

# The Limit of Using “Unification and Independence” as Instrument to Understand Taiwan politics

“Election Polling and Democratic Consolidation in Taiwan and Korea”

Dec. 1, 2016 @ UC Berkeley

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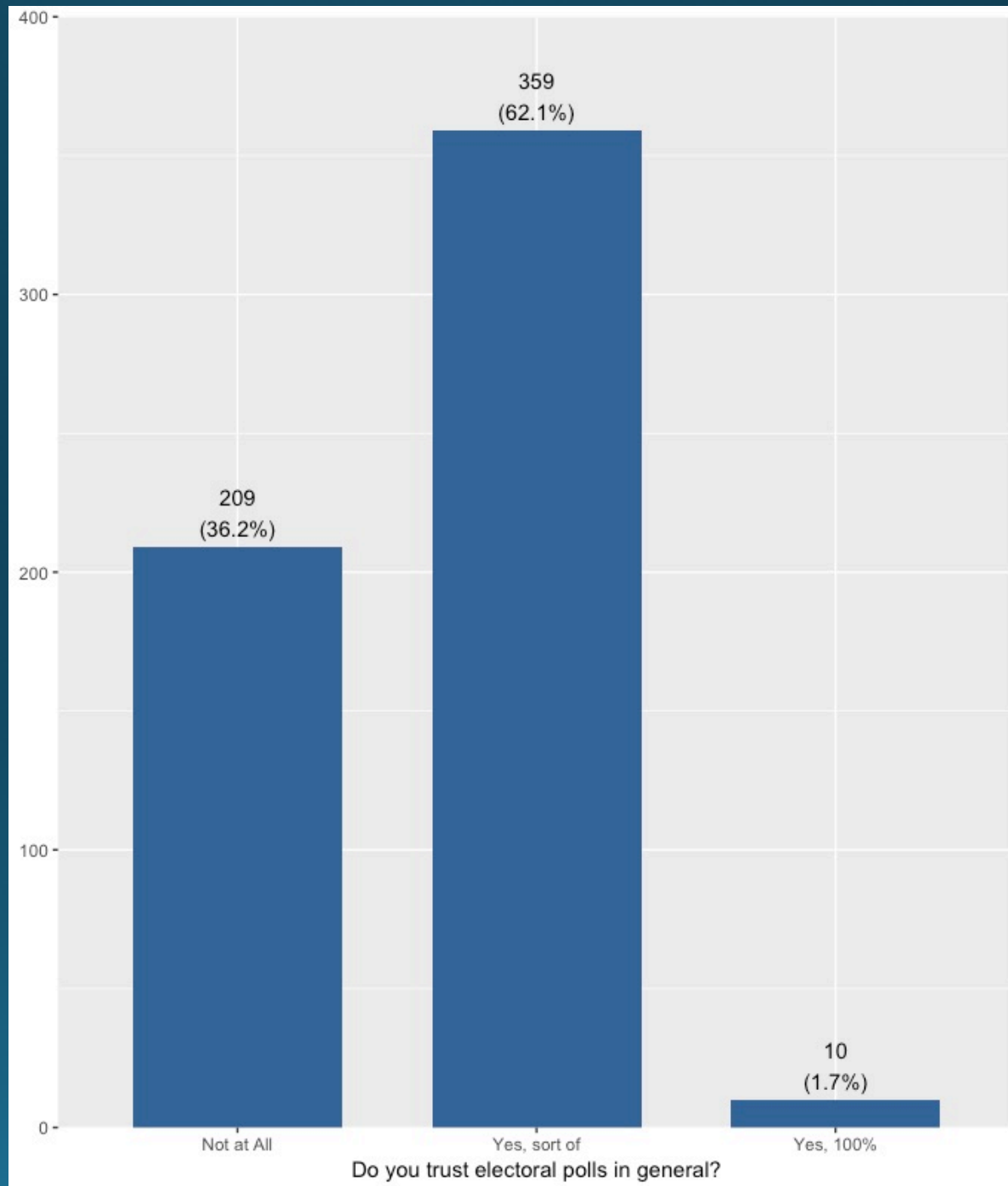
# Web Sample Nov. 11~29, 2016

受訪者人口學變項分佈 Demographics

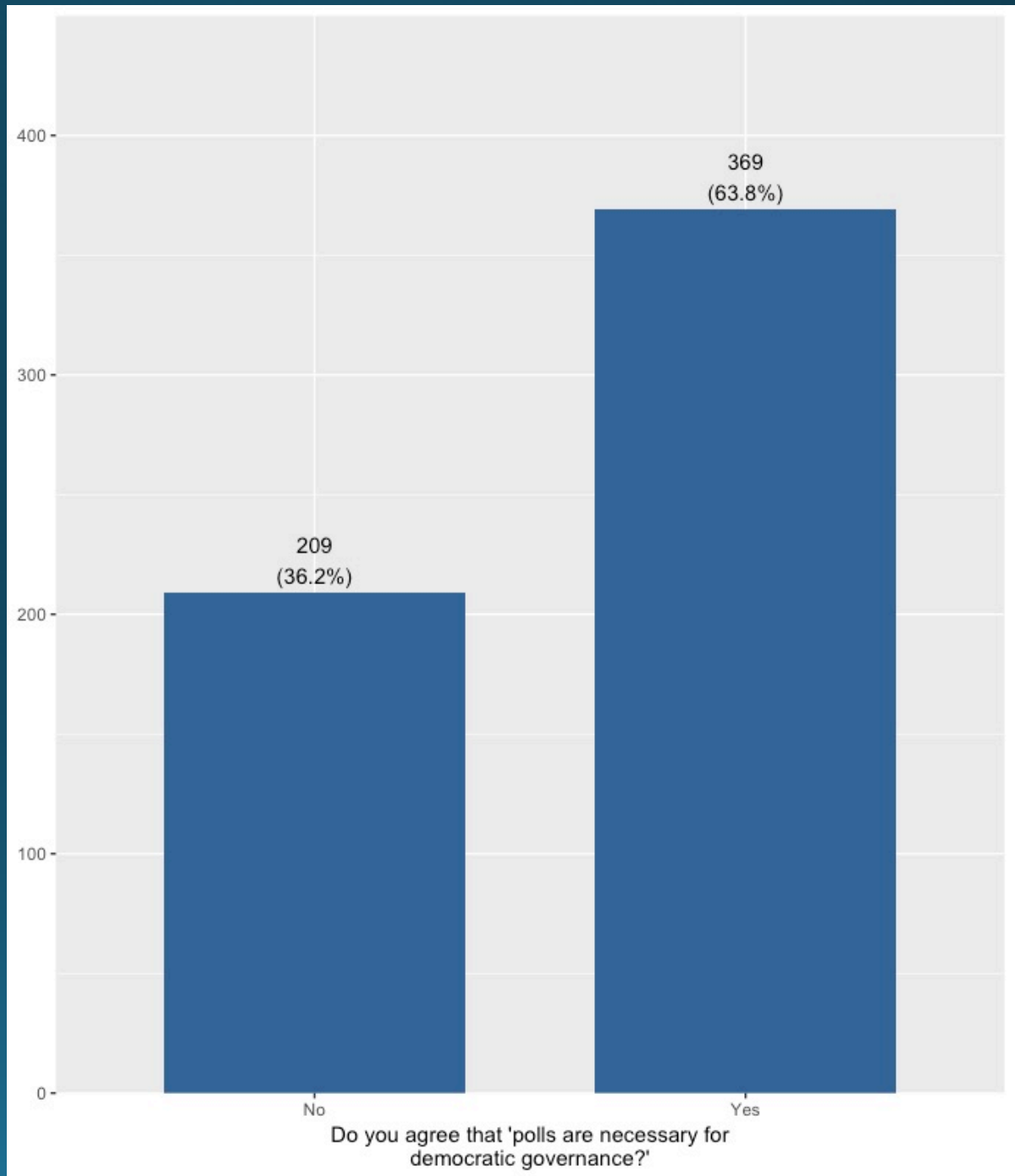
百分比	性別 gender			年齡 Age							total 總人數
	M 男性	F 女性	社會 性別	<20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	>60	NA 未答	
%	43.9	48.8	7.3	5.7	38.1	30.8	17	5.5	2.6	0.3	578

百分比	戶籍地區 Residence Areas						total 總人數
	北部 N	中部 C	南部 S	東部 E	其他 rest	未答 NA	
%	36	19.4	28.3	2.6	2.1	11.6	578

Polls seem  
to be  
trusted...

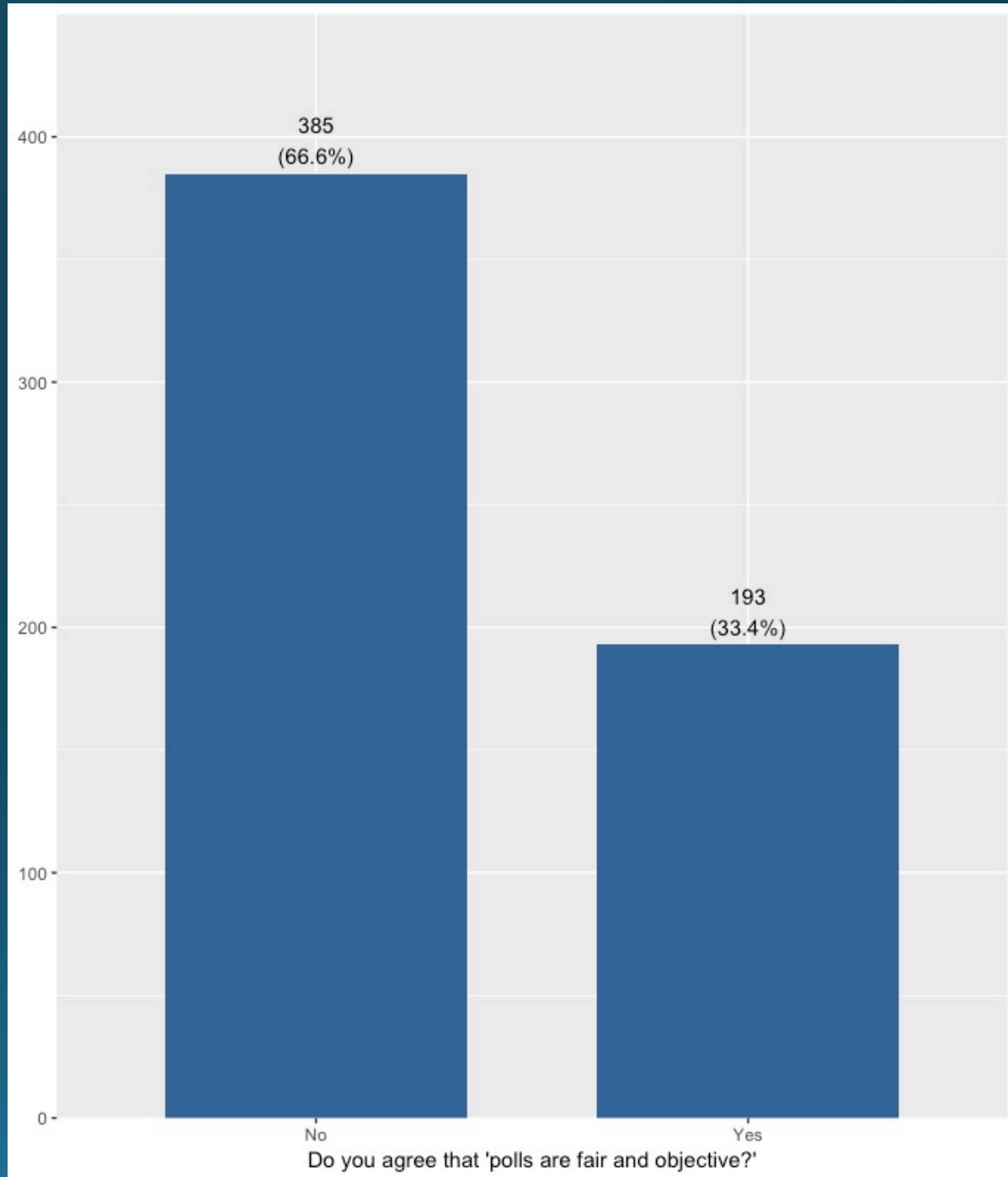


and necessary  
for democracy

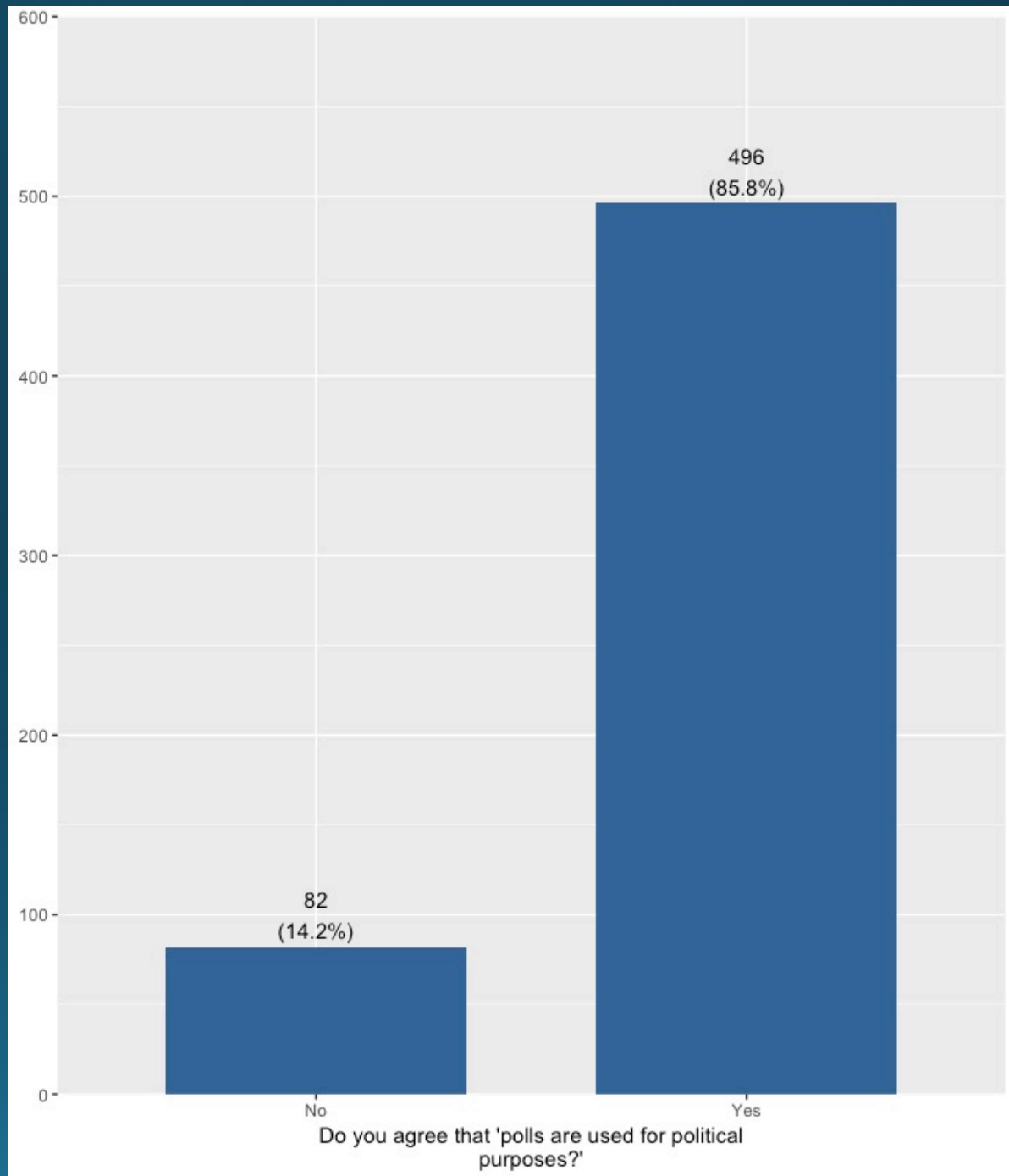




But they are  
not seen fair  
and objective...



# Polls are political.



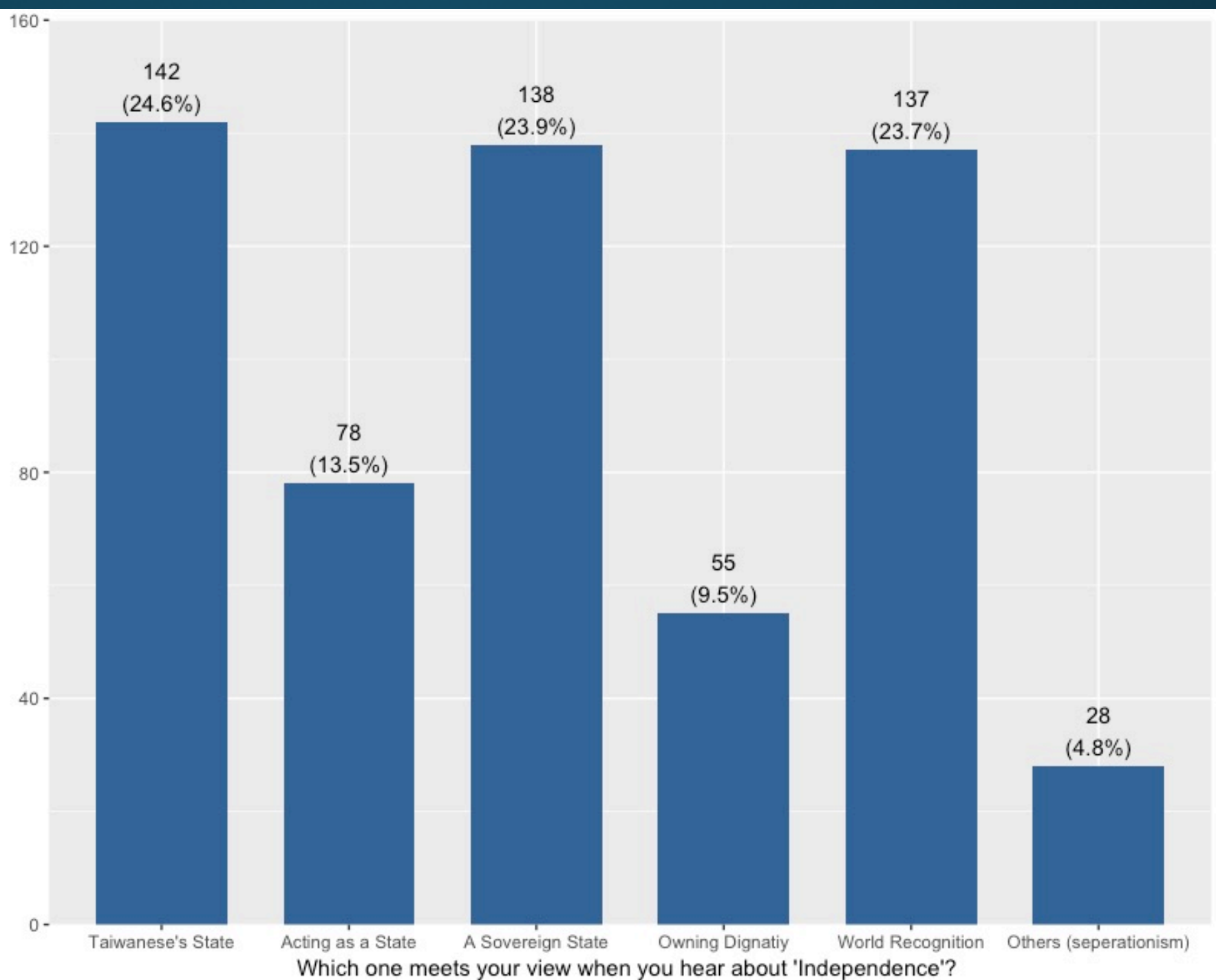
# Taiwanese people have multiple views about

- state: Taiwan or ROC?
- nation: Taiwanese, Chinese, Both, or something else?
- future relationship with PRC: separation, unification, or status quo?

One possible cause of distrusting political polls is...

That we have a good number of measurements,  
but we lack of enough effort to validate the  
concept-measurement connections.

Which matches your view when you think about Independence?



# Research Questions

- Are the measurements properly conceptualized?
- Do the major concepts find their measurements?
  - How sure are we when we associate the measurements with concepts (national/ethnic and state/country identification)?
  - How to conceptualize the most commonly used survey question—unification/independence preference?
  - Could we find the right indicators for the concept of national/ethnic identification?

# Research Methods

- Revisit the Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) approach
- Explore with Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) techniques
- Double check patterns with multiple datasets



# Data Sets

- F2F Survey: Taiwan Social Change Survey 2013 (n=1,952)
- CATI Telephone survey 2015 (n=1,100)
- Web panel 2015-2016 (n=468)

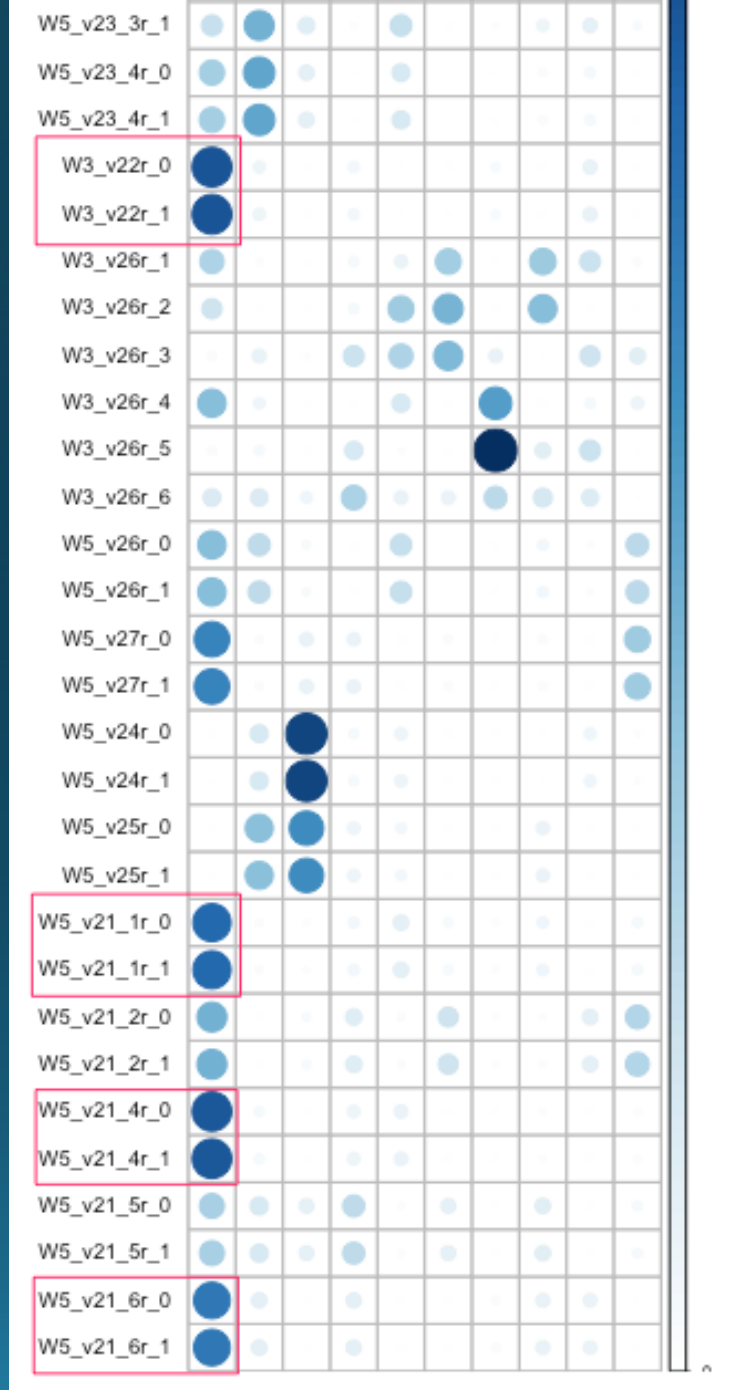
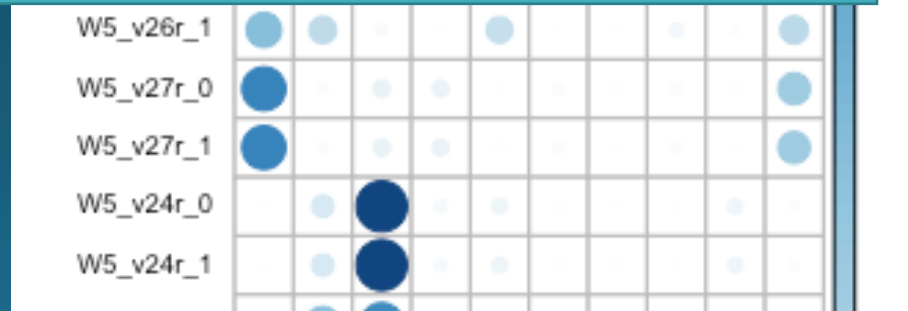
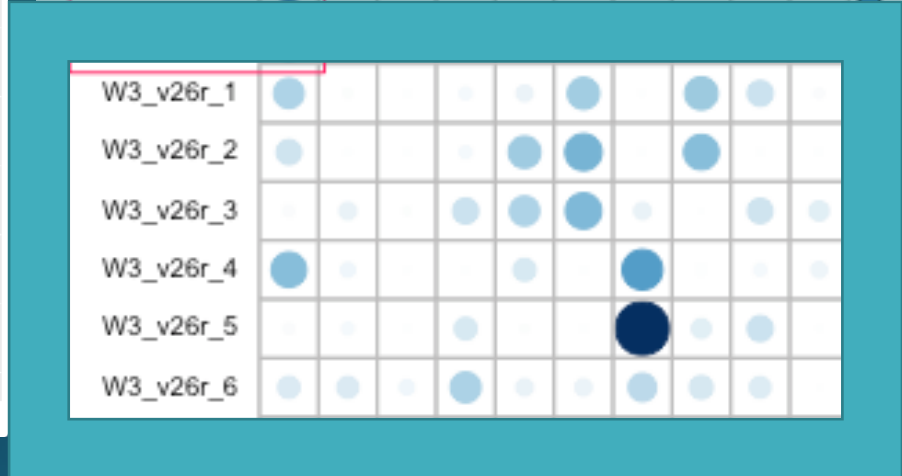
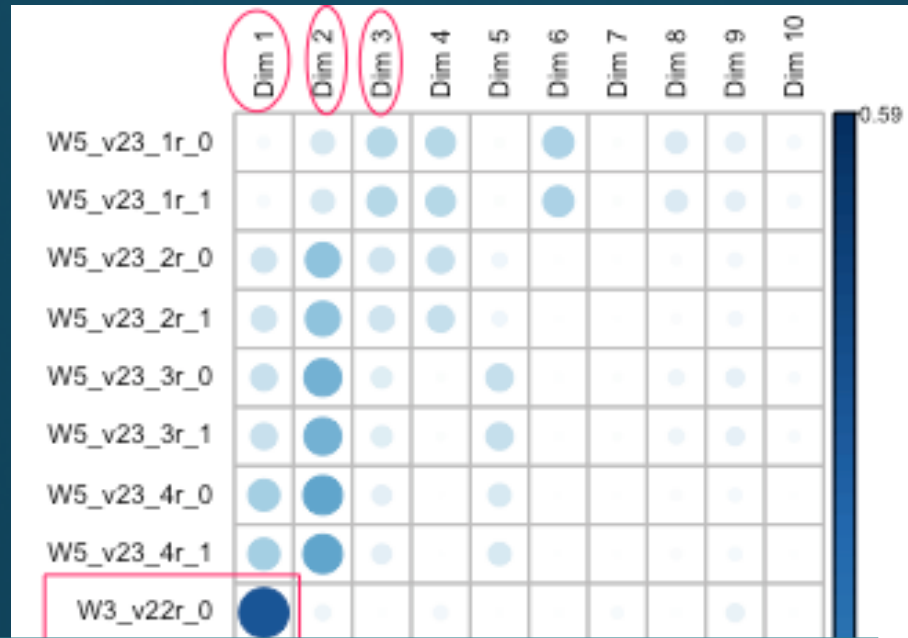
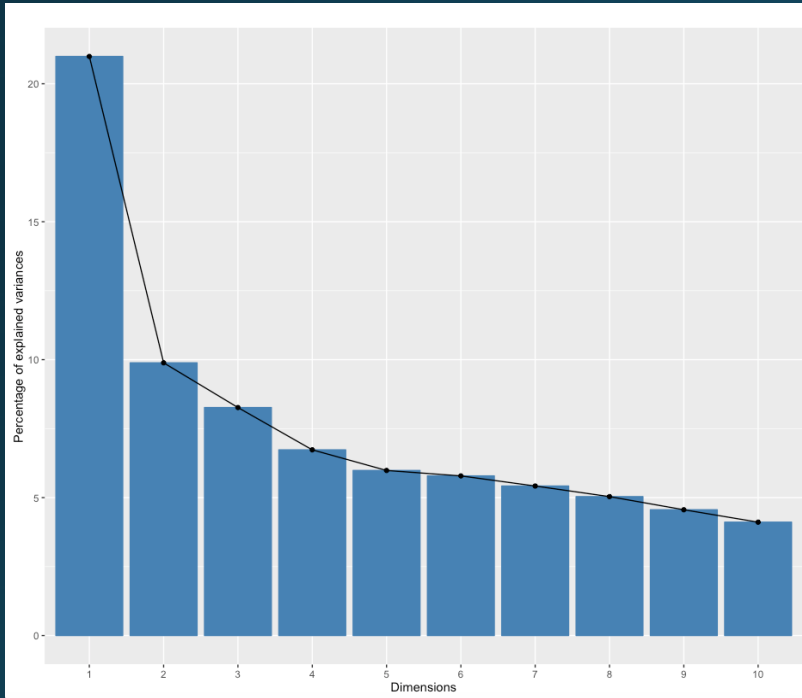
**My first point (primary finding):**  
Conceptualization problem regarding the independent/unification preferences can lead to confusion and distrust in Taiwan politics.

The commonly used simple "unification/independence" question can NOT be grouped into any of the top 10 dimensions.





# Webpanel 2015-2016



My second point:

The majority of poll questions are about national identification.



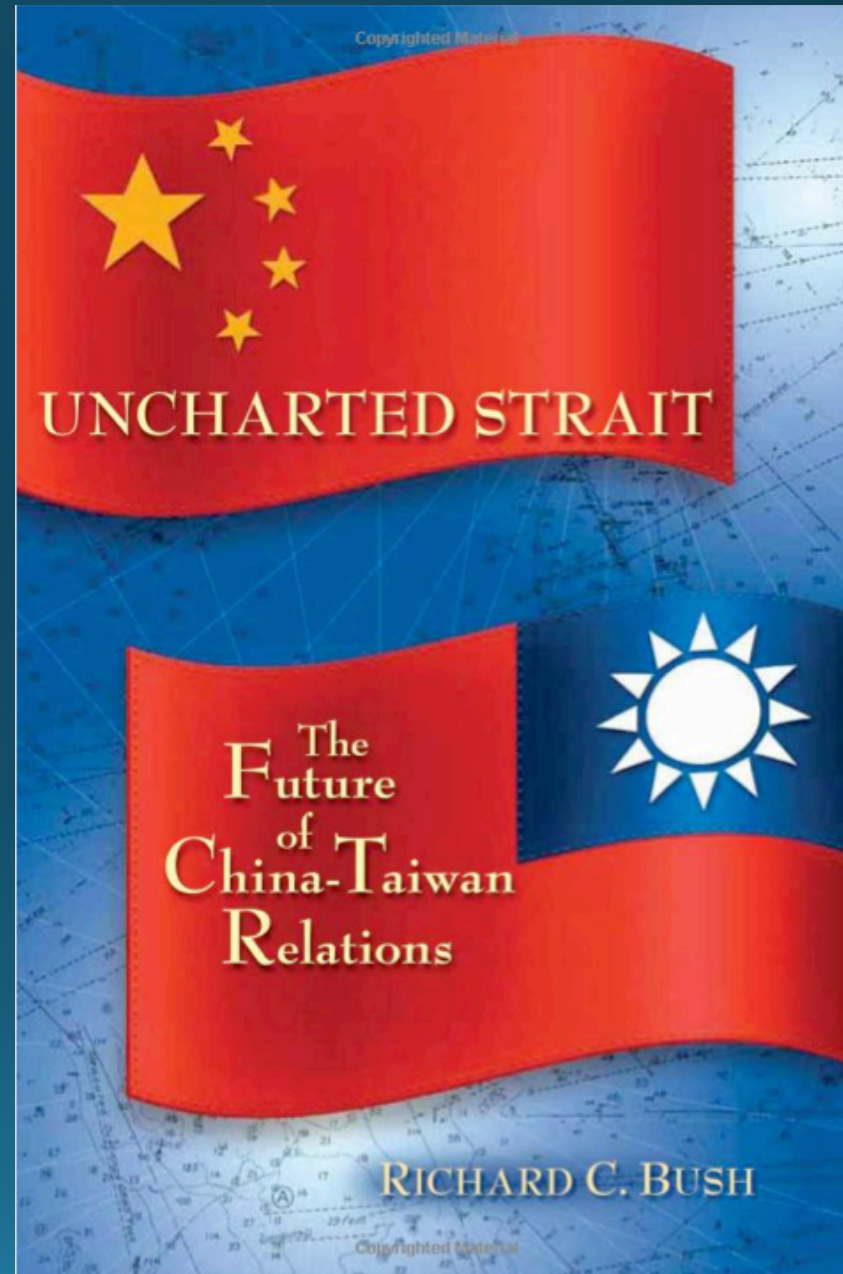
- **“Do you consider yourself as Taiwanese, Chinese, or both?” is grouped with the questions below:**
  - “The Chinese people consist of various ethnic groups, and those groups should not be isolated from one another perception about Chinese nation.”
  - “Taiwan has developed very different cultures that should no longer be regarded as part of Chinese culture.”
  - “The Chinese people consist of various ethnic groups, and those groups should not be isolated from one another.”
  - “Taiwanese people’s forefather is the Yellow Emperor (also called as Huang-di) from China, and we must inherit such an original and history.”
  - “As the descendants of the Yellow Emperor, we should try our best to promote Chinese culture in the international community.”

# How about refining the questions?

- The refined, conditional unification/independence questions are (at best) measurements of national identification:
  - “If the independence of Taiwan would not lead to war, we should declare independence.”
  - “If the economic, social and political development in China is more or less the same as development in Taiwan, there should be a cross-strait unification.”



So, it is likely that we are  
not talking about two  
nation-states  
but two state-nations

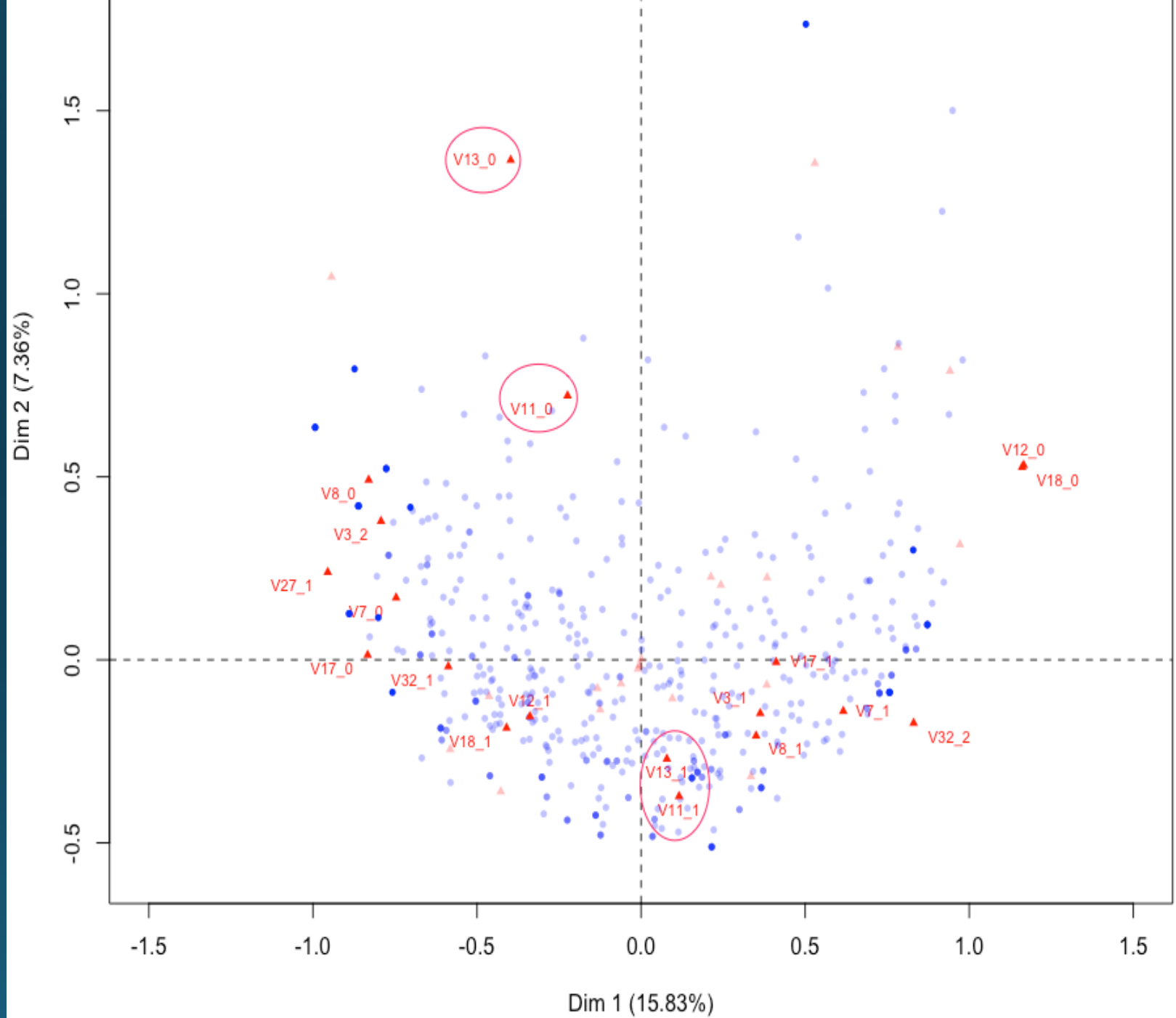


My third (minor) point:  
Here comes a new group of  
measurement that requires  
conceptualization.

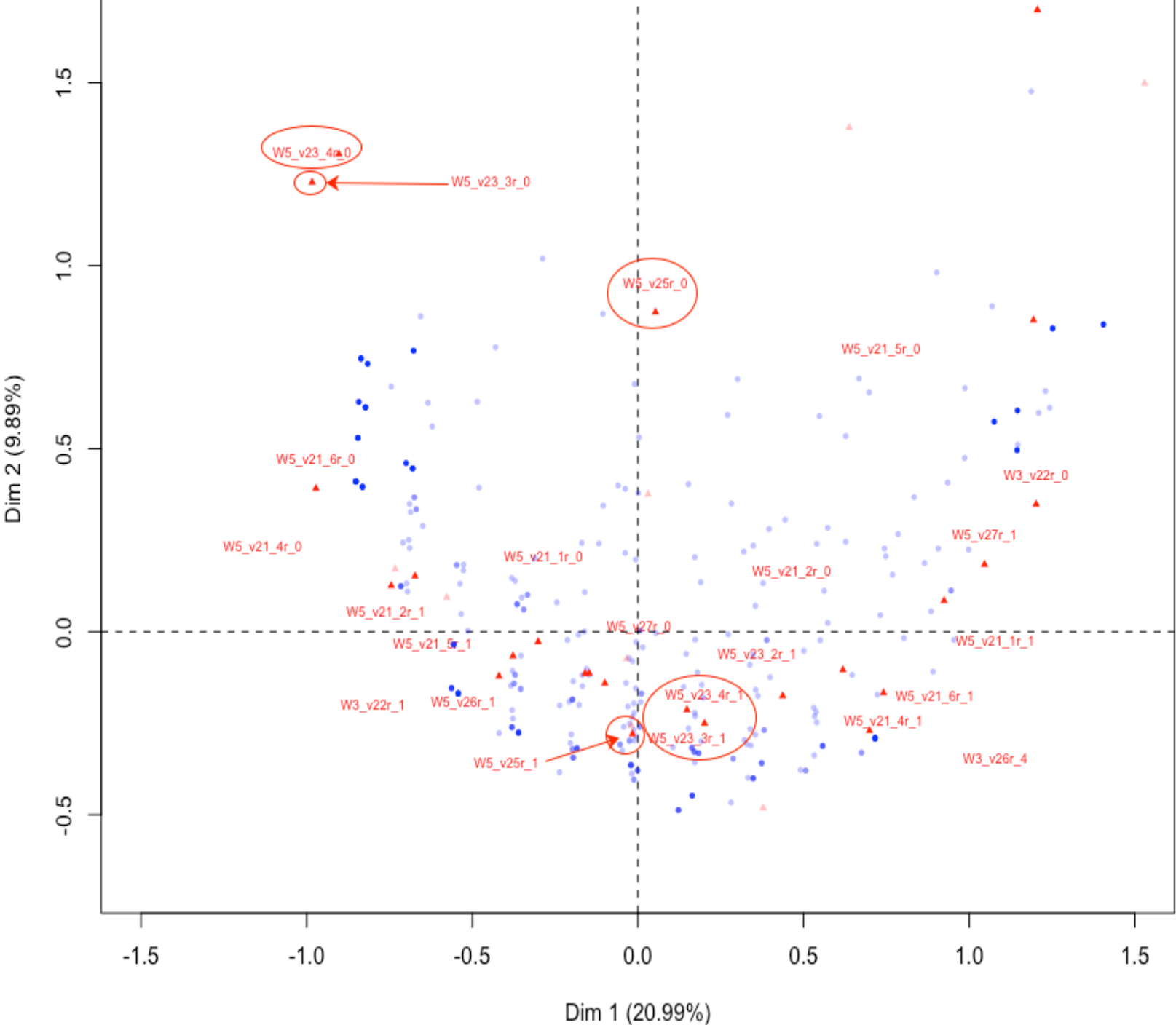
- "End of the Ching Dynasty and establishment of **the Republic of China** is an important historical event and should be remembered by the next generation and forever."
- "The victory of the Second Sino-Japanese War is an important historical event and should be remembered by the next generation and forever."



# ID2015



# Webpanel 2015-2016





# Discussion

- It is likely that most commonly used poll questions regarding Taiwan's political future, including state name choice, are linked to one latent concept: national/ethnic identification. (and no beyond)
- The commonly used poll question regarding independence/unification, which assumes a linear spectrum, can be very misleading because this measurement has no link to a concrete concept.
- The heavy use of this independence/unification question in polls could help explain why voters in Taiwan see polls are politically used and cannot be objective and fair (...for future research).