

## **A Splash of Taiwan Bubble Tea: Gastrodiplomacy, Nation Brand and A Symbol**

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### **Abstrak**

*Bubble Tea merupakan salah satu minuman khas negara Taiwan yang mulai dikenal sejak tahun 1980-an di Taichung, Taiwan. Bubble Tea sangatlah populer di berbagai kalangan masyarakat. Dengan dikenalnya Bubble Tea, pemerintah Taiwan memanfaatkan kesempatan ini sebagai usaha dalam membentuk citra positif di tengah konfliknya dengan Tiongkok terkait kebijakan One China Policy. Pemerintah Taiwan mengembangkan Bubble Tea sebagai nation branding melalui praktik gastrodiplomasi dalam usaha memperkenalkan minuman khasnya kepada dunia. Pendekatan kualitatif akan dipilih dalam penelitian ini berdasarkan tinjauan pustaka dengan pendekatan eksploratif dan deskriptif. Penulis akan menggunakan konsep gastrodiplomasi dan nation branding. Serta, penulisan ini bertujuan untuk membuktikan bagaimana pemerintah Taiwan memanfaatkan Bubble Tea tidak hanya sebagai minuman khas Taiwan tetapi juga sebagai simbol dalam gerakan anti-Tiongkok. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah menjelaskan usaha pemerintah Taiwan memanfaatkan Bubble Tea sebagai upaya disparitas yang dapat membedakan Taiwan dari Tiongkok.*

**Kata Kunci:** Gastrodiplomasi, Bubble Tea, Taiwan, Nation Branding, Gerakan Anti-Tiongkok

### **Abstract**

*Bubble Tea is one of the typical drinks of Taiwan, which has become known since the 1980s in Taichung, Taiwan. Bubble Tea is prevalent in various circles of society. With the recognition of Bubble Tea, the government of Taiwan took advantage of this opportunity to build a positive image amidst its conflict with China regarding the One China Policy. The Taiwanese government developed Bubble Tea as a national brand through gastrodiplomacy to introduce its signature drink to the world. A qualitative approach will be chosen in this study based on literature review with exploratory and descriptive approach. The author will use the concepts of gastrodiplomacy and nation branding. Also, this paper aims to prove how the Taiwanese government uses Bubble Tea not only as a typical Taiwanese drink but also as a symbol in the anti-China movement. The results of this study examine the Taiwanese government's efforts to utilize Bubble Tea as a disparities between China and Taiwan culture that can differentiate Taiwan from China.*

**Keywords:** Gastrodiplomacy, Bubble Tea, Taiwan, Nation Branding, Anti-China Movement

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Taiwan is an island that European Sailors first discovered in the 1500s. It is located off the southeastern coast of China, between Japan and the Philippines. This island is often called Iha Formosa, which means Beautiful Island. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2022), around four hundred years ago, traders and fishermen from China started arriving in Taiwan straight from Fujian Province and settled in Taiwan. Moreover, in 1885, the Qing Empire declared Taiwan their province as part of mainland China. Although in 1895, Japan successfully conquered Taiwan when China lost the first Japan-China war. Morris (2004) argues that this was more than a change of government but submission to the new colonialists who ultimately left a distinct mark on the island and the identity of the Taiwanese people. Under Japanese colonialism, Taiwan was not affected by China's imperial rebellion in the late 19th century.

Moreover, in 1912 the Republic of China (ROC) stood, which replaced the Qing Dynasty with Chiang Kai-shek as its leader. ROC is the legitimate government of mainland China and Taiwan too. In 1945, Japan lost the Second World War, and China managed to control Taiwan again. However, a civil war broke out between the Communist Party and the Nationalist Government, commonly called the Kuomintang (KMT), in mainland China. Furthermore, China was ruled by the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) and became the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 (Kan, 2014).

Brown (2004) argues that after the KMT lost, Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of the KMT, fled to the island of Formosa and ruled for decades. The KMT ruled Taiwan and shaped it into a de facto political entity separate from the communist mainland. Holbrook (2007) added that most Chinese upper classes started migrating across the Taiwan strait and bringing their high-class chefs to the island of Formosa. Then in 1966, more chefs came from mainland China to Taiwan because CPC began to close restaurants during the Cultural Revolution as a symbol of bourgeois refinements. After that, in 1986, the KMT practised authoritarian one-party rule and imposed martial law, severely limiting citizens' liberties and political participation (Fell, 2018). Taiwanese people do not want to admit that they are part of Modern China after the People's Republic of China was ruled by CPC in 1949. Although, For PRC, Taiwan is still part of mainland China.

However, several countries do not officially acknowledge Taiwan's statehood even though its government is separate from China. Because China still considers Taiwan under its jurisdiction. Furthermore, since the implementation of the One China Policy, Taiwan has become a more diplomatically isolated country. The One China Policy is a policy that only recognizes only one Chinese Government (Maulana et al., 2016). It means several countries that wish to have diplomatic relations with mainland China must break diplomatic relations with Taiwan. This policy makes Taiwan has no formal diplomatic relations with any significant powers. Also, Taiwan is not part of prominent international organizations, and Chan (1997) argue that Taiwan perceived as "financially rich but diplomatically poor".

Thus, with this One China Policy's existence, Taiwan is considered part of China. Moreover, regarding military, trade and economic strength, Taiwan recognizes that its strength with China is unequal. Furthermore, Taiwan is trying to create its own national identity and gain recognition as a sovereign country because Taiwan wants to get out of China's shadow and be separate from China. Foreign policy elites believe that strategic international communications programs can persuade audiences worldwide to pay more attention to Taiwan, sympathize with their predicament, and support their political agenda. To achieve this goal, successive governments have chosen and communicated various narratives that they believe will attract international audience that is still largely unfamiliar with Taiwan. (Rawnsley, 2014, p. 161).

Therefore, public diplomacy is one way to maintain positive perceptions of foreigners about the country. Taiwan is starting to take advantage of its tourism by attracting national tourists. In 2006 the Taiwan government began promoting video campaign tourism (Chang, 2020). One thing that can be used to differentiate Taiwan and China is culinary. Taiwan is known for its amazing food and cuisine. Even so, many typical Taiwanese foods are heavily influenced by China. Although there is a typical drink that comes originally from Taiwan, it is called Bubble Tea (Galante et al., 2006). *Bubble tea* is a Taiwanese drink made of sweetened tea, flavoured milk, and tapioca pearls. In a short time, Bubble Tea became very popular across Europe and the United States, making Taiwan more famous around the world. Because of this, Taiwan started Public Diplomacy through culinary, known as gastrodiploamacy. Moreover, by practising gastrodiploamacy, Taiwan can promote its culture and gain a positive reputation as the centre of gastronomy in East Asia.

Based on the background above can explain how food can be crucial in the contexture and complexities of International Relations. In this case, Taiwan is using gastrodiploamacy through Bubble Tea as a different identity from China. The Taiwanese government utilizes Bubble Tea as a typical drink known worldwide and as a symbol to indicate separation from China. The author will examine Taiwan's Gastrodiploamacy in utilizing Bubble Tea's popularity as a nation branding as an anti-China movement.

## **2.THEORY**

### **2.1 Gastrodiploamacy**

Gastrodiploamacy is the "oldest diplomatic instrument" that uses food for cross-cultural understanding and is expected to increase interaction in bilateral and multilateral cooperation (Haugh, 2014). The term gastrodiploamacy was first used in public diplomacy (Rockower, 2012). Gastrodiploamacy is a branch of public diplomacy where soft power is one of its strengths. According to Paul Rockower (2012), Gastrodiploamacy is "the act of winning hearts and minds through the stomach." Food and cuisine are the primary weapons in gastrodiploamacy because they believe food can represent their nation. Gastrodiploamacy emerged as a new approach to interacting with foreign communities and cultures. Through exhibitions that showcase food art and a small quantity of diplomacy. Even though the practice is ancient, the terminology is relatively new (Ruddy, 2014).

Meanwhile, Mary Jo Pham (2013) argues that gastrodiploamacy is "a government practice of exporting its national culinary heritage as part of public diplomacy efforts to increase national brand awareness. To encourage economic

investment and trade, and engage with everyday visitors on a cultural and personal level." Gastrodiplomacy can play a significant role in achieving state interests. Introducing culture through culinary can attract the attention of other nations in assessing culture. One country that has succeeded in leveraging its culinary heritage to become soft power through its gastrodiplomacy is Taiwan. Sontikul (2017) added that Gastrodiplomacy could benefit the domestic economy, especially its tourism industry. Their dining experiences can foster positive associations between the cuisine and the culture it represents, thereby driving consumers' desire to visit these places.

## **2.2 Nation Branding**

A prosperous nation branding campaign will help create a better reputation in the international arena, thereby increasing a country's soft power (Anholt, 2022). Nation branding can be conceptualized as area-specific place branding. Nation branding often refers to the mere application of branding strategies and tools to nation-states: 'Nation branding concerns the application of branding and marketing communication techniques to promote the image of a nation' (Fan, 2006, p. 6). Nation branding, however, can be conceptualized independently of branding. It can be defined as a country's strategic self-presentation to create a good reputation by promoting economic, political, and social interests abroad (Gyorgy, 2008).

## **3. RESEARCH METHOD**

A qualitative approach will be chosen in this study based on an exploratory and descriptive approach. *Qualitative research* is a situated activity that locates observers in the world and consists of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). This method was chosen because this research aims to examine Taiwan's Gastrodiplomacy in utilizing Bubble Tea's popularity as a nation branding an anti-China movement. The analysis will be based on a literature review with an exploratory and descriptive approach by reviewing scholarly books, journals, and studies related to this topic.

## **4. ANALYSIS**

### **4.1. Taiwan Gastrodiplomacy Campaign**

The success of Thailand's gastrodiplomacy initiatives known as the Global Thai Campaign in 2002 first became a source of inspiration for the Taiwanese government. So in 2010, Taiwan launched a gastrodiplomacy campaign called "All in Good Taste: Savor the Flavors of Taiwan," introducing Taiwanese specialities to various foreign countries. Taiwanese cuisine has rich backgrounds and ethnicities that greatly influence it (Defrancq, 2018). One of the goals of this campaign is to prove that Taiwanese food is different from Chinese because it is lighter, less greasy, and healthier (Strugar, 2015). Rockower (2011) added that Taiwanese cuisineries to introduce a more Western version of Chinese food.

The government also contributes funds to foundations dedicated to promoting and developing Taiwanese restaurants, coffee shops, and ingredients abroad. Early Ma Ying-jeou administration initiatives to "internationalize local" and "international localize" Taiwanese food were financed with NT\$1.1 billion (\$35.8 million) between 2010 to 2013 (Lipscomb, 2019). Booth (2010) describes that this plan is based on the budget spent on promoting Taiwanese cuisine in the U.K and worldwide. In line with Lipscomb (2019) and Booth

(2010), the article *Taiwan Today* (2010) reported that for four years, the Taiwan government invested in Taiwan's gastrodiploamacy campaign and aimed to promote Taiwanese cuisine at global dining tables. Ma Ying-jeou also highlighted that Taiwan 'taking Taiwan's food to the world is a policy priority (Caltonhill, 2011). The Ministry of Economic Affairs sponsored it, and the Taiwan Tourism Bureau also participated in the campaign. This campaign also encourages more Taiwanese restaurants to open abroad, especially in shopping malls and department stores. International airports also often have sampling stations to try Taiwanese cuisine. This campaign wanted to help local chefs introduce Taiwanese cuisine to tourists who come so that Taiwanese food is increasingly recognized worldwide (Taiwan Today, 2010).

One of those attempts is holding the International Gourmets Festival with Taiwan as the host. Taiwan also organizes Authentic Taiwan Cuisine festivals in countries such as the US, Canada, and New Zealand. The Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) also held the Din-Tai-Fung Exhibitions, known for its soup dumplings or *xiaolongbao*. Cooperate with 85 coffee shops. Furthermore, it opened a Taiwanese restaurant overseas.

More and more tourists are arriving because of Taiwan's gastrodiploamacy, which has attracted attention to its culinary uniqueness. The percentage of tourists who came has increased rapidly in 2017 since the Taiwanese gastrodiploamacy campaign, which started in 2011. Based on the Annual Survey Report on Visitors Expenditure and Trends in Taiwan conducted by the Taiwan Tourism Bureau (2017), Gourmet and snacks are the main reason as many as 68% of tourists visit Taiwan. The main destination is the night market which presents a variety of Taiwanese cuisine. According to this survey, Kaohsiung Liuhe Night Market and Shilin Night Market are the most popular night markets. *Los Angeles Times* (2017) added that Jonny Hwang claimed to be inspired by Taiwanese night markets' growth and popularity in his hometown and created the 626-night market. There are night markets in many locations, including Orange County, the San Francisco Bay Area's NorCal Night Market, Koreatown, Monterey Park, Long Beach, Philadelphia, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Vancouver, and Atlanta. In his interview, Hwang added that the new menu items, according to Hwang, show a change from Asian to Asian American identity. With the success of the 626-night market, the Taiwan Tourism Bureau did not hesitate to take advantage of this by holding a raffle for vacation tickets to Taiwan as prizes for those who took pictures and posted them on social media. At first, various Taiwanese street food became the main attraction in this night market, but Bubble Tea became one of the most popular drinks representing Taiwanese cuisine over time. Bubble Tea is also included in Taiwan's gastrodiploamacy campaign. Bubble tea is a drink that has quickly spread its popularity so that the Taiwanese government does not hesitate to take advantage of it. Its popularity and various special festivals supporting Bubble Tea are also present in various countries to support Taiwan's gastrodiploamacy.

As explained in the theory section, gastrodiploamacy is an instrument of public diplomacy that utilizes culinary as a strategy in introducing a country's culture. Rockower (2012) states that efforts to introduce a nation's culture can be through gastrodiploamacy, which uses food and cuisine as its main strength. One of the efforts that can be made is through various gastrodiploamacy campaigns and exhibitions containing various food and cuisine the country wants to introduce. In this case, Taiwan held "All in Good Taste: Savor the Flavors of Taiwan," thereby pioneering Taiwanese cuisine festivals held abroad.

Furthermore, with the popularity of Taiwan Bubble Tea, various Bubble Tea Festivals have been held, for example, in the United States, to be precise, in New York, Vancouver, Canada, and Singapore. This festival is a form of gastrodiplomacy practice exploiting Taiwanese cuisine's popularity, especially Bubble Tea. The Taiwanese government also utilizes this gastrodiplomacy practice to increase the nation's brand awareness, which can increase economic investment and trade, as explained by Pham (2013). The 3,500 local restaurants that open overseas are expected to generate NTD \$2 billion (\$65 million) in profits, market 50 brands, and offer 10,000 new job opportunities (Taiwan Today, 2010). In addition, the Taiwanese government is also trying to open many Bubble Tea outlets in various overseas countries. Moreover, making this opportunity to attract tourists from outside to visit Taiwan to try Taiwanese cuisine will indirectly promote Taiwan tourism.

#### **4.2. Politics of Bubble Tea: Nation Brand and a Symbol of Anti-China**



**Figure 1:** *Bubble Tea (Liu, 2020)*

Tea is an essential part of Asian history and especially the economy. Taiwan's tropical climate, dominated by highlands, allows the country to produce tea. *Bubble Tea* is a milk tea beverage mixed with bubbles based on tapioca flour. Bubble Tea, often called Boba Tea, was initially debated about who first created this drink.

According to the *South China Morning Post* (2019), Bubble Tea originated in the 1980s in Taichung, Taiwan. The first innovation of Bubble Tea came from a Chun Shui Tang Teahouse owner named Liu Han-Chieh. Through several experiments, he tried to add boiled tapioca pudding to a mixture of black tea, high-fructose corn syrup, milk, and ice. He has made a new taste of Bubble Tea, which is also recognized and loved by people from various generations. After the original version of Bubble Tea was created, other variations emerged, such as using coffee instead of tea and mixing fruits. In the 1990s, Bubble Tea became increasingly popular in Asia. Moreover, in the early 2000s, Bubble Tea began to spread across Europe and the United States.

According to an *Aljazeera* (2020) interview with Po-Yi Hung from National Taiwan University, he said that when the Taiwanese were looking for their country's national identity, Bubble Tea became a symbol for the world to see the existence of Taiwan. Galante (2006) added that Taiwan's place in the

international community has long remained unshaken. Bubble Tea also has a metaphor that means "*shake*" Taiwan's status quo and rise to the international community's top. Wong (2021) added that in 2004, Taiwan's ministry of defence began advocating the purchase of weapons by comparing the cost to the money that could be saved by every citizen who skipped one Bubble Tea every week for fifteen years. This comparison received a negative response, so it can be proved that Bubble Tea has become an important component in the domestic national dialogue and daily life.

Reported CNN (2020) article entitled "*The Rise of Bubble Tea, One of Taiwan's Most Beloved Beverages*" features images of Hilary Clinton with Bubble Tea in the 2016 presidential campaign. During this phase, Bubble Tea increasingly entered the political sphere, especially in introducing Bubble Tea as a new Taiwan nation branding. As previously explained in the theory section on nation branding by Anholt (2022) that creating a campaign will increase reputation on an international scale so that, in the end, soft power will also be formed. Clinton's political appeal to this drink may have influenced Taiwan's global image and implied American recognition of Taiwan's sovereignty. As described by Fan (2006) nation branding theory, good technical marketing communication can promote the nation's image. In this case, Bubble Tea is a new national branding instrument Taiwan wants to introduce to the world to get a good reputation.



**Figure 2:** Hilary Clinton with Bubble Tea (Getty Images, 2020)

The other example is when Taiwanese diplomats took pictures with Bubble Tea until the formation of the "Milk Tea Alliance" Bubble tea has become a political force to be reckoned with in promoting Taiwan's democracy (Wu, 2021). It indicates that by representing the nation branding can affect the political, economic, social relations with foreign countries as stated by Gyorgy (2008). In addition, the Taiwanese government also intends to redesign its passport during the pandemic by displaying Bubble Tea as its main icon. Bubble Tea's popularity has become the symbol of separation between Taiwan and China and has become the pride of the Taiwanese people.

### 4.3. Taiwan Government Program

The Taiwanese government has made various efforts to introduce Taiwanese gastrodiplomacy with Bubble Tea as its instrument. Here are some programs supported by the Taiwanese government to expand the spread of Bubble Tea around the world.

#### ***Opening Bubble Tea Outlets***

The Taiwanese government is pushing to open Bubble Tea outlets outside Taiwan. Initially, Taiwan's main targets were nearby countries with Taiwanese expatriate communities, such as Southeast Asia, Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Canada and the United States. Only a few years later, it began to spread to countries in Europe and the Middle East. With the widespread popularity of Bubble Tea, the Taiwanese Government began to plan marketing policies to promote and increase sales of Bubble Tea internationally as the business has achieved the highest revenue growth in the country's export history, with profits now increasing tenfold. According to *Forbes Magazine* (2017), many Bubble Tea outlets have opened overseas. For example, in 2011, the ChaTime tea shop opened for the first time in the Philippines and has at least 40 outlets in Metro Manila. The success of these Bubble Tea outlets led the government of President Tsai Ing-wen to revive the New Southbound Policy, which attempts to reduce Taiwanese investors' reliance on China by encouraging them to make more investments in South and Southeast Asian nations. Currently, ChaTime has more than 2,000 stores worldwide. Meanwhile, other well-known Bubble Tea brands from Taiwan are Presotea and Cha Ji Tang, which have also spread internationally (Bachdar, 2018). So Taiwanese gastrodiplomacy through Bubble Tea has enhanced the image of Taiwanese cuisine abroad and has real economic and political benefits.

#### ***Bubble Tea Events***

Various kinds of events are held in Taiwan and various countries. One of the efforts of the Taiwanese government in introducing Bubble Tea is through the Bubble Tea Festival, which is organized and collaborates with many institutions. The Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in New York is holding Lab B: A Unique Taiwanese Bubble Tea Experience at SOHO New York, which will take place at 107 Grand Street in SOHO from August 17-19, 2018. Lab B was created by a group of Taiwanese artists, writers and designers living in New York who are passionate about sharing Taiwan's most popular culinary. Bubble tea—designed to be part funhouse, part exhibition, and part tea shop. Also, Lab B features tastings, boba DIY, and interactive installations, including a Bubble Tea ball pool and a gigantic Bubble Tea balloon. The event is co-sponsored by Hello Taiwan, JIC Media, and the Taipei Cultural Center.

Quoted from the *Taiwan News* article (2019), the Taiwan Hello Bubble Tea festival is back in the United States, specifically at New York Time Square. This festival aims to show the love of Taiwanese people for Bubble Tea by demonstrating the creative manufacture of Bubble Tea. Hsu Bo-cheng, the organizer of this festival, hopes that when someone tries Bubble Tea, they will be reminded of Taiwan instead of other Asian countries. Hsu added that this festival is expected to raise awareness of the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals and showcase how Taiwan is reportedly exceeding in this area. It proves that Bubble Tea carries a positive image of Taiwan.

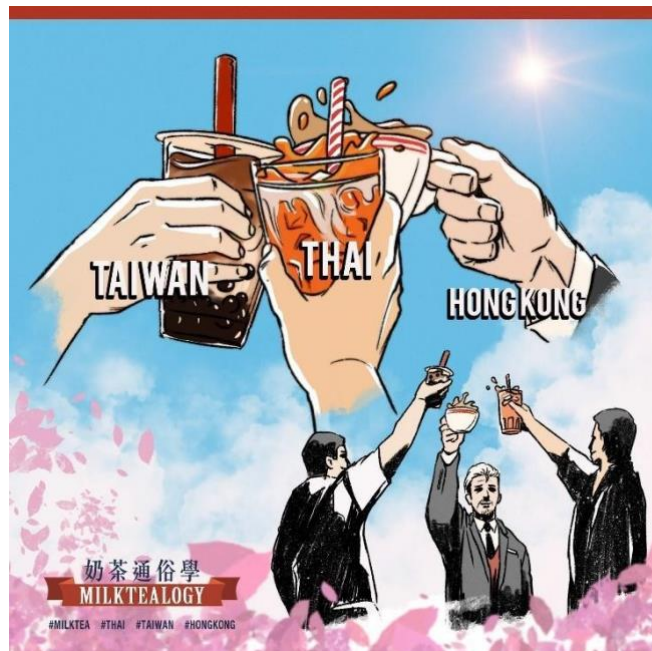


In Southeast Asia, Singapore's first Bubble Tea Festival was held in 2019. Precisely on 18-19 October 2019 at SCAPE, Singapore. This festival presents various Bubble Tea vendors and a Bubble Tea exhibition event.

Next is the Vancouver Bubble Tea Festival 2022. This festival will be held on 22-23 July 2022 at Burnaby Swangard Stadium, 3883 Imperial Street, Burnaby, Canada. According to (McLean, 2022). Since Bubble Tea is a very popular drink in Vancouver. In collaboration with the UBC Taiwanese Association (TA), this festival presents ten well-known Bubble Tea brands originating from Taiwanese, 20 street food tenants, food trucks, 30 retail boots, and various entertainment. Apart from that, The Chinese Cultural Inheritance Association also attended the event to make tapioca balls and paper lanterns. Based on the article *Burnaby Now* (2022), This festival is the biggest Bubble Tea festival in Canada. One of the main events is the Talent Show which gives the winner will get \$3,000 cash and two round-trip vacation tickets from Vancouver to Taipei, Taiwan.

#### 4.4. Milk Tea Alliance

Meanwhile, it started with a meme war on Twitter between Chinese netizens and Thai fans of Vachirawit Chiva-aree, a Thai actor whose girlfriend implicitly indicated that Taiwan and China were different countries under her Instagram photo in April 2020. As a result of this tweet, the Chinese citizens demanded an apology from the girlfriend by making 1.4 million posts on Weibo. Nevertheless, Thai netizens support the girlfriend's opinion by making more than 2 million tweets on Twitter. Because this issue is related to the One China Policy, Taiwanese and Hong Kong residents also expressed their protest and support for the Thai couple. Hong Kong and Taiwan want to convey that they are not part of China.



**Figure 3 :** #MilkTeaAlliance (MilkTealogy Facebook Page, 2020)

With the popularity of Bubble Tea, which has become a symbol of the anti-China movement in Taiwan, an alliance has emerged between countries with the same historical background as Taiwan. Hong Kong-based Facebook page, MilkTealogy explained that Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Thailand allied with illustrations of milk tea from each country, so the #MilkTeaAlliance emerged (Hui, 2020). According to the *Atlantic* (2020), This alliance comes from the mutual liking for milk tea, with each country having a distinct interpretation of the drink. Thailand with sweetened orange tea with condensed milk, Hong Kong with tea from England heritage, which is not too sweet, and Taiwanese Bubble Tea, which is unique with tapioca pearls. Quoted from *Hongkong Press* (2020), Milk Tea was chosen as a symbol of this alliance because Milk Tea can become the boundaries for China which do not 'have' its Milk Tea, while each country in this alliance has Milk Tea in its 'own' variety. This alliance initially appeared online and was driven by East and Southeast Asian netizens through social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. The illustration with the hashtag spread to more than 13,000 reposts on Twitter.

Quoted from *The Diplomat* article, with the visit of the highest-ranking active member of the U.S. government namely Pelosi, who visited Taiwan has revived the Milk Tea Alliance by stating that America is determined to preserve democracy in Taiwan. The movement, which was initially started by netizens via social media, was eventually supported by the Taiwan government which also supports the #MilkTeaAlliance movement. Furthermore, Taiwan Digital Diplomacy Association tweeted an illustration of the Milk Tea Alliance to thank Thai netizens for solidarity with the One China Policy. The #MilkTeaAlliance movement did not only last for a few days. However, it became a symbol in the anti-China movement, which made several countries, such as India, Australia, and the Philippines, join the alliance within a few months. Until December 2020, seven major movements took place online and offline as protest movements. The #MilkTeaAlliance will continue in these countries' protests against China.

So that the initial goal of Taiwanese gastrodiplomacy through Bubble Tea was to spread Bubble Tea as Taiwan's new branding to create uniqueness from China in terms of cuisine. The Taiwanese government participates in promoting Taiwanese cuisine so that it is known to the world. In this case, the popularity of Bubble Tea among the public led to the spark of an anti-China movement which proved that Bubble Tea had become a symbol of Taiwan's resistance to the One China Policy, emphasizing that Taiwan is different and not part of China. The Taiwanese government also supports various movements to demonstrate Taiwan's independence from China.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

As a country that has received various government changes, Taiwan is trying to show its identity as an independent country that is not part of China. Moreover, since the implementation of the One China Policy, this diplomatically isolated country needed to establish diplomatic relations with other countries. Since Taiwan and China are not equal in terms of military and economic aspects, Taiwan began to work on its public diplomacy. Taiwan used gastrodiplomacy as an instrument of public diplomacy by utilizing its cuisine as the main attraction. Even though it is difficult, Taiwan is trying to find new and unique innovations that can become Taiwanese cuisine.

By practicing gastrodiploamacy, the world can recognize that Taiwan is not part of China. With the recognition of Taiwanese cuisine, Taiwan has created its own identity. Through gastrodiploamacy, Taiwan can implement Bubble Tea as its new national branding because it originally comes from Taiwan. Not only as a special drink that makes Taiwan popular in the world, but Bubble Tea has also become a symbol in the anti-China movement. All of this must be connected to the support of the Taiwanese government. Through various movements, such as opening Bubble Tea outlets outside Taiwan and also Bubble Tea festivals held in various countries, it has been proven that through Bubble Tea, Taiwan's positive image is increasingly recognized.

Furthermore, it benefits the political aspect, where more countries started recognizing Taiwan's existence and sovereignty. Also, Taiwan's culture is increasing globally and benefits Taiwan's economy from investment. Through gastrodiploamacy, Bubble Tea has become Taiwan's national branding that differentiates Taiwan from China while simultaneously proving that Taiwan can stand alone and get positive recognition as an independent country without any interference from China.

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