

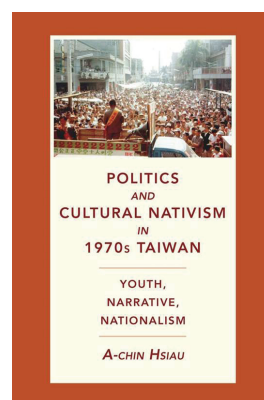
this chapter is only loosely connected with the rest of the book. Chapter Five introduces the national laws and regulations governing river-sand mining and describes the fragmented bureaucratic management below the provincial level, which explains the prevalent illegal mining and corruption in the towns and villages in Guangxi. Given the problematic legal and administrative structure, Chapters Six and Seven zoom in on local citizens and analyse the negative environmental, economic, and sociopolitical impacts of river-sand mining on rural communities. They provide first-hand information on how the livelihood of indigenous villagers has been adversely affected by the chaotic extraction and how villagers try to resist the mining activities through contentions, petitions to the government, protests on social media, and religious beliefs. These two chapters present a vivid picture of the causes and patterns of the resource conflicts aroused by river-sand mining.

As a native of the research site, the author shows strong devotion to the Zhuang people and communities under this study. She examines the mining areas and villagers both as a researcher and as a member of the community, which allows her to collect abundant insider information and keenly observe many details that other researchers may not pay attention to. The unique perspective enables this research to cover almost every important aspect of the river-sand mining business, ranging from the legal and administrative framework, market conditions, and daily operations of mining activities, to the impacts on and interactions with local citizens. Although it is a case study on one type of mineral extraction in southwest China, it depicts a rich picture of the political ecology of small mining businesses in local China. For people interested in understanding the extractive industries and their environmental and sociopolitical implications in China and beyond, the book provides plenty of interesting and useful information.

That being said, the author could have made better use of the rich empirical details to conduct more in-depth analyses and connect with wider areas of research. To begin with, the author emphasises the Zhuang people as an ethnic minority with indigenous ecological knowledge in the introduction. But the empirical analysis throughout the book does not lay out how Zhuang people may think or behave differently from Han people or other ethnic groups. What's unique about the Zhuang people and how ethnicity matters for the subject under discussion could be further explored and potentially contribute to ethnic studies. Second, the author distinguishes among river-sand miners on different dimensions, such as legal vs. illegal miners, local vs. nonlocal miners, and male vs. female miners, which are all interesting distinctions. Whether and how the different types of miners behave differently could be more carefully examined. For instance, compared with nonlocal mining companies who just extract sand from the locality and make money, do local miners care more about the interests of fellow villagers because of their shared identity and longer time horizon for interaction? And do illegal miners more easily get into conflicts with the villagers than legal miners do? These questions would be interesting to scholars studying the political economy of resource extraction. Third, based on field research in multiple villages, the author draws tables showing the characteristics of individual villages. But there is a lack of detailed analysis on how these villages manage river-sand mining and the related social conflicts, protests, corruption, etc. If the author could

conduct some comparative case studies across the villages, the book could potentially offer more insights into rural governance in China.

Overall, this book tells a typical story of what I shall call the local resource curse: whereas the abundant mineral resources make mining businesspeople rich and contribute to the local economy, the extractive activities impose multidimensional negative externalities on the local communities and citizens, such as environmental damage, economic costs, health losses, and social conflicts. Therefore, the uneven distribution of the benefits and costs makes the mining business an unfair game and prone to conflicts between the winners and losers. Meanwhile, this book reveals the gap between national policies regulating the extractive industries and actual implementation on the ground: while there are laws and regulations from top down, local governance is often ineffective, leaving ample space for corruption and local state capture by the mining businesses, often at the expense of local citizens. With these important findings, this book is a welcome addition to the growing research on the impact of mineral resource extraction on local development and governance in contemporary China.



HSIAU, A-chin. 2021.
Politics and Cultural Nativism in 1970s Taiwan: Youth, Narrative, Nationalism.
 New York: Columbia University Press.

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Written by one of the best specialists of the 1970s, a pivotal decade for the political and cultural trajectory of Taiwan, this book on “the return to reality” generation is a revised version of a first edition in Mandarin published in 2010. Beyond the richness of the corpus and the finesse of the analyses, it is above all the theoretical approach adopted by the author that makes this publication essential in the field of Taiwan studies. Indeed, the literary and political movements at the heart of the book have already been the subject of numerous studies, whether in Mandarin, English, or even French, but none of these studies adopts the generational

perspective that gives this book its originality and its analytical strength.

From a theoretical point of view, the first merit of Hsiao A-chin is to highlight the glaring lack of research carried out in a generational perspective within the field of Taiwan studies and the heuristic value of this approach. Some scholars do research on the youth of the period they consider, but the author rightly emphasises that the divisions of a population into age groups or generations should not be confused. Drawing on the work of Karl Mannheim and his successors, Hsiao A-chin shows that an “actual generation” is found at the intersection of individual biographies and the social structures of a historical process shaken by a major event – or several. In the case studied, the postwar generation encounters the double crisis of sovereignty and identity constituted by the setback suffered in the dispute with Japan for the possession of the Diaoyutai Islands, and then the expulsion of the Republic of China (ROC) from the United Nations in October 1971.

Hsiao A-chin shows that this double crisis generates the transition from a passive “generation in-itself” to a socially active “generation for-itself” by creating a dynamic of “conscientization”: the common intuition that other individuals share the same understanding of a serious situation and that a “we” can be constituted to cope with it (p. 17). This dynamic is at the origin of a generational identification and solidarity built in opposition to the elders whose blindness towards Taiwan/the ROC’s international status is denounced. To do so, he successfully combines Mannheim’s generational sociology and the theory of narrative identity to “grasp the relationships between history and biography, structure and agency, self and society” (p. 172). This fruitful combination is the second theoretical strength of the book. This approach is applied to the “generational units” studied, that is to say, again according to Mannheim, the groups of people who, within the same generation, respond differently to the common historical problems they face. The author lists three groups whose influence was preponderant for the “Taiwan turn,” which is characterised by the desire to return to the reality of the experiences lived by the Taiwanese population, and therefore to put Taiwan, and no longer China, at the forefront of intellectual, social, and political concerns. These three generational units are the subject of the last chapters (Four, Five, and Six): the rediscovery of the “New Taiwanese literature” (*Taiwan xinwenxue* 台灣新文學), the development of a nativist literature movement, and an opposition political movement outside of the Kuomintang (*dangwai* 黨外).

The first three chapters establish the theoretical (Chapter One) and historical (Chapters Two and Three) frameworks for the case studies of the generational units that are carried out subsequently. Two major objectives emerge. The first is to analyse the passage from a “generation in-itself” manifesting a certain number of specific characteristics that can be objectified but devoid of generational consciousness, to a “generation for-itself” whose members recognise common visions that are simultaneously at the root of divisions with their elders and of different forms of mobilisation.

In Chapter Two, Hsiao A-chin shows that the postwar generation is characterised first by a “quasi-exilic mentality” (for the Mainlanders who arrived in Taiwan with the Kuomintang) or a “semi-quasi-exilic mentality” (for the Taiwanese already present on

the island), since its members, too young or not yet born at the time of the retreat of the Kuomintang to Taiwan and the total closure of the strait (in 1949-1950), did not get any direct experience of China, which nevertheless was at the centre of the nationalist narrative of reconquest of the Chinese mainland and of their entire socialisation. This generation of urban intellectuals is also distinguished from the previous one by its higher level of education, its exclusion from public affairs, which is the source of its political apathy, and a worldview that was initially strongly turned towards Western democracies, whether for its sources of reflections or in the hope of going there to study.

Chapter Three focuses on the emergence of a “Taiwanese consciousness” that is, at first, juxtaposed with a “Chinese consciousness” without the two coming into conflict. This is explained by the fact that the first one is linked with daily local experiences, whereas the second one is in connection with an ancestral, cultural, and political heritage spread through a national narrative. The second objective that runs through the entire book is drawn in this chapter: explaining the identity rupture that occurs within the generation of the return to reality by going beyond the alternative between essentialism and instrumentalism that is too often present in the explanations of the “Taiwan turn.” According to the essentialist approach, the Taiwanese always considered themselves as such, but subjected to a series of colonial powers they were never free to express their national sense of belonging openly. Conversely, the instrumentalist vision assimilates the individual to the rational and calculating actor of classical economic theory: the inhabitants of the island proclaimed themselves Chinese when it served their interests, then Taiwanese as the political configuration changed. Hsiao A-chin rightly rejects these two currents and replaces them with an “interpretative” approach (p. 171) based on narrative identity: individuals seek to give meaning to their lives by putting it into a narrative, but each individual’s narrative is itself embedded in and shaped by other broader and encompassing collective narratives. Among them, the national narrative is of paramount importance. The transition from a Chinese identity to a Taiwanese identity can therefore be explained in terms of the linking of individual biographical narratives and broader narrative frameworks that evolved rapidly during the 1970s. The one linked to the experience lived on the territory of Taiwan gradually became a preponderant source of meaning and action for the return to reality generation.

Considering the importance given to individual narratives and to the theoretical perspective of narrative identity, one can however question the relevance of the methodological choices that presided over the constitution of the corpus studied. On the one hand, although having brought together a rich corpus of texts of various origins, Hsiao A-chin gives us very little information on the way they were gathered, classified, and analysed. The author limits himself to a general definition of the “method of discourse analysis” on which he relies (p. 24). On the other hand, he did not conduct any interviews, although most of the people at the centre of the investigation were still alive when it was done. It is a pity that this choice is not explained in the section “Materials and method,” which, limited to a short page, seems very thin in relation to the excellent quality of the book.