Building a National Identity Rooted in Democratic Values Among Political Leaders: Evidence from the Pro-democracy Movement in Taiwan

Miri Aoki Jun Goto*

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Abstract

Political elites, who shape the fundamental pillars of the state, are becoming increasingly divided. Some advocate democratic ideals and inclusive institutions, while others are resolutely devoted to autocratic governance. What originates these fundamentally opposed ideological commitments? This paper examines the long-term influence of early-life exposure to the pro-democracy movement on shaping collective identity and fostering a commitment to democratic governance among political elites. We focus on the 1979 Kaohsiung Incident in Taiwan—a historic event in which peaceful demonstrations turned into violent suppression. Using a triple-differences design combined with a Natural Language Processing approach, we find that legislators who were in their formative years and born in Kaohsiung at the time of the Incident more consistently suggest and support democracy-oriented legislation. Furthermore, we develop a novel method of text-based identity detection and find that these political elites internalize a "Taiwanese" national identity that is closely associated with democratic values. Our findings suggest that localized movements and shared narratives can foster a national identity that, in turn, reinforces ideological commitments, shaping policymaking and helping societies uphold democratic norms.

Keywords: national identity, democracy, text-based identity detection

*Miri Aoki: Graduate School of Frontier Sciences, The University of Tokyo, 5-1-5, Kashiwa-no-ha, Kashiwa City, Chiba 277-8561. Jun Goto, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, 7-22-1 Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-8677, Japan, ju-goto@grips.ac.jp. We thank Ryo Takahashi, Tomoaki Tanaka, and Junichi Yamasaki as well as conference and seminar participants for helpful comments and suggestions.

1 Introduction

Polarization between democratic and authoritarian governance has emerged as a critical global issue.[1] Political elites, who shape foundational regimes, are increasingly split: some advocate democratic ideals and inclusive institutions, while others prefer tighter central authority (Acemoglu et al., 2001; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006; Boix, 2011; Boix and Svolik, 2013). Recent studies suggest these opposing stances are deeply rooted in ideological commitments (Layman et al., 2006; Bermeo, 2016; Foa and Mounk, 2016; Haggard and Kaufman, 2016; Graham and Svolik, 2020). However, empirical evidence on how such distinct perspectives arise among political leaders remains limited. What drives politicians to adopt fundamentally different ideologies in the first place? Understanding origins of democratic values is vital to safeguarding democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

This paper examines how early-life exposure to a pro-democracy movement fosters a lasting commitment to democratic policies among politicians. We focus on the 1979 Kaohsiung Incident in Taiwan, one of the most significant pro-democracy movements in the post-war era. Although it began as a peaceful gathering to mark International Human Rights Day, the demonstration escalated when government forces resorted to violence. Over time, this event has become a powerful symbol of resistance against authoritarian rule and is widely seen as a turning point for Taiwan's subsequent democratization.

The literature of history, political science, and sociology argues that this historic event fostered a distinct Taiwanese national identity, separate from that of mainland China, and instilled it with democratic ideals. Building on these observations, we hypothesize that individuals who experienced the Kaohsiung Incident—especially during their formative years—strengthened their "Taiwanese" identity and closely linked it with democratic values. In turn, they view themselves as protectors of political freedom, reinforcing their dedication to democratic principles.

We construct a novel dataset comprising all bills submitted to Taiwan's Legislative Yuan (the national parliament) between 2012 and 2024. This period spans the 8th to 11th terms. We draw on the official Legislative Yuan portal, which offers detailed information on each bill, including its title, content, primary proposers, and cosponsors. We also gather additional data from publicly available legislator biographies on Wikipedia and

[1] According to Pew Research Center, although most people still reject authoritarianism, a significant minority now finds it appealing, and support for democracy has waned in some key nations. This dual trend—growing receptiveness to centralized authority alongside eroding trust in democratic institutions—intensifies today's global divide. Pew Research Center. (2024, February 28). *Attitudes toward different types of government systems.* https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2024/02/28/attitudes-toward-different-types-of-government-systems/

from official election records provided by the Central Election Commission. Our final dataset includes every legislator–bill pairing during these terms. For instance, in the 8th term alone, 3,364 bills were introduced, and there were 113 legislators serving in that term, resulting in 380,132 legislator–bill pairings. Altogether, we identify 1,523,096 legislator–bill observations in the complete dataset.

We adopt the triple differences approach to estimate the impact of early-life exposure to the pro-democracy movement on legislators' propensity to support democracy-related policies. Specifically, we leverage variation along three dimensions: (1) whether legislators were or were not in formative years (7–15 years old) when the pro-democratic movement occurred, (2) whether their birthplace or childhood residence was located inside or outside the movement region, and (3) whether a given bill is categorized as "democracy-supporting" or not. This design allows us to compare exposed legislators' behavior on democracy-related bills versus other bills, while also accounting for legislators' baseline tendencies to sponsor legislation of any kind. By incorporating all bills—both democracy-related and non-democracy-related—we can better isolate the effect of childhood exposure on subsequent support for democratic policies, mitigating confounding factors such as overall legislative activism or personal characteristics unrelated to the pro-democracy movement.

In defining the formative years for identity and ideology development, we draw on the political science literature. Political socialization theory highlights that early childhood (around 7 to 15 years old) is crucial for shaping political attitudes and identity (Greenstein, 1965; Easton and Dennis, 1969; Jennings and Niemi, 1974). Children begin forming these orientations around age seven, influenced by family, school, and broader social contexts (Hess and Torney, 1967). Early socialization experiences, including family dynamics, leave lasting imprints on beliefs about party affiliation (Block and Block, 2006; Healy and Malhotra, 2013). Taken together, this body of work indicates that the environment and experiences between roughly ages seven and fifteen play a pivotal role in shaping enduring political and social identities.

To measure how strongly a bill's text aligns with core democratic values, we employ a pre-trained Chinese BERT model to create vector representations of both the bill text and three democracy-related keywords ("democracy," "human rights," and "freedom"). After converting each keyword and the bill text into multi-dimensional embeddings, we average the keyword embeddings to produce a single "democracy-ideology" vector. We then calculate the cosine similarity between this democracy-ideology vector and the embedding of each bill. Intuitively, if a bill's text shares many semantic features with these democracy keywords, its cosine similarity score will be higher, indicating a closer align-

ment with democratic principles. In our triple-differences approach, we classify a bill as democracy-supporting if its cosine similarity to the democracy-ideology vector is greater than zero. This threshold is reasonable because a cosine similarity of zero indicates that a bill's text is orthogonal—and thus unrelated—to the democratic ideology, implying it does not reflect such values.

We find that legislators who experienced the Kaohsiung movement during their formative years consistently exhibit a higher propensity to support legislation related to democracy. Specifically, our triple-differences estimates show that being born in Kaohsiung and belonging to the cohort that was between 7 and 15 years old at the time of the Incident increases the likelihood of signing a democracy-supporting bill.

We examine the mechanisms underlying legislators' stronger support for democracy-related bills when they were exposed to a pro-democracy movement in childhood. Our main hypothesis, building on the historical literature focusing on this Incident, posits that a national identity grounded in democratic values took shape during these formative years. In particular, we argue that children in Kaohsiung at the time of the movement came to see themselves as guardians of democracy—a perspective that remained influential well into adulthood.

To test our hypothesis, we construct a speech-by-legislator dataset and develop a novel method to quantify identity formation from text data. We measure the semantic similarity between self-referential expressions (e.g., *we*, *our*, *us*, and *ours*) and Taiwan-related keywords (e.g., *Taiwan* and *Taiwanese*) to understand how legislators self-identify. For each legislator, we aggregate speeches and use a pre-trained Chinese BERT model to compute cosine similarity scores between self-referential expressions and Taiwan-related keywords. This measure quantifies the extent to which legislators associate themselves with a Taiwanese identity in political speeches.

We employ a difference-in-differences design that leverages variations in age-based and geographic exposure. By comparing legislators who are between 7 and 15 years old during the Kaohsiung Incident and born in the affected region with those who are not, we isolate the effect of early-life exposure on national identity formation. Our analysis shows that treated cohorts are more likely to associate their identity with Taiwan-related keywords than control cohorts. Moreover, we find that these self-referential expressions align with democratic values while being negatively associated with a Mainland China identity. This evidence suggests that childhood exposure to the pro-democracy movement instills a deep, enduring national identity closely linked to democratic ideals.

Further analysis examines the validity of four alternative hypotheses. First, the Re-election Hypothesis suggests that political elites who experienced the Kaohsiung Incident

during their formative years are more likely to run in their native constituencies. With local voters favoring democratic values, these politicians are incentivized to signal support for democracy to secure re-election—even if it does not reflect their true preferences. Second, the Partisanship Hypothesis suggests that these legislators could simply be more inclined to join the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and thereby reflect the party's pro-democracy platform rather than their own individual preferences. A related concern is that legislators who narrowly won in the previous election might propose democracy-supportive bills to attract voters from the Kaohsiung region, irrespective of their personal ideology. Third, the Education-in-Schools Hypothesis posits that teachers who were influenced by the Kaohsiung Incident informally transmitted democratic values to students in Kaohsiung schools. Finally, the Selection Hypothesis proposes that the observed result might arise because the pro-democracy movement preferentially selects future legislators who already endorse democratic principles. If so, legislators from Kaohsiung would differ systematically in key pretreatment characteristics.

Returning back to a complete bill-legislator pair dataset and the triple differences approach identical to the main analysis, we find no evidence supporting these alternative hypotheses: childhood exposure to the Kaohsiung Incident has enduring effects on democracy supportiveness, independent of re-election incentives, party alignment, schooling experience, or selective entry into politics. The evidence consistently points to a national identity formation as the principal mechanism. The Kaohsiung movement appears to have cultivated a deep and enduring link between a national identity and democratic ideals among children who witnessed it.

Contribution to the Literature We contribute to the three strands of the literature. First, the rich literature examines the impact of personal experiences on long-term economic, political, and social preferences.[2] However, little evidence exists on the origins

[2] A substantial body of research shows that personal experiences—whether economic, political, or social—can shape not only core socio-economic attitudes and preferences (such as risk tolerance and social trust) but also political preferences in ways that persist into adulthood. Accumulated evidence demonstrates the influence of natural disasters or conflict (Voors et al., 2012; Hanaoka et al., 2018), financial market exposure (Malmendier and Nagel, 2011; Koudijs and Voth, 2016; Malmendier and Nagel, 2016), and professional responsibilities among CEOs (Malmendier et al., 2011; Schoar and Zuo, 2017; Marquis and Qiao, 2020), policymakers (Malmendier et al., 2021), public officials (Chen et al., 2024; Guo et al., 2024), judicial officers (Bharti and Roy, 2023), and politicians (Carreri and Teso, 2023). Further, formative experiences in adolescence—including parental political engagement (Jennings et al., 2009; Ojeda, 2018), civic-focused educational environments (Campbell, 2006; Becker and Woessmann, 2009; Persson, 2015; Cantoni et al., 2017), exposure to significant political events (Sears and Valentino, 1997; Finkel, 2002; Erikson and Stoker, 2011; Beber et al., 2014; Blattman, 2009), and living under particular political regimes (Alesina and Fuchs-Schündeln, 2007)—can strongly shape individuals' long-term political attitudes and ideologies (Alesina and Fuchs-Schündeln, 2007; Madestam and Yanagizawa-Drott, 2012).

of democratic values, particularly among political elites. Moreover, our understanding of how early-life exposure to resistance against authoritarianism shapes the formation of a unified national identity remains limited. Our paper extends this literature by providing the first evidence that exposure to a pro-democracy movement during formative years shapes a national identity among political elites, which in turn fosters a sustained democratic commitment that informs their legislative decisions

Second, another strand of the literature demonstrates that collective experiences forge individuals' regional, national, or other shared identities.[3] The literature underscores how institutions and narratives shape, reinforce, and potentially sustain shifts in identity, yet questions remain about the social and political consequences of these changes and their varying impacts across different segments of the population. Building on this work, we show that collective experiences can foster a national identity among political elites, positioned as a vanguard of democracy, which in turn drives policy formation at the national level. Our findings are distinctive in demonstrating that a national identity can influence not only political ideology but also the actual policies enacted.

Finally, we advance the literature on identity in economics and the social sciences (Akerlof and Kranton, 2000; Shayo, 2020) by introducing a novel text-based method for detecting identity formation. Over the past decade, researchers have employed a range of empirical techniques—from field and laboratory experiments to questionnaire-based analyses, survey experiments, and list experiments—to demonstrate how social identities (such as religious, professional, gender, and partisan affiliations) shape behavior and attitudes. More recently, natural language processing methods (e.g., topic modeling, classification, and sentiment analysis) have enriched this body of work by analyzing textual data (Gentzkow et al., 2019a; Ash and Hansen, 2023).[4]

[3]Recent empirical research in economics and political science underscores how collective experiences—whether threatening, oppressive, or celebratory—can forge stronger regional, national, or supranational identities by influencing how individuals perceive themselves vis-à-vis out-groups. External threats, as shown by Gehring (2022), can galvanize support for broader entities like the European Union, enhancing trust and shared policies in a "rally around the flag" manner. Negative historical exposures, documented by Dehdari and Gehring (2022), can bind communities around regional identities and local governance mechanisms, highlighting how conflict often unites people at one level in opposition to another. Meanwhile, Depetris-Chauvin et al. (2020) demonstrate the potent effect of positive celebrations—such as national sports victories—in reducing ethnic divisions and building a sense of national solidarity.

[4]Recent studies employing text-based NLP and machine learning techniques have shed light on how identity is captured and measured across various domains in economics and the social sciences. For instance, Vishwanath (2024) demonstrates that U.S. legislators strategically invoke racial identities—with White lawmakers referencing minority groups in response to demographics while legislators of color delve deeper into racial topics—while Hopkins et al. (2024) documents a rise in identity-focused media coverage on Twitter, where posts rich in identity cues generate higher audience engagement. Gentzkow et al. (2019b) tracks the evolution of partisan identity through increasingly distinctive linguistic markers over time, and Ash et al. (2024) captures nuanced expressions of gender attitudes in judicial texts from

Most text-based studies focus on the relative salience of well-defined social groups (e.g., gender, religion, ethnicity, race) or ideologically opposing stances (e.g., political ideologies). This focus allows researchers to infer which group identity individuals emphasize relative to others. However, this comparative approach becomes problematic when dealing with social groups whose boundaries are ambiguous, non-exclusive, or non-adversarial. For example, while national identity can sometimes be analyzed in contrast with ethnic identity, it is much harder to determine whether people prioritize national identity when they belong to multiple, layered social groups simultaneously—especially when prioritizing one group does not contradict prioritizing others (e.g., village, district, province, national, and global). Consider a case where an individual identifies both with Taiwan and, in a broad sense, with China. Existing methods struggle to capture such multifaceted self-identification because they fail to contrast the relative salience of one social group over another when these categories overlap and their ideologies do not necessarily contradict each other.

To address these limitations, we develop an innovative approach that directly examines the semantic patterns of self-referential language—specifically, the use of pronouns like "I" and "we" —in text data. This method captures an individual's self-identity by revealing the social groups their language aligns with, even when group boundaries are fluid and overlapping. Rather than placing texts into a dimension involving well-defined and mutually exclusive categories, our approach provides a direct measure of the extent to which individuals associate themselves with national identity. This enables us to precisely discern the social groups that individuals internalize as part of their self-identity—even when group boundaries are ambiguous and overlapping.

2 Context

2.1 The Pro-Democracy Movement: The Kaohsiung Incident

In this subsection, we discuss Taiwan's historical context after World War II, with a particular focus on the origins and escalation of the 1979 Kaohsiung Incident. We also explain why this localized pro-democracy movement serves as a natural experiment in our estimation strategy. Specifically, we show that individuals who grew up in Kaohsiung

U.S. circuit courts. Similarly, Adukia et al. (2023) analyze character representation in children's literature to measure persistent identity inequalities, and Voigt et al. (2017) quantifies identity in police-public interactions by showing that officers use less respectful language with Black drivers. Collectively, these studies illustrate diverse methodologies for measuring identity, underscoring the transformative role of computational text analysis in understanding social identity dynamics.

during the incident were directly exposed to the emergence of democratic ideals and the ensuing authoritarian repression.

Background and Rise of Pro-Democratic Sentiment. Following the Second World War, Taiwan came under the rule of the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang, KMT) (Kerr, 1965). The KMT declared martial law in 1949, initiating nearly four decades of authoritarian governance often referred to as the "White Terror" era.[5] During this period, political and civil liberties were severely restricted, and many who opposed the regime were detained or even executed (Copper, 2012). By the late 1970s, however, rapid economic growth had fostered an emerging middle class, which began advocating for political reforms and broader civil liberties (Wachman, 1994). Alongside these sociopolitical shifts, a wave of *Tangwai* (outside-the-party) magazines—such as *Taiwan Political Review*, *Chinatide*, and later *Formosa*—provided an alternative platform for political discussion outside of KMT control. Although these publications often circulated underground or in limited print runs, they played a key role in uniting pro-democracy activists (Rigger, 2001).

The Kaohsiung Incident. On December 10, 1979—International Human Rights Day—members associated with *Meilidao* (Formosa Magazine) organized a political demonstration in Kaohsiung without obtaining official approval (Chao and Myers, 1998; Jacobs, 2012). The rally started on a relatively small scale, but tensions quickly escalated when police intervened, sparking widespread clashes that reportedly swelled participation to around 100,000 people by nightfall (Roy, 2003). Although few attendees anticipated its future historical significance, this event—commonly referred to as the Kaohsiung (or Formosa) Incident—proved to be a turning point in Taiwan's path to democratization (Jacobs, 2012; Copper, 2012). Hundreds of protestors, including the *Formosa* leadership, were arrested (Copper, 2012). Several of those indicted later formed or led the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), fueling the push for systemic political change (Rigger, 2001).

2.2 Evolution of Taiwanese Identity

During the Kaohsiung Incident, local residents directly witnessed state-led repression and citizens' protests against the authoritarian regime. Eventually, the event came to be

[5] According to Roy (2003), this term stems from the widespread climate of fear, including secret police surveillance, forced disappearances, and infiltration of educational institutions to monitor perceived dissidents. For instance, the Taiwan Garrison Command played a pivotal role in suppressing political expression by detaining activists without due process (Roy, 2003).

recognized as a symbolic foundation for protecting human rights and political freedom (Chao and Myers, 1998; Jacobs, 2012). However, this kind of identity formation did not spread to other regions due to severe media control and government censorship. For instance, Roy (2003) states that those outside Kaohsiung depended on official media, which often depicted demonstrators negatively. Consequently, only Kaohsiung natives developed a distinctive political awareness rooted in firsthand encounters with both fear and hope, whereas people in other regions—lacking this immediate exposure—were less likely to internalize similar pro-democratic sentiments (Rigger, 2001; Wachman, 1994). Over time, these locally shared narratives not only signified a collective stand against authoritarianism but also helped solidify a uniquely Taiwanese identity—one inherently tied to democratic aspirations and distinct from mainland China (Wachman, 1994; Tien, 1989).

Some research consistently supports such identity formation in locally affected areas. Rigger (2001) notes that Kaohsiung's forceful confrontation with the regime and subsequent leadership in reform efforts elevated the city's citizens to a vanguard position in Taiwan's democratization. Thus, the incident's lasting legacy nurtured a heightened civic consciousness: local residents developed a Taiwanese identity centered on defending political freedoms and resisting repression (Chao and Myers, 1998; Jacobs, 2012). Annual commemorations and public recollections continue to reinforce Kaohsiung's historic role, perpetuating a self-perception among its populace as guardians of democratic values.

Taken together, these historical studies affirm that the Kaohsiung Incident shaped not only Taiwan's democratic trajectory but also a deeply rooted sense of national identity for those who directly observed the event.[6]

2.3 Legislative Procedures and Bill Submissions in Taiwan

Overview of Bill Proposals and Cosponsorship Taiwan's Legislative Yuan allows bills to be introduced by the Executive Yuan, Judicial Yuan, Examination Yuan, Control Yuan, and by legislators themselves. In practice, most bills are proposed either by government ministries or by legislators. For a legislator to serve as a *proposer*, they must prepare the draft text of the bill and gather the signatures of at least fifteen other leg-

[6]Further examples appear in news coverage: a detailed *Taipei Times* report, "DPP Marks 40th Anniversary of Meilidao Incident" (December 9, 2019), features firsthand accounts from participants and local leaders who emphasize Kaohsiung's pivotal role. *Focus Taiwan (CNA English News)* published "Event Marks Kaohsiung Incident Anniversary, Honors Democracy Advocates" (December 10, 2021), highlighting ongoing annual observances. Similarly, *Taiwan News* ran "Kaohsiung Incident Commemorated: Catalyst for Taiwan's Democracy" (December 10, 2018), noting that many original *Meilidao* supporters still see the city as a cradle of democratic reform.

islators. Only after reaching this threshold can the proposer formally submit the bill to the legislature. These additional supporters are known as *cosigners* or *co-sponsors*, and their signatures signal collective support for the proposed policy. Because a bill cannot move forward without meeting the required number of signatures, the choice of whether to co-sign offers a clear indication of which legislators back a given proposal.

Institutional Rules for Bill Submission When a legislator decides to propose a new bill, they typically draft it with assistance from their legislative staff or party colleagues. Once the draft is ready, the proposer solicits co-signatures from fellow legislators. There is no strict upper limit on the number of co-signers; however, at least fifteen are needed to meet the minimum requirement. After securing enough support, the proposer submits the bill, along with the list of co-signers, to the Legislative Yuan. At this point, the legislature assigns the bill a unique identification number and officially registers the names of the proposer and all co-signers. This process clearly records who took the lead on drafting the bill and who chose to endorse it. Because the minimum signature rule applies to all legislators, the number of signatories can sometimes reveal broader consensus or partisan alliances.

Legislative Process Once a bill has been introduced, the *Procedure Committee* decides how and when it will be debated. The standard legislative process can include up to three readings. First, during a plenary session, the bill's title is announced, and legislators vote on one of several options: send the bill to a committee, move directly to the second reading, decline to consider it, or return it to the Procedure Committee. If the bill goes to a committee, it is examined in detail, which can include amendments, public hearings, and party caucus negotiations (often called "inter-party consultations"). After the committee review, the bill returns to a plenary session for the second reading, where each article is discussed and can be amended. If it moves to the third reading and passes, the bill is sent to the President for final approval and becomes law. Some bills may be expedited to the second reading or sent back to the Procedure Committee, often because of urgent needs, policy disputes, or partisan agreements. In addition, the *proposer* can withdraw the bill at any point before the second reading if the legislature agrees.

Full Coverage of Introduced Bills The dataset used here includes *all* bills introduced in the legislature, whether they eventually passed, were withdrawn, or did not move beyond committee review. By capturing every opportunity legislators have to propose or co-sign a bill, we avoid focusing only on laws that passed. This comprehensive view

is essential for understanding how early-life experiences, such as the Kaohsiung Incident, might shape a legislator's readiness to propose new legislation or to co-sign another's proposal. Because we record each bill from the moment it is submitted—and identify the proposer and co-signers—our analysis can trace the exact roles legislators play in advancing policy ideas, including pro-democracy measures.

3 Data: A Complete Bill-Legislator Pair Dataset

We collect a complete set of bills submitted to Taiwan's Legislative Yuan between 2012 and 2024 (covering the 8th to 11th legislative terms). Our main source is the official Legislative Yuan portal, which offers electronic records of each bill, including text, sponsor, and cosponsors.[7] We also use data from the Central Election Commission to verify each legislator's electoral district, election outcomes, and party affiliation.[8] Finally, we consult Chinese-language Wikipedia to confirm birth years, birthplaces, and other biographical details for individual legislators.[9]

To build our dataset, we first write simple web-scraping scripts to extract all available bills from the Legislative Yuan portal. For each bill, we capture the unique bill ID, submission date, sponsor, cosponsors, and a brief summary of the proposed content. Next, we cross-reference the sponsor and cosponsor IDs with the Central Election Commission's database to gather additional details, such as election dates and party alignment. We then match each legislator's ID to their online biography from Chinese-language Wikipedia, where we record birth year, birthplace, and other background information.

After combining these sources, we have a comprehensive record of every bill introduced between 2012 and 2024, regardless of whether it passed. Our final dataset is organized as a bill-legislator pair level, where each row represents a single legislator's involvement (or non-involvement) with a particular bill. For each legislator–bill pair, we note whether the legislator cosponsored the bill (a binary yes/no), along with the legislator's party affiliation, birth cohort, and birthplace. We also classify each bill as "democracy-supporting" based on text analysis that is explained in the next section.

We define a legislator as having childhood exposure to the pro-democracy movement if that legislator (1) was within a specific age range (for example, 7–15 years old) when the movement took place, and (2) lived or was born in the movement's region. This definition creates our key exposure variable. In total, we observe N_{bills} bills and N_{legs} legislators,

[7] Official Legislative Yuan portal: https://www.ly.gov.tw
[8] Central Election Commission: https://db.cec.gov.tw/ElecTable/Election?type=Legislator
[9] Wikipedia in Traditional Chinese: https://zh.wikipedia.org/zh-tw

which yields approximately $N_{bills} \times N_{legs}$ unique legislator–bill observations.

4 Measuring Each Bill's Democratic Supportiveness

We develop a systematic way to measure how closely each legislative bill aligns with core democratic ideals such as freedom, human rights, and representative governance. This measure lets us identify "democracy-supporting" bills and examine whether legislators who experienced the Kaohsiung Incident are more likely to propose or sign them. We rely on a machine learning approach using a pretrained language model, Chinese BERT, which produces continuous scores capturing the semantic similarity between each bill's text and a reference vector representing democratic principles.

Intuitive Explanation of Word Embeddings Word embeddings are numerical vectors that represent the meaning of words (or sub-words) in a multi-dimensional space. In simpler terms, each word is turned into a list of numbers (e.g., 768 numbers in BERT), and these numbers indicate where the word lies in that "semantic space." The idea is that similar words—say, "freedom" and "liberty''—will end up in nearby regions of this space, while dissimilar words—like "freedom" and "banana''—will be far apart.

Modern models like BERT go further by creating context-aware embeddings. Rather than assigning one fixed vector to each word, BERT uses many layers of "self-attention" to consider the surrounding words or sentences. This way, the word "bank" in "river bank" has a different embedding from "bank" in "financial bank," because the context is different. BERT is trained on a large text corpus so that, by the time we use it, it has learned a rich internal representation of Chinese words and phrases.

Mathematically, BERT's internal layers apply matrix multiplications and attention mechanisms that transform input tokens into output vectors, with each step refining how much weight is given to each neighboring token. At the end of this process, each token has a 768-dimensional embedding (a 768-length vector). We can measure the similarity of any two embeddings by using *cosine similarity* or other distance metrics. If two embeddings have a higher cosine similarity, they share more of the same direction in this vector space, indicating that they represent semantically related concepts.

Preparing and Embedding the Legislative Texts To prepare legislative texts for embedding, we use the full text of each bill from official databases. We rely on a Chinese BERT tokenizer, which is specifically designed to handle Chinese characters, to transform

each bill into tokens. Practically, we feed these tokens into the pretrained "bert-base-chinese" model in inference mode, meaning we do not fine-tune the model's internal parameters. BERT adds a special token, $[CLS]$ ("classification"), at the beginning of every input; in many BERT-based tasks, the final hidden-layer embedding of this token serves as a representation of the entire input sequence. Following this convention, we extract the 768-dimensional embedding corresponding to $[CLS]$ from the model's final hidden layer, treating it as a holistic summary of each bill's text.

Constructing a Democracy-Ideology Vector To represent the core values of democracy, we embed three key Chinese words: 民主 (democracy), 人權 (human rights), and 自由 (freedom). For each of these words, we extract the [CLS] embedding from BERT. We then average these three 768-dimensional vectors into a single "democracy-ideology" vector:

$$\mathbf{v}_{\text{democracy}} = \frac{1}{3}\big(\mathbf{v}_{\text{demo}} + \mathbf{v}_{\text{human}} + \mathbf{v}_{\text{free}}\big).$$

This aggregated vector captures a combined semantic representation of the key democratic ideology.

Measuring Each Bill's Alignment with Democracy Once each bill is converted into its own embedding $\mathbf{v}_{\text{bill}}$, we measure its closeness to $\mathbf{v}_{\text{democracy}}$ using cosine similarity:

$$\text{similarity}(\mathbf{v}_{\text{bill}}, \mathbf{v}_{\text{democracy}}) \;=\; \frac{\mathbf{v}_{\text{bill}} \cdot \mathbf{v}_{\text{democracy}}}{\|\mathbf{v}_{\text{bill}}\| \; \|\mathbf{v}_{\text{democracy}}\|}.$$

A higher similarity means the bill's text shares more of its semantic features with these democratic concepts. We treat this similarity score as a continuous measure of "democratic supportiveness." Although researchers might choose different cutoffs, we focus on bills where similarity exceeds zero. When the similarity is zero or below, it suggests that a bill is unrelated or even negatively related to the democracy-ideology vector.

The Key Treatment Variable: Democratic Supportiveness Relying on the NLP approach, we construct the key treatment variable in our triple differences design: the binary indicator taking the value of one if a bill supports democracy and zero otherwise. We classify a bill as democracy-supporting if its cosine similarity with the democracy-ideology vector is greater than zero. This threshold makes sense because a score of zero means the bill's text is orthogonal to the concepts of representative democracy and human rights, suggesting no meaningful link to such values. By contrast, any positive score

indicates some alignment with democratic principles, implying the bill's language is at least somewhat supportive of democracy.

5 Empirical Strategy: Triple-Differences Approach

Intuitive Explanation Our primary goal is to identify whether childhood exposure to a pro-democratic movement makes legislators more likely to support democracy-related bills in their later legislative careers. For this purpose, we use a triple-differences (DDD) framework in a bill-legislator pair setting. Specifically, we exploit three sources of variation:

1. **Age-Based Exposure**: Whether a legislator was between 7 and 15 years old when the pro-democratic movement took place.
2. **Geographic Exposure**: Whether a legislator's birthplace (or childhood address) was inside or outside the region affected by the movement.
3. **Bill Classification**: Whether a given bill is categorized as "democracy-supporting" or not.

The Baseline Specification In a simple two-way fixed effects approach, one might focus only on democracy-related bills and compare legislators who were "exposed" during childhood to those who were not. However, this could be misleading if exposed legislators are simply more active or more likely to sponsor *any* bill. By extending to a triple-differences design that includes *all* bills—both democracy-related and non-democracy-related—we can better isolate the additional impact of childhood exposure on sponsoring democracy-related policies.

Formally, a baseline version of our regression could be written as:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Sign}_{b,i,t} &= \alpha + \beta\, \text{ExposedCohort}_{c(i)} \times \text{MovementRegion}_{p(i)} \times \text{DemocracyBill}_{b,t} \\ &+ \sum_{k} \theta_k\, \text{DoubleDiffs}^{k}_{c(i),p(i),b,t} + \gamma_{c(i)} + \delta_{p(i)} + \eta_{b,t} + \varepsilon_{b,i,t}, \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

where $\text{Sign}_{b,i,t}$ is an indicator equal to one if legislator i cosponsors (or signs) bill b in year t. The term $\text{ExposedCohort}_{c(i)}$ indicates whether legislator i was a child at the time of the movement, $\text{MovementRegion}_{p(i)}$ indicates whether legislator i's birthplace or childhood address was in the region affected by the movement, and $\text{DemocracyBill}_{b,t}$ indicates whether bill b is classified as democracy-supporting. The DoubleDiffs terms

control for pairwise interactions between any two of these three variables, while $\gamma_{c(i)}, \delta_{p(i)}$, and $\eta_{b,t}$ are fixed effects for cohort, place, and bill–year, respectively. The error term is $\varepsilon_{b,i,t}$.

The Full Model Our alternative specification adds more comprehensive fixed effects to better capture unobserved legislator and bill characteristics:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Sign}_{b,i,t} &= \alpha + \beta\, \text{ExposedCohort}_{c(i)} \times \text{MovementRegion}_{p(i)} \times \text{DemocracyBill}_{b,t} \\ &+ \gamma_{c(i),p(i)} + \delta_{c(i),b,t} + \eta_{p(i),b,t} + \varepsilon_{b,i,t}. \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

Here, $\gamma_{c(i),p(i)}$ captures all unobservable factors specific to each combination of cohort and birthplace, $\delta_{c(i),b,t}$ and $\eta_{p(i),b,t}$ capture interactions between these dimensions and the bills, and $\varepsilon_{b,i,t}$ is the error term. Our coefficient of interest, β, measures how exposure to the pro-democratic movement in childhood affects a legislator's probability of signing democracy-related bills, relative to non-democracy-related bills and relative to unexposed legislators.

Identifying Assumptions Our triple-differences approach requires the standard parallel-trends assumption extended to three dimensions. Intuitively, we assume that, in the absence of the pro-democratic movement, any differences in signing behavior between exposed and unexposed legislators would remain the same for democracy-related and non-democracy-related bills. A positive and significant estimate of β would provide evidence that early-life exposure indeed increases legislators' support for democracy-related policies.

To further validate this claim, we include additional controls for legislator characteristics (such as party affiliation and education) and bill attributes (such as legislative session and policy domain). We also run sensitivity checks with alternative definitions of democracy-supportiveness (e.g., changing the threshold for text similarity scores). These exercises help confirm that our results are not driven by arbitrary definitions or omitted variables.

6 Main Results

Baseline Results Table 1 presents the estimation results based on the main equation (1). Each column corresponds to a different definition of "signing" a bill: (1) as any role (either a proposer or a cosigner), (2) as a proposer, and (3) as a cosigner.

Across all three outcomes, the coefficient on the triple interaction (Exposure Cohort × Born in Kaohsiung × Bills Supporting Democracy) is positive and statistically significant. This pattern supports our hypothesis that legislators who experienced the pro-democratic movement during childhood are more inclined to support democracy-related legislation once they are in office.

Magnitude and Interpretation To interpret these estimates, we compare the coefficients with the mean outcome levels for the *control group*, which comprises legislators born after the incident in regions other than Kaohsiung. Specifically, the control group's average probability of signing a bill in any role is approximately 21.2%, signing a bill as a proposer is around 7.4%, and signing a bill as a cosigner is about 19.6%. In column (1), the coefficient of roughly 0.0187 implies that exposed legislators are 1.87 percentage points more likely to sign a democracy-supporting bill in any capacity, corresponding to a 9% increase over the 21.2% baseline. In column (2), the coefficient of about 0.0061 indicates that exposed legislators are 0.61 percentage points more likely to sign a bill as a proposer, compared to the 7.4% control-group average, which represents an 8% increase. Finally, column (3) shows a 1.26 percentage point rise in the probability of cosigning a bill, compared to the 19.6% baseline—equivalent to an increase of around 6–7%.

All three estimates are statistically significant at the 1% or 5% level, and the specifications incorporate a comprehensive set of legislator-level controls (e.g., party affiliation and education) as well as region and birth-year fixed effects. These findings consistently indicate that childhood exposure to the pro-democratic movement is associated with a lasting commitment to democratic values, as manifested by a higher propensity to endorse democracy-related bills throughout one's legislative career.

Robustness Checks Including Two-way Fixed Effects Table A.1 presents the estimation results based on equation (2). Compared to the baseline specification, this model incorporates more detailed fixed effects by interacting birth year, birth place, and bill democracy classification, thereby capturing additional sources of unobserved heterogeneity. The coefficients on the triple interaction term remain positive and statistically significant for all three outcomes: signing a bill in any role, signing as a proposer, and signing as a cosigner. The inclusion of these extensive fixed effects highlights that the results are not driven by unobserved factors linked to specific birth cohorts, birth places, or types of bills.

Table 1: The Impact of the Early Life Exposure to the Pro-Democracy Movement on Politicians' Democratic Ideology

	Outcome: Did They Sign a Bill?		
	Signed a bill as any roles	Signed a bill as a proposer	Signed a bill as a cosignatory
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Exposure Cohort (7-15 Age at Incident) × Born in Kaohsiung (Movement Exposure Region) × Bills Supporting Democracy	0.0187***	0.0061**	0.0126**
	(0.0060)	(0.0030)	(0.0054)
R^2	0.02588	0.00725	0.02322
Observations	1,523,096	1,523,096	1,523,096
Birth Year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Birth Place fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Bill Supporting Democracy fixed effects	✓	✓	✓

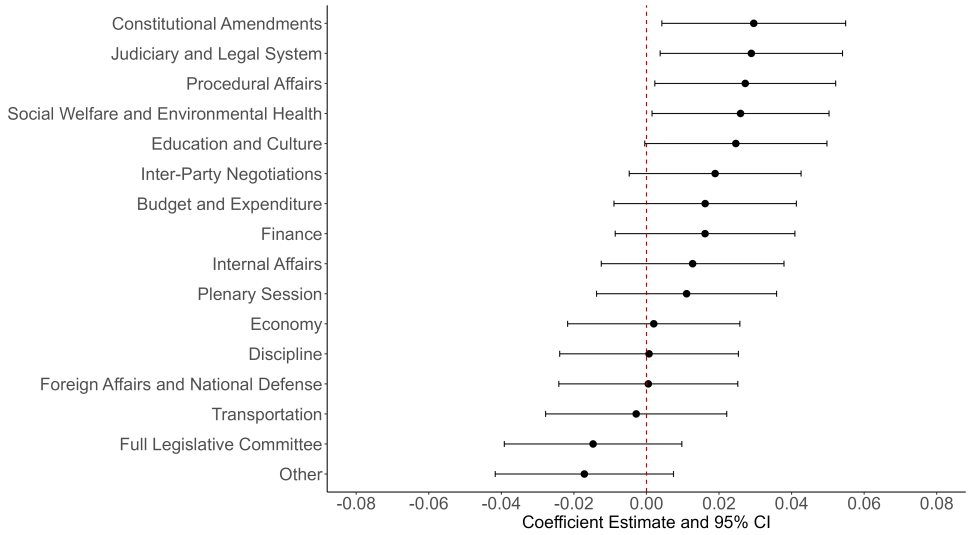
Notes: This table presents regression results based on the following equation: $\text{Sign}_{b,i,t} = \alpha + \beta\text{ExposedCohort}_{c(i)} \times \text{BornMovementRegion}_{p(i)} \times \text{DemocracyBill}_{b,t} + \sum_k \theta_k \text{DoubleDiffs}^k_{c,p,b,t} + \gamma_c + \delta_{b,t} + \eta_p + \varepsilon_{b,i,t}$. The dependent variable is one of the following variables: any roles (a proposer or a cosignatory), a proposer, or a cosignatory. In all specifications, the set of control variables regarding legislator characteristics is included. Standard errors clustered at a legislator ID are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Robustness Checks Using an Alternative Dummy for Bills More Strongly Supporting Democracy In our main estimation, we classify a bill as "democracy-supporting" if its cosine similarity with democracy-related keywords is above zero. Here, we apply a stricter cutoff—namely, considering a bill as "strongly democracy-supporting" if its similarity score falls in or above the 75th percentile. Table A.2 shows that under this revised definition, the triple-interaction coefficients remain positive and statistically significant for all three outcomes (signing as any role, as a proposer, or as a cosigner). These results suggest that our main findings do not hinge on the precise threshold used to classify a bill as democracy-supporting.

Heterogeneity: Affected Policy Topics We assess how treated cohorts vary in signing democracy-aligned bills across policy topics. The Taiwan Legislative Yuan categorizes debates into 16 topics (e.g., national policy, domestic issues, constitutional amendments, judiciary, and emerging issues).[10] We estimate our main regression (Equation 1) sepa-

[10]More specifically, in the Taiwan Legislative Yuan, there are 16 major topics officially defined by the parliament: (1) Plenary Session debates on national policies and laws; (2) Internal Affairs debates addressing domestic issues like public administration and law enforcement; (3) Foreign Affairs and National Defense debates concerning diplomatic relations and military strategies; (4) Economy debates focusing

Figure 1: Heterogeneity: Differential Policy Topic Support among Treated Cohorts



Notes: The figure shows point estimates and 95% confidence intervals from separate regressions by policy topic. The regression specification is: $\text{Sign}_{b,i,t} = \alpha + \beta\,\text{ExposedCohort}_{c(i)} \times \text{BornMovementRegion}_{p(i)} \times \text{DemocracyBill}_{b,t} + \sum_k \theta_k\,\text{DoubleDiffs}^k_{c,p,b,t} + \gamma_c + \delta_{b,t} + \eta_p + \varepsilon_{b,i,t}$. The dependent variable indicates whether a legislator signed a bill, and all models include controls for legislator characteristics.

rately by topic (see Figure 1 for 95% confidence intervals), focusing on whether legislators signed a bill.

Legislators shaped by the pro-democracy movement are significantly more likely to sign bills on constitutional amendments, judiciary and legal system, procedural affairs, social welfare and environmental health, and education and culture. These topics are central to modern democratic governance—ensuring robust rights, transparent processes, legal reforms, public well-being, and an informed citizenry.

on trade, labor, and financial markets; (5) Constitutional Amendments debates for modernizing government structures and rights; (6) Finance debates on taxation, banking, and budgeting; (7) Education and Culture debates covering academic reforms and cultural preservation; (8) Transportation debates on public transit, infrastructure, and safety; (9) Procedural Affairs debates managing legislative processes and agendas; (10) Judiciary and Legal System debates on legal reforms and human rights; (11) Social Welfare and Environmental Health debates addressing public health, welfare, and environmental policies; (12) Discipline debates overseeing ethical conduct among legislators; (13) Inter-Party Negotiations debates fostering bipartisan cooperation; (14) Budget and Expenditure debates ensuring effective public fund management; (15) Full Legislative Committee debates on complex or critical issues; and (16) Other debates on urgent or emerging legislative matters.

7 Mechanisms

So far, our findings consistently demonstrate that legislators who were directly exposed to the pro-democracy movement in their childhood are more likely to support democracy-related bills than those who were not exposed to it. In this section, we examine the possible mechanisms behind this main result. We have the following possible hypotheses for the underlying mechanism.

1. **The Identity Formation Hypothesis**: This is our main hypothesis. The existing literature in history, political science, and sociology holds that the 1979 Kaohsiung Incident helped forge a distinctly Taiwanese national identity, separate from that of mainland China, and imbued it with democratic aspirations (Chao and Myers, 1998; Roy, 2003; Wachman, 1994). Namely, we expect that individuals who experienced the Kaohsiung Incident—particularly during formative years—reinforced their "Taiwanese" identity and closely linked it with democratic values. Consequently, they perceive themselves as protectors of political freedom, thereby deepening their commitment to democratic principles (Jacobs, 2012).

2. **The Re-election Incentive Hypothesis:** This hypothesis posits that future political elites who experienced the Kaohsiung Incident during their formative years are more likely to run for office in their native constituencies rather than in other regions. Because ordinary citizens in these constituencies—who are part of the affected cohort—may share similar preferences for democracy and freedom, politicians elected from these areas have an incentive to appeal to these voters by signaling support for democratic principles, regardless of their genuine policy preferences. In this context, it is the reelection incentives, rather than a national identity formed by the pro-democracy movement, that drive the adoption of democracy-supportive policies.

3. **The Partisanship Hypothesis**: This hypothesis builds on the fact that the Kaohsiung Incident gave rise to the Democratic Progressive Party. If political elites from this region are more inclined to run for office under the DPP than other parties, they are likely to endorse democracy-related policies in line with the party's platform, regardless of their personal identity.

4. **The Education-in-Schools Hypothesis**: This hypothesis posits that teachers who experienced or were influenced by the Kaohsiung Incident have been informally conveying the importance of democracy to their students. Despite the event

not yet being emphasized in textbooks, these educators' personal engagement with the Incident exposes students to democratic values through unofficial classroom discussions and activities. This informal education could instill democratic values in children.

5. **The Selection Hypothesis**: This hypothesis proposes that the pro-democracy movement influences who becomes a future legislator by favoring individuals who already show strong support for democratic principles. Through this process, the movement effectively shapes the pool of candidates by selecting those who are predisposed (ex ante) to uphold democracy.

7.1 Tests of the Main Mechanism Using a Speech-by-Legislator Dataset

The Pro-Democracy Movement Shapes the Collective Identity To directly assess whether the pro-democracy movement has shaped a Taiwanese identity intertwined with democratic values, we create a novel dataset distinct from that used in our main analysis (Section 3). We also adopt an identification strategy specifically tailored for this analysis, differing from the triple-differences approach described in Section 5.

Speech-by-Legislator Data We construct a speech-by-legislator dataset in which each observation aggregates all speeches delivered by a legislator during their allocated question time in a parliamentary session. First, we scraped the official speech records from the Taiwan Legislative Yuan website (`ivod.ly.gov.tw`)[11]. Since the text records include both the target legislator's questions and the corresponding responses from the government, we retain only the speeches made by the legislators themselves.

Next, we randomly select 30% of the sessions in which each legislator posed questions. This process yields a dataset comprising 5,751 observations from 286 legislators (approximately 20 sessions per legislator). Each observation contains a rich amount of textual data—equivalent to about 167 minutes of speech by a single legislator. Finally, we merge this speech-by-legislator dataset with biographical information (including birth years and birthplaces) to support our analysis of identity formation.

[11]This is the official Interactive Video On Demand platform of Taiwan's Legislative Yuan, which provides public access to video recordings and text-based records of legislative sessions, debates, and individual speeches. This platform promotes transparency and accountability in government while facilitating research and public oversight.

Text-based Measurement of Identity To capture each legislator's identity from their speech records, we build on our previously described BERT-based embedding approach. For each legislator's speech, we first generate a vector representation using the pretrained Chinese BERT model. Then, rather than simply measuring overall sentiment or topic, we specifically quantify how closely each speech aligns with three identity-relevant dimensions: Taiwanese identity, Mainland of China identity, and democratic values.

To construct these dimensions, we compile lists of representative keywords for each category. More precisely, the Taiwanese identity vector is generated by averaging the embeddings of terms such as *Taiwan* and *Formosa*. Similarly, the Mainland of China identity vector is based on terms like *Mainland China*, *Mainland*, *Chinese Communist Party*, *Communist Regime*, *Beijing Government*. The democratic values vector is built from keywords such as *democracy*, *human rights*, and *freedom*. These averaged vectors serve as our reference points in semantic space.

A key aspect of our approach is the distinction between self-referential and other-referential expressions. We first check whether a speech contains self-oriented pronouns (e.g., we, us, our) or other-oriented pronouns (e.g., they, them, the others, the other side). For speeches that include self-referential language, we compute the cosine similarity between the speech's embedding and each of the reference vectors, yielding scores for each reference vector.

These similarity scores provide a novel measure of identity as expressed in legislators' speeches. A higher score indicates a closer semantic alignment with the respective identity category. Using these measures at the speech-by-legislator level, we can assess whether early-life exposure to the pro-democracy movement is associated with a stronger Taiwanese identity that is closely linked to democratic values.

Identification Strategy: The Difference-in-Differences Design To identify the causality, we adopt a cohort difference-in-differences (DiD) approach that leverages variation in both age-based exposure and geographic origin. We compare legislators who were between 7 and 15 years old during the movement (the exposed cohort) with those who were not, and further distinguish these groups based on whether their birthplace was in the region affected by the movement.

In our baseline specification, the dependent variable is a text-based identity score for each legislator—derived from the cosine similarity measures between their speech embeddings and reference vectors representing Taiwanese, Mainland of China, and democracy-

related identity. The regression is specified as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Identity}_{i,t} &= \alpha + \beta\, \text{ExposedCohort}_{c(i)} \times \text{MovementRegion}_{p(i)} \\ &+ \gamma_{c(i)} + \delta_{p(i)} + \varepsilon_{i,t}, \end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

where $\text{Identity}_{i,t}$ is the identity score for legislator i in session t, ExposedCohort_i is an indicator for whether legislator i was in the formative age range during the movement, and MovementRegion_i indicates whether they were born or raised in the affected region. The interaction term $\text{ExposedCohort}_i \times \text{MovementRegion}_i$ captures the causal impact on identity for legislators who witnessed pro-democracy movement. We further incorporate legislator fixed effects and additional controls.

Our coefficient of interest, β, captures the differential effect of early-life exposure to the pro-democracy movement on identity formation. A positive and statistically significant estimate of β would indicate that legislators who experienced both the critical age exposure and geographic proximity to the movement exhibit a stronger alignment with a Taiwanese identity coupled with democratic values, relative to their unexposed counterparts.

This DiD design relies on the assumption that, absent the pro-democracy movement, the differences in identity scores between legislators from affected and non-affected regions would have evolved similarly across cohorts.

Main Results: Expression Referring to Themselves Table 2 presents the effects of early-life exposure on legislators' self-referential expressions. In column (1), which examines the Taiwanese identity dimension, we observe that the interaction of being in the exposed cohort (ages 7–15 at the time of the incident) and being born in Kaohsiung is associated with a marginally significant increase in the cosine similarity with Taiwan-related keywords (coefficient = 0.0675, $p < 0.1$). In column (2), focusing on the Mainland of China dimension, the corresponding coefficient is negative (–0.0516) and not statistically significant, indicating that early-life exposure does not enhance self-referential language related to Mainland China. Finally, column (3) shows a robust and statistically significant positive effect on the similarity with democracy-related keywords (coefficient = 0.1736, $p < 0.01$). Overall, these results suggest that early-life exposure to the pro-democracy movement reinforces a self-identity that is more closely aligned with Taiwanese concepts and democratic values, without concurrently promoting a self-identification with Mainland China.

Table 2: Main Mechanisms: The Formation of National and Democratic Identity (i.e., Expression Referring to Themselves) Through Early-Life Exposure to Pro-Democracy Movement

	Outcome: Cosine Similarity Between Expression Referring to Themselves and the Following Keywords:		
	Taiwan-related Keywords	Mainland of China Related Keywords	Democracy-related Keywords
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Exposure Cohort (7-15 Age at Incident) × Born in Kaohsiung (Movement Exposure Region)	0.0675*	-0.0516	0.1736***
	(0.0350)	(0.0371)	(0.0315)
R^2	0.05017	0.05330	0.07340
Observations	5,751	5,751	5,751
Birth Year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Birth Place fixed effects	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents regression results based on the following equation: $\text{CosineSimilarity}_{i,h,p} = \alpha + \beta\text{ExposedCohort}_h \times \text{BornMovementRegion}_p + \gamma_c + \eta_p + \varepsilon_{i,h,p}$. The dependent variable is one of the following: cosine similarity between the expression referring to themselves and (1) Taiwan-related keywords, (2) mainland of China related keywords, and (3) democracy-related keywords. Standard errors clustered at a legislator ID are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Main Results: Expression Referring to Others Table 3 reports the effects of early-life exposure on legislators' expressions referring to others. In column (1), which captures similarity with Taiwan-related keywords, the interaction term yields a small and statistically insignificant coefficient (0.0112), implying no meaningful effect on how legislators refer to others in a Taiwanese context. In column (2), however, the coefficient for similarity with Mainland of China-related keywords is positive and statistically significant (0.1324, $p < 0.05$), indicating that legislators exposed to the movement are more likely to use language associated with Mainland China when referring to others. In column (3), the effect on similarity with democracy-related keywords is negative (–0.0782) but not statistically significant. Together, these findings imply that while early-life exposure does not significantly shape others-referential expressions in terms of Taiwanese or democratic language, it does lead to a greater emphasis on Mainland-related terms when referring to others. This pattern may reflect a discursive strategy of contrasting the self with an "other" defined in Mainland terms, thereby reinforcing a distinct national identity.

Additional Evidence on the Geographical Boundary of Identity: Which Geographical Regions Do They Identify With? Our earlier findings show that childhood exposure to the pro-democracy movement shapes Taiwanese national identity rel-

Table 3: Main Mechanisms: The Formation of National and Democratic Identity (i.e., Expression Referring to Others) Through Early-Life Exposure to Pro-Democracy Movement

	Outcome: Cosine Similarity Between Expression Referring to Others and the Following Keywords:		
	Taiwan-related Keywords	Mainland of China Related Keywords	Democracy-related Keywords
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Exposure Cohort (7-15 Age at Incident) × Born in Kaohsiung (Movement Exposure Region)	0.0112	0.1324**	-0.0782
	(0.0592)	(0.0524)	(0.0564)
R^2	0.07344	0.07642	0.07711
Observations	5,751	5,751	5,751
Birth Year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Birth Place fixed effects	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents regression results based on the following equation: $\text{CosineSimilarity}_{i,h,p} = \alpha + \beta\text{ExposedCohort}_h \times \text{BornMovementRegion}_p + \gamma_c + \eta_p + \varepsilon_{i,h,p}$. The dependent variable is one of the following: cosine similarity between the expression referring to others and (1) Taiwan-related keywords, (2) mainland of China related keywords, and (3) democracy-related keywords. Standard errors clustered at a legislator ID are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

ative to Mainland China. Here, we extend our investigation to determine whether this identity also encompasses democratic countries as opposed to non-democratic ones. In other words, when legislators use the term *we*, which geographical regions do they perceive as sharing their identity?

To answer this, we compile a list of all countries and utilize the Economist Intelligence Unit's 2023 Democracy Index. This index aggregates information on factors such as free and fair elections, civil liberties, citizens' preference for democracy over other systems, political participation, and the effectiveness of government, scoring countries on a scale from 0 to 10 (with 10 indicating the highest level of democracy). We classify countries scoring below 3 as non-democratic and those with scores of 3 or higher as democratic. We then examine whether legislators' identity is more closely associated with democratic countries compared to non-democratic ones.

Our text-based approach measures the cosine similarity between expressions referring to themselves and the names of target countries (either democratic or non-democratic). A higher cosine similarity with democratic countries implies that legislators view their identity as closely aligned with those nations.

Table 4 presents the estimation results based on Equation (3) using two outcomes: (1) the cosine similarity between self-referential expressions and democratic countries, and

Table 4: Additional Evidence on the Geographical Boundary of Identity: Which Geographical Regions Do They Identify With?

	Outcome: Cosine Similarity Between Expression Referring to Themselves and the Following Keywords:	
	Democratic Countries	Non-Democratic Countries
	(1)	(2)
Exposure Cohort (7-15 Age at Incident) × Born in Kaohsiung (Movement Exposure Region)	0.0867**	-0.1463***
	(0.0394)	(0.0441)
R^2	0.02738	0.04272
Observations	5,751	5,751
Birth Year fixed effects	✓	✓
Birth Place fixed effects	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents regression results based on the following equation: $\text{CosineSimilarity}_{i,h,p} = \alpha + \beta\text{ExposedCohort}_h \times \text{BornMovementRegion}_p + \gamma_c + \eta_p + \varepsilon_{i,h,p}$. The dependent variable is one of the following: cosine similarity between the expression referring to themselves and (1) democratic countries and (2) non-democratic countries. Standard errors clustered at a legislator ID are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

(2) the cosine similarity between self-referential expressions and non-democratic countries. The findings reveal that treated legislators are more likely to associate their identity with democratic countries than with non-democratic ones.

7.2 Tests of Alternative Mechanisms Using a Complete Bill-Legislator Pair Dataset

To assess the validity of alternative hypotheses, we revisit the complete bill-legislator pair dataset from our main analysis and apply the same triple differences approach.

7.2.1 The Re-election Incentive Hypothesis

Do They Respond to Re-election Incentives? We examine the alternative mechanism based on the re-election incentives. We ask whether legislators support democratic policies only when they are elected from the Kaohsiung constituency. Namely, We investigate which factor carries greater weight for these legislators: being born in Kaohsiung or being elected from that region.

Table 5: Alternative Mechanisms: Do They Respond to Re-election Incentives?

	Outcome: Did They Sign a Bill?		
	Signed a bill as any roles	Signed a bill as a proposer	Signed a bill as a cosignatory
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Exposure Cohort (7-15 Age at Incident)			
× Born in Kaohsiung (Movement Exposure Region)			
× Bills Supporting Democracy	0.0163***	0.0062*	0.0101**
	(0.0058)	(0.0033)	(0.0050)
Exposure Cohort (7-15 Age at Incident)			
× Elected from Kaohsiung (Movement Exposure Region)			
× Bills Supporting Democracy	0.0098	-0.0074	0.0171
	(0.0110)	(0.0050)	(0.0107)
R^2	0.03683	0.01056	0.03284
Observations	1,523,096	1,523,096	1,523,096
Birth Year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Birth Place fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Election_Constituency fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Bill Supporting Democracy fixed effects	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents regression results based on the following equation: $\text{Sign}_{b,i,t} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{ExposedCohort}_{c(i)} \times \text{BornMovementRegion}_{p(i)} \times \text{DemocracyBill}_{b,t} + \beta_2 \text{ExposedCohort}_{c(i)} \times \text{ElectedMovementRegion}_{p(i)} \times \text{DemocracyBill}_{b,t} + \sum_k \theta_k \text{DoubleDiffs}^k_{c,p,b,t} + \gamma_c + \delta_{b,t} + \eta_p + \varepsilon_{b,i,t}$. The dependent variable is one of the following variables: any roles (a proposer or a cosignatory), a proposer, or a cosignatory. In all specifications, the set of control variables regarding legislator characteristics is included. Standard errors clustered at a legislator ID are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Specifically, our analysis includes two triple-difference terms: one indicating whether a legislator was born in Kaohsiung, and another indicating whether they were elected in Kaohsiung. The latter term accounts for the potential influence of reelection incentives rather than a deeper identity-based effect. If the coefficient for "born in Kaohsiung" remains positive and statistically significant—while the coefficient for "elected in Kaohsiung" does not—this would suggest that an enduring identity, rather than short-term electoral considerations, drives democratic support.

Table 5 presents our findings. Legislators who were part of the exposure cohort (ages 7–15 during the Incident) and born in Kaohsiung are significantly more likely to sponsor or support democracy-related bills. In contrast, the coefficients for legislators elected from Kaohsiung are smaller and not statistically significant. These results indicate that early-life exposure to the pro-democracy movement fosters a lasting democratic identity tied to the region, transcending the immediate electoral incentives associated with representing Kaohsiung constituencies.

In essence, legislators who grew up in Kaohsiung during the Incident are more inclined

to advocate for democratic policies, regardless of whether they serve constituencies within or beyond the region. This finding supports our main hypothesis that the movement fostered a national identity deeply committed to preserving democracy, an influence that endures throughout their legislative careers.

Do Politicians Seek to Attract Voters in the Movement Exposure Region for Future Elections? Another potential concern is that politicians who narrowly won in the last election may attempt to attract voters in the movement exposure region by proposing policies aligned with their preferences, regardless of their own ideology. To evaluate this possibility, we employ a quadruple-differences design, incorporating the vote share in the last election as an additional variable.

Table A.3 presents the estimation results. The coefficients for the quadruple-differences term involving vote share are close to zero and statistically insignificant. This indicates that politicians do not adjust their policy positions based on their margin of victory in the previous election. Instead, those who were exposed to the pro-democracy movement consistently support democracy-related bills, irrespective of their electoral outcomes. This suggests that their response is not motivated by a strategic intention to attract voters for future elections.

7.2.2 The Partisanship Hypothesis

Inclusion of Party Fixed Effects A potential concern is that the main results might simply reflect the tendency of politicians born in Kaohsiung to run as members of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). In this case, their support for democracy could merely be a reflection of partisan alignment or responsiveness to voter preferences favoring the DPP. To address this concern, we include party fixed effects in the main specification of equation (1) to control for potential confounding effects of partisanship.

Table A.4 presents the estimation results. The coefficients remain robust and statistically significant even after accounting for party fixed effects. This suggests that, even within the same party (e.g., the DPP), legislators exposed to the pro-democracy movement during their childhood are more likely to propose democracy-supportive policies than their counterparts who were not exposed. Consequently, the observed effects cannot be attributed solely to party affiliation or partisanship.

7.2.3 The Education-in-Schools Hypothesis

We next examine an alternative mechanism: whether informal education provided by school teachers who were exposed to the incident instilled democratic ideology in children. To test this hypothesis, we replace the dummy variable for being born in Kaohsiung with a dummy variable indicating whether legislators graduated from schools in Kaohsiung.

Table A.5 presents the estimation results. The coefficients are very close to zero and statistically insignificant. This suggests that legislators' support for democracy-oriented bills is driven by being born in the movement exposure region (i.e., an identity) rather than by attending schools there (i.e., informal education in schools).

7.2.4 The Selection Hypothesis

Finally, we examine whether a selection mechanism could explain our findings. If this mechanism were at play, legislators exposed to the pro-democracy movement would systematically differ from other legislators in each electoral term across characteristics that might correlate with political preferences. To assess the relevance of this explanation, we adopt two approaches.

Differences in Observable Characteristics Between Treated and Control Politicians First, we test whether movement-affected legislators differ from non-movement-affected legislators along any pretreatment characteristics. The predetermined variables we consider are as follows: (1) gender, a well-documented predictor of political preferences (Chaney et al., 1998; Box-Steffensmeier et al., 2004); (2) whether the legislator holds a master's degree; and (3) whether they hold a Ph.D. Table A.6 reports the results based on a cohort-difference-in-differences approach, using the interaction of the exposure cohort and a dummy variable for being born in Kaohsiung with these predetermined outcomes.

The point estimates for all three outcomes are statistically insignificant, indicating that movement-affected legislators do not systematically differ from non-movement-affected legislators in these characteristics. These findings reject the selection mechanism as an explanation for our results.

Placebo Tests Using Fake Treated Cohorts Second, we adopt an alternative approach to examine whether a legislator's experience of the pro-democracy movement outside the 7-to-15 age range also influences their stance on democracy-related policies. If exposure to the movement directly shapes a future legislator's identity, we expect our findings to be specific to experiences during the identity-forming years (the 7-to-15 age

Table 6: Placebo Tests Using the Placebo Exposure Cohort (0-5 Age at Incident): The Impact of the Exposure to the Pro-Democracy Movement on Politicians' Democratic Ideology

	Outcome: Did They Sign a Bill?		
	Signed a bill as any roles	Signed a bill as a proposer	Signed a bill as a cosignatory
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Placobe Exposure Cohort (0-5 Age at Incident) × Born in Kaohsiung (Movement Exposure Region) × Bills Supporting Democracy	0.0092	0.0050	0.0042
	(0.0146)	(0.0030)	(0.0130)
R^2	0.03213	0.01210	0.02791
Observations	528,568	528,568	528,568
Birth Year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Birth Place fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Bill Supporting Democracy fixed effects	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents regression results based on the following equation: $\text{Sign}_{b,i,t} = \alpha + \beta\text{PlaceboExposedCohort}_{c(i)} \times \text{BornMovementRegion}_{p(i)} \times \text{DemocracyBill}_{b,t} + \sum_k \theta_k \text{DoubleDiffs}^k_{c,p,b,t} + \gamma_c + \delta_{b,t} + \eta_p + \varepsilon_{b,i,t}$. The dependent variable is one of the following variables: any roles (a proposer or a cosignatory), a proposer, or a cosignatory. In all specifications, the set of control variables regarding legislator characteristics is included. Standard errors clustered at a legislator ID are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

range). In other words, exposure to the pro-democracy movement at other ages should not significantly affect a legislator's ideological positions on democracy.

This expectation aligns with the political science literature, which underscores early childhood as a critical period for the development of political attitudes and identity. For example, Hess and Torney (1967) demonstrate in their seminal work that children as young as 7 years old begin forming political orientations through interactions with family, schools, and broader societal structures. They highlight the importance of early exposure to political symbols and authority figures in shaping children's understanding of political systems. Building on this, Healy and Malhotra (2013) use a natural experiment to show how early socialization experiences—such as family dynamics—leave lasting imprints on political attitudes, particularly influencing beliefs about gender roles and political party affiliation. Similarly, Block and Block (2006) find that personality traits observed in nursery school children predict political orientations two decades later, emphasizing the enduring impact of early temperament and experiences on political identity. Collectively, these studies illustrate that the environment and experiences during formative years, especially between ages 7 and 15, play a pivotal role in shaping long-term political and

Table 7: Placebo Tests Using the Placebo Exposure Cohort (16-25 Age at Incident): The Impact of the Exposure to the Pro-Democracy Movement on Politicians' Democratic Ideology

	Outcome: Did They Sign a Bill?		
	Signed a bill as any roles	Signed a bill as a proposer	Signed a bill as a cosignatory
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Placobe Exposure Cohort (16-25 Age at Incident) × Born in Kaohsiung (Movement Exposure Region) × Bills Supporting Democracy	0.0011	0.0002	0.0009
	(0.0013)	(0.0001)	(0.0012)
R^2	0.03038	0.00760	0.02786
Observations	1,231,473	1,231,473	1,231,473
Birth Year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Birth Place fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Bill Supporting Democracy fixed effects	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents regression results based on the following equation: $\text{Sign}_{b,i,t} = \alpha + \beta\text{PlaceboExposedCohort}_{c(i)} \times \text{BornMovementRegion}_{p(i)} \times \text{DemocracyBill}_{b,t} + \sum_k \theta_k \text{DoubleDiffs}^k_{c,p,b,t} + \gamma_c + \delta_{b,t} + \eta_p + \varepsilon_{b,i,t}$. The dependent variable is one of the following variables: any roles (a proposer or a cosignatory), a proposer, or a cosignatory. In all specifications, the set of control variables regarding legislator characteristics is included. Standard errors clustered at a legislator ID are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

social identities.

These studies suggest that events and experiences that happen outside these crucial formative years are less likely to shape a person's worldview in a major way. However, if the pro-democracy movement selects future legislators who already support democracy, then the formative years alone would not be the only critical period. In that case, we would expect to see strong effects on ideological positions even when the movement was experienced during other age ranges.

Tables 6 and 7 show the results from our distinct empirical strategies. First, we remove the treated cohort (those who were 7–15 years old at the time of the Incident and born in Kaohsiung) from our sample. We then define a "placebo cohort" of individuals who were 0–5 years old at the time of the Incident. This group lets us compare people who were very young children during the Incident (placebo treatment) with those who were born after the Incident (pure control). In the second strategy, we again remove the same treated cohort and create a new placebo cohort of individuals who were 16–25 years old at the time of the Incident. This lets us compare people who had already formed their national identity during the Incident (placebo treatment) with those who were born after

the Incident and thus formed their identity later (pure control).

Table 6 shows the first set of estimation results. Here, all coefficients are also close to zero and not statistically significant. This indicates that individuals who were exposed to the Incident but were still too young to fully understand it respond in the same way as legislators who were born after the Incident. These findings support our hypothesis that a geographically rooted identity shapes political ideology and do not support the selection mechanism.

Table 7 shows the second set of estimation results. All three coefficients are statistically insignificant. This suggests that once people have formed their local birthplace identity in their formative years (7–15 years old) before the Incident, their political ideology is less influenced by the Incident. They look similar to those who were born after the Incident and do not link their identity to the past pro-democracy movement.

8 Conclusion

This paper addresses a pressing global concern: the growing polarization between democracy and autocracy, particularly among political elites. It investigates how early-life exposure to a pro-democracy movement can profoundly shape future legislators' commitment to democratic governance. By focusing on the 1979 Kaohsiung Incident in Taiwan —a pivotal event where peaceful demonstrations escalated into violent suppression—we demonstrate that individuals who experienced the movement during their formative years internalized a "Taiwanese identity," viewing themselves as protectors of political freedom and embedding these values into their long-term political outlook. Consequently, they are more likely to sponsor or cosponsor bills aligned with democratic principles. This effect persists regardless of political party affiliation, schooling experience in the treated region, or selective entry into politics, underscoring the durable influence of formative experiences.

Beyond illuminating how a major pro-democracy event shapes legislators' identities and policy preferences, we contribute to broader literatures on the long-term effects of personal experiences and the role of collective events in forging national identity. Crucially, the findings show that localized political movements can engender lasting ideological commitments that directly influence real-world policymaking. Understanding these identity-formation processes is key to grasping how institutional narratives and early political socialization can sustain democratic norms, offering valuable insights for scholars and policymakers aiming to bolster democratic governance.

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Online Appendix: Additional Tables and Figures

Table A.1: Robustness Checks Including Two-way Fixed Effects: The Impact of the Early Life Exposure to the Pro-Democracy Movement on Politicians' Democratic Ideology

	Outcome: Did They Sign a Bill?		
	Signed a bill as any roles	Signed a bill as a proposer	Signed a bill as a cosignatory
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Exposure Cohort (7-15 Age at Incident)			
× Born in Kaohsiung (Movement Exposure Region)			
× Bills Supporting Democracy	0.0235***	0.0040**	0.0196**
	(0.0090)	(0.0020)	(0.0080)
R^2	0.05391	0.01427	0.04856
Observations	1,523,096	1,523,096	1,523,096
Birth Year-Birth Place fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Birth Year-Bill Supporting Democracy fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Birth Place-Bill Supporting Democracy fixed effects	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents regression results based on the following equation: $\text{Sign}_{b,i,t} = \alpha + \beta\text{ExposedCohort}_{c(i)} \times \text{BornMovementRegion}_{p(i)} \times \text{DemocracyBill}_{b,t} + \gamma_{c,p} + \delta_{c,b,t} + \eta_{p,b,t} + \varepsilon_{b,i,t}$. The dependent variable is one of the following variables: any roles (a proposer or a cosignatory), a proposer, or a cosignatory. In all specifications, the set of control variables regarding legislator characteristics is included. Standard errors clustered at a legislator ID are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table A.2: Robustness Checks Using an Alternative Dummy for Bills More Strongly Supporting Democracy Bills: The Impact of the Early Life Exposure to the Pro-Democracy Movement on Politicians' Democratic Ideology

	Outcome: Did They Sign a Bill?		
	Signed a bill as any roles	Signed a bill as a proposer	Signed a bill as a cosignatory
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Exposure Cohort (7-15 Age at Incident)			
× Born in Kaohsiung (Movement Exposure Region)			
× Bills Strongly Supporting Democracy	0.0207***	0.0079***	0.0128**
	(0.0051)	(0.0022)	(0.0052)
R^2	0.02588	0.00727	0.02322
Observations	1,523,096	1,523,096	1,523,096
Birth Year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Birth Place fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Bill Strongly Supporting Democracy fixed effects	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents regression results based on the following equation: $\text{Sign}_{b,i,t} = \alpha + \beta\text{ExposedCohort}_{c(i)} \times \text{BornMovementRegion}_{p(i)} \times \text{AlternativeDemocracyBill}_{b,t} + \sum_k \theta_k \text{DoubleDiffs}^k_{c,p,b,t} + \gamma_c + \delta_{b,t} + \eta_p + \varepsilon_{b,i,t}$. The dependent variable is one of the following variables: any roles (a proposer or a cosignatory), a proposer, or a cosignatory. In all specifications, the set of control variables regarding legislator characteristics is included. Standard errors clustered at a legislator ID are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table A.3: Alternative Mechanisms: Do Politicians Try to Attract Voters in Movement Exposure Regions?

	Outcome: Did They Sign a Bill?		
	Signed a bill as any roles	Signed a bill as a proposer	Signed a bill as a cosignatory
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Exposure Cohort (7-15 Age at Incident) × Born in Kaohsiung (Movement Exposure Region) × Bills Supporting Democracy	0.0227***	0.0062*	0.0165***
	(0.0065)	(0.0032)	(0.0058)
Exposure Cohort (7-15 Age at Incident) × Born in Kaohsiung (Movement Exposure Region) × Bills Supporting Democracy × Close to Lose in the Last Election	-0.0191	-0.0063	-0.0128
	(0.0118)	(0.0058)	(0.0099)
R^2	0.02853	0.00783	0.02535
Observations	1,523,096	1,523,096	1,523,096
Birth Year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Birth Place fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Bill Supporting Democracy fixed effects	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents regression results based on the following equation: $\text{Sign}_{b,i,t} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{ExposedCohort}_{c(i)} \times \text{BornMovementRegion}_{p(i)} \times \text{DemocracyBill}_{b,t} + \beta_2 \text{ExposedCohort}_{c(i)} \times \text{BornMovementRegion}_{p(i)} \times \text{DemocracyBill}_{b,t} \times \text{CloseToLose}_{c(i)} + \sum_k \theta_k \text{DoubleDiffs}^k_{c,p,b,t} + \gamma_c + \delta_{b,t} + \eta_p + \varepsilon_{b,i,t}$. The dependent variable is one of the following variables: any roles (a proposer or a cosignatory), a proposer, or a cosignatory. In all specifications, the set of control variables regarding legislator characteristics is included. Standard errors clustered at a legislator ID are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table A.4: Robustness Checks Including Party Fixed Effects: The Impact of the Early Life Exposure to the Pro-Democracy Movement on Politicians' Democratic Ideology

	Outcome: Did They Sign a Bill?		
	Signed a bill as any roles	Signed a bill as a proposer	Signed a bill as a cosignatory
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Exposure Cohort (7-15 Age at Incident)			
× Born in Kaohsiung (Movement Exposure Region)			
× Bills Supporting Democracy	0.0187***	0.0061**	0.0126**
	(0.0060)	(0.0030)	(0.0054)
R^2	0.02880	0.00792	0.02544
Observations	1,523,096	1,523,096	1,523,096
Birth Year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Birth Place fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Bill Supporting Democracy fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Party fixed effects	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents regression results based on the following equation: $\text{Sign}_{b,i,t} = \alpha + \beta\text{ExposedCohort}_{c(i)} \times \text{BornMovementRegion}_{p(i)} \times \text{DemocracyBill}_{b,t} + \sum_k \theta_k \text{DoubleDiffs}^k_{c,p,b,t} + \gamma_c + \delta_{b,t} + \eta_p + \omega_{party} + \varepsilon_{b,i,t}$. The dependent variable is one of the following variables: any roles (a proposer or a cosignatory), a proposer, or a cosignatory. In all specifications, the set of control variables regarding legislator characteristics is included. Standard errors clustered at a legislator ID are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table A.5: Alternative Mechanisms: Do Early-Life Education in Schools in the Movement Exposure Region Nurture the Democratic Ideology?

	Outcome: Did They Sign a Bill?		
	Signed a bill as any roles	Signed a bill as a proposer	Signed a bill as a cosignatory
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Exposure Cohort (7-15 Age at Incident) × School in Kaohsiung (Movement Exposure Region) × Bills Supporting Democracy	0.0096	-0.0031	0.0127
	(0.0303)	(0.0129)	(0.0322)
R^2	0.02676	0.00737	0.02378
Observations	1,475,064	1,475,064	1,475,064
Birth Year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Birth Place fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Bill Supporting Democracy fixed effects	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents regression results based on the following equation: $\text{Sign}_{b,i,t} = \alpha + \beta\text{ExposedCohort}_{c(i)} \times \text{SchoolInMovementRegion}_{p(i)} \times \text{DemocracyBill}_{b,t} + \sum_k \theta_k \text{DoubleDiffs}^k_{c,p,b,t} + \gamma_c + \delta_{b,t} + \eta_p + \varepsilon_{b,i,t}$. The dependent variable is one of the following variables: any roles (a proposer or a cosignatory), a proposer, or a cosignatory. In all specifications, the set of control variables regarding legislator characteristics is included. Standard errors clustered at a legislator ID are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table A.6: Selection Mechanism: The Impact of the Early Life Exposure to the Pro-Democracy Movement on the Pre-determined Elite Background of Politicians

	Outcome: Predetermined Elite Background		
	Male Dummy	Master's Degree Holder	Doctorate Degree Holder
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Exposure Cohort (7-15 Age at Incident) × Born in Kaohsiung (Movement Exposure Region)	-0.2117	-0.0398	-0.0146
	(0.3047)	(0.3163)	(0.3162)
R^2	0.39230	0.34366	0.27344
Observations	1,038	1,038	1,038
Birth Year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Birth Place fixed effects	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents regression results based on the following equation: $\text{PreDeterminedVariable}_i = \alpha + \beta\text{ExposedCohort}_{c(i)} \times \text{BornMovementRegion}_{p(i)} + \gamma_c + \delta_p + \varepsilon_i$. The dependent variable is one of the following variables regarding the legislator's elite background: a master's degree holder or a doctorate degree holder. In all specifications, the set of control variables regarding legislator characteristics is included. Standard errors clustered at a legislator ID are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.