



**Revisiting Taiwan and Chinese nationalism: identity and status in international society**

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## Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism: Identity and Status in International Society

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(In Dafydd Fell and Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao (eds.), *Taiwan Studies Revisited*, Routledge: New York and London, 2019, (isbn-1-: 0367201720; isbn-13: 978-0367201722))

This account of the writing of *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism: Identity and Status in International Society* describes the challenges and opportunities of doing research while living through the confusion of the early stage of Taiwan's democratization, the end of the Cold War and the emergence of China as a superpower. It attempts to convey how the project became successful when the research question was formulated with reference to an appropriate body of nationalist theory and when the appropriate method was found for making sense of a rapidly growing body of evidence. By being in the right place and at the right time, what students often think of as dry academic tasks of engaging with theory and method became the source of the excitement and creativity that led to the development of the original concept of Taiwan as 'a post-nationalist entity in an intermediate state'.

It would be nice to be able to claim that *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism: Identity and Status in International Society*, was the result of a well-thought-out research plan. A more honest account is that it was the outcome of the author being lucky enough to be in the right place and at the right time. This makes it very much a snapshot of Taiwan at a particularly exciting period in its own political history, which occurred as the world entered the post-Cold War period.

To explain how I decided on the topic, it is necessary to say a bit about the circuitous route that brought me into contact with Taiwan. As an undergraduate and graduate student, I had studied intellectual history with a special focus on the history of political thought. An initial interest in China had been sparked when I had touched on Chinese philosophy and art. I had also come into contact with nationalist theory, especially when I studied under Elie Kedouri and Kenneth Minogue at the LSE. One book that had made a particularly deep impression was Joseph Levenson's monumental trilogy, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*, which opened my eyes to the remarkable story of the identity crisis involved in China's painful transition to modernity (Levenson 1958).

In the early 1980s I also decided to start to learn Mandarin Chinese at evening school and with a private tutor. This was partly due to academic inquisitiveness but also because China was beginning to become more accessible for travellers and increasingly salient in the media in the early years of Deng Xiaoping's policy of 'Reform and Opening.' I then took the leap in 1986 and spent just under a year backpacking around most of China, including Xinjiang and Tibet. I think the first time Taiwan entered my consciousness was when someone waved a Taiwanese bank note in front of me on a train and asked what they could do with it in a rather nervous fashion.

Those were the heady days when the government of the reformist CCP general secretary, Hu Yaobang (胡耀邦), unleashed an explosion of creative and eclectic thinking across the arts and politics. I became involved with the movement of young experimental artists and planned

to help them to gain exposure for their work in the UK. To develop my knowledge further, I registered for the MA Area Studies (Far East) at SOAS in 1987, taking courses in Chinese politics, art and archaeology and mediaeval philosophy.

There were no courses in Taiwan studies in those days. I even recall the great Mao scholar, Stuart Schram, refusing to allow a student to give a presentation on the topic in his class on Chinese politics. But Taiwan began to become a story in the news when Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國) passed away. With my interest further stimulated by talking to Taiwanese students I decided to travel to the island to improve my language skills at the Mandarin Training Centre at Taiwan National Normal University.

Taiwan was an exciting but confusing place to be in 1988. After Chiang's death, Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) had taken over the Presidency. The situation was quite surreal, as demands for democratization grew while the parliamentary chambers were populated by representatives who had been elected in China in the 1940s and refused to relinquish power until they could return there to hold new elections. The social infrastructure had deteriorated badly after decades of neglect by a ruling party who proudly proclaimed that its aim was not to stay in Taiwan but to 'unify China under the Three Principles of the People', as billboards outside government buildings constantly reminded the population. It was not hard to understand why people should ignore such abstract political principles and take to the streets to demand better governance. In the crowded suburb of Yunggho (永和), where I lived, there were no public spaces, no metro system and very few outlets that resembled modern shops. The contrast with thriving Yonggho today, with its restored parks and good transport links attests to the often-overlooked achievements of democracy at the local level.

As I began to think about doing a PhD, it was obvious that the focus would have to be related to democratisation in some way. How I looked at this was also influenced by the comparison of what I had witnessed in China. Much like in Taiwan, society there had been boiling over with demands for political change as a new generation refused to accept the myths of the past. This came to a bloody end when dissent was crushed in the 1989 Beijing Massacre. At the time I was sitting in Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Plaza, where the crowds had been in contact with the students in Tiananmen Square through a video link to a large screen. To this day I do not know what happened to the friends I had made during my visit there, some of whom were students at the Beijing Academy of Fine Arts, where the 'Goddess of Democracy' was constructed.

The questions began to grow, therefore, as to how these societies could relate to each other as they moved in such different directions. The contrast only became starker when students in Taiwan occupied the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Plaza to call for elections to the National Assembly. When the KMT literally wheeled its veteran members into the chamber to oppose the demands for change, President Lee eventually threw himself behind the calls for reform. Democratization in Taiwan entered a new and exciting stage just as China was put under martial law and the Communist Party began to look anew to Chinese nationalism to rebuild its legitimacy.

### **Theory, Methods and fieldwork**

With a whole set of vague questions starting to gel in my mind I decided to return to London and get the academic training to undertake a more systematic analysis. In stark contrast with the flourishing of Taiwan studies in the UK today, it proved almost impossible find a

supervisor. It was by pure luck that I happened to be listening to the radio one day and there was an interview about Taiwan with Michael Yahuda, a world-leading expert on Chinese foreign policy in the International Relations Department at the LSE. I contacted him and after some discussion, he agreed to supervise me. This was a generous decision because neither of us had a clear idea about how to approach the complex and rapidly developing situation in Taiwan.

The first problem with framing the research was the lack of secondary academic literature. When I conducted my initial bibliographic search the results were paltry, to put it generously. I think there were only two books of much use in the various libraries attached to the University of London. One of these was Thomas Gold's *State and Society in the Taiwan Miracle* (Gold 1986) without which I would not have known where to start; the other was Chiu Hungdah's *China and the Question of Taiwan: Documents and Analysis*, a 1972 book on the ROC and international law, which was extremely useful and important for background information, but somewhat out of date (Chiu 1972). Other books, such as George Kerr's *Formosa Betrayed*, were very useful for gaining insights into Taiwanese identity, but very out of date. In general, though, the study of Taiwan had been dominated by the Cold War concerns with geostrategy and security studies, with little work done on deeper issues of social and political change.

Deciding to do a PhD on an unfolding situation does also have advantages. The greatest is that it is much easier to make the claim originality that is required for a successful thesis. I would not have been so lucky if I had come to the topic a few years later, when a new wave of books by pioneering authors such as Alan Wachman (whose early death was a tragic blow to all of us) and Shelley Rigger was appearing, triggered by interests similar to my own (Wachman 1994; Rigger 1999).

Luckily the theoretical approach I decided to take ensured that my work would add to that literature, rather than just restate what began to be published. While students often bemoan an apparent preoccupation with theory in the social sciences, I cannot stress enough how important this was in helping me to make sense of the mass of empirical evidence being generated in Taiwan. Having struggled in my first year, my eureka moment came when I joined the seminar on nationalism held every week at the LSE by Anthony Smith and James Mayall. This was a crowded and intensely interesting group of students and faculty, inspired by the nationalist movements that were breaking the political mould around the world after the Cold War. It rekindled the interest nationalism that I had earlier developed when studying under Elie Kedouri and Kenneth Minogue.

It was while working in this context that it suddenly became clear to me that what I was really interested in was the implications of democratisation in Taiwan for Chinese nationalism. This question might seem rather obvious today, but throughout the Cold War nationalism had been eclipsed by the struggle between the superpowers, with a few brave exceptions, such as Benedict Anderson (1991 [1983]) Elie Kedouri (1961) and Anthony Smith (1986). Even the study of Chinese nationalism did not become as serious subject of academic study until the wave of books that was triggered by the 'new nationalism' of the 1990s.

I was fortunate, therefore, that the debates of the post-Cold War years certainly provided some concepts to bring to the study of Taiwan. Anderson's idea of the nation as an 'imagined community' was particularly useful for focusing on the *politics* of national identity. Anthony

Smith's distinction of 'ethnic' and 'civic nationalism' was also useful for developing this question, insofar as it showed how the claim made by the CCP and KMT that the populations on the two sides of the Taiwan Strait were obliged to unify due to blood ties, which has very different implications from the voluntaristic form of 'civic nationalism' upon which the liberal concept of citizenship is based (Smith 1986).

It was Ernest Gellner's definition of nationalism as the principle that 'the political and the national unit should be congruent' that eventually provided a simple starting point for designing the research programme (Gellner 1990: 1). When applied to Taiwan, this would become the question of what would happen when the political unit of 'Taiwan' no longer claimed to be congruent with the national unit of 'China'.

When faced by big and complex questions, such simple concepts are necessary for providing a clear thread to guide research. The complexity of my subject matter was certainly growing as identity politics, both ideationally and institutionally, began to be reshaped by the exercise of sovereignty through the ballot box in Taiwan. This provided an opportunity to develop theory as Gellner's principle, which implies there can be no room for compromise, was challenged by creative political thinking that effectively loosened the bonds of ethnic Chinese nationalism in novel ways.

Another advantage of using nationalist theory was that it allowed me to avoid getting bogged down in the fruitless arguments over rival historical claims over the status of Taiwan. At the start of the book I thus make it clear that I am only interested in how history was politicised by the two parties, not in trying to define Taiwan's identity and status by finding some kind of archival proof. This meant that the first task of the contextual paragraph was thus to explain how the Chinese claim to Taiwan became a criterion for the leadership legitimacy of the two parties in the Chinese civil war, when the prospect of gaining control over the island arose during World War Two. The fact that I included evidence that the Communists had not seen Taiwan as part of China before this, including Mao Zedong's 1936 remark to Edgar Snow that it should be helped in its struggle for independence from Japan, like Korea, probably explains why the work has never been honoured by publication in China (Snow 1978: 128-9).

The key claim to originality, however, would be to show what happened when ethnic Chinese nationalism collided with the forces of democratisation that were shaping a more civic conception. This led to one of the most exciting periods of my research, when I began to look at how people in Taiwan had been addressing the problems raised by theorists of nationalism for many years already. In this respect, it would be fair to say that a figure like Dr. Peng Ming-min, was some twenty years ahead of Anderson and Smith. As early as 1972, he had developed explored the relationship between political community and national identity in ways that challenged ethnic nationalism, publishing them during his exile in Canada in *A Taste of Freedom* (Peng 1972). This should be compulsory reading for all students of Taiwan and of nationalism in general.

Central to Peng's argument was the very modernist proposition that Taiwan should be understood as a 'community of shared destiny' (命運共同體). By this he meant that there was no more of an obligation for people who identify with a Chinese to all live in one China, any more than there is such an obligation for the Anglo Saxons scattered through Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand to live in one state. Thanks to a collection of *Dang Wai* magazines on microfilm held at the British Library, I was able to trace how this

loosening of the bonds between ethnic and political identity was further developed by the most brilliant of the Taiwan's dissident thinkers in the 1970s. These ideas were ultimately appropriated for the KMT in the 1990s by Lee Tenghui, who recast Peng's conception of the nation as the Kantian conception of *Gemeinschaft* (生命共同體) and avoiding the use of the concept state (國) by referring to Taiwan as a 'political entity' (政治實體).

Bigger than this historical challenge was how to follow the way in which these basic conceptions of national identity were being changed by the process of democratisation unfolding in Taiwan. Having been able to secure funding for my research from what was then the Economic and Social Research Council of the United Kingdom, I could do this *in situ*. Living in Taiwan I could take full advantage of the remarkable flourishing of journalism that took place as political constraints were eased.

I developed a systematic method of building up a card index (personal computers were still rudimentary!) from reading several newspapers every day, representing views across the political spectrum. These included the United Daily News (聯合報), China Times (中國時報) and the KMT's official organ(中央日報); for the opposition, there was the Independence Morning Post (自立早報) and Independence Evening News (自立晚報). As important as the record of events in these newspapers was the editorials and opinion pieces which provided remarkably high quality analysis and debates of government policies, political struggles and the profound issues of national identity politics. Finally there was the appearance of substantial monographs by leading political actors, as figures such as President Lee Teng-hui, or DPP Chair Hsu Hsin-liang (許信良) Lee attempted to explain their thinking on key issues relevant to my research. As an increasing number of books on Taiwanese identity and history appeared, there was now an embarrassment of riches when it came to research material.

All of this contextual material was extremely useful for understanding the significance of the more mainstream sources of academic research, such as the statements, policy papers and election campaign materials issued by the government and political parties. By asking how these debates were addressing and shaping the basic concepts and principles of nationalist theory, it was not hard to develop the hypothesis that democratisation in Taiwan was stretching the idea of 'one China' but it was not clear towards what. Rather than assume that Chinese ethnic nationalism would be replaced by an equivalent kind of Taiwanese nationalism, it was more interesting to explore what would happen if external constraints forced something different to emerge. I decided to call this a 'post-nationalist' identity, because it would be based on subjective loyalty to the island but still shaped in significant ways by the demands of Chinese nationalism.

This led to the second dimension of the research, which was to ask how democratisation and the practice of sovereignty in Taiwan could be compatible with the international system of sovereign states. The importance of this question was evident in the early 1990s as war erupted in the Balkans over secessionist movements from the former Yugoslavia. Given that the Chinese Communists were increasingly relying on nationalism to claim legitimacy after Tiananmen, it was important to ask whether creative thinking and diplomacy on both sides of the Taiwan Strait would be able to avoid a descent into conflict. Even more interesting from the perspective of International Relations theory was to ask whether the international system itself could be flexible enough to adapt to whatever Taiwan was becoming.

The theoretical framework for this part of the thesis was influenced by James Mayall's *Nationalism and International Society* (1993). Rooted in the English School approach to understanding world politics that was dominant at the LSE in those days, this focused on the international political dynamics that arise when the system of legally sovereign states is challenged by demands for self-determination made by sub-state or trans-state communities.

In the 1990s, as economic globalization began to accelerate, it appeared that new political dynamics were creating opportunities to loosen the bonds of sovereignty and identity that a dynamic economy such as Taiwan might be well placed to exploit. The final part of the research was thus to look at how the restrictions of statehood imposed by international society were being weakened by Taiwan's diplomacy resulting in a unique situation where the island was neither recognised as part of 'China' or as an independent sovereign state. It was to describe this phenomenon that I coined the term 'intermediate state.'

The concept was actually inspired by a passage in Hedley Bull's seminal International Relations book, *The Anarchical Society*, where he discusses the alternatives to the current Westphalian international system of sovereign states and remarks: 'the appearance of entities that remain transfixed between two statehoods might signal the decline of international society' (Bull 1993: 267). This struck me as a very important proposition that the case of Taiwan appeared to contradict, because it was thriving in every way in a condition of being transfixed between the two possible statehoods of the PRC and a Taiwan enjoying diplomatic recognition from major states and the UN. By showing that democratisation had stretched the meaning of 'China' and that pragmatic diplomacy had allowed Taiwan to thrive in international society without diplomatic recognition, I could thus contribute to both nationalist and International Relations theory by proposing that the new concept of a 'post-nationalist entity in an intermediate state' was needed to categorise Taiwan.

My choice of theory was thus very much a product of the immediate post-Cold War period. My method was determined to a large extent by fast-changing circumstances. My training in intellectual history also steered me away from trying to evaluate the rational coherence of arguments over concepts such as 'nation' and 'state' in favour of an analysis of how these were deployed in the political strategies of people were thinking and acting to resolve a variety of problems in a fast-changing situation. To paraphrase what Joseph Levenson recommended in his book on the fate of Confucianism, it was not a history not of thought that was required but an understanding of how people were thinking, that could reveal all the creativity, imagination and constructive ambiguity that this involves.

Once I had a clear research question, the best way to do this was to just to absorb, catalogue and analyse as much information as possible in the immediate environment. While such an approach might not sound particularly scientific, it has produced outstanding results in other cases. Perhaps the best example is the twentieth-century's foremost China watcher, Simon Leys (the pen name of Pierre Ryckmans), who prided himself on being able to predict more about what would happen in China than the best-trained social scientists by merely talking to Chinese friends and reading the daily newspapers from that country (Leys 1989).

This method is certainly even more necessary when you are living through a period of fast political change. Like most foreign scholars doing research in Taiwan at the early stage of their career, I benefitted immensely from talking to people who I met not just socially but also through work. This included as an English teacher for adult learners, and as a translator at the Government Information Office-sponsored multilingual magazine *Sinorama* (光華雜

誌). It was enlightening and uplifting to witness how journalists and editors reacted to the shifting political environment, taking advantage of the growing confusion in the ideological guidelines from above to branch out into areas that were formerly considered taboo. This would be a research project worth conducting in itself.

Whereas I had started the research with a dearth of material, therefore, the main problem had become one of keeping up with the tidal wave of information and knowing where to stop. It was only by having a clear set of questions rooted in nationalist theory that this could be made manageable. This could allow me to mine the data to gain insights into how political actors were changing the meaning of nation, state and sovereignty as they pursued power and legitimacy in a democratising system.

### **Main findings and arguments in the book**

The main finding of the project was that the processes of democratization, domestic political negotiation and compromise and diplomacy had shown how malleable the idea of the nation could become. This could be demonstrated by tracing in detail every painful step in the search for ways to navigate around the concept of the Chinese nation that had been used to legitimate the rule of the both the KMT and the CCP. While fully understanding the desire of many people in Taiwan to reject Chinese identity, it was clear that threats from conservative forces inside Taiwan and from the Chinese Communists meant that the instability followed by a declaration of independence was a too high for most people to want to pay. It was equally important to recognise that political actors and decision-makers could not ignore the positive economic possibilities presented by being part of a trans-national Chinese identity.

It was my hope that combining categorising Taiwan as ‘a post-nationalist entity in an intermediate state’ could capture the dynamics of what appeared to be an enduring situation. Although this somewhat convoluted formulation came to me at the end of the research, it seemed to be a way to challenge the assumption that Taiwan had to choose between being either part of ‘China’ or recognised as ‘independent,’ both of which terms are rarely defined. All the domestic and international dynamics appeared to be pointing to the fact that it would have to find its own, unique way to survive between these two possibilities for the foreseeable future.

I also hoped that this concept could contribute to the broader debates on nationalism. This is because the idea of a ‘post-nationalist’ identity can be understood as going beyond an inherited national identity but is not the same as entirely negating it. The evidence supported this in the case of Taiwan, because ways were being sought to keep ‘Chineseness’ as a valued part of many people’s identity, so long as it was separated from the principles of statehood and political legitimacy.

I also hoped that the idea of the ‘intermediate state’ could contribute to debates in International Relations theory, especially as notions of statehood were becoming increasingly elastic under the impact of globalisation. Rather than assume that Taiwan was posing a threat to the international system (as many of its critics were trying to say and Bull’s comments would seem to imply), it was more interesting to explore how ‘pragmatic diplomacy’ was creating a new kind of international dispensation. This could be seen in the use of imaginative concepts, such as the ‘substantive relations’ forged with Japan and the US and the ‘reciprocal recognition’ used to build links with small states. Then there was the host of creative practices that Taiwan’s politicians and diplomats began to develop in order to create



international space, such as ‘dollar diplomacy’ and even the ‘vacation diplomacy’ used to maintain links with Southeast Asian states by sending government personnel there for their ‘holidays’.

By looking at Taiwan in this way it was possible to side-step the temptation to make a moral judgement about whether Taiwan ought to be either independent or unified with China. Instead, such a perspective made it possible to evaluate how Taiwan was actually using its often-understated economic, diplomatic and cultural strengths to create a special niche in the international system. Those strengths were especially evident on the economic side in the 1990s, when Taiwan still had a lead over the PRC in many respects. Moreover, by developing the flexible concept of a ‘political entity’ (政治實體) instead of ‘state’, it was well-placed to align with trends that were eroding the nation-state, namely regionalisation, globalisation and the ‘Third Wave’ of democratisation. When the Lee Teng-hui administration was forced by opposing domestic and international pressures to propose that there might be something called ‘one China’, but that Taiwan and the PRC had different governments within it, something quite revolutionary was happening from the perspective of International Relations theory.

It is my greatest regret about the book that the concept of Taiwan as a ‘post-nationalist identity in an intermediate state’ was not taken up more broadly by academics. I still think this is useful for explaining the situation that has been created as political actors in Taiwan have had to meet the challenge of explaining and articulating the nature of Taiwan’s unique international situation to widely different audiences at home, in the PRC and in international society more generally. The need to ameliorate pressures maintaining the myth of ‘one china’, while making it clear that sovereignty is practiced by the people of Taiwan through the ballot box, has not gone away since the book was published.

While the lack of diplomatic recognition is undoubtedly a source of great frustration for the majority of people in Taiwan, it is to the credit of the island’s politicians and policy makers that creative thinking has allowed a pluralist form of post-nationalist identity to emerge on the back of a flourishing civil society at home. At the same time, despite periods of tension and often vicious rhetoric from Beijing, both sides of the Taiwan Strait have benefited enormously from the forging of special economic and cultural links. The consolidation of Taiwan’s subjectivity might have been constrained by the attraction of the Chinese economy and enduring family and cultural links, but the result has been a metamorphosis of identity politics rather than the kind of collapse into communal violence seen in other parts of the world since the Cold War.

When faced by pessimism concerning Taiwan’s future that seems to be pervasive on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, I thus like to point out the remarkable achievements that have been made by avoiding the assumption that only zero-sum outcomes are possible. This has become even more important to recognise as democratisation and the lack of diplomatic recognition has forced Taiwan to continue to deconstruct nationalism, while there has been a hardening of ethnic Chinese nationalism in the PRC, due to the ideological crisis of the CCP and the political and cultural impact of globalisation. The case of Taiwan thus provides rich insights into the possibilities for crisis management, building international stability and even for the development of nationalism in China itself.

Given that events have borne out my hypothesis, I would not have approached the project any differently with the benefit of hindsight. This is also due to the practical reason that

developing and using a more sophisticated methodology would have been very difficult due to the fact that I was really running to keep up with events. It should also be remembered that there was virtually no secondary literature to draw on, given the speed of change. Finally, it is easy to forget just how sensitive the topic was at the time.

It should be clear from the above, however, that working on an unfolding and sensitive topic does have great advantages. I was delighted and surprised when the PhD thesis was awarded the British International Studies Association prize in 1997, despite the fact that it was not possible to include the Taiwan Strait crisis that developed from the summer of 1995 through the first presidential election in 1996. The pleasure of receiving this accolade was only accentuated by the fact that my fellow research students at the LSE had treated my topic as a bit of a joke, wondering why I was bothering to work on a such an insignificant issue as a faraway, authoritarian ruled island.

The Straits crisis of 1995-96 may well have helped me to get the contract to publish the thesis as a Routledge monograph. The fact that the quick return to the *status quo ante* made it relatively easy to integrate those events into the text seems to attest to the robustness of my main hypothesis about the durability of the political dispensation. I was very pleased to be able to summarize the core of my argument in a single chapter in a volume on Asian nationalism edited by Michael Leifer (Hughes 2000). I certainly regret that I did not do more to build on the growing interest after publication, due to pressures of job-hunting and family. I would urge all scholars to avoid making that mistake, no matter how overwhelmed you might be with other tasks and issues.

I was very pleased to have a glowing review from Professor June Dreyer at Miami University, however. As more scholars in the United States began to pay attention to Taiwan after the crisis I also received emails expressing their gratitude for the detailed and dispassionate explanation I had provided of the linkage between Taiwan's complex domestic politics and cross-Strait relations. The work has steadily gained more attention as Taiwan has become one of the most important case studies in the social sciences and Taiwan studies has grown from strength to strength. I was delighted when a second edition was published as a much more affordable softback in 2014 and then as a Kindle version. I am absolutely delighted to have played my part in the growing community of academics who have put Taiwan on the academic map in the 1990s.

The field has developed in ways that were unimaginable when I started my project, especially with the very advanced methods used by scholars working on topics from elections, cultural and anthropological studies of identity, or political economy research into the role of the Taishang. My main consolation is that Taiwan has continued to develop its unique status and identity and avoided the kind of violent conflict witnessed in so many parts of the world over identity politics and nationalism, even as China power has grown to exceed what most people expected when I was doing my research in the 1990s.

Equally positive is the way in which ethnic Chinese nationalism has been deconstructed in Taiwan and replaced by a post nationalist identity that has exceeded all expectations in its degree of liberal diversity and social pluralism. This has been an immense source of power in itself, as the international system has to accommodate the existence of a significant entity that is neither a part of the PRC nor a state that enjoys diplomatic recognition. Central to this is the behaviour of the most important actors, namely Taiwan, the PRC and the US. Perhaps most remarkable of all is the way in which the concept of Taiwan as a 'community of shared

destiny' that was coined by Peng Ming-min, the father of the independence movement, and appropriated by Lee Teng-hui in the 1990s, has now been taken up and applied to PRC diplomacy by none other than President Xi Jinping!

Overall, therefore, the book might be considered a snapshot of the early stage of a remarkable process that is still unfolding. I have taken every effort to keep on top of developments down to the present day. In particular, I have made it a priority to be present in Taiwan for every presidential election, although I had to miss the 2016 contest due to my duties as Head of Department at the time. I have also attended countless conferences and workshops on cross-strait relations over the years, in both Taiwan and the PRC. I have used the information from this fieldwork to produce a series of journal articles that explore the relationship between elections and the formation of identity in Taiwan, with some special emphasis on how the PRC adapts to this and takes part in shaping it (Hughes 2002; 2009; 2008; 2011; 2014). As my status in the academic profession has improved, I have also had the benefit and pleasure of being able to gain more access to members of the political elite. Of course, we have some very important LSE alumni in Taiwan.

As my academic research and teaching has developed to cover the international politics of the Asia-Pacific region, however, I must also be honest in admitting that I cannot pretend to be able to compete with the growing number of scholars who have focused entirely on Taiwan throughout their careers. Most humbling is the amazing work conducted by Taiwanese social scientists themselves. When confronted by such formidable competition, my best hope for doing anything valuable is to continue to try to identify the cutting-edge themes that nobody else is yet working on.

I still believe that the fate of Taiwan will to an important degree determine and be determined by the evolution of nationalism in China. However, given the now abundant work on Chinese nationalism, I have chosen to focus more specifically on the problem of Chinese militarism. This issue has become increasingly salient in recent years yet remains shockingly under-researched. Taiwan is also an important case study in itself for understanding the political dynamics of militarism, having been the subject of intense militarization under both the Japanese occupation and KMT administration. It thus presents a case for understanding not only the political dynamics of using military values and practices to discipline a society but, even more importantly, it is the only case of de-militarization in a society that was shaped by the hegemony of Chinese nationalism for several decades. Exploring how the political dynamics of how Taiwan's democratization have achieved this would perhaps be a most fitting sequel to *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism*.

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