

‘Taiwanese’ identity hits record level

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The number of people who refer to themselves as “Taiwanese,” as well as those who support Taiwanese independence, have hit historic highs, according to a survey by National Chengchi University.

The university’s Election Study Center poll showed that 60.6 percent of respondents regard themselves as Taiwanese, while 23.9 percent support Taiwanese independence.

The poll was part of a study that has been ongoing since 1992 on political attitudes, including on the unification-independence issue, national identity and political party preference.

The latest figures, a collation of results gathered last month, showed that the number of people self-identifying as Taiwanese has skyrocketed from 17.6 percent in 1992.

The results also showed a record-low of 32.5 percent of respondents who identified themselves as both Taiwanese and Chinese, down from 47.7 percent in 2004, while 3.5 percent said they consider themselves to be Chinese, down from 26.2 percent in 1994.

The results over the years show a continual upward trend in the number of people self-identifying as Taiwanese, with a major hike to 34 percent in 1996 when the first direct presidential election took place and a mark of more than 40 percent after the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government took office in 2000.

The figure soared to 50 percent in 2009 and to 60 percent last year amid extensive exchanges between Taiwan and China following the Chinese Nationalist Party’s (KMT) return to power in 2008.

Meanwhile, the number of respondents identifying themselves as Chinese was more than 20 percent in 1992; was first exceeded by the number who self-identified as Taiwanese in 1995; fell to less than 10 percent during the DPP administration from 2000 and 2008; and dropped to less than 5 percent after the KMT returned to power in 2008, the center said.

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The latest survey showed that 18 percent of respondents said they would like to see the “status quo” maintained in cross-strait relations, while 5.9 percent said they would prefer an immediate declaration of independence. Both numbers represent a small increase from levels seen two years ago.

The survey showed that respondents supporting unification with China dropped to 9.2 percent, down 1.9 percentage points from last year.

Support for the DPP reached 26.7 percent at the end of last year, more than the 26 percent support the party garnered in 2000 when former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) was in office, while support for the KMT was 22.9 percent, a low not seen since 2004.

DPP Legislator Lee Chun-yi (李俊洋) said the survey shows that China’s hostility is driving Taiwanese away, as Beijing has never ceased suppressing the nation, despite the administration of President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) being accommodating toward Beijing.

The Ma administration should stop making policies that cater to Beijing’s needs, Lee said.

While support has risen for the DPP and dropped for the KMT, 45 percent of respondents said they are neutral or indifferent in terms of party preference, Lee said, adding that the results indicate a lack of trust in any parties by the public.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2015/01/26](#)