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## **Politicized to Mobilize? A Longitudinal Study of First-Time Voters' Voting Intentions in Taiwan, 2004-2016**

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# Politicized to Mobilize? A Longitudinal Study of First-Time Voters' Voting Intentions in Taiwan, 2004-2016\*

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## Abstract

Much has been made about the “coming of age” of many Taiwanese young and new voters as an important factor contributing to the gratifying electoral result of the DPP and its pan-Green allies. The Taiwanese case, then, may be considered an aberration as the increased political activism among the younger Taiwanese voters stands in some contrast to the supposed apathy of their counterparts in the Western world. Indeed, this particular generation of young Taiwanese voters may have been “politicized” so much so that they are also easily “mobilized.” In this paper, we examine whether Taiwanese new voters are indeed politicized and whether their politicization translates to voting intentions. Using longitudinal TEDS surveys to detect common patterns of first-time voters’ voting behavior, preliminary results from our multivariate analysis indicate that first-time voters are not different

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\* Data used in this article are from Taiwan’s Election and Democratization Studies presidential election surveys for 2004 (TEDS2004P), 2008 (TEDS2008P), 2012 (TEDS2012), and 2016 (TEDS2016). The coordinator of multi-year project TEDS is Professor Chi Huang (National Chengchi University). More information is on the TEDS website (<http://www.tedsnet.org>). We, the authors, express our gratitude to the Election Study Center of the National Chengchi University, the TEDS project for providing the data. The authors are solely responsible for views expressed herein.

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in likelihood of participating in voting compared to other voters. The subtle difference, however, resides on the viable options with which these young cohorts can identify. This can be part of the reason they are more supportive of the new parties than merely the traditional parties.

Keywords: young voters, participation, voting behavior, mobilization, first-time voters

## I. Introduction

The year 2016 will long be remembered as a watershed year in the history of Taiwan's political and democratic development. The presidential and legislative elections of January 2016 led to another transition of government in Taiwan's young but robust democracy. This transition is marked by the turnover of both the executive and legislative branches of government to the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Although the Executive Yuan has witnessed party turnovers in 2000 and in 2008, the Legislative Yuan is experiencing a first true handover of majority status from the Kuomintang (KMT) to the DPP. Political observers and pundits have sought to explain the reasons for the DPP's landslide victory – by the unpopularity of the Ma administration, the poor state of the economy, overly cozy China relations, and the fall-out of the Sunflower Movement in early 2014.

Indeed, much has been made about the “coming of age” of many Taiwanese young and new voters as an important factor contributing to the gratifying electoral result of the DPP and its pan-Green allies. Horwitz (2016) suggested that the so-called “Sunflower Power” has propelled a new generation of voters that “is changing Taiwan's stodgy politics.” Horwitz quotes Nathan Batto that “this generation of young people has been very politicized.” This contrasts greatly with most of the advanced industrial democracies, where low levels of political participation and political apathy reign among the youth and young voters (Donald 2010; Kimberlee 2002; Norris 2003; Queniart 2008; Sheerin 2007). The Taiwanese case, then, may be considered an aberration as the increased political activism among the younger Taiwanese voters stands in some contrast to the supposed apathy of their counterparts in the Western world. Indeed, this particular generation of young Taiwanese voters may have been “politicized” so much so that they are also easily “mobilized.”

But what do we mean when we say that someone is “politicized”? The Oxford dictionary defines the verb “politicize” as to make someone politically aware and/or to engage in or talk about politics. So extending this definition to our interest at hand, we would expect that “politicized” Taiwanese new and young voters should become more politically aware, more engaged in politics, and more likely to talk about politics. Pushing this inference much further, voluminous extant studies of political behavior and political participation remind us of the correlation between voting and political participation, that is, that those who are politically aware and politically interested are more likely to participate and vote. In this paper, we examine

whether Taiwanese new voters are indeed politicized and whether their politicization translates to voting intentions.

## II. Literature Review

Young voters are not considered a group who votes enthusiastically in comparison to other age groups. Nonetheless, despite a relatively low participation rate – at least in voting – amongst the young voters, journalists and academics across numerous advanced industrial democracies have noted an observed decline in young people voting at general elections over time. In the hope of stemming the decline of voter turnout, many countries have launched citizenship and voter education drives tacitly implying that non-voting and non-participation are consequences of low levels of political knowledge, awareness, and interest. Despite these efforts, voting as the most common form of political participation has not notably increased in the established democracies. Dalton (1988), however, notes that there have been substantial changes in Western society that would have contributed to increasing political sophistication of Western publics leading to higher level of participation. Amongst these changes are a higher level of education, the development of mass media and information and communication technologies and the politicization of society amongst others. All these, according to Dalton (1988), would contribute to a cognitively mobilized public and therefore lead to higher level of participation.

The puzzle remains then: Why do young people not vote? Why do they have low levels of political participation? Kimberlee (2002) in his review essay provides an excellent inventory of varying perspectives in explaining youth non-participation. He groups these explanations into four approaches – the youth focused, politics focused, alternative values, and generational explanation. Youth focused explanations assume that the low level of participation of young voters can be located in each individual young person. The lifecycle effect and political apathy can be included in the so-called youth focused explanations. Lifecycle theories hypothesize that young voters' low uptake of political participation and/or voting is a consequence their life stage being more mobile and less settled. Political apathy explanations, on the other hand, suggest that the youth's non-caring attitude extends to the political arena such that it often leaves them alienated, uninformed, and disinterested in things political.

More politics-focused explanations suggest that the non-participation of the young is not necessarily a result of their life stage nor being politically apathetic but instead place the blame

squarely on the failure of existing institutions, e.g., political parties, in making politics more appealing to young citizens. There is some support for this perspective as studies have shown that young people are not necessarily less politically efficacious or apathetic. Instead there is some evidence young voters are shunning voting or joining political parties as way to participate politically because many young people do not believe they offer much (Dalton 1988; Donald 2010; Norris 2003; Sheerin 2007).

The alternative values explanations of non-participation of young people suggest that young people have different values and interests from the old and are more attracted to “new” politics issues and progressive causes. This may lead to the young being more attracted to single-issue groups or post-materialists type political organizations. The generational explanations of young people’s non-participation tend to suggest that there are experiences unique to this generation of young people that are discouraging them from the participating in politics. In particular, the socio-economic transformation resulting from rapid technological and other societal changes (such as changes in family structure, weakening of traditional values etc.) have impacted upon the way young people experience their formative years leading to adulthood.

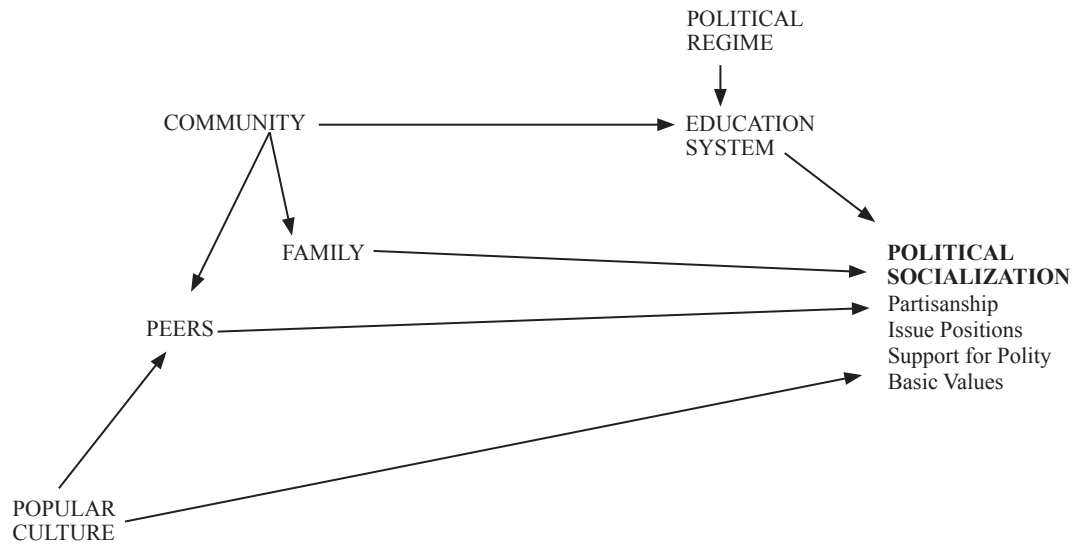
The above views are largely in line with Dalton (1988)’s observation that Western publics are more cognitively mobilized, more elite-challenging rather than elite-following, and prefer communal activities than more conventional forms of political participation such as voting. Norris (2003, 1) concurs with this observation suggesting that, at least amongst young people, political activism is slowly evolving from the “politics of loyalties” to the “politics of choice.” This evolution, if true, has obvious implications to the form, style, and shape of how young people engages in politics.

All these perspectives provide us a glimpse of why young people tend to have a lower level of political participation and voting. Can these perspectives help us understand the political participation and behavior of young Taiwanese voters? According to Horwitz (2016, 1), “Taiwan’s under-40s have embraced political activism over the past four years more than anytime in the past decade.” In line with the politics focused and generational perspectives, the events of the past four years and the Sunflower Movement of 2014 in particular could well have been a catalyst in priming and politicizing Taiwanese young voters. This leads us to ask the obvious questions: Are Taiwanese young people politicized? Are they more likely to vote in 2016 than in prior elections? Have they been politicized and mobilized in the 2016 presidential and legislative election to make a difference? What is their impact as a group in the 2016

election? These are some of the questions that we will examine in our paper.

### III. Political Socialization: A Model

Conventionally, political socialization connotes the processes by which the young in a society learn about politics and government, although it is also recognized that adult socialization occurs to some extent, especially following traumatic events. The content of political socialization includes party affiliation, position of the major issues of the day, support for the governmental system, and basic values concerning democracy, the rule of law, freedom of speech, and minority rights. Three actors have generally been viewed as the major sources of these attitudes and values: the family, the education system, and peers, usually in that order. More indirectly, the political regime and the local community also affect political socialization; and, especially with the development of social media, popular culture can contribute to political socialization too. Figure 1 summarizes how these factors fit together. In this model, family, the education system, peers, and popular culture are assumed to have a direct impact on political socializations. More indirectly, peers' attitudes and values might be influenced by community norms and the popular youth culture; and both the policies of the political regime and community norms could shape the educational system. In addition, the role of the political regime in political socialization will probably be much greater in authoritarian governments than democratic ones (Dawson and Prewitt 1969; Gimpel, Lay, and Schuknecht 2000; Greenberg 2009; Jackson 2009; Renshon 1977). Finally, the normal pattern in democracies is for young people to have comparatively low rates of political participation (Bhatti and Hansen 2012a; 2012b).



Source: Authors' own model.

Figure 1 Agents of Political Socialization

The political regime in Taiwan has tried to shape political socialization, not just in the authoritarian era before the 1990s but following its democratic transition as well, perhaps because the DPP and KMT have been quite reluctant to view the other as legitimate. During the KMT's one-party hegemony, the Kuomintang emphasized the Chinese nature of Taiwan; during Chen Shui-bian's administration (2000-2009), he moved to de-Sinify education and culture in Taiwan; and President Ma Ying-jeou (2009-2016) sought to re-Sinify Taiwan, including a controversial reform in the school curriculum. There also is a pronounced difference in community partisanship with the north being more pro-KMT and the south being more pro-DPP. In urban areas at least, nuclear families are replacing extended families as the focus of family life. Finally, the nation has a vibrant popular and youth culture that has almost certainly increased the importance of peers in political socialization considerably. The current political environment in Taiwan also is affecting the partisanship of young citizens by increasing their alienation from the KMT. Key events here include the repressive response of the Ma regime to the 2014 Sunflower Movement, student opposition to KMT attempts to mandate a pro-China curriculum, the death of a young soldier under controversial circumstances, and widespread perceptions that the Ma administration cared little for the poor or the young whose bleak job prospects has led them to be called "Taiwan's lost generation." Moreover, shortly before the election a Taiwanese member of a South Korean band was forced to apologize after she appeared on a variety show



with the ROC flag, which aroused substantial indignation in Taiwan (Chen 2017; Clark, Ho, and Tan 2016; Clark and Tan 2012; Copper 2016; Fell 2012; Hsieh 2016; Lee 2005).

## IV. Design of the study

First-time voters can be of any age as eligibility of voting can come in any stage of life. Examples include immigrants being granted voting rights after naturalization or citizens decide to exercise civic duties in a later age. We however concentrate on studying the young and newly eligible voters because they represent the cohort lined up to become the newest part of the electorate. These voters are in similar stages of the life cycle. They witness contemporary political and social events during the crucial years between adolescence and adulthood. As these young adults enter the voting age of 20, they are faced with political choices of parties, policy positions and the obvious one of whether turning out to vote.

We employ the Taiwan Election and Democratization Study (TEDS) data to examine this special group of Taiwanese voters. To focus on the group of first-time voters being eligible for the first-time to vote in current election, we confine the voters between 20 and 24 years old who were ineligible to vote in previous presidential election.<sup>1</sup> In other words, we exclude those who become eligible voters for other reasons than coming of voting age (20) or who could have participated in other local elections. To make comparison with high consistency, we focus on the most salient presidential elections, which not only attract most attention but also provide a higher sense of political participation than in sub-national elections.<sup>2</sup> According to the Statistical Bureau, the population in this age group is about 1.6 million.<sup>3</sup> The Central Election Commission however does not provide age information on the voting data. For political awareness and political interest, we use the political discussion variable, or how often one talk about politics or elections with other people, for operationalization of these two concepts.<sup>4</sup> We count on survey

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<sup>1</sup> Following Bhatti and Hansen (2012a, 264) who focus on highly salient elections, we investigate the presidential elections that usually attract most attention and thus higher turnout instead of other local elections which could likely result in a negative period effect.

<sup>2</sup> We follow the convention of other studies in focusing on most salient elections (Bhatti and Hansen 2012a; 2012b).

<sup>3</sup> <http://ebas1.ebas.gov.tw/phc2010/english/rehome.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Another survey question also asks political interest: "How interested would you say you are in politics?" However, this question is only available in 2016 TEDS survey.

data to approximate the profile of first-time voters on whether and how they vote, taking into account the above described political socialization model. For comparison purposes, we adopt the four presidential election survey data including 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2016 to study the voting intentions of Taiwan voters.<sup>5</sup>

## V. Analysis

Are the first-time voters less likely to show up at the ballot booth? Developmental theory suggests that young adults' own personal achievement and status change are determining factors for voting as compared to other older cohorts (Plutzer 2002). For instance, the latter groups are less likely to experience relocations due to job or academic advancement (Bhatti and Hansen 2012b). First-time voters may vary in points of life stages when entering the state of habitual voting. In other words, they may be equally willing to vote, but life cycle events or higher opportunity costs, such as an early stage of career development, may prevent this cohort from achieving the high participation rate of habitual voters.

In the context of Taiwan, the decline in voting turnout is a general phenomenon across all age groups in particular the younger ones (see Table 1). From 2004 to 2016, the actual turnout rate declined from over 80 percent to 66.27 percent. In a similar trend, the first-time voter cohort reported lower participation rate compared to the other voters in the electorate with the exception of 2008 (see Vote column in Table 1). Closer examination to the partisanship data in that year indicates that these young voters had high expectations on the Kuomintang (KMT) or the then opposition candidate Ma Ying-jeou. This could be attributed to the greater disappointment with the incumbent Chen administration among the young people. Four years later, when the overall turnout rate basically remained flat, the young voters went back to the norm and were more likely to be absent than other voters. They recorded the lowest rate of voting intention in history as compared to other voters despite their support for the government remained unaltered. Noteworthy is the observation that ratio between young and old supporters of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) have been stable over all elections. In other words, the DPP did not experience a surge in the proportion of first-time voters like the KMT did in 2008 even though young voters increased in numbers, a parallel to other voters. This could be explained by the general dissatisfaction with the government performance in 2016. The election of 2016, however,

<sup>5</sup> The 2000 election was not considered due to the lack of TEDS data.

is very different from previous elections in many other aspects. A general dealignment in voting turnout and KMT support redefined the political landscape in what some scholars identified as a partisan realignment (Chen and Liao 2016; Clark, Ho, and Tan 2016; Hsieh 2016). The DPP landslide victory demonstrated a high general disapproval of the KMT government, but the first-time voters were not more highly mobilized compared to other voters. Their voting intention was statistically lower, like in previous elections. In terms of party support, DPP enjoyed similar support across all age groups and KMT suffered big loss in popularity especially among the young voters. The record low proportion of young supporters provides strong evidence of general distaste for the long time governing party. In fact, while the DPP support remained structurally unchanged, the rise of the New Power Party (NPP) is noticeable given its strong appeal to first-time voters. This group was very much more likely to support NPP than older voters. The fact that three out of four NPP voters are young citizens suggests the new party will enjoy a more advantageous position compared to other small parties provided that the young cohorts continue to commit to participating in future elections.

Are first-time voters more interested in politics or more politically aware? Interestingly, according to our survey data, this group of voters were more interested or engaged in talking about politics or elections in 2016 but they do so as much as other voters in different age groups (see Figure 2).<sup>6</sup> This could be explained by general attention to the political events such as the Sunflower Movement and trade pacts with China.

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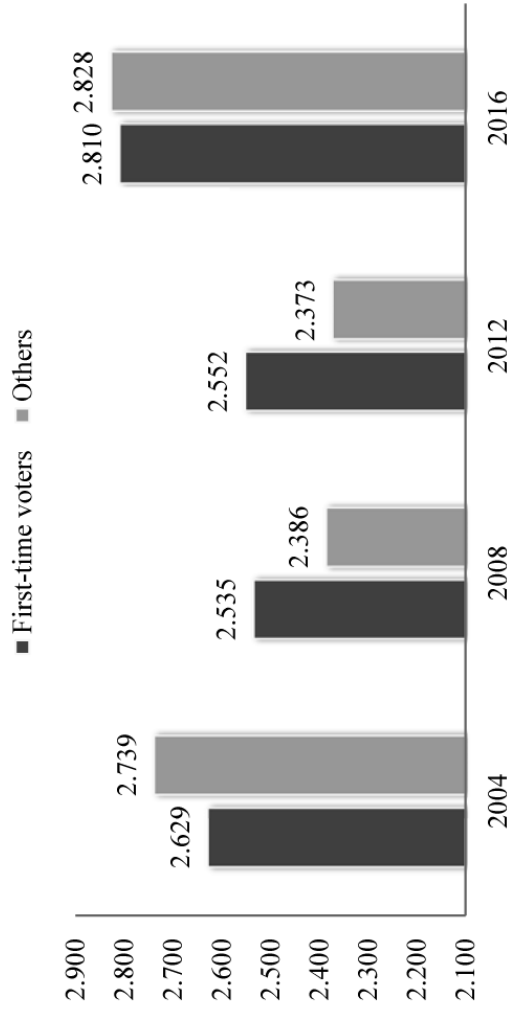
<sup>6</sup> In the political discussion question, the respondents choose from 1 (never) to 5 (often) when answering how often he or she talk about politics or election with other people. A score is created with a range of 1 to 5.

Table 1 First-Time Voters' Voting Intentions and Partisanship in Taiwan, 2004 to 2016

Year	Actual Count	N	Vote		KMT		DPP		FPF		NPP		
			First-time voters	Others	First-time voters	Others	First-time voters	Others	First-time voters	Others	First-time voters	Others	
2004	80.28%	113	1,823	84.07%	90.96% <sup>***</sup>	19.48%	20.86%	34.69%	28.27%	7.79%	8.75%	-	-
2008	76.33%	130	1,905	83.83%	87.99%	42.58%	34.63% <sup>**</sup>	22.70%	28.18%	1.70%	0.93%	-	-
2012	77.88%	105	1,826	69.52%	90.41% <sup>***</sup>	41.90%	39.63%	30.48%	28.18%	1.90%	1.00%	-	-
2016	66.27%	121	1,690	74.38%	86.55% <sup>***</sup>	15.70%	23.52% <sup>**</sup>	39.67%	34.61%	1.65%	1.91%	6.61%	2.23% <sup>***</sup>

Source: TEDS2004P, TEDS2008P, TEDS2012, TEDS2016 and authors' own calculations.

Note: Proportion Tests (First-time voters vs. Others): \*  $p < .10$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$ .



Source: TEDS2004P, TEDS2008P, TEDS2012, TEDS2016 and authors' own calculation.

Figure 2 Political Interest of First-Time Voters, 2004-2016 (Do You Commonly/Usually Talk about Politics or Elections with Other People?)

In next stage of the analysis, we investigate the first-time voters' impact on general voting intention controlling the partisanship, socialization, and political awareness variables. Table 2 presents logistic regression models of voting intentions from 2004 to 2016. The dependent variable is self-reported voting intention. Comparing first-time voters with other more experienced voters, the former group is generally less likely to turn out to vote (see columns (A)).<sup>7</sup> When the age variable is included, the first-time voter variable has no effect on turnout as age is the stronger predictor in explaining the turnout variance. The consistently positive sign indicates that as voters enter middle age they more likely to grow in habitual voting (see models (B)). In the second series of the models (B), the age variables demonstrate a more subtle curvilinear process, indicating the turnout rate gradually declines among older voters. The other groups of predictors – political parties – are also main drivers for turnout. Supporting either of the major parties, the KMT or DPP, produces a stronger intention to cast a ballot. Another strong predictor is political socialization, which is one of the main mobilizing factors for voting. The more communications on elections and politics a citizen receives, the more likely the respondent will be to turn out to vote.

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<sup>7</sup> Age is a confounding factor with first-time voting. By definition, the first-time voter is the youngest group of all voters. As one reviewer remarks, including first-time voter variable and age variable(s) in the same model will result in over-specification. To address this problem, we present two specifications to illustrate that first-time voting is subsumed under the age effect.

Table 2 Logistic Regression Models: Voting Intentions in Taiwan Elections, 2004-2016

Voting Intentions	2004		2008		2012		2016	
	(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)
<b>First-time Voters</b>								
	-0.668*	0.0358	-0.349	0.271	-1.281***	0.105	-0.659**	0.322
	(0.291)	(0.337)	(0.267)	(0.307)	(0.252)	(0.304)	(0.242)	(0.310)
<b>Party Support</b>								
<b>KMT</b>								
	1.303***	1.187***	1.047***	1.026***	0.912***	0.853***	0.607**	0.504**
	(0.274)	(0.276)	(0.192)	(0.193)	(0.198)	(0.203)	(0.190)	(0.193)
<b>DPP</b>								
	0.837***	0.889***	0.404*	0.442*	0.808***	0.812***	0.979***	0.952***
	(0.228)	(0.230)	(0.181)	(0.181)	(0.211)	(0.216)	(0.195)	(0.196)
<b>PFP</b>								
	0.917**	0.848*	0.524	0.436	0.154	0.12	1.624*	1.631*
	(0.348)	(0.349)	(0.739)	(0.744)	(0.661)	(0.691)	(0.747)	(0.749)
<b>NPP</b>								
	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.271	0.374
							(0.450)	(0.450)
<b>Political Socialization</b>								
<b>Talk about Politics or Elections</b>								
	0.315***	0.300***	0.281***	0.283***	0.248***	0.205**	0.399***	0.368***
	(0.073)	(0.075)	(0.067)	(0.069)	(0.070)	(0.073)	(0.066)	(0.068)
<b>Political Efficacy</b>								
	-0.0464	-0.0479	0.0543	0.0482	0.112**	0.0764*	0.0343	0.0261
	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.032)	(0.031)
<b>Political Cleavage</b>								
<b>Pro-independence</b>								
	0.623*	0.581*	0.371	0.338	0.0078	0.108	-0.07	0.0836
	(0.248)	(0.249)	(0.194)	(0.194)	(0.205)	(0.208)	(0.182)	(0.185)
<b>Pro-unification</b>								
	-0.39	-0.392	-0.0578	-0.0701	-0.0551	-0.262	-0.0017	-0.164
	(0.217)	(0.219)	(0.228)	(0.230)	(0.254)	(0.263)	(0.234)	(0.239)

Table 2 Logistic Regression Models: Voting Intentions in Taiwan Elections, 2004-2016 (continued)

Voting Intentions	2004		2008		2012		2016	
	(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)
<b>Demographics</b>								
Male	-0.234 (0.168)	-0.265 (0.170)	-0.331* (0.146)	-0.327* (0.147)	-0.412* (0.162)	-0.386* (0.166)	-0.397** (0.148)	-0.369* (0.150)
Education	-0.0562* (0.029)	0.032 (0.038)	-0.0947 (0.052)	0.066 (0.067)	-0.279*** (0.061)	0.0802 (0.083)	-0.174*** (0.050)	0.047 (0.065)
Age	-	0.0951** (0.031)	-	0.081** (0.028)	-	0.196*** (0.034)	-	0.0789* (0.031)
Age^2	-	-0.0007* (0.0003)	-	-0.0006* (0.0003)	-	-0.0015*** (0.0003)	-	-0.0004 (0.0003)
Constant	1.990*** (0.377)	-1.205 (0.909)	0.909** (0.324)	-1.872* (0.792)	1.377*** (0.370)	-4.873*** (0.942)	0.911** (0.318)	-2.534** (0.858)
Observations	1,823	1,823	1,905	1,905	1,819	1,819	1,690	1,690
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.082	0.097	0.057	0.072	0.090	0.144	0.085	0.117

Source: Authors' own calculations.

## VI. Conclusion and Discussion

In this study, we collected longitudinal data from the TEDS surveys to detect common patterns of first-time voters' voting behavior. The 2016 elections indeed saw a historic transition for the general voters and political parties alike. While the conventional wisdom suggests young voters are more apathetic, less interested and informed, and less likely to participate, we argue new empirical evidence suggests that further investigation is needed. By merely looking at the numbers, these first-time voters may be still in the stage of developing the habit to vote. Unlike the older habitual voters, they may tend to stay home if the cost of decision-making seems high. This does not mean they are apathetic about supporting political parties or taking positions on issues, however. When the NPP emerged in the 2016 elections, first-time voters were more attracted and more motivated to vote because they found the party's issue positions to be better aligned with their own interests (Chen and Liao 2016).

In the multivariate models, preliminary results indicate the first-time voters are not statistically different in voting intentions compared to other voters. The subtle difference however resides on i) the age effect and ii) the viable options with which these young cohorts can identify. Cohort analysis provides more insight into the subtlety of age effect and voting turnout among the younger voters. Like the older generations, new voters may grow in age and into more participation in voting but lower in both rates and levels. When faced with the traditional party choices and campaigns, they may feel disinterested or distanced from old issue agenda. This can be part of the reasons they are more supportive of the new parties than merely the traditional parties or the presidential candidates affiliated with old politics (Hsieh 2016). Political socialization is the determining factor on voting turnout. More dedicated efforts are in order when we need to understand the new voters more systematically. One direction of future research is to incorporate the new mode of political communication and internet-driven mobilization in studying participation and voting turnout. For example, the advent of internet and social media could lead to the substitution of the traditional electoral participation with unconventional or activist participation to influence government policies, particularly for the younger generations (see Baek 2015; Huang et al. 2017; Prior 2005; Skoric and Poor 2013).

These generations will grow and their different political and party preferences will drive further changes in the party system (realignment) and replace older party supporters in particular the pan-blue voters. The possibility that the latter group decides not to return to vote will usher in



an era of new politics as the DPP assumes ownership of the national identity issue and takes on the moderate position of maintaining the status quo. The young voters are poised to change that and will redefine the new issue space of Taiwan. They are the new players who will reshape the young democracy's future.

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# 政治化到動員？2004-2016年台灣首投族投票率的縱貫性研究

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## 《本文摘要》

近年台灣青年與新興選民的「崛起」，可視為是造成民進黨及泛綠陣營勝選的重要因素。西方國家的年輕選民多半政治冷漠，相較之下台灣的年輕選民政治積極性增高，算是一個異數。這一代台灣年輕選民，可能因為高度「政治化」，以致於更容易被「動員」。本篇文章探討：台灣新興選民是否受到「政治化」的影響，以及「政治化」是否能進而轉換為實質上的政治參與或投票行為。若以「台灣選舉與民主化調查」的縱貫性研究做為依據，探討首投族投票行為的常見模式，可以發現，首投族的投票意向與其他選民相比，並無太大的差異。他們的差異—儘管細微，取決於這些年輕人如何辨識不同的選項。這也可能是年輕人更為支持新政黨，而非傳統政黨的部分原因。

關鍵詞：年輕選民、參與、投票行為、動員、首投族