the prosecution silences these. Closing arguments offer the lawyers a final chance to convince the jury that their version of the “truth” is legitimate before the verdict (Lief et al., 1998). As it happens after all of the evidence has been presented, lawyers need to craft their narratives to best suit their side of the case, using all of the information present (Gibbons, 2003). Hence, closing arguments have been a rich site for observing linguistic strategies of how opposing lawyers portray the same incident differently to benefit their clients.

Manipulative silence is a well-recognized phenomenon in journalism, shaping how readers perceive events based on the selective presentation of information. Most readers rely on a single, preferred newspaper for their news, making it unlikely to consult multiple sources for a more comprehensive understanding. As a result, the way newspapers frame an issue plays a crucial role in shaping public perception. The selective inclusion or omission of information often reflects the newspaper's ideological stance, reinforcing a particular narrative while downplaying or excluding details that may challenge it. This careful content curation ensures that readers internalize perspectives that align with the publication's ideological framework, ultimately preserving and reinforcing its influence. Numerous studies have highlighted how such selective reporting shapes public opinion and maintains ideological consistency. Peled-Elhanan (2010) found that news

reports on massacres by the Israeli government silenced the reason for killings, the suffering brought to the victims, and details regarding the government's denial of the event to prevent the government from being negatively evaluated. In a case study of 163 newspaper articles about homelessness, Huckin (2000) found that conservative newspaper editorials actively avoided discussing legitimate causes of homelessness that are often discussed by politically liberal newspapers. Fang (2001) analyzed reports of the incidents of civil unrest of police shootings in South Africa between leading newspapers: *People's Daily* (mouthpiece of mainland China) and *Central Daily News* (Taiwan Nationalist Party newspaper). The results show the former portraying the blacks and the masses as victims and the authorities and police as aggressors, and noticeably missing reports on any mention of the vengeance killings of black officials by the blacks and the fact that the police officers whose houses were destroyed are black.

In contrast, the latter showed the police suppression of the blacks, the retaliation by the blacks, the casualties, and the arrests of activists. The paper even included a local news report mentioning that the blame for the police shootings should perhaps be placed on a single individual who ordered the shootings and who was allegedly drunk on duty. Interestingly enough, this topic is not found in the *People's Daily*. By intentionally excluding information, the presenters can create a biased representation of reality that better aligns with their ideologies and repeat or maintain it through their intended audience.

## **2.4 Emphasis and De-emphasis**

Even when information is not kept from the recipients, not all information in discourse is treated the same. One concept that is used frequently in CDA is emphasizing and de-emphasizing. Following Rosulek (2014), when something is emphasized, the information is given more importance than other things and kept at the forefront of the reader's attention. More information or details are given or repeated throughout the discourse. On the other hand, when something is de-emphasized, the topic is less mentioned and given less detail in the discourse. Following Rosulek (2014), the research will mainly focus on the frequency of inclusion as a means of emphasis. The reason that frequency was selected is that it can mean one of two basic things: either that more information and details are being provided about a topic or that the same information is being repeated. Both keep the topic at the forefront of the speaker's attention and focus. When a topic is referred to less frequently, and less information is provided about it, it is de-emphasized.

Taiwan's press offers a rich platform for exploring ideological practices as political interests significantly impact the island's linguistic ecology. Shih & Soong (1998) analyzed the code-mixing of Taiwanese in the headlines of three major newspapers from 1987 to 1991. Their comparison indicated that after the martial law lifting in 1988, Taiwanese code-mixing increased for all newspapers regardless of political stances. However, the newspaper strongly associated with the then-ruling KMT (nationalist) party, which had been promoting Mandarin as the national language and actively suppressing other local dialects for the past fifty years, used the least code-mixing out of the three. Researchers have also found broad differences in how the same news can be reported differently through the newspaper's selection of quotations and quoted speakers. Results show that the speaker is quoted as saying two different things by the newspaper, and the newspapers are also more prone to directly quote speakers who align with their political positioning and indirectly quote those on the opposing side (Kuo, 2007). This difference not only happens in locally produced news but also in representations of international news. When comparing translated texts of the same English articles between two newspapers, noticeable changes have been made to the Chinese texts in lexical variation, deletion, addition, and paragraph styles, suggesting that these changes were not arbitrary but motivated (Kuo & Nakamura, 2005).

Adopting the CDA approach, this study mainly focuses on editorials and their portrayal of three incidents that occurred during COVID-19 in two ideologically opposed newspapers. This study explores the relationship between language and ideology in Taiwanese news discourse by comparing how the different publishers title their articles and how certain information is selected. Below is the background information on the selected incidents.

## **2.5 Selected Incidents**

### **2.5.1 Exclusion from WHA**

In the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan was able to suppress the spread of the pandemic and maintain the lowest number of deaths and infection cases in the world due to effective travel restrictions and community quarantine measures. However, despite the successful outbreak management, Taiwan was excluded from the World Health Organization (WHO) meetings, where it was prevented from receiving or sharing information with the global community (BBC News, 2021). This exclusion resulted from the *One China Policy*, where it is said that only one Chinese government is legitimate, the People's Republic of China in Beijing.

The government of the Republic of China in Taipei should not be recognized as a legitimate power by countries that wish to maintain a relationship with China. As a result, Taiwan has been unable to participate in global organizations such as the UN and WHO. From 2009 to 2016, Taiwan was able to join the World Health Assembly (WHA) as an observer. However, China blocked further participation after President Tsai Ing-Wen from the DPP was elected.

The sovereignty conflict between China and Taiwan is long-standing. Taiwan's official name is the "Republic of China" (ROC), tracing its founding to 1911 on the Chinese mainland after China's last imperial dynasty collapsed. During the Chinese Civil War in 1949, the Chinese nationalist party (Kuomintang or KMT) lost to the communist party of China and retreated to Taiwan with its supporters. The party set up its capital in Taipei, where it planned to retreat only temporarily, hoping to regroup, reinforce, and reconquer the mainland (Cheung, 2016). At the start, leaders from the KMT still viewed themselves as legitimate rulers of China. However, a separatist national identity began to emerge as time passed.

During and after the Cold War, the differentiation between China and Taiwan widened. As Mainland China was under the rule of the communist party, Taiwan started building stronger ties with the West, especially the U.S. During the Cold War, the U.S. supported Taiwan's industrialization and economic growth. By the 1980s, Taiwan had become a powerful economic body known as the Taiwan Miracle. With this increased Western interaction, Taiwan underwent significant reformation, transitioning towards Western modernity, such as adopting the multi-party system and capitalism.

This reformation culminated in 1996 when Taiwan officially held its first presidential election (Jost, 1996); however, this change also marked a watershed in Taiwan's and China's relationship. As Taiwan gains international grounding, it must face China, which is becoming more assertive in viewing Taiwan as an integral part of its territory. Despite the move to democracy, Taiwan has experienced diplomatic isolation as China has blocked Taiwan from participating in most international organizations and has limited Taiwan's capacity to build formal relations with other countries. With this challenging dynamic, leaders face the ever-present dilemma of balancing the striving for recognition without provoking a drastic response from the mainland. These developments planted the seeds of a critical contributor to domestic tensions between political

parties: whether Taiwan should strive for independence from mainland China. Hence, disputes arise whenever there is any policy or issue involving the relationship with China, since it affects the stability of cross-strait relationships.

### **2.5.2 Mask Diplomacy**

After the outbreak, there was a mask purchase frenzy worldwide, and countries actively increased their mask production capacity. At the end of January 2020, the Tsai Ing-wen government banned the export of masks and invested large amounts of capital in mask factories, requisitioning them to focus on domestic supplies. As of March 2020, Taiwan has become the world's second-largest producer of masks, second only to mainland China. On April 1, 2020, the Central Command Center for Epidemics launched the "Protect Taiwan and Help the World" mask humanitarian aid campaign, announcing that Taiwan would donate 10 million masks and other medical equipment to support medical personnel in countries with severe epidemics. On April 27, 2020, the government also allowed citizens to donate their masks; over 4 million were collected within a week (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2020). Aside from medical aid, Taiwan also invited countries, including the United States, Japan, and Canada, to organize video forums for in-depth exchanges on epidemic prevention. The "mask diplomacy" resulted in a positive global reception and has been reported by many foreign media. Countries in the E.U., the U.S., Japan, and many other diplomatic countries have expressed their gratitude, praised Taiwan's disease prevention measures, and stated high-level support in letting Taiwan participate in the WHA meeting in May. However, in light of a volatile relationship, holding a campaign to increase rapport within WHO member countries is perceived by China as a threat, and the DPP is using the pandemic for political manipulation to leverage international grounding (Reuters, 2020). In addition, the U.S. Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo's open support also triggers its decades-old relationship with Taiwan, which is also of great concern to China.

### **2.5.3 China Airlines Name Change**

Further adding to the cross-strait tension was the heated debate about changing the name of China Airlines (CAL). China Airlines is a national airline and one of Taiwan's most prominent civil airlines. It was founded in 1959 by the ROC government, which still owns most of the company through indirect shareholding. The airline's name came into the spotlight when its cargo

carrying supplies for the mask diplomacy campaign was mistakenly identified as coming from mainland China. A petition for a name change was initiated on Change.org, and up to 50,000 people have signed. The argument for renaming the airlines is no new news. Renaming China Airlines has been popular with the DPP and other “pan-green” (DPP-supporting) political parties. During the first DPP administration led by President Chen Shui-bian in the early 2000s, a few Taiwan companies with the word China in their names, including China Airlines, were asked to change their names. The topic resurfaced again in 2016 under Tsai Ing-wen’s leadership. Not surprisingly, the geopolitical sensitiveness between Taiwan and China also extends to aviation matters. In 2018, Beijing demanded that global airlines change how they refer to Taiwan on their websites, or they will face sanctions. Despite the criticism from the United States, many airlines still complied in the end (Bloomberg, 2018). Hence, the active removal of China from the airline names and the emphasis on Taiwan amidst the global pandemic is sure to be seen as a provocation to Beijing officials and an attempt towards independence.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Data

The data for this study was collected from two widely circulated newspapers in Taiwan: The *China Times* (CT) and The *Liberty Times'* online bilingual newspaper, *Taipei Times* (TT). The two newspaper publishers were chosen due to their deep connection with contemporary political changes in Taiwan. During the 1980s, Taiwan repealed its 38-year-long martial law, shifting away from an authoritarian past and embarked on a democratization process. Lifting political restrictions also led to a significant transformation in Taiwan's news ecosystem. Under martial law, the government was granted the authority to restrict the rights of assembly, free speech, and publication in Taiwanese. The then-ruling Kuomintang (KMT), also known as the Chinese Nationalist Party government, enforced a "Mandarin only" language policy and repressed the use of local dialects. Newspapers were also required to publish propaganda articles or make sudden editorial modifications to align with the government's demands. After 1988, the newspaper market underwent a process of commercialization, with publishers determining their editorial stance based on reader preferences and political affiliations. Although this transformation has enabled the populace to express their views liberally, it also exacerbated internal tensions between proponents of reunification with China and advocates for independence.

The *China Times* was established in 1950 by key central committees of the KMT, which advocates for maintaining the status quo or eventual reunification with China (Hsu, 2014). Hence, the newspaper has a history of being traditionally aligned with the Kuomintang. In 2008, the *China Times* group was acquired by pro-China Taiwanese businessman Tsai Eng-Meng, head of Want Want Holdings Limited, a large food manufacturing and media company that has many factories in China. Due to Tsai's close business relationship with China, the editorial stance of the *China Times* has been described as biased and favorable towards the Chinese authorities (Higgins, 2012). In contrast, the *Liberty Times*, founded by a local Taiwanese business group in the early 1980s, emphasizes Taiwan's local values and independence. It places itself as a Taiwanization, de-Sinification, pro-independence newspaper and is generally associated with the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). This divergence is evident not only in political discourse but also in the editorial positions taken by the media, as these two newspapers often criticize each other when covering contentious political issues that impact cross-strait relations. Since editorial perspectives

typically reflect the stance of their respective publications, analyzing articles from these two divergent newspapers could depict how issues are portrayed.

### 3.2 Procedure

The articles from *the China Times* were accessed via their online archive, where they provided scanned PDF files of hardcopy newspapers. Articles from *Taipei Times* were accessed through their official website and Google search. A total of 103 articles were gathered, with 35 of them being editorials. The articles collected span from 2020 to 2022, focusing on March to November 2020 due to the higher relevance of COVID-19-related incidents. After reviewing the editorial headlines for comparability, 12 editorials (6 from each publication) were selected for analysis.

Since the *China Times* English Newspaper was discontinued in 2016, the Mandarin articles were translated into English. The original articles were initially translated using DeepL, a professional A.I. translation tool. Subsequently, the author and two other proficient English-Mandarin bilingual Taiwanese individuals collaboratively revised the translation to produce a final version that best conveys the nuances and meaning of the original Mandarin text.

Each article title was then coded using the five generic news frames proposed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000): attribution of responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic consequences, and morality. Through this method, the overall attitude of the editorials in portraying the same event can be determined.

Huckin's (2002) framework for identifying thematic patterns was applied to analyze instances of silencing, de-emphasizing, and emphasizing within the selected newspaper articles. Typically, this method begins with collecting a corpus of texts representing the broader discourse on a given topic. While Huckin's study examined 163 documents, this thesis focuses on the selected articles.

Using qualitative content analysis, I examined each text to identify thematic patterns that appeared across the corpus. As Huckin explains, public discourse on a given topic develops over time through the emergence of subtopics embedded within the body of texts addressing that topic. Analyzing the selected articles, I identified the consistently present subtopics and traced their

recurrence throughout the corpus. This process provided insight into how these newspapers framed the events in question.

After establishing a broad understanding of the discourse, I returned to each article to assess how these subtopics were represented. Specifically, I examined which subtopics were emphasized, which were de-emphasized, and which were omitted entirely. This step allowed me to determine the selective representation of information within each publication and how these editorial choices aligned with their respective ideological perspectives.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

In the following section, the CT and the TT editorials are analyzed and categorized by the news event. First, the titles are compared to contrast the frames that are deployed. The texts are then examined, identifying silenced topics within the discourse of the topics and comparing differences in emphasized and de-emphasized between the two publishers to illustrate how political ideologies are reinforced through these selections. Phrases relevant to the topics or subtopics are underlined. It was discovered that for the editorial titles, CT tends to portray each issue with a harsher critique, often using the attribution to responsibility frame, where they suggest the actions of the DPP contributing to or worsening the situation. Conversely, TT was prone to illustrating the issues in a more positive light, utilizing morals and emotions to arouse empathy and support from readers.

### **4.1 Exclusion from WHO**

In the analyzed data, we found that the CT and the TT represent different topics and focus through their headlines. In the following, we compare the headlines of the two Chinese versions: (1a) and (1b) are CT's headlines, and (2a) and (2b) are TT's headlines.

#### **4.1.1 Titles**

- (1a) DPP Desires To Join WHO Using Wrong Entry Code
- (1b) Taunting WHO More Only Leads to More Resistance
- (2a) Taiwan in WHO in world's interest
- (2b) The world needs Taiwan at WHA

Both CT headlines portray the WHA incident in the responsibility frame. (1a) directly critiques the DPP's method for seeking WHO membership. It assigns responsibility to their "wrong" strategy and subtly invites readers to judge their actions. (1b) also implies a critique of DPP's behavior even if the subject (DPP) is not explicitly named. It suggests that their dispute with the WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus is counterproductive and directly contributes to resistance from the WHO. This attribution of responsibility could paint a negative picture of DPP and garner more support from readers who are also against the ruling government's handling of the situation.

On the other hand, TT illustrates the same topic in terms of economic consequences and morality frames. (2a) suggests a more utilitarian perspective, implying that Taiwan's inclusion would benefit the world, potentially in public health, economic stability, or cooperation. (2b) frames Taiwan's inclusion as a "need" for the global good. The lexical choice emphasizes urgency and rightness, suggesting a sense of duty or justice. A summary of the frames deployed for the topic is listed in Table 2.

**Table 2. Summary of Frames for Exclusion from WHO**

<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Frame</b>
<b>China Times</b>	(1a) DPP Desires To Join WHO Using Wrong Entry Code	Responsibility
	(1b) Taunting WHO More Only Leads to More Resistance	Responsibility
<b>Taipei Times</b>	(2a) Taiwan in WHO in world's interest	Economic Consequence, Morality
	(2b) The world needs Taiwan at WHA	Morality

#### **4.1.2 Silencing, De-emphasizing, and Emphasizing**

Below are the identified main topics and subtopics covered in the WHA incident

##### **(1) Taiwan's Health Achievements**

- COVID-19 management success
- Health technology and innovation
- "Taiwan Can Help" campaign
- Global health leadership
- Health diplomacy
- Taiwan's contributions to global health solutions

##### **(2) Geo-Political and current political landscape**

- One-China policy
- Cross-strait relations
- WHO structure
- China's influence on WHO

##### **(3) International Support for Taiwan**

- US support
- Support from other allied nations
- Positive media coverage and public opinion

##### **(4) WHO Criticism**

- WHO's handling of Taiwan's issue
- Calls for WHO reform
- WHO political bias

There was a noticeable difference between the two publishers' main topics and subtopics included in the content. Of the main categories, TT's articles mainly focused on Taiwan's health achievements during COVID-19, the international support garnered, and criticism towards WHO. These topics all relate more closely to TT's stance, where the WHA exclusion is portrayed as a result of baseless unfair treatment from WHO despite Taiwan's successful COVID-19 response. On the other hand, CT heavily emphasizes geopolitical barriers and the current political landscape to criticize and question DPP's methods of pushing Taiwan to be accepted into participating in the WHA conference. In particular, the editorial fails to mention political bias in the WHO or criticism towards the organization, a sub-topic relevant to the overall discourse. This difference illustrates a skewed picture of the event. CT essentially adopts a narrative emphasizing maintaining peaceful relationships with China and avoiding more radical displays of independence, reflecting its publishing political stance. By excluding this information, the topic silenced by the editorial is kept out of their reader's minds.

A closer look at the content shows that the editorials emphasize different information. In TT's editorials, detailed information is provided on Taiwan's COVID-19 response achievements, while CT kept relative information to a minimum. The following excerpts from the article (2b) and (1a) illustrate the contrast between these two newspapers:

(1) *The Taipei Times*

“What does the world have to gain from Taiwan? The technology it has used to curb the spread of COVID-19 and its development of vaccine candidates targeting the coronavirus, to name just two.”

“President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) has pledged to offer other nations the same system powered by big data extracted from cellphone towers to track people who have come into contact with possible COVID-19 carriers. Meanwhile, Adimmune Corp has developed a vaccine candidate that is expected to enter clinical trials after it was proven to inhibit the growth of the novel coronavirus in preliminary animal tests.”

(2) *The China Times*

“This year's World Health Assembly (WHA) opened on May 18. Taiwan has been absent for four consecutive years. In order to participate in the WHA, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government has promoted "Taiwan Can Help" internationally. However, while Taiwan can assist others, it cannot help itself to be included in the WHA due to four different mindsets.”

Taipei Times emphasizes Taiwan's efforts to combat COVID-19 and gives more detailed information on the exact technology and its uses than CT. By putting Taiwan's success at the forefront of its readers, TT can better stress Taiwan's inclusion as essential for global health, showcasing its ability to contribute to international pandemic prevention and healthcare systems. Although CT mentions the "Taiwan can help" campaign, it is done so dismissively, implying that it does not outweigh political concerns. This perspective minimizes the significance of international support, portraying it as largely symbolic and insufficient to effect change.

In general, Taiwan's achievements in healthcare or pandemic prevention are downplayed in the CT editorials. Instead, they highlight how the ruling Democratic Progressive Party's confrontational approach is counterproductive by stressing China's opposition's political struggles and challenges. Below are a few examples taken from the two CT editorials:

**(1a)** "The World Health Organization (WHO) is a subsidiary organization of the United Nations (UN), so it should abide by the relevant UN resolutions... According to UN Resolution 2758, China claimed that the Beijing government is the only legitimate representative of China in the WHO and that Taiwan has no right to become a member of the WHO."

"The rupture of cross-strait relations and the divergence of opinions among the member states of the World Health Organization (WHO) have discouraged the WHO from sending an invitation letter to Taiwan, and even with the support of friendly countries, it is still impossible to facilitate Taiwan's return to the WHO General Assembly. This is because the WHO has 194 member states, 180 of which have diplomatic relations with the CCP, and the CCP has great influence in the Third World, so it can easily block Taiwan in the WHO."

**(1b)** "WHO is a specialized agency of the United Nations, and WHA is the highest authority of WHO. From the point of view of international law, Taiwan is not a member of the United Nations, so of course, it has no right to participate in the WHO, which is a subordinate organization of the United Nations, let alone in the meetings of the highest authority of the WHO. In order for Taiwan to participate in WHO or WHA as an observer, there must be a goodwill invitation from WHO or the consent of a majority of member states, which often hinges on mainland China's goodwill."

"Then, can Taiwan expect goodwill from mainland China? Since 2016, the cross-strait relations have steadily deteriorated. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan's various pandemic prevention policies all have been "dissing" China and being anti-China, so much so that the mainland has been long convinced that Taiwan is "seeking independence." Given the situation, how would mainland China extend goodwill and invite Taiwan to participate in WHA?"

The examples highlight Taiwan’s perceived strategic missteps, while its healthcare achievements and international support are downplayed. CT significantly emphasizes geopolitical relations and China’s influence over the WHO. By bringing these points to the forefront, CT reinforces its stance on maintaining a positive relationship with China and states that the DPP’s WHO inclusion campaign is merely a superficial attempt by the government to gain international recognition. By reiterating the resistance from China, CT also portrays the DPP’s actions as the primary obstacle to Taiwan’s inclusion rather than attributing it to external pressures. Overall, the emphasis is placed on the WHO’s adherence to established rules, portraying its resistance to Taiwan’s inclusion as pragmatic and procedural rather than biased. On the other hand, while TT strongly emphasizes international backing, portraying Taiwan as deserving of global solidarity and support, the political struggles and challenges posed by China’s opposition are mentioned but are not the primary focus.

## 4.2 Mask Diplomacy

The following compares CT editorials (3a, 3b) and TT editorials (4a, 4b). A summary of the frames deployed for the topic is listed in Table 3.

### 4.2.1 Titles

(3a) Why Engage in Mask Diplomacy when Officials, Soldiers lack Sufficient Masks?

(3b) Masks Become Pawns in Political Games, Ignoring Peoples' Suffering

(4a) Epidemic kindness: Paying it forward

(4b) Pride taken in nation’s pandemic compassion

**Table 3. Summary of Frames for Mask Diplomacy**

<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Frame</b>
<b>China Times</b>	(3a) Why Engage in Mask Diplomacy when Officials, Soldiers lack Sufficient Masks?	Responsibility
	(3b) Masks Become Pawns in Political Games, Ignoring Peoples' Suffering	Conflict
<b>Taipei Times</b>	(4a) Epidemic kindness: Paying it forward	Morality
	(4b) Pride taken in nation’s pandemic compassion	Morality

(3a) presents the issue in the attribution of responsibility frame. It critiques the decision to prioritize mask diplomacy while implying a failure to meet the domestic needs of officials and soldiers. This portrayal assigns responsibility for the perceived mismanagement of resources to those in charge. (3b) uses the conflict frame. The lexical choice of “pawns” emphasizes political

rivalry or manipulation, with masks symbolizing a tool used in "games," strongly framing the situation as a conflict between the two parties.

Again, TT frames the situation in a more positive light. (4a) paints the mask diplomacy with the morality frame. The focus on "kindness" and "paying it forward" reflect ethical obligations or morally commendable acts. This emphasis on moral values during a crisis could appeal to readers' empathy and compassion. (4b) also employs the morality frame, focusing on emotional appeals and moral values to highlight Taiwan's compassionate response during the COVID-19 pandemic. It emphasizes national pride, ethical behavior, and humanitarian contributions. Through this framing, the piece evokes empathy and a sense of collective identity.

#### **4.2.2 Silencing, De-emphasizing, and Emphasizing**

Below are the identified main topics and subtopics covered in the WHA incident.

##### **(1) Domestic Mask Distribution**

- Allocation issues
- Rationing system
- Impact on groups (soldiers, public, medical staff)
- Emotional responses

##### **(2) Mask Diplomacy and Taiwan's Global Image**

- Taiwan's international mask donations
- Recipients of mask donations (e.g., U.S., EU, Southeast Asia)
- Struggles for international recognition
- Global pandemic efforts
- International responses to Taiwan's mask diplomacy

##### **(3) Government Prioritization**

- Domestic vs. international balance
- Criticism of resource allocation
- Perceived motives

##### **(4) Comparison with Other Nations**

- Taiwan's performance vs. other countries in pandemic management
- Historical aid (e.g., SARS)

Again, CT and TT inclusions of the topics to portray the event differ. Previously, TT was identified to frame the mask diplomacy with the morality frame as the focus content is to illustrate moral values displayed during the pandemic. This can be seen through the analysis of topics as TT

editorials mainly illustrate the event through positive lights of its effect on Taiwan's global image and recount previous aids Taiwan has provided. However, the articles do not include topics regarding government prioritization, where discussions about balancing domestic and international needs are kept out of sight. In addition, in the domestic distribution topic, only the implementation of the rationing system is mentioned. Potential groups that might be affected and information on public response are also kept from the reader. By keeping these aspects from entering the reader's mind, TT can adopt a more positive tone and highlight Taiwan's altruism and contributions to global pandemic efforts, likely seeking to appeal to both Taiwanese citizens and international readers. On the other hand, CT omits the topic of comparing Taiwan with other nations. There are no mentions of how successful Taiwan's COVID-19 management is and other aids Taiwan has done in the past.

Similarly, how CT and TT emphasize and de-emphasize different information in their editorials reflects their political ideologies. TT provides detailed information on the mask diplomacy campaign, including the number of masks donated and specific nations that will receive the donations. They also stress the timely manner of the aid, previous global aid to Taiwan, and other assistance Taiwan has provided for other nation's hardships, as samples shown below:

**(4a)** “Through mask donations, Taiwan is also giving back to the international community for its kind assistance during the 2003 SARS outbreak. At that time, it did not have adequate mask production, so members of the public and hospitals fought over them. This “mask fever” was notorious even outside Taiwan. Thankfully — and surprisingly — Taiwan received more than 4.7 million masks, 260,000 protective suits, and tens of thousands of shoe covers and face shields from other nations, diplomatic allies, overseas Taiwanese and the diplomatic corps in Taipei.”

**(4b)** “Once mask production reached 13 million per day, President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) on April 1 announced that Taiwan would donate 7 million masks to 11 severely affected European nations, 2 million to the US and 1 million to other friendly nations. On April 9, mask production had reached 15 million per day and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that it would donate 6 million masks as foreign aid. In addition to giving masks to the hardest hit US states, it donated 1.3 million to eight European nations, 1.6 million to Southeast Asian nations targeted by the New Southbound Policy, and 1.05 million to allies and friendly nations in Latin America.”

“Following the March 11, 2011, earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan's Fukushima Prefecture, donations from Taiwan reached NT\$6.8 billion. After the May 12, 2008, earthquake that struck China's Sichuan Province, Taiwanese ignored the unfriendly comments made by then-Chinese premier Zhu Rongji (朱鎔基) ahead of Taiwan's

presidential election in 2000 and donated NT\$5 billion, in addition to NT\$2 billion donated by the government.”

As seen in (4a), by repeatedly focusing on Taiwan’s international contributions, TT highlights Taiwan’s generosity as a moral obligation and a way to repay past kindness, presenting it as a genuine solidarity during the pandemic. By emphasizing positive global responses, the articles promote that Taiwan’s actions can create meaningful and impactful influence, even in the face of China’s resistance. TT’s pro-Taiwan stance is shown in this analysis as the overall portrayal leans towards validating Taiwan’s legitimacy in the global community independent of China. Conversely, CT emphasizes domestic concerns and de-emphasizes the significance of Taiwan’s international recognition or global contributions:

**(3a)** “The Taiwan military's zero confirmed cases streak is broken, with over 20 cases of COVID-19 reported. Ironically, the 180,000-strong national army could only be allocated 17,000 masks a day before, and only on the 18th was it changed to one mask a day for each person. On the one hand, the national army did not have enough masks, and on the other hand, the government kept on sending tens of millions of masks for desperate “diplomatic” purposes, which is evidently not a correct approach for pandemic prevention and national defense.”

“However, this is not the case with the Tsai government. On April 1 and 9 alone, the government announced that it will donate 16 million masks to foreign countries, enough for the entire national army to use for 88 days.”

**(3b)** “With the outbreak of COVID-19, the public is in a state of panic. Masks, alcohol, ear thermometers, and other pandemic prevention supplies all sold out, especially masks, which are hard to come by. Even though 20 million masks can be produced daily, citizens are restricted to purchasing only nine masks every two weeks under the real-name system. Sending masks to relatives and friends overseas is still limited to 30 masks in two months. The government is now focusing on mask diplomacy in an attempt to elevate Taiwan’s international image. The public can not help but lament that “Tshenn tsiáh to bô-kàu, ná ũ thang phák-kuann,” harshly criticizing the government for disregarding the people's suffering, and turning pandemic prevention masks into political bargaining chips.”

\* “Even raw consumption is insufficient, let alone having surplus to air dry”. Southern Min saying. It is a metaphor signifying the current state of life being stretched thin, with little hope for a better future

The CT editorials emphasize the struggles of affected local groups and the public's negative sentiments, providing detailed information about how current domestic allocation and production fail to meet demand. By highlighting dubious government priorities, CT minimizes the positive framing of Taiwan’s contributions and critiques the DPP’s “mask diplomacy” as a political

maneuver rather than a genuine humanitarian effort. This portrayal not only reframes the government's actions as misaligned with public interests but also seeks to resonate with readers' frustrations, reinforcing a sense of shared disapproval and skepticism toward the DPP's strategies.

### 4.3 China Airlines/ Passport Name Change

In the analyzed data, we found that the CT and the TT represent different topics and focus through their headlines. In the following, we compare the headlines of the two Chinese versions: (5a) and (5b) are CT's headlines, and (6a) and (6b) are TT's headlines. A summary of the frames can be found in Table 4.

#### 4.3.1 Titles

(5a) Long-Term Manipulation of Name Rectification Backtracked, Exposed in Face of Challenge

(5b) DPP Stirs Up Trouble: Recycling Old Gag with Fake Issue

(6a) The pandemic and passport change

(6b) Passport, CAL changes cannot wait

CT illustrates both titles with the attribution of responsibility frame. In (5a), words such as "manipulation" and "exposed" strongly suggest that wrongful action was taken regarding the name rectification issue. "Manipulation" assigns a morally harmful responsibility to the party involved, implying intentional deceit or wrongdoing. The event is illustrated as a ruse, and the responsibility is placed on the DPP, even if not explicitly mentioned. Similarly, (5b) assigns blame, suggesting that the DPP manipulates public attention towards a non-issue. The phrase "stirs up trouble" places the DPP responsible for causing disruption. "Fake issue" and "recycling old gag" imply that the issue being raised is not new, and it is being revived for political purposes rather than being a legitimate concern, thus creating unnecessary unrest.

**Table 4. Summary of Frames for China Airlines/ Passport Name Change**

<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Frame</b>
<b>China Times</b>	(5a) Long-Term Manipulation of Name Rectification Backtracked, Exposed in Face of Challenge	Responsibility
	(5b) DPP Stirs Up Trouble: Recycling Old Gag with Fake Issue	Responsibility
<b>Taipei Times</b>	(6a) The pandemic and passport change	Human Interest
	(6b) Passport, CAL changes cannot wait	Responsibility

At first glance, the frame of (6a) is less evident than the others. However, given the context that TT supports the name change, the human interest frame seems more fitting as it focuses on how the pandemic provides a unique opportunity for Taiwan to assert its identity through the name change on passports. The pandemic adds an emotional layer, as Taiwan's handling of the pandemic has been praised globally, and the name change could be framed as part of Taiwan's increased international recognition, which would make Taiwanese people feel more validated or proud of their identity in the global community. (6b) frames the issue with the attribution of responsibility frame. The phrase "cannot wait" creates urgency, suggesting the situation is critical and demands immediate attention. This frames those responsible for implementing these changes (DPP government and other relevant authorities) accountable for ensuring timely action. The framing in this case is positive and supportive, which aligns with TT's editorial stance on Taiwan's sovereignty. There is likely a call to action within the article, urging Taiwanese citizens and global readers to recognize the name change as a step in the right direction for Taiwan.

### **4.3.2 Silencing, De-emphasizing, and Emphasizing**

Below are the identified main topics and subtopics covered in the incident:

#### **(1) Historical Context**

- Background of China Airlines' name controversy.
- Political debates surrounding the name rectification in the past.
- Previous government actions or inactions on the issue.

#### **(2) Geopolitical Implications**

- Potential diplomatic repercussions of a name change.
- Impact on Taiwan's international relations and branding.
- Concerns over how international organizations might react.

#### **(3) Taiwan's Sovereignty and Identity**

- Significance of the airline's name to Taiwan's identity.
- Taiwan's representation in global affairs.
- Symbolic value of passports and airline branding.

#### **(4) Implementation and Practicality**

- Logistical and financial implications of changing CAL's name and altering passports.

- Suggestions on name change designs

As CT's ideology is against raising tensions with China, CT does not include the main topics about national sovereignty. In the main topics about implementation and practicality, CT discusses financial and practicality concerns, portraying the proposal as unrealistic and costly. Including these topics helps strengthen CT's argument that DPP's efforts are misplaced, given other pressing issues like economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. In contrast, TT does not mention logistic or financial hurdles but suggests how the passport and China airline aircraft design could be changed and highlights the symbolic importance and the need for the DPP government to act decisively.

Emphasized and de-emphasized information further shows the two publishers' alignment with their topic framing. TT stresses the need to differentiate Taiwan from China by providing examples of the global perception difference between the two. They also underscore the information of the pandemic originating from China, which helps support how the misidentification with China could be problematic for citizens:

**(6a)** “The Henley Passport Index ranks countries according to travel freedoms for their citizens in countries they visit. Taiwan's passport is ranked 32nd out of 195 countries in the world. This year, it has visa-free or visa-on-arrival status in 146 countries and territories. Notwithstanding having formal diplomatic relations with a mere 15 nations, this ranking is amazing and unprecedented, which speaks volumes of Taiwan's accomplishments in healthcare, technology and democracy.”

“ This confusing situation is akin to “China Airlines” and “Air China.” Ask any American: Which airline belongs to Taiwan? Neither, will likely be the answer delivered with a puzzled look.”

“The outbreak of the Wuhan pneumonia virus (COVID-19) that has spread worldwide since January and the ensuing possible mix-up over Taiwan's name is jarring and detrimental to Taiwan's prestige, considering that its methods to stem the spread of the virus without resorting to extreme lockdown measures has received universal praise.”

**(6b)** “The motions for the changes have an interesting parallel with the nation's previous efforts to update the cover of the passport by adding the word “Taiwan” in 2003, in that they were both prompted by a pandemic originating in China — SARS in 2003 and COVID-19 this year. In both cases, the proposals reflect the desire of Taiwanese to be distinguished from Chinese, as anti-China sentiment swelled worldwide amid the outbreaks.”

“That desire was bolstered after photographs emerged showing batches of masks Taiwan had shipped overseas wrapped in banners reading “China Airlines,” leading to the misunderstanding that they were sent by Beijing, defeating the purpose of Taiwan’s so-called “pandemic diplomacy.”

This differentiation between Taiwan and China, reinforced by negative connotations tied to the virus originator, ties directly to how the name change issue is framed. By associating the pandemic with misidentifications and global confusion about Taiwan’s identity, the articles argue that addressing the airline name and passport design is not merely cosmetic but essential for preserving Taiwan’s global standing. Choosing to emphasize this specific information strengthens the narrative that the name change is a necessary step in distancing Taiwan from China’s shadow, both politically and reputationally, and aligns with TT’s broader support for Taiwan’s distinct identity on the international stage. Although TT acknowledges the risk of provoking China, the information is de-emphasized and not given much detailed explanation, arguing that asserting Taiwan’s identity is worth the potential backlash.

CT’s stance on criticizing the DPP reviving the sensitive issue for political gain could be illustrated through their choice of emphasized information. Both articles give significant attention to the DPP’s motives, highlight the DPP’s alleged pattern of using the name-change issue during election cycles or times of political tension, and explain previous debates on name rectification, particularly linking them to past attempts by the DPP government:

**(5a)** “The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which used to fly the flag of Taiwan’s proper name, has suddenly changed its attitude to a conservative one before dealing with the two resolutions yesterday, and has even proposed to put forward an amendment motion that is even more retrogressive than the original wording of the proposal, and deferred it to the next week’s session of the Legislative Yuan. This dilatory attitude is not only due to the unwillingness to advocate the opposition party’s proposal, but also exposes the fact that the government does not want to deal with sensitive issues.”

“The Tsai government, in handling issues involving sovereignty disputes, diverges from its strong advocacy during its opposition period. After assuming full governance, there has been a drastic shift in attitude, employing a tactic of delay even for non-binding resolutions that lack enforceability. These two resolutions are akin to a revealing mirror, exposing the Democratic Progressive Party’s long-standing manipulation of the “name rectification” tactic”

**(5b)** “The “China Airlines renaming” issue is, in fact, a stale pseudo-topic that politicians have played with repeatedly. In 2006, President Chen Shui-bian proposed that China

Airlines change its name to "Taiwan Airlines" or "Formosa Airlines." However, due to complex issues involving international air traffic rights and trademarks, and with the China Airlines union estimating costs including repainting, labor, and trademark to exceed NT\$1 billion, the idea was eventually dropped. In July 2016 and June 2018, members of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) brought up the issue, but they all once again came to naught.”

Although the editorials acknowledge the name confusion issue, both articles downplay its significance and highlight that these symbolic actions worsen cross-strait tensions unnecessarily, portraying the DPP as reckless and risking Taiwan’s security:

**(5a)** “The two resolutions on China Airlines and passport renaming, which involve issues such as air traffic rights and national sovereignty, have remained at the discussion stage without any further action. China Airlines, which carried masks to other countries, has been in the spotlight for its name change because its English name is considered to be easily confused with mainland China”

**(5b)** “In fact, every country understands that the two sides of the Taiwan Strait are different political entities, and Taiwan's China Airlines has been flying internationally for more than a day or two. Saying "China Airlines” carrying masks for international aid may be misunderstood as coming from China is not a smart reason to initiate the renaming of China Airlines at a time when the entire nation is devoted to preventing the pandemic. It unnecessarily provokes sensitivities surrounding the Taiwan independence issue.”

By focusing on the historical context and the long-term pattern of the DPP's bringing up the naming issue, CT portrays the DPP as disingenuous and uses the name rectification as a political tool. Both editorials minimize any narratives presenting the name rectification positively or meaningfully. This selective emphasis on information and framing aligns with their critical stance toward the DPP and delegitimizing the issue.

The above analysis shows that the ideological divide between the publishers significantly influences the information that is emphasized or included. TT supports a progressive, sovereignty-driven narrative, and CT focuses on pragmatic, China-aligned critiques. Table 5 summarizes the framing each publisher used in all three incidents.

**Table 5. Summary of Frames**

<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Frame</b>
<b>China Times</b>	(1a) DPP Desires to Join WHO Using Wrong Entry Code	Responsibility
	(1b) Taunting WHO More Only Leads to More Resistance	Responsibility
	(3a) Why Engage in Mask Diplomacy when Officials, Soldiers lack Sufficient Masks?	Responsibility

Table 5 (cont.)

Publisher	Title	Frame
China Times	(3b) Masks Become Pawns in Political Games, Ignoring Peoples' Suffering	Conflict
	(5a) Long-Term Manipulation of Name Rectification Backtracked, Exposed in Face of Challenge	Responsibility
	(5b) DPP Stirs Up Trouble: Recycling Old Gag with Fake Issue	Responsibility
Taipei Times	(2a) Taiwan in WHO in world's interest	Human Interest
	(2b) The world needs Taiwan at WHA	Economic Consequence, Morality
	(4a) Epidemic kindness: Paying it forward	Morality
	(4b) Pride taken in nation's pandemic compassion	Morality
	(6a) The pandemic and passport change	Human Interest
	(6b) Passport, CAL changes cannot wait	Responsibility

Overall, CT predominantly employs the responsibility frame in its coverage of the selected incidents, attributing blame to the DPP for creating undesirable or politically risky situations. This framing strategy constructs a narrative in which the DPP is portrayed as a destabilizing force, thereby casting the party in a consistently negative light. Beyond overt framing, CT also engages in textual silence, strategically omitting information that might disrupt or challenge its ideological stance. For instance, there is a noticeable absence of detailed reporting on Taiwan's pandemic achievements or the international support it received, both of which could bolster the legitimacy and popularity of the DPP. Instead, CT emphasizes cross-strait tensions and international diplomatic risks, portraying the DPP's actions as reckless provocations that jeopardize Taiwan's relationship with China and international stability.

In contrast, the Taipei Times (TT) primarily utilizes the morality and human interest frames to shape its narratives. These frames are characterized by emotionally charged language and appeals to ethical responsibility, allowing the newspaper to connect more intimately with readers. TT highlights Taiwan's humanitarian efforts, such as international mask donations, and underscores the DPP government's commitment to global solidarity and public health. This emotionally resonant framing serves not only to foster empathy among readers but also to legitimize and rally support for the DPP's policies and political actions. Unlike CT, TT tends to downplay potential geopolitical consequences or criticisms, creating a more favorable portrayal of the government's efforts during the pandemic.

These contrasting framing strategies demonstrate how ideological positioning influences what is reported and how it is reported. By selectively emphasizing or omitting specific themes and topics, each newspaper reinforces its political stance and guides readers toward a specific interpretation of the events, often without readers realizing it. What audiences consume is not the complete picture but rather a curated representation of events shaped by editorial priorities. Most loyal readers tend to trust and align with their preferred publishers, which reinforces and perpetuates the ideologies those outlets promote. Without strong media literacy skills, many individuals may not question the framing of information or seek alternative perspectives. The stark differences in framing, emphasis, and omission become evident through such comparisons, providing a clearer understanding of the biases and agendas at play.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This study has examined how Taiwanese newspapers employ linguistic strategies to frame political discourse, highlighting the ideological influences embedded within media representations. By analyzing editorial coverage from the *China Times* and the *Taipei Times* on key political events during the COVID-19 pandemic, this research demonstrates that news reporting is not a neutral process but rather an active construction of reality influenced by ideological stances. Through the application of framing theory, textual silence, and emphasis/de-emphasis strategies, it has been shown that each newspaper selectively highlights or downplays aspects of political issues to align with their broader ideological perspectives.

The findings underscore the extent to which media discourse in Taiwan is shaped by political affiliations and how the linguistic choices made by newspapers reinforce specific narratives. The *China Times* frequently employs framing strategies that criticize the ruling government. In the content, they emphasize cross-strait relations and highlight international risks, reinforcing their disagreement towards the current government's decisions. On the other hand, the *Taipei Times* editorial titles focus on illustrating the events as morally righteous or commendable. The content emphasizes Taiwan's contributions and successes in preventing the COVID-19 pandemic, often omitting discussions of political constraints. Both publishers constructed the text to cater to their respective readerships by applying headline framing, textual silence, and emphasis/de-emphasis strategies.

As many studies have shown, it is relatively easy to manipulate linguistic features, such as word choice, syntactic structures, and framing devices, to influence the reader's perception (Craig, 1992; Fairclough, 1992; Fang, 1994; Fowler et al., 1979; Huckin, 2002; Kuo, 2007; Rosulek, 2008; Peled-Elhanan, 2010). While media bias may seem like common sense, it becomes far more compelling and evident when illustrated through systematic analysis that reveals precisely where and how those differences occur across texts. By identifying these variations, this study offers concrete examples of how ideological bias operates at the linguistic level.

Ultimately, this study underscores the importance of perceiving news reports as representations rather than objective accounts of reality. Given the widespread nature of media bias, the significance of media literacy is crucial. The ability to critically analyze and compare

news sources is crucial in reducing the influence of ideological framing. Without such critical engagement, readers may risk accepting mediated perspectives that do not entirely reflect the complexities of the issues. Future research should further examine the effects of selective reporting on public opinion formation and identify strategies for encouraging balanced and critical news consumption. By continuing to investigate the relationship between media framing and ideological positioning, scholars can contribute to fostering a more informed and discerning readership.

## **5.1 Limitations**

This research was not without limitations. Ideally, the study would compare two English-language newspapers in Taiwan to examine how they frame the same incidents differently. However, due to the absence of an English-language counterpart for one publication, it was necessary to translate selected Mandarin-language articles into English. While effort was made to ensure that the translations accurately preserved the original meaning and best reflected the intent of the original text, the translated versions remain inherently different from articles initially written and published in English. The nuances of word choice and editorial decisions made by the researcher may not fully capture how the publisher's editors would have framed the events in an English-language publication.

Additionally, even for the English-language newspaper, the articles were written by Taiwanese journalists who are not native English speakers. This raises the possibility that confident word choices or linguistic nuances may differ from how a native English-speaking journalist might have framed the same events.

Despite these limitations, this study still provides valuable insights into how media outlets in Taiwan selectively frame political issues, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. This research contributes to the broader discussion on media bias and ideological positioning in news reporting by identifying patterns of emphasis, de-emphasis, and omission. Future research could build on this study by incorporating more sources, including Mandarin-language newspapers with English-language counterparts, or by employing native-language discourse analysis to capture linguistic subtleties better.

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## APPENDIX A: WHA INCIDENT SELECTED ARTICLES

### (1a) DPP Desires to Join WHO Using Wrong Entry Code (進世衛 · 念錯芝麻開門)

This year's World Health Assembly (WHA) opened on May 18. Taiwan has been absent for four consecutive years. In order to participate in the WHA, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government has promoted "Taiwan Can Help" internationally. However, while Taiwan can assist others, it cannot help itself to be included in the WHA due to four different mindsets.

The first is Taiwan's diplomatic allies' mindset. Our diplomatic allies recognize the Republic of China as a sovereign and independent country, with the right to participate in the United Nations and, naturally, the WHO. It is rational, reasonable, and legitimate for our diplomatic partners to make a proposal to the WHO on our behalf. However, this thinking is not in line with mainstream international opinion, making it impractical, as evidenced in 2004, when our diplomatic allies proposed Taiwan's participation in the WHO, the vote resulted in 133 against and 25 in favor.

The second kind of mindset is that of the U.S., Japan, and European countries. These countries all have diplomatic relations with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and follow the "one-China policy" and do not develop official relations with Taiwan. However, these countries recognize that Taiwan is a "political entity" and is not affiliated with the CCP, so they support Taiwan's participation in international organizations that are not based on statehood. This is the rationale behind the U.S., Japanese, and European countries' support for Taiwan's participation as an observer in the World Health Assembly. However, this is also not the mainstream opinion in the WHO, so they only voice their support, but do not participate in the proposal.

The third kind of mindset is that of the DPP government, that is, "Taiwan is not part of China". In simpler words, it is the mindset of "one China, one Taiwan". The purpose of the DPP's de-sinicization in Taiwan is to make the Taiwanese people think that they are Taiwanese, not Chinese. Hence, they refuse to participate in the World Health Assembly in the name of Chinese Taipei, which has the connotation of "China." Yet, the DPP's thinking is not only not the international mainstream opinion, but also may not be the consensus of all the people of Taiwan, and therefore cannot amount to anything.

The fourth kind of mindset is Beijing's mindset. The World Health Organization (WHO) is a subsidiary organization of the United Nations (UN), so it should abide by the relevant UN resolutions. By introducing UN Resolution 2758, China has changed Taiwan's participation in the WHO from a technical consideration to a political one. According to UN Resolution 2758, China claimed that the Beijing government is the only legitimate representative of China in the WHO and that Taiwan has no right to become a member of the WHO. This claim was recognized by the supporters of the CCP, which led to a divergence of views within the organization.

The rupture of cross-strait relations and the divergence of opinions among the member states of the World Health Organization (WHO) have discouraged the WHO from sending an invitation letter to Taiwan, and even with the support of friendly countries, it is still impossible to facilitate Taiwan's return to the WHO General Assembly. This is because the WHO has 194 member states, 180 of which have diplomatic relations with the CCP, and the CCP has great influence in the Third World, so it can easily block Taiwan in the WHO.

In fact, the Tsai government knows very well that Taiwan has no other way to return to the

WHO, but to negotiate with the mainland, and if it can come up with a proposal acceptable to both sides, the WHO will certainly be happy to see it happen. On the other hand, if the DPP government insists on Taiwan's independence and refuses to face the problem, no matter how much the U.S., Japan, and Europe voice their support, Taiwan can only sigh on the sidelines. Foreign Minister Wu Zhiao-Xie's statement that Taiwan's goal of participating in the World Health Assembly will come closer if the voice of support for Taiwan can be strengthened is actually misleading the people.

本年世界衛生大會(WHA)於5月18日開幕。台灣連續4年缺席。為了爭取參與世衛,民進黨政府在國際間宣傳 Taiwan can Help。但台灣能幫別人,卻無法幫自己擠進世衛,原因是台灣參與世衛之事陷入4種思維之爭。

第1種思維是我邦交國思維。邦交國都承認中華民國為主權獨立的國家,不但有權參加聯合國,當然更有權參加世界衛生組織(WHO)邦交國為我向世衛組織提案,合情、合理、合法。但是此種思維並非國際主流意見,所以不能成事。2004年我友邦在世衛組織就台灣參與案發動投票,結果133票反對、25票贊成,就是明證。

第2種思維是美、日及歐洲國家思維。這些國家都與中共有外交關係,都遵行「一中政策」,不與台灣發展官方關係。但是這些國家都承認台灣是「政治實體」,與中共互不隸屬,因此支持台灣參與不以國家為條件的政府間國際組織。這就是美、日及歐洲國家聲援台灣以觀察員身分參加世衛大會的理論基礎。但是此種思維,同樣並非世衛組織中的主流意見,因此他們只是聲援,卻不參加提案。

第3種思維是民進黨政府的思維,就是「台灣不是中國的一部分」。易言之,就是「一中一台」思維。民進黨在台灣進行「去中國化」,目的是使台灣人民認為自己是台灣人,不是中國人。因此拒絕以具有「中國」意涵的 Chinese Taipei 名義參加世衛大會,民進黨的思維非但不是國際主流意見,也未必是台灣全體人民的共識,因此也不成氣候。

第4種思維是北京的思維。世衛組織是聯合國附屬機構,當然應該遵守聯合國有關決議。中國大陸提出聯合國2758號決議,將台灣參與世衛問題,由原本的技術性考量,轉換成政治性考量。中國大陸根據2758號決議,主張北京政府是中國在世衛組織的唯一合法代表,台灣無權成為世衛成員。此項主張得到中共支持者認同,世衛內部因此意見分歧。

兩岸關係決裂,世衛組織會員國意見分歧,使世衛組織不敢對台灣發出邀請函,即使友我國家力挺,也無法促成台灣重返世衛大會。因為世衛組織有194個會員國,其中180個與中共有邦交,而且中共在第三世界中有極大的影響力,能夠輕易地在世衛組織中封殺台灣。

蔡政府其實心知肚明,台灣想要重返世衛大會別無他途,必須要先與對岸協商,若能訂出雙方皆可接受的方案,世衛組織必然樂觀其成。反之,如果民進黨政府堅持台獨意識,不肯面對問題,無論美、日、歐國家如何聲援台灣也只能望門興嘆。外交部長吳釗燮說如果能加強支持台灣的聲量,台灣參與世界衛生大會的目標就愈來愈接近,其實是誤導國人。

### **(1b) Taunting WHO More Only Leads to More Resistance (愈嗆 WHO 愈撞牆)**

In early May, the U.S. magazine "Foreign Policy" cited diplomats and internal meeting records of the World Health Organization (WHO) stating that the Trump administration is seeking support from allied countries to restore Taiwan's observer status. They also plan to co-sign a letter to WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus along with Japan, Australia, the UK, France, and Germany, requesting Taiwan's participation in the World Health Assembly (WHA). The World Health Organization (WHO) has also confirmed that on May 18, during the World Health Assembly, member countries will debate whether Taiwan can participate as an observer.

News has shown that Taiwan's pandemic prevention performance and international public relations seem to have worked, so what are the chances of Taiwan participating in the WHA this year? Looking at the international political landscape and the operating rules of WHO, Taiwan's prospects for participating in this year's WHA meeting remain challenging. Health Minister Chen Shih-chung's criticism of WHO officials seems to convey a pessimistic signal.

WHO is a specialized agency of the United Nations, and WHA is the highest authority of WHO. From the point of view of international law, Taiwan is not a member of the United Nations, so of course, it has no right to participate in the WHO, which is a subordinate organization of the United Nations, let alone in the meetings of the highest authority of the WHO. In order for Taiwan to participate in WHO or WHA as an observer, there must be a goodwill invitation from WHO or the consent of a majority of member states, which often hinges on mainland China's goodwill.

It is reasonable that the WHO Director-General has the authority to proactively invite specific entities as observers to WHA based on operational needs, but why does Director-General Tedros avoid exercising this right and throws the issue of Taiwan's participation in the WHA to the members of the WHO? Tedros's actions shows that he still has a hard time getting over the discriminatory terms used by Taiwanese Netizens to bully him. And he still harbors resentment toward President Trump's witch hunt against the WHO and himself.

Then, can Taiwan expect goodwill from mainland China? Since 2016, the cross-strait relations have steadily deteriorated. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan's various pandemic prevention policies all have been "dissing" China and being anti-China, so much so that the mainland has been long convinced that Taiwan is "seeking independence." Given the situation, how would mainland China extend goodwill and invite Taiwan to participate in WHA?

In fact, due to the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's WHA conference will be conducted entirely via video conferencing. For us, who have claimed superior pandemic prevention achievements, the gains from attending the conference are limited and not particularly meaningful. If Taiwan truly wishes to share its success in preventing the pandemic with the world, it can easily do so on the internet and through videos and social media. To be frank, what Taiwan's government cares about is just finding a breakthrough in international participation, which allows the world to see Taiwan as a "nation."

If Taiwan truly wishes to reclaim its place on the international stage through this opportunity, why not announce an annual donation of \$300 million without any conditions to fill the gap caused by Trump's suspension of funding to the World Health Organization? Such a generous and unconditional gesture could turn enemies into friends and secure a major public relations victory on the international stage.

5月初,美國”外交政策”誌引述外交人士與世衛組織(WHO)內部會議記錄指出美國總統川普政府正尋求盟友支持,以恢復台灣的觀察員地位,且擬與日本、澳洲、英國、法國與德國等共同連署致函WHO祕書長譚德塞,要求譚德塞邀請台灣出席世界衛生大會(WHA)。世衛組織也證實,將在5月18日世界衛生大會上,由成員國們辯論台灣是否能以觀察員身分參與議題。

對照新聞報導,台灣的防疫成績與國際公關似乎已告奏效,那麼今年我國參與WHA會議的機會,究竟有多高?從國際政治博弈和WHO運作規則的角度看,台灣參加本年度WHA會議的前途依然多艱阻。陳時中痛批世衛組織官僚,似乎也透露了悲觀的信號。

WHO是聯合國的專門機構,WHA則是WHO的最高權力機構。從法理上而言,台灣既非聯合國的會員國,當然也無權參加聯合國下屬的世衛組織,更無權參與世衛組織最高權力機構的會議了。台灣要想以觀察員的身分參與WHO或WHA,必須有WHO的善意邀請或多數會員國的同意,而多數會員國的同意又往往繫於中國大陸的善意。

按理,世衛組織的祕書長有權依業務需要主動邀請特定對象以觀察員身分參與WHA,但祕書長譚德塞為何迴避運用這項權力而將台灣參與WHA的問題拋給世衛組織會員國呢?譚德塞此舉顯示,他對台灣網軍用歧視性的字眼霸凌他,至今難以釋懷。而他對於美國總統川普對世衛組織以及他個人的獵巫行動,仍然憤恨難平。

那麼,台灣可能得到中國大陸的善意嗎?2016年以來,兩岸關係一步步走入谷底,新冠肺炎疫情爆發後,台灣的種種防疫政策都不忘嗆中、反中,以至於大陸方面早已認定台灣「以謀獨」情勢如此,中國大陸豈會在會員國的辯論中釋出善意,邀請台灣參與WHA?

事實上,此次WHA會議全球新冠肺炎疫情影響,全程將以視頻會議方式進行,參加與否,對於號稱防疫成績優等的我們而言收穫有限,意義也不大。台灣真要與世界各國分享防疫的成就,大可透過無遠弗屆、萬國皆達的互聯網與視頻社群媒體,說透徹些,台灣在乎的不過是想藉機在國際參與上找到一個突破口,讓世界可看到台灣「這個國家」罷了。

台灣真想藉此機會重新站上國際舞台,何妨宣布,在不附帶任何條件的前提下每年捐款3億美元,填補川普停止資助世衛組織所造成的缺口?如此無所求卻能得道多助,化敵為友,贏來國際公關的大勝利。

## **(2a) Taiwan in WHO in world's interest**

There is less than one month to go before the opening of World Health Assembly's (WHA) 73rd plenary session, which is scheduled for May 17 to 21, and whether Taiwan is to be invited is once again drawing attention worldwide.

Despite the fact that Taiwan's great achievements in combating COVID-19 and its “Taiwan can help” campaign have been widely reported by foreign media, there are only a few nations that have publicly announced their support for Taiwan's participation in the WHO and the WHA.

The government has in the past few years sought to attend the WHA as an observer, while fully participating in WHO affairs. Although this is a compromise it has to make due to political reality, it has made many nations support only observer status for Taiwan instead of supporting Taiwan being able to work with the international community as a full member of the WHO.

When we look back at Taiwan's exclusion from WHO in the past few decades, it is clear that many Taiwanese lost their lives during the 1998 enterovirus and 2003 SARS outbreaks due to the lack of an early warning from the WHO.

Taiwan remains subject to a secret memorandum of understanding signed by China and the WHO in 2005, which says that only if China agrees can Taiwanese experts attend WHO meetings.

Through the COVID-19 pandemic, the WHO's inaction has exposed its "China first" stance toward global health, creating a huge disaster for the global community.

Under pressure from many nations, the WHO has now changed its stance from avoiding the Taiwan issue by emphasizing its "one China" policy, claiming that membership for Taiwan should be decided by member states.

However, the "one China" policy has never appeared in any official WHO document.

Even though WHA Resolution 25.1, which was passed in 1972 by the WHO according to a UN resolution, states that the WHA "decided to restore all its rights to the People's Republic of China and to recognize the representatives of its government as the only legitimate representatives of China to the World Health Organization, and to expel forthwith the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) from the place which they unlawfully occupy at the World Health Organization," the issue of Taiwan's representation and the phrase "one China" never appeared in a document.

WHO spokesperson Iain Simpson in April 2004 said that the "one China" policy was never a guiding principle at the WHO and the organization had always insisted that Taiwan's membership should be decided by all of its member states.

There could not be a better time for the government to urge other nations to support a much more meaningful role for Taiwan by enabling it to become a WHO member.

As the founding spirit and mission of the WHO were established on universal principles of health, once any nation or region becomes a crack in the global health security network, then no other nation can be free from the risks and threats of a pandemic.

Article 3 of the WHO constitution stipulates that membership in the organization shall be open to all states, and non-UN members, according to Article 6, can be admitted as members when their application has been approved by a simple majority vote of the WHA.

The admission threshold of the WHA is different from that of the UN system, which is a two-thirds majority vote, and the simple majority also intends to downplay the veto power of the permanent members of the UN Security Council to minimize sovereignty controversies in global politics and emphasize that the WHO is a professional science-based organization whose responsibility is to promote global health, not resolve political conflicts.

As a role model in combating the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan's outstanding performance has proven that the nation is an independent, responsible, capable democratic nation willing to offer its help to the international community.

Sadly, Taiwan remains excluded from the WHO's early warning system and it has also been falsely accused by WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus of launching racist attacks after its efforts to alert the WHO to the potential human-to-human transmission of COVID-19 were denied.

This unfair treatment has been extensively reported on by the global media.

Allowing Taiwan membership in the WHO is key to reforming the organization to ensure that not only does it meet public health needs, it can bring long-term benefit to the world.

### **(2b) The world needs Taiwan at WHA**

The World Health Assembly (WHA) began yesterday and Taiwan was again excluded. What makes the nation's marginalization even more infuriating is that nations worldwide are not meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, this year — they are meeting virtually through video conferencing, and the topic is the COVID-19 pandemic.

Taiwan has every reason to attend this year's WHA, not as an observer as its friends have advocated, but as the leader of discussions. The reason is simple and it bears repeating: Taiwan has the world's best COVID-19 response.

Forbes magazine on April 13 published an article which said that nations with female leaders have the best coronavirus responses, citing Taiwan, Germany, New Zealand, Iceland, Norway and Denmark as examples.

While the article stopped short of ranking the efficacy of the six nations' responses, the answer is quite clear after comparing their proximity to China — where the novel coronavirus originated — and population density in relation to the number of confirmed cases and deaths.

However, even that is not reason enough for other nations to go out of their way to carve out a space for Taiwan's international participation.

After all, the international community has already spoken up for Taiwan, with the US and seven other nations calling on the WHA to grant the nation observer status, and 106 European lawmakers urging the WHO to allow Minister of Health and Welfare Chen Shih-chung (陳時中) to attend the WHA to share the nation's measures to contain the virus.

There is no reason to expect others to stand up for Taiwan, unless they realize what they have to gain — or lose, if they make only half-hearted efforts or are complacent about the world order after the COVID-19 debacle.

What does the world have to gain from Taiwan? The technology it has used to curb the spread of COVID-19 and its development of vaccine candidates targeting the coronavirus, to name just two.

President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) has pledged to offer other nations the same system powered by big data extracted from cellphone towers to track people who have come into contact with possible COVID-19 carriers. Meanwhile, Adimmune Corp has developed a vaccine candidate that is expected to enter clinical trials after it was proven to inhibit the growth of the novel coronavirus in preliminary animal tests.

Given the technicality of the issues and the tremendous help that Taiwan could offer the world in prevailing against the pandemic, it stands to reason that the nation deserves a proper platform and should be allowed floor time at the WHA.

Conversely, the world will have much to lose if nations are content with mere formalities such as “condemning” China and “demanding” that the WHO, which has unabashedly shielded China, comply with an investigation into the source of the outbreak. These efforts are so half-hearted and meek that they are unlikely to sit well with anyone whose life has been threatened by China.

The world already knows from statistics and chronicling the outbreak that the new coronavirus came from China. Drastic measures must be taken. The world will likely have put COVID-19 behind it and be preoccupied with other challenges before China is willing to divulge any information on the subject.

The world has much to gain from embracing Taiwan and everything to lose from capitulating to China. It is regrettable that Taiwan has again been sidelined at the WHA, but it would be even more tragic if the world continues to allow China to hold so much sway over it.

## APPENDIX B: MASK DIPLOMACY SELECTED ARTICLES

### (3a) Why Engage in Mask Diplomacy when Officials, Soldiers lack Sufficient Masks? (官兵都不夠用 拚什麼口罩外交)

The Taiwan military's zero confirmed cases streak is broken, with over 20 cases of COVID-19 reported. Ironically, the 180,000-strong national army could only be allocated 17,000 masks a day before, and only on the 18th was it changed to one mask a day for each person. On the one hand, the national army did not have enough masks, and on the other hand, the government kept on sending tens of millions of masks for desperate “diplomatic” purposes, which is evidently not a correct approach for pandemic prevention and national defense.

Unlike the general public, the military has prolonged and close contact every day. Once someone is infected, the transmission rate will be extremely high, and the entire ship or camp will have to be quarantined and tested, which will have an impact on the military's combat effectiveness and national security, thus affecting the entire population. Therefore, normally, the government should ensure an adequate supply of masks to the military before engaging in mask diplomacy.

However, this is not the case with the Tsai government. On April 1 and 9 alone, the government announced that it will donate 16 million masks to foreign countries, enough for the entire national army to use for 88 days.

Meanwhile, due to the meager distribution of masks to the army, most soldiers could only buy masks themselves or through their families at pharmacies, and it was not until March 26 that they were able to start ordering masks online. How much time do soldiers stationed in the camp have to queue up to buy masks all day? Moreover, the limit for buying masks at that time was only 3 pieces for 7 days, which was simply not enough.

Recently confirmed cases in the military all developed symptoms in April, but the government's misguided mask distribution policy had already sown the seeds of infection in the military. This is the best example of putting the cart before the horse! Due to the insufficient distribution of masks, as long as asymptomatic or mildly infected individuals appear in the military, the disease will spread like a fire in a prairie.

Perhaps the Tsai government believes that in March and early April, the mask production was not enough to provide the military with one mask per person per day, so they could only follow the general public's allocation of 3 masks in 7 days. But how do they explain their extravagant "mask diplomacy" while neglecting their own military? The national army's infection is a matter of national security and public health. The Democratic Progressive Party government, which has always emphasized on defending national security and has claimed success in preventing the pandemic, has the obligation to give an explanation to all the people and the national army.

國軍零確診破功,逾 20 人感 染新冠肺炎。諷刺的是,之前 18 萬國軍 1 天只能分配到 1.7 萬 片口罩,18 日才改成每人 1 天 1 片,一邊是國軍口罩不夠用,一邊是政府不斷送出上千萬片 口罩「拚外交」,顯然不是正確的防疫和國防政策。

軍隊不比一般民眾,每天長 時間、群聚接觸,一旦有人感 染,傳染速度一定極快,且整艘軍艦或整個營區都要隔離採檢。衝擊軍隊戰力和國家安全,從 而影響全民。所以正常來說,政 府理應先確保國軍口罩充足,再 去拚口罩外交。

蔡政府卻非如此。光是 4 月 1 日 和 9 日公開宣布捐給外國的口罩 就多達 1600 萬片,夠全體國軍使用 88 天。

而在此同時,因為軍方配發口 罩少得可憐,多數國軍只能自行或透過親人去藥局排隊買口罩,直到 3 月 26 日起才能透過網路訂 購口罩。試問整天在營區的國軍 有多少時間可以排隊購買?而且 當時買到口罩限制是 7 天只有 3 片,根本不夠用。

近日確診國軍都是 4 月才發病,但政府本末倒置的口罩分配政 策,早已種下國軍染病因!由 於口罩配發不足,只要軍中出現 無症狀或輕症感染者,必將如火燎原快速蔓延。

或許蔡政府認為,3 月和 4 月 初口罩產量尚不足提供國軍每 人 1 天 1 片,只能讓他們比照一 般民眾 7 天 3 片;但又如何解釋 不顧自己國軍,卻一再大手筆 做「口罩外交」?國軍染疫事 件事關國家安全和人民健 康,自許防疫成功、又素來強調捍 衛國家安全的民進黨政府,有 義務給全民與國軍一個交代。

### **(3b) Masks Become Pawns in Political Games, Ignoring Peoples' Suffering (口罩淪政治操作 枉顧民間疾苦)**

With the outbreak of COVID-19, the public is in a state of panic. Masks, alcohol, ear thermometers, and other pandemic prevention supplies all sold out, especially masks, which are hard to come by. Even though 20 million masks can be produced daily, citizens are restricted to purchasing only nine masks every two weeks under the real-name system. Sending masks to relatives and friends overseas is still limited to 30 masks in two months. The government is now focusing on mask diplomacy in an attempt to elevate Taiwan's international image. The public can not help but lament that "*\*Tshenn tsiáh to bô-kàu, ná ũ thang phák-kuann,*" harshly criticizing the government for disregarding the people's suffering, and turning pandemic prevention masks into political bargaining chips.

\* "Even raw consumption is insufficient, let alone having surplus to air dry". Southern Min saying. It is a metaphor signifying the current state of life being stretched thin, with little hope for a better future

Taiwan's performance in pandemic prevention is commendable, which is originally something to be proud of. However, it is overshadowed by the government being too keen on high-profile external promotion. While Taiwan does have a lot of practical experience and practices to share with the international community in pandemic prevention, the issue of pandemic prevention supplies is a different matter. Of course, on the premise of sufficient production of masks in Taiwan, there is room to help other countries, but the problem is that the people of Taiwan still can only buy limited masks with their health insurance cards. It is difficult for the public to not have resentment when they are sending a large number of masks out of the country when they cannot even meet the daily and monthly supply.

What is even more ironic is that when the government sends the masks to other countries, there have been rejections. When the public sees that the masks rejected are the ones they have been "thrifting" — the sense of deprivation deepens. This incident reflects whether the government is genuinely attentive to the needs of the people, whether it truly empathizes with their hardships, or whether it is just utilizing the nation's resources to appear strong in the international arena. In the light of the international reality and China's repression, Taiwan was once again not invited to participate in the WHA this year. Even the countries that have received our donated masks are hesitant to openly express gratitude, which is even more embarrassing to the Taiwanese people.

新冠肺炎疫情發生,民眾人心惶惶,口罩、酒精、耳溫槍等防疫物資一掃而空,尤其是口罩一片難求。即使現能日產2千萬片口罩,但國人實名制購買也只放寬到2周9片,甚至寄給海外二等親友,猶受限2個月30片,政府此時卻推口罩外交企圖搏國際形象,民眾不免感慨「生食都不夠那有通曝乾」,痛批政府枉顧民間疾苦,將防疫口罩淪為政治操作的籌碼。

台灣此次防疫有不錯的表現,原是美事一樁,但政府急於大動作對外宣揚,其實,台灣在防疫上的表現,在實務上的確有不少經驗及做法可與國際分享,但防疫物資是另外一件事。當然,在台灣口罩產量足夠的前提下,行有餘力可以幫助其他國家,但問題在於,國人對於口罩都還要憑健保卡限制購買,尚且無法達到1天1月的供給之下,還要將大批的口罩往外送,要民眾心理不存芥蒂之心也難。

更諷刺的是,政府將口罩送給其他國家時,其間也有遭到婉拒,民眾看到遭拒收的是自己「被儉用」的口罩,相對剝奪感也就更深了。此次口罩的事,反應政府對民眾需求是否用心,是否真的能苦民所苦,還是只是用全民的資源,對外打腫臉充胖子,在國際現實與大陸打壓下,今年台灣依舊未受邀參與WHA,甚至接受捐贈口罩的國家連公開道謝都多所顧忌,更令民眾感到情何以堪。

#### **(4a) Epidemic kindness: Paying it forward**

President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) on April 1 announced that Taiwan would donate 10 million masks to the US, the EU and other countries seriously affected by the COVID-19 pandemic — this was exciting news.

Some have said that the nation should take good care of itself first — even though the figure is lower than the nation's daily output of masks — but Taiwan has always taken good care of itself.

So far, more than 70 percent of the confirmed COVID-19 cases in Taiwan were imported, with fewer than 60 confirmed domestic cases. Taiwan is the nation with the lowest number of people who have contracted the coronavirus from imported cases.

The pandemic has largely put a halt to global travel, as nations attempt to further contain the spread of the virus. At this critical juncture, Taiwan can make a significant contribution globally by expressing its virtue and goodness through timely aid.

Through mask donations, Taiwan is also giving back to the international community for its kind assistance during the 2003 SARS outbreak. At that time, it did not have adequate mask production, so members of the public and hospitals fought over them. This “mask fever” was notorious even outside Taiwan.

Thankfully — and surprisingly — Taiwan received more than 4.7 million masks, 260,000 protective suits, and tens of thousands of shoe covers and face shields from other nations, diplomatic allies, overseas Taiwanese and the diplomatic corps in Taipei.

The Singaporean government made the greatest impression with its donations. Although the city-state was also hit by SARS, it kept panic under control so that health authorities and medical institutes, such as the Tan Tock Seng Hospital, could focus on fighting the disease.

Meanwhile, the Taiwanese government was busy dealing with rising panic and social disorder, as well as reactions of avoidance and paralysis that local medical institutions had in coping with the epidemic.

Despite its relatively small size, Singapore did not experience a shortage of disease-prevention supplies during the SARS crisis. It generously donated to Taiwan — 100,000 protective suits, 100,000 N95 masks, 100,000 masks and 150,000 testing kits on May 21, 2003 — as well as giving two sets of infrared temperature sensors to local airports.

Today, Taiwan’s pandemic miracle backed by its team of local mask manufacturers will be fleeting, as “mask fever” will surely fade after the crisis stabilizes. The global mask shortage is mainly a result of Chinese panic buying around the world from about two months ago.

China is the world’s largest producer of masks, but it instructed Chinese to wear masks and suspended mask exports when the outbreak erupted. It also purchased more than 700 million masks overseas, which led to a serious short-term imbalance between supply and demand in the global mask market.

Beijing is making every effort to rapidly and massively expand mask production lines, hoping to meet global demand and promptly remedy its failure to contain the outbreak in Wuhan, which resulted in the worldwide spread of the coronavirus.

As for Taiwan, it has quickly built a “national mask production team,” becoming the world’s second-largest mask and protective suit maker after China.

Over the next few weeks, Taiwan should seize this opportunity to take its mask and prevention miracle onto the world stage, making a significant and historic contribution during the pandemic of the century.

#### **(4b) Pride taken in nation’s pandemic compassion**

As COVID-19 began to spread from Wuhan to the rest of the world, Taiwan produced 1.88 million masks per day. That was clearly not enough to meet the public’s needs after providing for front-line medical personnel.

After the government implemented a rationing system, there were long lines to buy masks, but at least there was no mad rush of people fighting to be first in line or trying to jump ahead.

At first, as people were worried and the epidemic kept changing, some restaurants were unfriendly to medical personnel ordering food for delivery, but as soon as the media reported on these incidents, every one of those guilty apologized.

This self-discipline, ability and willingness to reflect make me proud to be Taiwanese.

Once mask production reached 13 million per day, President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) on April 1 announced that Taiwan would donate 7 million masks to 11 severely affected European nations, 2 million to the US and 1 million to other friendly nations.

On April 9, mask production had reached 15 million per day and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that it would donate 6 million masks as foreign aid. In addition to giving masks to the hardest hit US states, it donated 1.3 million to eight European nations, 1.6 million to Southeast Asian nations targeted by the New Southbound Policy, and 1.05 million to allies and friendly nations in Latin America.

With the exception of a few politicians who are more interested in complaining than in doing their job, most Taiwanese were happy to see the nation offer masks wherever there was a need, regardless of whether it was a diplomatic ally or not.

This ability and willingness to give help where it is needed makes me proud to be Taiwanese.

Italy is among the hardest hit nations. When Father Giuseppe Didone, who has spent 55 years in Taiwan, asked Taiwanese to provide assistance to his home nation, they responded by donating NT\$150 million (US\$5.03 million at the current exchange rate) in just six days.

Following the March 11, 2011, earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan's Fukushima Prefecture, donations from Taiwan reached NT\$6.8 billion. After the May 12, 2008, earthquake that struck China's Sichuan Province, Taiwanese ignored the unfriendly comments made by then-Chinese premier Zhu Rongji (朱鎔基) ahead of Taiwan's presidential election in 2000 and donated NT\$5 billion, in addition to NT\$2 billion donated by the government.

This ability and willingness to repay kindnesses and to help anyone, friend or foe, makes me proud to be Taiwanese.

Looking at Taiwan's landmass, it would not be wrong to call it a small nation, but looking at it from a perspective of compassion, it is clear that Taiwan — together with its 23.5 million inhabitants — is a giant.

Taiwan's foreign aid team is not working to attract fleeting media attention or to be in the spotlight, it is engaged in a long-term effort, working silently in the background and extending assistance sometimes to Latin America, sometimes to Africa — including, of course, Ethiopia, the home nation of WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus — and at other times to nations in the South Pacific.

Taiwan helps train medical and environmental workers, build infrastructure, prevent kidney disease, and reduce maternal and infant mortality. For example, the Taiwan Fund for Children and Families is sponsoring more than 60,000 children in 35 nations in Africa, Asia and the Americas.

This ability and willingness to quietly and unselfishly care for people in far-flung places makes me proud to be Taiwanese.

## APPENDIX C: CHINA AIRLINES NAME CHANGE SELECTED ARTICLES

### (5a) Long-Term Manipulation of Name Rectification Backtracked, Exposed in Face of Challenge (長期玩弄正名 臨陣退縮露馬腳)

The Tsai government has increased Taiwan's international visibility due to epidemic prevention and mask diplomacy, which has brought the issue of China Airlines and passport renaming back to the forefront. The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which used to fly the flag of Taiwan's proper name, has suddenly changed its attitude to a conservative one before dealing with the two resolutions yesterday, and has even proposed to put forward an amendment motion that is even more retrogressive than the original wording of the proposal, and deferred it to the next week's session of the Legislative Yuan. This dilatory attitude is not only due to the unwillingness to advocate the opposition party's proposal, but also exposes the fact that the government does not want to deal with sensitive issues.

The two resolutions on China Airlines and passport renaming, which involve issues such as air traffic rights and national sovereignty, have remained at the discussion stage without any further action. China Airlines, which carried masks to other countries, has been in the spotlight for its name change because its English name is considered to be easily confused with mainland China.

The New Power Party (NPP) Legislative Yuan caucus proposed a resolution on the name change, requesting the Ministry of Transportation and Communications (MOTC) to actively promote the short-, medium-, and long-term renaming of China Airlines. Cheng Po-Wei from the Legislative Yuan caucus of the Taiwan Statebuilding Party also proposed a resolution on the passport name change, advocating that the name of the country on the passport cover and the personal information page should be changed to "台灣 TAIWAN".

The two cases were scheduled to be discussed in the Legislative Yuan yesterday, but the DPP announced in the pre-congress party meeting that it would propose an amendment, but when we looked at the content of the amendment, we found that the original proposal called for the development of a "correct" name proposal, but it was changed to a "name change" proposal. Even for the original proposal to change the name of the country on the cover and inside of the passport to Taiwan, the DPP's version only mentions that the administrative department will examine the recognizability of the Taiwan passport, which is obviously weaker than the original proposal.

Compared to the KMT's strong reaction on the issues of China Airlines and passport name change in the past, the KMT has learned a lesson this time and is handling the issue in a cold manner, unwilling to stand in the way of the Green camp and take the blame again, making it clear that it wants the ruling government to take responsibility on its own, and leaving the DPP's customary two-faced tactics out of the question.

The Tsai government, in handling issues involving sovereignty disputes, diverges from its strong advocacy during its opposition period. After assuming full governance, there has been a drastic shift in attitude, employing a tactic of delay even for non-binding resolutions that lack enforceability. These two resolutions are akin to a revealing mirror, exposing the Democratic Progressive Party's long-standing manipulation of the "name rectification" tactic

蔡政府因防疫及口罩外交增加 台灣的國際能見度,讓中華航空,護照更名議題再度浮上檯面,過往打著台灣正名大旗的民進黨 昨天處理兩公決案前,態度突 變保守,甚至研擬提出比原提案 用詞更退縮的修正動議,並延至 下周院會處理,拖泥帶水的態度 ,不僅因為不願意倡議在野黨提 案,也露出不想處理敏感議題的 馬

腳。

華航及護照更名兩件公決案,因牽涉航權、國家主權等問題,始終僅止於討論階段,沒有進一步動作。前陣子協助載運口罩至各國的華航,因英文名稱「CHINA AIRLINES」被認為容易與大陸混淆,讓華航更名議題受到矚目。

時代力量立法院黨團提出更名公決案,要求交通部應積極推動短中長期的華航正名。民進黨立委陳柏惟也提出護照更名公決案,主張應更改護照封面及個人資料頁國名為「台灣 TAIWAN」。

原定兩案昨排入立法院會討論事項,民進黨團在院會前黨團大會突襲式宣布要提修正動議,但細看內容,相較原提案要求研擬「正」名方案,改為「改」名,連原提案護照封面及內頁國名更改為台灣,民進黨版僅提到行政部門研擬台灣護照辨識度,力道明顯偏弱。

相較過去在華航、護照更名議題上強烈反彈的國民黨,這次學乖了,冷處理,不願再替綠營擋門背鍋,擺明要全面執政的政府自行負責,也讓民進黨慣用的兩面手法無計可施。

蔡政府處理牽涉主權爭議的議題,不同於在野時期大力提倡,全面執政後態度丕變,就連以宣示意義為主,不具有強制力的公決案,也採拖延戰術不敢快速通過。兩件公決案正如照妖鏡,拆穿民進黨長期玩弄「正名」的西洋鏡。

### **(5b) DPP Stirs Up Trouble: Recycling Old Gag with Fake Issue (綠營搞飛機 假議題玩老哏)**

At a time when the whole country is fighting against the pandemic, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) lawmakers propose renaming China Airlines. Both Lin Chia-lung (secretary general) and Su Ching-cheong (president of executive yuan) have expressed support for it. In the midst of the pandemic, provoking the sensitive issue of renaming China Airlines by the ruling party not only fails to assist in pandemic control and national unity, but also reinforces the DPP's intention of using the pandemic for independence. This escalates cross-strait tensions, and such a brash approach will not only harm Taiwan's hard-earned reputation for pandemic prevention, but also jeopardize Taiwan's already limited international space.

The "China Airlines renaming" issue is, in fact, a stale pseudo-topic that politicians have played with repeatedly. In 2006, President Chen Shui-bian proposed that China Airlines change its name to "Taiwan Airlines" or "Formosa Airlines." However, due to complex issues involving international air traffic rights and trademarks, and with the China Airlines union estimating costs including repainting, labor, and trademark to exceed NT\$1 billion, the idea was eventually dropped. In July 2016 and June 2018, members of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) brought up the issue, but they all once again came to naught.

In all three previous attempts to rename China Airlines, there was a lot of noise, but in the end, practical considerations such as diplomatic reality and commercial interests led to these attempts becoming a political farce for the DPP. Is it possible that this time, because Taiwan's pandemic prevention performance surpasses international standards and because of Taiwan's donations of masks, the international community will cooperate with renaming China Airlines and even recognize Taiwan's national status?

In fact, every country understands that the two sides of the Taiwan Strait are different political entities, and Taiwan's China Airlines has been flying internationally for more than a day.

or two. Saying "China Airlines" carrying masks for international aid may be misunderstood as coming from China is not a smart reason to initiate the renaming of China Airlines at a time when the entire nation is devoted to preventing the pandemic. It unnecessarily provokes sensitivities surrounding the Taiwan independence issue.

Besides the fact that China Airlines is a listed company, changing its name will jeopardize many shareholders' rights. Then for any other state-owned companies carrying the name "China," will a comprehensive renaming be necessary? If so, since the DPP is in full control of the government, why not boldly amend the constitution and change the country name to Taiwan too? This is exactly why the Kuomintang taunts, "all bark no bite."

As the saying goes, "A good host does not stir up trouble." At a time when the severe pandemic shows no signs of easing, politicians manipulating a false issue of renaming, apart from seeking publicity or trying to gain an advantage during the government reshuffle on May 20, not only fails to help, but may even be detrimental to pandemic control, national unity, and Taiwan's already limited international space. Is there no sense of unease about this for the DPP?

全民抗疫之際,綠委倡議華航改名,林佳龍、蘇貞昌先後「讚聲」。疫情當前,執政黨挑動華航改名的敏感神經,既無助抗疫,也無益國家團結,更坐實「以疫謀獨」,激化兩岸對立,粗暴的手法,不只會傷害台灣好不容易獲得的抗疫美名,也會讓台灣當前些許的國際空間,陷入困境。

「華航改名」其實是被政客玩到老掉牙的假議題。2006年陳水扁總統就曾主張華航改名「台灣航空」或「福爾摩沙航空」,後因牽涉國際航權、商標等複雜問題且華航工會估計光牽扯烤漆、人力、商標等成本,超過新台幣10億元,最後不了了之。2016年7月,2018年6月,民進黨都有人重提華航改名,最後同樣無疾而終。

前3次華航更名,都喧騰一時,結局都在外交現實、商業利益等最實際考量下,成了綠營關門自爽的政治鬧劇。這次難道會因台灣防疫表現高於國際水準且捐助口罩,國際上就會配合華航改名,甚至承認台灣的國家地位?

其實各國都清楚兩岸是不同的政治實體,台灣的華航在國際飛行,更非一天兩天,拿載口罩援外的「China Airlines」會被誤解是中國為由,在全民抗疫關頭發動華航更名,撩撥統獨敏感神經,並不聰明。

不談華航是上市公司,更名將損及多少股東權益,接著冠上「中華」2字的國民營事業,是否要全面更名?與其如此,既然民進黨完全執政,何不大膽修憲變更國號?這正是國民黨嗆「笑你不敢」的原因。

所謂「當家不鬧事」,當嚴峻疫情不知何時緩解,政客卻操作改名的假議題,除了在520政府改組之際搏版面或求上位,不僅無助,甚至有害抗疫、國家團結以及台灣有限的國際空間,難道不心虛?

### **(6a) The pandemic and passport change**

Before beginning, we would like to offer an observation: by typing "countries with republic in their name" into a Google search, a list of about 130 countries prefaced by "republic" are displayed, of which there is a "People's Republic of China" (PRC), but no "Republic of China."

Apparently, "Republic of China" is *persona non grata* in cyberspace, begging the question of its existence in physical space as far as the world at large is concerned.

The Henley Passport Index ranks countries according to travel freedoms for their citizens in countries they visit. Taiwan's passport is ranked 32nd out of 195 countries in the world. This year, it has visa-free or visa-on-arrival status in 146 countries and territories. Notwithstanding having formal diplomatic relations with a mere 15 nations, this ranking is amazing and unprecedented, which speaks volumes of Taiwan's accomplishments in healthcare, technology and democracy.

The favorable treatment, accorded to Taiwanese is a stark testament of admiration for Taiwan and its rule-abiding citizens, despite the absence of formal diplomatic relations.

Paradoxically, Taiwan's passports bear the official title "Republic of China" on the cover, which is often mistaken as the other country across the Taiwan Strait — the People's Republic of China. Considering the dichotomy between the "Republic of China" and the "People's Republic of China" in terms of governance and other factors, what could be more misleading when a lay person needs to determine which side is which, obfuscated by the similarity in name? This confusing situation is akin to "China Airlines" and "Air China." Ask any American: Which airline belongs to Taiwan? Neither, will likely be the answer delivered with a puzzled look.

The outbreak of the Wuhan pneumonia virus (COVID-19) that has spread worldwide since January and the ensuing possible mix-up over Taiwan's name is jarring and detrimental to Taiwan's prestige, considering that its methods to stem the spread of the virus without resorting to extreme lockdown measures has received universal praise. Most people who carry Taiwanese passports prefer not to have the word "China" highlighted on them, due to perception issues.

The world stands to benefit greatly from access to Taiwan's expertise in containing the virus. The sharp contrast between Taiwan's methods of disease mitigation, which preserve daily democratic discourse compared with the extreme lockdown approach implemented by the PRC, must be clearly delineated and not be confused by an obfuscating name similarity.

Once this ravaging pandemic is in our rearview mirror, one cannot expect people to return to pre-pandemic normalcy. A residual sense of unease is expected to persist for a long time after experiencing such unspeakable, horrific ordeals.

The word "China" will always be a stain in people's minds, provoking a visceral antipathy, if not outright hostility toward Chinese at large. In the long run, Taiwanese travelers and workers overseas would be better served without the words "Republic of China" on their passports.

The scene worldwide on what is transpiring serves as a warning. Amid rising anti-Chinese sentiments in many countries stemming from the origin of the pandemic and the delay in revealing the disease, overseas Chinese are experiencing racial discrimination across the globe. Racist invectives are being hurled and bodily attacks against Chinese are common on every continent, especially Europe, which has seen disproportional suffering from the Wuhan coronavirus. Under the current malaise, Taiwanese travelers would do well without the word "China" on their passport. Imagine a Taiwanese in the middle of a racial imbroglio desperately struggling to save himself in a potential violent attack. He could not flash his passport to prove that he is Taiwanese when the word China is on it.

Taiwan is emerging from the pandemic practically unscathed economically, socially and, most importantly, with a death toll of only six. This fact is in sharp contrast with other countries that are still mired in social isolation and lockdowns, economic catastrophes and deaths in the hundreds of thousands. A passport with the word “Taiwan” at the bottom and without “China” at the top would give Taiwanese a sense that they were carrying a badge of honor tempered by a somber feeling of sympathy for those adversely affected.

There are bilateral travel agreements between Taiwan and countries with which Taipei has no formal diplomatic relationships. From a convenience standpoint, another benefit of the passport change would be to allow foreign governments to quickly and efficiently distinguish between holders of Taiwanese and Chinese passports without incurring delays due to nationality mix-ups, as Taiwan’s many travel agreements are with countries with which it has no formal diplomatic relations. Quick differentiation between Taiwanese and Chinese nationality by customs officials at ports of entry would ensure time-saving and hassle-free travel for Taiwanese tourists and workers.

Because of these reasons, we emphatically suggest that the Democratic Progressive Party government quickly initiate a modification of the wordings on the passports to better differentiate between Taiwan and China. We suggest the removal of the English name “Republic of China” from the cover, while preserving the Chinese characters for Republic of China.

Or, at a minimum, replace “Republic of China” with “ROC” in a small font to get rid of the word “China.”

It must be emphasized that this request is motivated by practical considerations rather than an attempt to change the country’s name, which is legally impossible without a constitutional amendment. Thus, we are not advocating the removal of Republic of China in Chinese.

Taiwan is a *de facto* independent state that has its own central government with full sovereignty over its affairs and territory. It also has its own standing military to protect its sovereignty. Nevertheless, for idiosyncratic historical reasons readily apparent to anyone, but time-consuming to discuss here, Taiwan is unable to formally change the name “Republic of China” to “Taiwan,” although the island is universally referred to as “Taiwan” by the international community and its press. Indeed, a formal country name change might cross a “red line” imposed by authoritarian China, or may upset the “status quo” seemingly preferred by the US, which serves as Taiwan’s protector against Beijing.

We are confident that dropping “Republic of China” or replacing it with “ROC,” but retaining the Chinese characters would not alter the “status quo” and therefore should not elicit an adverse response from the US. However, China being China would respond as usual with a spike of belligerent rhetoric before the spike subsides in a matter of days, as has happened countless times.

#### **(6b) Passport, CAL changes cannot wait**

Although news reports have been dominated by lawmakers’ scheduled review of the qualifications of Control Yuan member nominees and an ensuing vote at the Legislative Yuan

this week, two more important issues await their consideration during the extraordinary session: changing the cover of the nation's passport and adding "Taiwan" motifs to the fuselages of China Airlines (CAL) aircraft.

The motions for the changes have an interesting parallel with the nation's previous efforts to update the cover of the passport by adding the word "Taiwan" in 2003, in that they were both prompted by a pandemic originating in China — SARS in 2003 and COVID-19 this year.

In both cases, the proposals reflect the desire of Taiwanese to be distinguished from Chinese, as anti-China sentiment swelled worldwide amid the outbreaks.

That desire was bolstered after photographs emerged showing batches of masks Taiwan had shipped overseas wrapped in banners reading "China Airlines," leading to the misunderstanding that they were sent by Beijing, defeating the purpose of Taiwan's so-called "pandemic diplomacy."

While opposition parties have said that they are open to discussing the issues, problems and challenges loom over the proposals.

The Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) proposal regarding the passport cover states that the word "Taiwan" should be featured on the cover using the Latin alphabet and Chinese.

However, as the administration of former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) in 2003 had already added the word "Taiwan" to the cover, the DPP's proposal would only serve to add the Chinese characters, which would not be much help when it comes to distinguishing the nation from China in the international arena, as most of the world's population cannot read Chinese.

There is also the question of whether the Chinese Nationalist Party's (KMT) emblem, featured prominently on the cover, should be removed almost three decades after the KMT's party-state rule ended with the dissolution of the National Assembly.

If the DPP, which has a legislative majority, does not want to be so bold as to abolish the current version of the passport, it should at least design a new cover — one that features "Taiwan," complete with Chinese characters and a symbol that represents the nation.

This would put the issue of passport "name rectification" to bed, and the government can decide in a few years how it would go from there by gauging public opinion.

The same goes for highlighting "Taiwan" on China Airlines aircraft. To make for a meaningful change, the words "China Airlines" should be removed, and Taiwanese motifs should be introduced in their place.

Lawmakers should consider the potential fallout and work out a long-term solution that ensures the nation's air rights after the words "China Airlines" are removed from the airplanes. Former

China Airlines pilot Chen Hsiang-lin (陳祥麟) in an op-ed published in May by the Chinese-language news site The Reporter warned of the consequences of such a move.

In September 2003, to coincide with the new design of the passport cover, the Chen Shui-bian administration painted the words “Taiwan — Touch Your Heart” on the fuselage of a China Airlines airplane.

The plane was scheduled to make its maiden flight to Japan, but due to political pressure from Beijing, several airports around the world removed the aircraft’s tail number from their flight registration data, essentially denying it permission to land, Chen Hsiang-lin said, adding that the plane never left the hangar before China Airlines repainted its fuselage back to its standard decoration.