

Special Event – The State of Taiwan Studies: A Roundtable Discussion on Methods and Directions, June 28, 2021

– Hello everybody and welcome to today's event. We will get started momentarily. We're just going to wait a moment to give everyone a chance to log in. And after that we will get started. Thank you for joining us.

– All right. Well, let's give people, a couple more people are still entering the chat room, but yeah, so, looks like very good turnout today. Yeah, so, hi everyone. Welcome to "The State of Taiwan Studies: A Roundtable Discussion on Methods and Directions", at the Fairbank Center. Good morning to our participants in this sweltering heat for those of us on the East and maybe some on the West Coast and good evening to a lot of our friends in East Asia and Taiwan, especially, I know that many of you all have been working from home and are still getting used to the rhythm of all these online events. But trust me, you'll get the hang of it soon enough. The goal of this workshop is really to bring together past and present fellows from the relatively newly established Hou Family Taiwan Studies Program at Fairbank, to have a discussion about the state of affairs and future directions in Taiwan Studies. And as you'll see, I think most of our panelists are quite bullish... of interest recently on Taiwan, but come from quite different perspectives and thus offer sort of a variety of visions when it comes to developing the field. Even though our panel today by chance is a sort of a bit biased towards the social sciences. We hope that our presentations today will spark great interdisciplinary conversations. All right, to just start things off a little bit about myself, my name is Kevin Luo and I'm currently the Hou Family Fellow in Taiwan Studies at Fairbank this year. I'm trained as a political scientist at the University of Toronto where my dissertation focused on comparing land reform, state building and authoritarian rule in Taiwan, China, and beyond. Joining me today as panelists, were all some point in Taiwan fellows at Fairbank here or soon to be fellow in our labs case, and now I'll introduce them in order of our speaker lineup today. So first, we have Huang Jaw-Nian, Jaw-Nian Huang. Currently an assistant professor at the Graduate Institute of Development Studies, National Chengchi University in Taiwan and our inaugural fellow in 2016. He received his PhD in political science from National Taiwan, sorry, PhD in political science from The University of California, Riverside as well as an MA, MBA in political science from National Taiwan University. He investigates the impacts of China's rise on media politics and press freedom in Taiwan and other countries. He is the author of "The Political Economy of Press Freedom: The Paradox of Taiwan versus China" from Routledge and a coauthor of "China's Influence and the Center-Periphery Tug of War in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the Indo-Pacific" edited by Brian Fong, Jieh-min Wu and Andrew Nathan also from Routledge last year. Next, we have Yang Zi-Qiao, Lawrence Zi-Qiao Yang, assistant professor at the Institute of Social Research and Cultural Studies at the newly coined

National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University. And last year as a fellow here. He received his PhD from UC Berkeley with certificates in Film and Media Studies and Critical Theory. His research focuses on "Propaganda Media Industries, Aesthetics in Modern China, Taiwan and Hong Kong." His broader research interests, cover war and militarism, theories of materialism and the industrial technological histories of cinema architecture and urban infrastructure. At NCTU, he is also developing a new project on China's belt and road initiative propaganda, and its influences on media production of Southeast Asia after the 2010s. He is also currently completing a book manuscript titled "Speculative Statecraft, Logistical Media, and the Culture of the Chinese Cold War". And then after my presentation, we have our newest fellow starting next year. Lev Nachman, who just recently received his PhD in political science from the University of California Irvine. He was a Fulbright research fellow from 2019 to 2020 and held an appointment as a visiting scholar at National Taiwan University from 2020 to 2021. His research is focused on the domestic politics of contested states with a particular focus on social movements and political parties in Taiwan and Hong Kong. And then to help us wrap things up, we have Ching-fang Hsu. Doctor Hsu is a political scientist specializing in comparative judicial politics with a regional interest in East Asia. Trained in both law and political science, she studies the politics of the legal profession in varying power settings, particularly the political rules of lawyers and judges in the advancement and after the retreat of authoritarianism. Her current book project focuses on Taiwan and Hong Kong, and also has a side project on China's cross border impact in the legal sector. Currently, Dr. Hsu is a postdoc fellow at The Research Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Ministry of Science and Technology in Taiwan. She's also the holder of the Hsu Research Fellowship in Taiwan Studies at Oregon State University in 2020 and 2021. Received a PhD in Political Science from the University of Toronto, LLM from UC Berkeley. So with that, we're going to start the panel. Each panelist is going to speak for about 10 to 15 minutes, followed by comments from our discussing after the four panelists. If you have any questions, please save them until later after discussing comments. We'll have a Q and A section then, hopefully beginning at around 10:30 to 10:40-ish running to about 11. You can type in your Q and A questions in the box, on your zoom, on your right hand side below. All right, with that, Jaw-Nian Huang, you can kick us off?

- Sure. Thank you Kevin, for your introduction. So just to make sure everyone's see my PowerPoint slide.
- Yes.
- Yes or no.
- Yes, great.

- Yes.

- Okay, great, all right. So let's just get started, right. It's my pleasure to be part of this round table. I'm happy to meet some old friends and new friends here, and I believe we may have choose to chat later. So right now, if possible to save time, let me just start my presentation. Of course we do Taiwan Studies, of course, because we want to understand Taiwan. We want to explain the changes in Taiwan, maybe in terms of politics, economics, social, and cultural and so on. However, it seems to me that Taiwan Studies is not only Taiwan Studies, but also Geopolitical Studies. I believe we cannot understand Taiwan well, if we don't understand geopolitics, if we don't put into consideration some external structural factors. This is largely based on my work. This picture is one of the origins of my worldview. It could be found in our high school geography textbook. So from this picture, we know Taiwan is basically located between Eurasia Plate and Philippine Sea Plate, right? So the Island of Taiwan actually gradually created for a long time by the convergence extrusion between these two plates. So that's the reason why we have so many earthquakes, so many high mountains in Taiwan. Similarly, from a geopolitical perspective, Taiwan is also located between land power and sea power. So basically you see, Taiwan always called the hegemonic confrontation between these two sides. For example, during the Cold War is between communist camp and capitalist camp until today, still between China and the United States. So it seems to me, Taiwan is vulnerable to geopolitics. So changes in Taiwan are very likely to be external induced. At least when we try to explain changes in Taiwan, I believe it would be good to put into consideration some external structural factors. So based on this world view, I would like to talk about my research experience. I face a challenge when I try to study the press freedom in Taiwan. This is because what I want to explain is domestic changes in Taiwan that is evolution of press freedom in Taiwan. However, what inspire me the most is international relations behavior. Which include, external structural factors. That I believe pretty useful. However, they are too far away from domestic outcomes here. So it's hard to make linkages between international changes and domestic changes. So to fix this challenge, I try to find a way to bridge the gap between external causes and domestic outcomes. I believe it's important to pay attention to the actors in the middle and their behavior, their action. It's because I believe these people in the middle, they play a role to serve us just like a link between international labor and local labor, such as capitalist, state leaders, multinational corporations, some social actors, NGOs with international connections. I found this middle range approach may help to find a middle ground between abstract theory and empirical practice. So we are more likely to propose a hypothesis or argument, that is observable and testable. And second, this approach may also help to find a middle ground between international level and local level. So we could do to find causal linkages between external factors and domestic factors. Moreover, this approach may also help to find a

middle ground between structure and agency. So we are likely to tell a more balanced story, which I believe would be more close to the allergy. So here I would like to take my own research about Taiwan's press freedom for example. In a pretty simplified way, I try to explain the change from underdevelopment to improvements. So we know the basic geopolitical condition was under the structure of cold war. United States rely to ally with Taiwan to come from with the so-called communist camp, including Soviet Union and China. So under this situation, United States provide military support, economic support to Taiwan, even if Taiwan did not put into practice political reforms. However, starting from 1970s until 1980s, we know the geopolitical published change. The United States started to try to align with China to confront with Soviet Union. So under this situation, Taiwan's geopolitical status declined. United States government started to express concerns about human right conditions and political reforms in Taiwan, and even urge Taiwan to put into practice some newly growth economic reform. So here I try to take care and piece that as people in the middle. So the basic fighting is state elite, did try to make up for the loose of international legitimacy. So they try to do something at home, try to make some changes at home. So in order to enhance their domestic legitimacy. And then use this domestic that you can not see to make up for international legitimacy. Finally to ensure the support coming from the United States. So that's part of the reason why Taiwan press freedom improved after 1980s. My study also tried to explain the deportation of Taiwan Press freedom after 2008. So we know the basic geopolitical competition was starting from 2000s, China started to repress the United States to be Taiwan's largest export target and investment target. So under the situation, Taiwan largely economically depend on China. So here I took media capitalist, businessmen, as people in the middle. So I not only focused on per page in media, like ... China Times, United Daily News. Here I also talk about some pro Taiwan identity media, such as Formosa television and San-li television. I felt this media started to do self censorship when they report Chinese sensitive topics like Tiananmen Incident, Falun gong, Tibet issues, something like this, but because this media will lie to make the business interests, or they want to sell newspapers, TV dramas to China, they want to receive embedded advertising fees coming from Chinese authorities. They're also wanting to rely on their business in the Chinese market, even rely on subsidies coming from Chinese government. So that's a reason why Taiwan's press freedom degraded after 2010. By the way, similar situation, not only happen to Taiwan in recent years, it also happened to many other countries. For example, international media like New York Times, Washington Post had ever accepted, advertising fee coming from Chinese official media to publish inserted column called China Watch. Another example is some internet companies, social media companies like Yahoo, Google, and Facebook. These companies were required to boost censorship in China and even to share their users data to the Chinese government. All these companies would be prevented from entering the Chinese market. So under the situation international

society, international scholarship started to raise concern about China's rise and its impact on our liberal ways of life, around the world. So they propose theories like of authoritarian diffusion, soft Power and so on. However, it seems to me far before this, Taiwan's studies scholars already propose some ideas like China factor. China impact studies to study China's influence improving the so-called local collaboration mechanism, zai di xie li ji zhi Again, we could see people in the middle, deserve attention and analysis. So this also leads to another point I would like to make, that is, Taiwan is not only vulnerable to geopolitics, but also sensitive to geopolitics. So Taiwan may be one of the first cases in which geopolitical changes can be observed and testified. So Taiwan's studies may have advantages of theoretical innovation, theoretical development and empirical education. So theory based on Taiwan experience may apply to other countries in the future and may have potential to contribute to international scholarship. That's all the points I would like to share today. Thank you.

- All right, so thank you, Jaw-Nian, for your excellent presentation. Lawrence are you ready?

- Sure, yes.

- All right, so next up we have Lawrence. So go ahead, you can share your screen.

- Let me... All right, does it show?

- Yeah.

- All right, okay. So thank you for inviting me for this round table on Taiwan's study with my peer Huang, Kevin and incoming and fellow old fellows. Thank you Jaw-Nian for pointing the geopolitical tension between the external structure and internal outcome. In my sharing, I hope to further this line of discussion, geopolitics by highlighting the entanglement between geo politics and media industry. And in specific, I hope to highlight how the study of film and media arts histories, not just passively represent a changing geopolitical reality where Taiwan is in, but also allow Taiwan to be thought as a highly mediated area of study between the Global North and Global South. So, sorry. So in the past couple of years, my training has been in mostly in film and media culture histories, and my own research has pretty much been defined by my inquiry into the notion of media and more general, the idea of mediation in state sponsored propaganda culture, especially in the KMT regime during the cold war. And the term mediation can mean, sorry. And the term mediation, can mean, a couple of different things for different disciplines, but a quick look at the etymological route, tell us that the mediation can mean, such as intervention agency or action as the mediator or intermediary or a division in the middle, or to echo Jaw-nian's term in the middle to

cut in half, to help or simply the middle. Or as my title of the talk shows, in media res, Taiwan in media res in the middle of things. In the study of narrative or in a literature narrative in media res usually mean the protagonist enter a story row, a story narrative where things have always already been happening. So it's in the middle of things, interrupting or intervene or theater on the story line. So in other words, the protagonists here, I mean, Taiwan is, can be both part of the story world, but also always already excluded from the beginning of a narrative. So seeing Taiwan as an area of study in media arrests or in media res has both the spatial and temporal consultations, especially as Jaw-nian point out the island or either state is and will be constantly caught up in the middle of continental land powers and sea powers as the contested side among different imperial states. In terms of time or temporality, Taiwan is also caught up among different developmental or expansionist ideologies. A bigger modern China's nations to building or interior to past gradual expansion of the core-periphery sphere, or U.S empire strategic containment or competition in the so-called Asia Pacific, or it's now Indo-Pacific. Well in short, Taiwan as a geopolitical and cultural area to be studying itself is already a highly mediated historical process. So this recognition of Taiwan as both an outcome of geopolitical mediation among empires or Taiwan as the medium, as a kind of a medium or a mean a tool by which power imperial powers, creativity, geopolitical map this lead to another thorny question, which is the question about the South, or Taiwan's relations with the South or Southeast Asia. So Taiwan in media res in the middle of space and time in the middle of things with it's always already belated enter into the theater, or is always already unfinished narrative or incomplete state affairs with it's always a bivalent and awkward state of being manifests probably most clearly in its relationship with the so-called the South, be it the South and Southeast Asia or the buzzword global south nowadays in general, and for some of us, the term south might automatically evoke different waves of sort of Southern policy or nan xiang zheng ce or the new Southbound policy or the xin nan xiang Or beginning in the 1990s, or often it's early a focus from its earlier focus on outsourcing labor and surpass value exploitation to the recent policy with a more stronger emphasis to generate a more equal change of cultural economy. So, but on the other hand, culture critics from the generally the self-proclaimed left or voice such an opposition however, that all this talk about the Southbound, or toward the South is replicating earlier colonialism earlier expansion of colonial powers in the newer capitalistic logic. And instead these critics would, especially in the field of cultural studies in the field of cultural history, or they will favor another south to south connection that was sort of inspired by the so-called the legacy of the Bandung Conference, the Wan long hui yi in Indonesia, and argue that Taiwan's position as a semi peripheral state has always been complicit with the empires of Global North, such as the Japanese empire, before the war in the U.S during the cold war. So this is nothing but a reenactment of a new kind of colonial capital,

capitalistic expansion. So in their kind of discourse on it, China plays a much more benevolent role, not only in leading the first effort, Asian, non-alignment movement in the fifties and sixties, but also now leading a new China model of development through its Belt and Road initiative and AIIB. So the legacy of Bandung ironically for many of us is now recycled as a good story, a good narrative, or even a mythology to reconnect China with a good old friends across Africa and Asia in China's expansion for new markets and alternative supply chains. Taiwan, once again, in media res is left out, in this morality play or in this moral story, despite the fact that one of the earliest theories of Taiwan independence such Liao Wenyi on the upper right, was also a welcome participant at the Bandung Conference as the representative of Taiwan gongheguo linshi zhengfu, or the Republic of Formosa. Liao Wenyi was later, not only was Liao Wenyi welcomed at a Bandung Conference, he also later attended the newly independent Federation of Malaysia in 1957 and met with Malaysia first prime minister, Tun Abdullah Ahmad. This is by now, this by now ignore connection between the Formosa, the Taiwan and the South. The South just stop connection. Let me to... a broader research question in a such of film and media history of Taiwan, which on the first glance whether in a Cold War or in the colonial period, the film and media history of film and media industry seemed to be highly complicit as part of the empire propaganda and their expansion to the South. And they will use cinema, they use radio, they use photograph either as propaganda message as a technology or as commercial monitoring to sell to the Southern market. So as a scholar, working on on film and media propaganda however, I'm still very eager to ask, is it possible to go beyond? Is it even possible to go beyond the imperial and the capitalistic divide between the North and South and reconnect Taiwan with an alternative cell and south to south relationship and can media representation of the South in Taiwan, whether it's propaganda or commercial stereotype offer an alternative imaginary about Southeast Asia. So I probably don't have time to go through all the route, all the case study. I'll probably, I mapped out three routes that more in a speculative manner as a kind of a case study to open up more questions, but I probably only would be able to cover the first two. Route one, Imperial Relay. I start from the colonial radio network during the Japanese colonial period and route two, it's Cold War Stand in or replacement with a case study from the US Aid Agricultural Films, sponsored by Nongfu Hui and local technocrats and filmmakers. The third, which I don't have the time to talk about is talk about the kind of a global imaginary of logistics from the Vietnamese Film and the how Vietnamese film project Taiwan as a kind of a nodal point for Bitcoin and Blockchain. And so, route one or route one, Imperial Relay. So I begin with imperial past use of Taiwan as a relay point for transport regional radio propaganda, which incorporated Taiwan as the empire's Southern infrastructure and pave way to an alternative South to South Sonic Network. This South to South radio network, which was established after 1937, was used to broadcast in Minnan dialect or Taiwanese Hokkien to the Fujian province or oversee Chinese in

Southeast Asia. So as to counter the radio broadcast of the nationalist China. So from 1937 to 1941, the Japanese colonial government, assembled an international team of radio broadcaster for the new report for their news report in Cantonese, Hakka Chinese Mandarin, Malay, Vietnamese, Tagalog in Philippines, English and Dutch, through its radio station in such as in Taipei, in Zhongli in the middle and Jiayi So these are the three major radio station to broadcast news reports to Taiwan to relay the radio show wave through the Southeast Asia, the three major one in Taipei, Zhongli and Jiayi. And from the first class, the radio network resume with a propaganda documentary film to the South Taiwan also in 1937, 19 Taiwan, which put Taiwan with in a liminal space, both inside and outside the Imperial mapping of so-called the South or Nanyang. On the other hand, it is the South of the empire. On one hand, Taiwan was itself, the South of the empire, but it is also the medium with which the Japanese empire to reach the South of the South, which is Southeast Asia. So this seem to, so this case seems to replicate a cliche, the Taiwan being of unsinkable ship or carrier under the rubric of industrializing Taiwan agriculturalizing Southeast Asia, except that, you know, except that we found this guy called Prince Cuong De, sorry, my Vietnamese ... of the Royal Family. So this Prince Cuong De along with a couple of other Vietnamese revolutionary unsuccessfully tried to liberate Vietnam from the French colonial occupation, but during his exile and study in Japan, in Tokyo, he was recruited by the Taiwanese colonial government and live in Taiwan between 1939 to 1940, where he produced a daily four hour radio show in Vietnamese or An Nam. Now all of this together with Prince Cuong De are other anti-colonial or anti French colonial Vietnamese revolutionaries based in Japan. They also use Taiwan as their temporary base and relay point or transport station to go back to Vietnam. So during this Vietnamese broadcasters' stay in Taiwan, they help the colonial government radio to produce an edit radio broadcast in Vietnamese to broadcast through the South. So they did so in exchange for Japan's recognition of the An Nam's independence. So this by now obscure history of propaganda radio infrastructure point at least, to two things, and first, there might have been much more linguistic exposure to Vietnamese, Tagalog and Malay among the Taiwanese radio used during the colonial period. And second, Taiwan's radio infrastructure serve not only as a relay station for the imperial expansion to reach the South or the Southeast Asia, but also potentially become mobilized as a kind of a logistic infrastructure in Vietnamese liberation from the South, from the French colonialism. So can we, and then this case, can we, according to this case, I wanna ask that, can we find more case studies? And so as the complicated, this history or the legacy of the South, the South legacy. So I think this is one of the first case. I feel that lead me to question this, that Taiwan is always during it colonial period, Taiwan was always already in complicit with the interior expansion of capitalism or colonial capitalism. And then even within this colonial network of media industry or propaganda industry of radio, that you found alternative network of south yourself that connect Vietnamese

anti-colonialism to the Taiwanese radio station as I mentioned. How much time do I have?

- Don't worry, you can go on, you can finish this part.

- So this question of finding kind of glimpses or moments of liberation from the control of media propaganda is leading to my second sort of a second route which is Cold War. I now move to the Cold War with a focus on the educational propaganda documentaries, co-produced by Taiwan's Agricultural Agency, Nongfu Hui or short joint commission of liberal reconstruction, JCRR, and the American University Field Staff, AUFS, for the teaching of the world's cultural ecological zones at the college level, in the U.S. AUFS, American University Field Staff, AUFS, in short was a quasi-government organization with a wide overseas network of reporters, scholars, and writers who helped collect data, information for the reference of college level education in social science and humanities. And as I wrote elsewhere, one of the earliest documentary film author in Taiwan, Richard Yao-chi Chen's in here on the right was recruited by the AUFS and Nongfu Hui to produce a series of documentary and propaganda films on the success of rice farming and land reform in Taiwan, of course, under the USA. And again, from the initial reading of these documents, from reading of the documents accompanying these film series, or film footages, they were meant to be a show piece for the success of the U.S engineered Green Revolution in Southeast Asia to rival the communist revolution. So in these films, Taiwan becomes a stand in or an replacement for an imagined free Southeast Asia free, meaning non communists or anti communists, as one of JCRS or Nongfu Hui's technocrat from the U.S proclaim. The agricultural success in rice farming in Taiwan could well be replicated or transferred to other Southeast Asian countries, such as the Philippines, the An Nam, Thailand and Malaysia, countries during the period, they were also given financial and technical support from the U.S, agrarian expertise. So repetitive evocation of the evidential power of documentary film, and the pedagogical uses of the series shows a very unusual obsession with a scientific objectivity based on human vision or the visuality. This emphasis on human vision is linked to the mapping of the so-called cultural ecological area as in area study cultural and ecological area, still diagram in the guidebook to the film series. So in this diagram, the map, the diagram map out five areas vertically from sea level to the mountain top each being index with a specific altitude. And the diagram, reveals a kind of confidence that a miniature ecological zone can stand in in place for the entire planet ecology, and Taiwan here was not only used as a simple to stand or kind of cultural ecological zone in the planet, but also use the kind of a replacement of standing for the agricultural modality for the entire Southeast Asia, if we look into, so again, from the first class that we have this propaganda agenda behind this collaboration between local filmmakers and yell, and Mr. Chen and the U.S aided expertise of propaganda using agriculture as a kind of a

modernization theories, modernization success story. Yet, if we look closely into the subtle cinematic language mobilized in these propaganda films, we found that director Richard Yao-chi Chen was actually experimenting with a wide array of audio visual critique of the reform of such KMT U.S Aid generated land reform, such as just a quick example, the kind of longest sharp and long take use in this film actually has predated the cinematic novelty or cinematic experiment that was known become the hallmark in the Taiwanese new way, almost a decade earlier because Yao-chi Chen in his documentary co-produced by the US propaganda machine was actually doing a lot of really stunning play with the audio visual critique of the land reform, or the land scape in the 70s. And later on in the early eighties Hou Hsiao-hsien, where they were doing all this really novel cinematic language, that was kind of 10 years later. So it's kind of a take away from this case, is that, so the U.S treatment of Taiwan as a replacement of Southeast Asia is a very interesting case because it echoes with an emerging film industry network, like center around a group of Southeast Asia Chinese based in Malaysia and Singapore, such as Singaporean tycoon, Singaporean filmmaker and tycoon Lau who projected Taiwan as the anticomunist stronghold. So yet, so in Singaporean made of films that we see this projection of Taiwan as urban, as the stand in for free China, during the same periods through US Aid in filmmaking, we see this reverse replacement or not Taiwan it's through China but Taiwan as a free Southeast Asia. So it's interesting to see how different camps of anti-communist of film industry makers, projecting Taiwan as a kind of replacement with something else as urban China in Taipei, or as rural Southeast Asia. So it's complicated our understanding of this Cold War, alignment of film languages. And on the other hand, it also kind of reveals that the fact that even within the propaganda machine, such as the U.S aided every cultural filmmaking that was broadcasting for the success story of green revolution to counter the red revolution that we still even, we think these smells, we find experimental languages of new aesthetic forms, a new genre and beyond the propaganda. So I think this is like a two cases study from cohort standing and in the previous case of the media radio infrastructure use for the cost of the anticolonial period anticolonial in the man, I was hoped to highlight these different routes because I'll skip the third case, but this route point toward a kind of collective imaginary and about all of the Southeast Asia, made only possible Taiwan's minimal status as a medium. So Taiwan not only as a media product, but also as a medium itself among existing infrastructure of geopolitics as a relay station, or as a stand in for the empires. But for Taiwan, the media and media entanglement, I think also allows for internet genealogy and even a future imaginary yeah, there's normative and even hegemonic boundary mapping of areas that was kind of a fixed apparently is really a fossilized understanding and imagination about what is the global North and what is the global South and what even within that dichotomize understanding of the Northern South, what kind of creativity and what kind of the novelty in terms of resistance and

collaboration could be born and reimagined? I think this is kind of the direction I'm pushing toward a film and media study within still Taiwan, but connecting to the South, the study of the Southeast Asia, but also beyond the kind of the customized understanding that was set by the Bandung Conference, which Taiwan is always already late, always in the middle of things, always excluded, included but excluded whether that's ASEAN or Bandung legacy. Yeah, that's it. Thank you.

- So thank you Lawrence, for your presentation. I like the way how our presentation sort of all linked together as you and Jaw-nian obviously shared a very interesting geopolitical angle. And as for me with you, I also, we also share a sort of historical angle, which I'm going to talk about once... Lawrence, you might wanna end your share screen.

- Oh, sorry.

- So I can share mine. Yeah, no worries.

- Let me, stop sharing.

- Yeah, yeah, yeah. So I can share mine. All right, can everyone see? All right. So yeah, so the focus of my talk today centers on the use of historical sources and comparative historical methods to conceptualize Taiwan's social economic and political development, particularly in the field of the social sciences. I'll argue not only can this method of comparative historical analysis help to highlight the case relevance of Taiwan within general social science research, but it can also help raise new important questions for scholars and students of Taiwan ourselves. So jump in. So what is comparative historical analysis? Large umbrella social science research that deals with first of all, comparative macro structural phenomenon, such as economic development, democratization, state building, and also comparing between large units of analysis, like the nation state, economic classes or mass social movements. And second of all, it's also interested in not just classifying and describing these comparative differences across large units, but it's also interested in examining various cause and effect explanations of how these macro structural phenomenon came to be. And third of all, it pays attention to historical sequencing between these factors and take seriously the unfolding of various social economic political processes across time. So if you think about many of the classical texts in the social sciences, Adam Smith, Marx Weber, Tocqueville, they all employ in some shape or form comparative historical methods or analytical frameworks. In the current social science literature, or at least in political science, it's also fairly common for this type of research to be attached to this sort of regional studies tradition. So topics like comparative democratization in Europe, state building in Latin-American and so on, have become fairly popular. This particular method of macro, comparative, causal, and historical research, as I hope to demonstrate today, can be a critical way to incorporate Taiwan into

mainstream social science research. First, it helps to demonstrate why Taiwan matters as a case study by addressing how questions like Taiwan generated economic growth, democratized elections, and developed welfare state policies on Taiwan can in fact help to generate theory about macro structural phenomenon that's going to be useful for other generalists working on these big social science puzzles. And this part about theory generation is important because it's not just about testing social science theories and hypotheses and seeing whether they "work" in a Taiwanese context, but it's more so about establishing a sort of a historically rich and rigorous depiction of Taiwan as a historical case study that eventually other non Taiwan scholars and comparative scholars would find interest in learning from. Second, this method can also, I argue can also help to distinguish and position Taiwan in the field of comparative regional research. We of course know that Taiwan is quite different from South Korea, Japan, China, and other countries in the region, but it's important to find a way to use common theoretical vocabularies to encapsulate these differences. For example, we may want to know whether the developmental state in Taiwan was indeed different from that of Japan or South Korea's, but we also want to know the historical causes behind these differences and the long-term implications of these initial variations. And I think the great thing about comparative historical analysis is that it helps to solve two sort of underlying existential problems that Taiwan scholars often face. One is that we're always concerned with preventing Taiwan from being lumped in with this sort of murky pool of the "East Asian experience." And two, we wanted to not get too attached to notions of so-called Taiwanese exceptionalism. As many of us, including me are prone to do, especially if we are from Taiwan and then turning this exceptionalist notion into actual productive, theoretical use. In the past Taiwan as a case study in comparative historical analysis really flourished in the developmental state literature of the 1990s due to Taiwan's economic success and worldwide renown as one of the Asian tigers. Comparative scholars were very interested in explaining why Taiwan state was exceptional in fostering economic development and developing sound industrial policy. More often than not, however, Taiwan I think has been characterized as sharing virtually the same developmental trajectory with that of Japan or South Korea where a politically independent bureaucracy was the key in generating policy success that set it apart from other failed or inefficient examples of state intervention in the economy say in Latin America, Africa, or the Middle East, and some of these scholars who have incorporated Taiwan explicitly into their comparative frameworks include the likes of Robert Wade, Peter Evans, Stephen Haggard, and David Waldner. And of course, Taiwan, as part of the third wave of global democratization was also the target of much scholarly interest in the comparative democratization literature. So see Larry Diamond and others, though due to time constraints, I'll have to leave this for another time. Beginning in the 2010s however, many interesting new attempts to position Taiwan in comparative historical research has really emerged.

And this is what I like to point out here. First off, the idea of a homogeneous East Asian developmental experience has really been challenged through more nuanced categorization in historical process tracing of the Taiwan case, vis-a-vis other cases in East Asia, Joseph Wong's 2011, "Betting on Biotech," for example, highlighted very different policy strategies that the central governments in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore took in fostering entrepreneurship and innovation in the biotech industry. Taiwan, for example, relied on this sprouting strategy in seeding, many smaller to mid-sized firms, whereas South Korea invested in national champions and Singapore sought after international firms. More recently, Kristen Looney's, recent 2020 book, "Mobilizing for Development" compares state led rural development in Taiwan, South Korea, and post reform China and highlights how varying strengths of farmer organizations in these three cases allowed for varying levels of stake success in rural modernization with Taiwan's strong farmer organizations providing a much more compliant partner in the central bureaucracy's policy efforts. Second, we also begin to see expanding areas of interest outside of the classical developmental state and democratization literature. Liu Hwa-Jen's 2015 book, "Leverage of the Weak," for example, looks at the different historical trajectories of social movement, mobilization in environmental and labor arenas, comparing between movements in Taiwan and South Korea. Sheena Greitens, 2016, "Dictators, and Their Secret Police," focuses on how authoritarian leaders can design different institutions and methods of state coercion, choosing South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines as comparative examples. Third, we are also seeing more extensions along the historical horizon in these case studies with scholars paying more attention to earlier episodes of political development. For example, beginning in the 1950s, or even earlier during the colonial period. Jong-Sung You's 2015, "Democracy, Equality and Corruption," looked at how bearing successes of land reform, which Lawrence referred to in Taiwan and South Korea, and the Philippines led to different levels of inequality, which then generated desperate opportunities for political corruption, some 30 to 60 odd years later. Reo Matsuzaki's 2019, "State Building by Imposition," compares to the Japanese colonial experience on Taiwan versus the American colonial project in the Philippines to illustrate how colonial states varied in their attempts to conduct land surveys and installed public health measures. And finally, Julia Strauss's 2020 book, "State Formation in China and Taiwan," looks to the Taiwan Strait in the early 1950s and show how the KMT and the CCP regimes undertook different bureaucratic strategies to implement land reform and impose political terror campaigns. Now there's obviously a lot we can discuss in the Q and A, but suffice to say that Taiwan as a critical case study is getting its place under the sun in comparative historical research, particularly in the last five or six years. So just through slip in my own research for a little bit while I also engage with these large historical comparisons across Taiwan and with other case studies in my own research, I propose that we can also look to sub national and local

differences within Taiwan from a deep historical perspective. One of my current ongoing projects involve documenting the geographical distribution of Taiwanese township leaders under the colonial era, as opposed to Japanese ones to think about the origins and the long-term effects of native political power on the island. I know that some historians have already done this, but yet to see this in social science research, by the way, big shout out to my RA Lin You-ming, for helping me code this. Another project also measures the stability of farmer organization leadership and membership composition from the 1950s and 60s as you can see in the bottom in order to demonstrate KMT's grasp on rule society and political organizations during this earlier period of authoritarian rule. And by identifying and tracing these local patterns, I hope can really help shine light on Taiwan's contemporary political outcomes, its current political geography and help bring historical and theoretical nuance to a comparative historical analysis of Taiwan itself. So to just conclude, I want to propose some future directions for developing Taiwan in comparative historical research. So first of all, we want to pay attention to case selection, right? So how do we select the comparative cases to compare Taiwan with? And this is sort of a thing I'm glad that Lawrence pointed out towards the second half of his presentation. So should we sort of stick with the sort of natural comparative cases that we've seen, the development studies literature mentioned? So with South Korea, Japan, or perhaps even China. Or should we choose sort of unorthodox comparative cases beyond East Asia and perhaps not just limiting ourselves to Southeast Asia, but also looking to other cases in the Global South. And second of all, we want to think about continuity, right? So has there been a continuation of state power or elite networks throughout the different areas of, you know, it really a wide array of different regime types throughout Taiwan's modern political history, what are the historical legacies such as colonialism, white terror, ethnic tensions, land reform and are these historical legacies still relevant for contemporary outcomes in politics or social economic development in Taiwan today. But other than continuity, we also might want to think about discontinuity. What are the important historical breaks and critical junctures that set Taiwan on alternative development paths from other case studies? So was it the 228 massacre? Was it ROC's exit from the UN in 71? Was it the end of martial law or other more subtle discontinuity's like the indigenization of the KMT regime in the early 70s. Or other sort of geopolitical shifts that Johnny and Lauren's have mentioned previously. And then we also want to ask what are the obvious intended consequences, but also the unintended consequences of these critical historical breaks. And so with that, although my talk is very broad and can't really get into more interesting details. I hope that we can further this this discussion in the Q and A section. So thank you for listening. All right. So Lev, there you go.

- Good morning everyone. Can everyone hear and see me okay? Great, so I'm gonna give a little bit of a different talk. I'm not gonna talk so

much about research, I'm gonna have a bit more of a meta discussion about the state of Taiwan Studies, because this is a topic, if there's one topic Taiwan scholars love to talk about its Taiwan Studies itself. And this is gonna be based off of a discussion that was really popular in 2017, which was a journal round table discussion in one of the first editions of the International Journal of Taiwan Studies. That was a golden age of Taiwan Studies at a time for optimism or pessimism. And it was a paper that was featuring comments from professors, Dafydd Fell, Gunter Schubert, Yvonne Chang, Ming-yeh Rawnsley, Kharis Templeman and I was a grad student at the time, but I was the grad student voice in the paper. And what this paper wanted to do was kind of assess where things were in the global world of Taiwan Studies, how programs were developing, how we were assessing whether or not programs were successful. And you know, the broad conclusions are kind of, Taiwan was in a good space as of 2017 or really 2016, when this discussion first started. And what I'm hoping to do in this talk, that the papers online for anyone interested, what I'm hoping to do in this talk is kind of reflect on some of the broad changes and status of some of these main issues that scholars in Taiwan Studies are really concerned about in 2017. And I'm gonna propose a lot of, kind of this questions for us to think about and also offer a few of my own reflections as someone who is freshly PhD, but coming out of a political science tradition, well-trained, also maintain a balance of Taiwan Studies as well. So first is funding and in the 2017 paper, you know, every professor commenting on Taiwan Studies hits over and over and over again, that funding funding funding is the biggest problem with Taiwan Studies. And there's a couple different aspects of funding here to talk about. So first is, you know, where's the money to study Taiwan and what is it for, you know, for those of us who do field work, obviously we are constantly trying to find opportunities that let us get to Taiwan. And you know, this ranges from, you know, grad students in their first or second year who just need \$1,000 here or \$1,000 there to get a plane ticket to junior faculty who are trying to do followup bookwork to senior scholars who are trying to get to Taiwan to start new projects. Then of course there's funding for those, and this is more specifically for those who are not of Taiwanese heritage, but those who are trying to go to Taiwan to learn Mandarin so that they can engage in Taiwan Studies. And then finally there's searches for money to do work on Taiwan that doesn't necessarily require you to go to Taiwan like those who do survey work. And all of these are difficult to find, but I want to highlight there's this really great website for those who don't know this is based off SOAS's Taiwan Studies program, but they have a really wonderful list of grant scholarships and funding opportunities for Taiwan Studies. If you Google, SOAS Taiwan Studies funding, you'll be able to find this very quickly. But there's still kind of a bit more of a bigger structural issue here when it comes to funding. And that is permanent homes for Taiwan Studies. Now in the last year, we've seen a total explosion of just really wonderful postdoc opportunities for Taiwan Studies. This is just an example from UT Austin's, new

Taiwan Studies program. And, you know, it's good because we need more institutionalization of Taiwan Studies at universities. And, you know, as amazing as this new funding opportunities are, you know, I know a lot of this money comes through Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, there was hesitation expressed in the 2017 paper for many of these professors. The hesitation comes from the longevity and whether or not the government funding like this is really sustainable. A lot of professors, especially Gunter Schubert and Kharis Templeman, call for a reflection on the Korea Foundation model and how Korea Studies has become so successful outside of Korea because they have long-term clearly funded Korea Studies programs and that quick fixes from the Taiwanese government while extremely helpful and great starts, need to be followed up with more long-term minded programs. So in thinking about how incredibly lucky we are, that there are actual multiple Taiwan Studies post-docs available. I think it's important for us as a field, to continue pushing for more formal institutionalization because as of the 2017 paper, one of the biggest reasons for Taiwan Studies programs shutting down or just kind of becoming hollow is because they became reliant on one singular person or they were never really able to grow beyond one person. So then, there questions of scholarships? So, you know, what are we studying in Global Taiwan Studies? And how does this sort of vary by whether you are studying Taiwan in Taiwan versus studying Taiwan from outside of Taiwan. And where does Taiwan Studies work get published? I know that we're all incredibly grateful to have a journal of Taiwan Studies that is published outside of Taiwan that has really become a home to a lot of Taiwan scholars looking to reach a more international audience with their Taiwan Studies work. Of course, there is a constant challenge, and I know all of us here as panelists and especially those of us trained in political science will constantly feel the push and pull about publishing in a disciplinary versus a regional studies journal. And I think this is something that Taiwan Studies needs to be a bit more honest with itself with, especially when we consider, and I'll talk more about this later, training future Taiwan scholars about how do we engage with Taiwan Studies while also making sure that we are setting ourselves up for academic success, because I don't think it's a secret to say that if you are in the social sciences, your advisors will tell you not to publish in a regional studies journal, but to engage with a disciplinary journal. But of course, those of us who feel very passionate about Taiwan Studies still want to stay engaged with Taiwan Studies and I think that's just a difficult conversation that as a field we need to address a little bit more. I also wanna shout out this really great project called the Taiwan Syllabus Project that the North American Taiwan Studies Association specifically Diane Hsieh and John Liu have done just an amazing job of mapping every Taiwan Studies class that is offered in North America and who is teaching the class and what the class is. And they have the syllabi that you can request from them. So, if you Google Taiwan Syllabus Project, you can find this very easily, but this is a fantastic resource for trying to not only see what is being taught in Taiwan

Studies, but where, and when and how. Cooperation, so who is friends with Taiwan Studies? And this is something that I raised a little bit in my response, but there always is a little bit of an elephant in the room when Taiwan is presented within China Studies and kind of the often just geopolitical day-to-day complications of how we frame our research about being Taiwan Studies, China Studies, Asian Studies, and based off my own experience as a grad student political science, I've actually found that there is far more support for studying Taiwan from places that we might not necessarily expect. So for example, I've been really lucky to be funded by places that study democracy or peace security. So, there's, so for example, at UC Irvine, there's a center for the study of democracy. There's a center for peace and security studies. And when I say, I wanna study in Taiwan, they say that sounds like a great novel case. We don't hear that much about Taiwan. And so I think one of the recommendations going forward is just to think a little bit more creative creatively about where Taiwan Studies can find friends in the academy. And I also think now is time more than ever, something that was definitely not nearly as true in 2017, that there is a reason for us to try to reach out to other marginalized regional studies, including Hong Kong Studies, Tibetan Studies and Uyghur Studies. I think all of us occupy this kind of one foot in China studies, one foot out of China studies and all of us still wanting to make sure that we can both speak to China studies and yet maintain our own kind of autonomy within the academy. And I think Taiwan is in a unique position to potentially lead that charge, especially since our programs are growing. I think at a just much faster rate than these other programs are. Education. So, you know, one of the biggest challenges in 2017 is not just a matter of research, but who wants to learn about Taiwan? How do we pitch Taiwan to undergrads? How do we pitch Taiwan to grad students? How do we make studying Taiwan something that, you know, in North America, many people have never heard of Taiwan and are unsure where it is. How do we make it more accessible? You know, I think one of the biggest challenges, and again, I'm sure every political scientist has had to do this, you know, in your intro IR class, your intro to comparative politics class, you get like maybe one class to talk about Taiwan and all of that class, you get like, you know, 20 minutes to explain everything about Taiwan and that's really hard, but that's kind of like our one hook about trying to get Taiwan interesting to people. And so I think, you know, we need to think about how can we make Taiwan more integratable into different types of coursework, as a means to sort of Trojan horse our way into making Taiwan a more appealing topic, for both undergrads and grads. And finally recruitment. And this was something that I felt particularly passionate about because when I was a grad student applying for my PhD, I was told by my advisor that studying Taiwan was career suicide and not to do it. And I'm sure people who studied Taiwan had at least once by some faculty member kind of gotten a bit of, are you sure that's the case you want to do? Because, you know, I, they don't mean to dismiss Taiwan. They're just thinking in terms of, you know,

pragmatic academic careers, it's difficult, it's more difficult to sell Taiwan, especially if you're a political scientist who studied East Asia. They'll tell you to go study China instead, even though that's just not what you're interested in studying. And so, you know, there's a couple of aspects that I'm concerned about, it is how do we encourage graduate students to study Taiwan, but how do we make that they stay engaged with Taiwan and that we're not pushing everyone who wants to study Taiwan into China, such a direction, or pushing them too far away from Taiwan. Now, just a few closing thoughts, 'cause I'll try to wrap up a little more quickly. How do we consider the success of Taiwan Studies going forward? Are we just looking at number of programs? I think again, you know, I think that's definitely a good start. I think seeing the number of postdocs that now exist is certainly a sign of improvement, but I don't think that should be the end of measuring success. I think we need to keep our eyes focused on the future and thinking about how we can grow beyond just post-docs. The duration of programs. I mean, the biggest challenges, some of the oldest programs like at UT Austin or so as I've been going on for a long time, but their sizes grow and wane. I think fortunately we have good starts with, you know, the, for example, the University of Washington Program that's been growing successfully, largely in part to the work of James Lin. Enrollment in Taiwanese programs. Again, this is just difficult because classes are only sole enrollable for undergrads. Events held. I think there's always a push for Taiwan events to be held, but I think a lot of the problem with Taiwan Studies events is that they are often populated by Taiwan Studies people, which is most certainly a good thing. But I really think for our Taiwan Studies events, one of the things we need to consider going forward is how do we get more people who don't already want to participate in Taiwan Studies to listen to Taiwan Studies? I love Taiwan Studies events because everyone agrees Taiwan's great. And I don't have to spend any time justifying my case selection and Taiwan Studies events, but I think it's still important to try to bring people who might not be as familiar into our events to try to, again, that's really, I think how we grow. And then again, I think it's a matter of trying to look at academic publications 'cause at the end of the day, that's what a lot of us as academics are focused on. And how can we make Taiwan a part of academia, not just as kind of, as Kevin, I think very eloquently put, just another East Asia experience and also avoiding Taiwanese exceptionalism. I'll stop there for now, but I hope this inspires some questions and discussions. And again, thank you Kevin, for putting this really great panel together.

- All right, thank you Lev for giving us some hard truths, of how Taiwan studies and the future, and a lot of these really interesting logistical problems that we can perhaps talk about later. Ching-fang, do you want to begin your comments? I know we're a little running behind a little on schedule, but you know, do your thing and then people, if you have questions, we were getting some questions in the Q and A box. Feel free to input your questions there, and we'll try to

incorporate it in our discussing feedback.

- Sure. Thank you all for wonderful presentations. I really learned a lot. And although I know all of you for a long time, I think this is probably the first time we actually sit down and have a former conversation on what we think about Taiwan Studies as a field. So what I'm gonna do in my response is I'm going to quickly summarize everyone's insight and put forward an observation and then raise a question to the panel. So I think the question to everyone successfully tackled in the presentation is what is the scholarly value of Taiwan? So for Jaw-Nian, I think the answer is obvious. It's a geopolitical structure that affords Taiwan great value. And I think this is interesting because you know, there is no place on earth can escape the geopolitical structure, not even the outer space, not on earth, you know, the outer space can not escape the Cold War. So geopolitics is a very strong, a powerful framework that gives Taiwan advantage to share its experience. And especially to those who just started dealing with China as Jaw-Nian's case is pointing out. So moving on to Lawrence. I think Lawrence's strategy is even more interesting. I enjoyed the talk very much because what he argues is that we should really turn the disadvantage to an advantage. So the fact that Taiwan is rejected by the international community. We're caught between superpowers. It's actually a good thing for academics because he offers us a unique angle to observe. So tell him maybe a relay time, maybe a standing where space of exceptions, but this liminal positionality is exactly why interesting stuff will happen in Taiwan and why connections are drawn in Taiwan. So that is Taiwan's immediate. So Kevin's proposal to position Taiwan is also very interesting through methods, by comparison, and as a comparativist myself, I share the scholarly tastes that comparison is one of the best ways to gain insights and advance in generality. In Taiwan as Kevin pointed out is not unfamiliar with this strategy. It contributed much to the studies of development of state and democratization. Both are very important, the key strategy and make appearances in Brooklyn Project. And I'm really happy to see that Kevin gave us a good syllabus of this. And I think Brooklyn Projects are a good sign indicating substantial resources and interests. And Lev has given us a very practical angle and evaluating the state of the field from the site of knowledge production that I personally find his discussion, very illuminating and very important because Taiwan study is only one part of the academic market. So as Lev rightly pointed out, if there's no tenured professors supporting it, researching it, continue it, no funding on it where there's no job for junior scholars like us, the field will not exist. So in other words, I think if you wanna know about the state of the field, and maybe you should just look and see how recent graduates in Taiwan studies are getting jobs, if they are getting jobs then how are they getting jobs. So throughout the conversation, my observation is this, so I actually sense a generational turn, emerging in today's discussion, which is a mentality that might be provisionally turned as talent can help, and

let me explain why? So in the late 2000s and early 2010s, I believe all of us would know because that was the time we started out on grad school. I think the main stream mentality shared by scholars and focusing on Taiwan was this survival crisis. And I think this most notably demonstrated by Jonathan Sullivan's piece on China Quarterly in 2011 and "Is Taiwan Study in Decline"? So I think what the scholars of that generation were thinking about at the time was that, are we being marginalized, how do we stay relevant? These are the questions that concerned them. And I believe, here I call Jaw-Nian. This might come from this geopolitical turn that China was actually on the rise at that time. And hence China study was on the rise, you know, rising very fast. And so scholarly resources and tangible reoriented, and Taiwan was feeling, you know, being pushed out. But today what I'm sensing here is not the case, is, you know, some kind of practical optimism, right? So while we are still thinking about how Taiwan may stay relevant in a way, we're thinking about this question without survival anxiety. So rather the key idea is to how to make a contribution by utilizing Taiwan's characteristics, which I want to point out is the question for all academics, not just specific to Taiwan Studies scholars. So we did not start from a marginalized, even sometimes victimized position, but actually now we're accepting the knowledge infrastructure as it is, and focus on the theoretical possibilities and the viable strategies to break through. So you all pointed to some strategy, turning the table by transforming seemingly advantage, that's one. Arguing for generality by identifying comparable cases might be another one. So I have to say, I think our minds are in the right place that the Taiwan can help mentality will indeed help us and help the world know better. So situating Taiwan in the world, engaging with possible allies are strategies that once worked and will continue to work. So the question I would like to raise to the panel is, as a panelist, how do we situate China in Taiwan studies? So into the like intellectually, right? I see Kevin smiling. So intellectually, I think we've taken a very important step further in the past decade was so that we not only establish ourselves as a field. So it's a small field as it is, but it is still an independent one, not only we've established this field, but also we produce diverse and solid research in various disciplines of humanities and social sciences, as you just pointed out. But as we're moving forward, I think this is a task we cannot avoid. How do we situate China in Taiwan Studies? And there are multiple possibilities, I'm thinking here. I'm just thinking out loud and we could name a few more possibilities later. So is Taiwan and China, two separate cases to be compared? Perhaps using different time periods of Taiwan, China. Is Taiwan an effective lens to understand China as a China factor literature is trying to do in my understanding. Is China one of the intellectual resource to understand Taiwan. Whereas the other way around perhaps Taiwan is creating intellectual value that will inform the world in which China is only a part. So there are multiple possibilities out. I would like to hear your thoughts on this. And that would be my comment. I look forward to the Q A session.

- All right, so thank you Ching-fang for the amazing wrap-up. So yeah, let's just get started on answering this question first. So how do we situate China in Taiwan Studies? And since I have the mic here, I'll just jump in with my own thoughts and other people who can obviously have we'll have really good comments. So I think, yeah, so for someone who started off his PhD, as mostly interested in just China, not Taiwan necessarily, I found it really useful towards the latter half of my PhD to really spend a little bit more time engaging with Taiwan Studies in a more substantive manner. And for me, as compared to this. Yeah, definitely it's interesting. There are interesting case comparisons across different time periods, sharing authoritarian history, histories of party mobilization, state building and that sort of thing, but obviously very different cases. So, but the job of the comparativist is to utilize all the resources you can to figure out, you know, general patterns despite these differences. And so, you know, from a practical standpoint, of course, like for scholars, you know, learning Chinese is, and being familiar with Chinese resources is already a tall task. So in the near future, especially with, you know, doing field work in China, being a much more insurmountable challenge for a lot of scholars of non China descent, you know, Taiwan is going to be well positioned as a interesting case study that, you know, scholars can come to Taiwan and actually access to the resources there. But, yeah, but my initial reaction is just that it's, you know, I'm thinking about this in very simplistic terms, right? That there are things that could be said about these comparative cases across history, across different dimensions of political structures, institutions, and that sort of thing, but the very simplistic answer from my front, but I assume other panelists would have much more creative answers than that.

- I would love to jump in on the question if that's okay. I, you know, it's, even though Taiwan Studies is most certainly growing, I think we all still often, I mean, sometimes get the feeling that, you know, Taiwan Studies is a de facto independence study of, but not a de jure independent study and that we often find ourselves kind of stuck in this difficult to completely separate, and often, sometimes don't want to separate from China studies. And for good reason, I think there are certainly topics in Taiwan Studies that are not China related. If you study democratization, then the PRC is probably not relevant. If you study indigenous Taiwanese studies, the PRC is probably not particularly relevant. And there's plenty of PRC topics that are not relevant to Taiwan and that's okay. At the same time, there's plenty of topics in Taiwan Studies that are relevant to the PRC. If you study Taiwan during the authoritarian era, most certainly relevant to compare it to the PRC. If you study cross strait relations, it's most certainly relevant to talk about the PRC. I think it's just a matter of, it matters on the question and it matters on the methodology, but they're not, I don't think that Taiwan Studies, every topic will be completely separate from China studies. And I think that's okay. I

think it just a matter of being honest with what is definitely Taiwan Studies, and what can speak to China studies, and it is good to speak to China studies. Like I think there's an inclination for a lot of Taiwan scholars. And I most certainly have had my moments of this where it's like, I am not China studies, I am Taiwan Studies, but like, we're not geopolitics. Like we don't have to have this like desire, to not speak to other parts of academia. I think it's incredibly important actually that Taiwan Studies stay connected to China studies as a means to, you know, both be a part of, you know, broader academic conversations, but also to try to help kind of foster this more academic and open environment and dialogue between the two departments. And, you know, also people wear both hats. Like it's okay to be a Taiwan Studies person and a China studies person, like there's, there are no pejorative or overly positives, with studying the cases you study. It's just a matter of what's the question and what's the method.

- Lawrence or Jaw-Nian, do you wanna jump in?

- All right, so this question is interesting, how to situate China in Taiwan Studies. It seems to me that my answer would be straightforward. Basically I would tend to treat China just as another independent variable for Taiwan Studies, because I would tend to basically follow the logic of geopolitical perspective. Basically in the context of China's rise, China basically have more and more stronger and stronger influence on not only Taiwan, but also to many other privacies around the world. So now we not only have so-called China study, but also have the so-called China impact studies. Of course it's different. Basically China studies, in terms of China's studies, we tend to treat China as dependent variable. On the other hand, in terms of China impact studies, we tend to treat China as independent variable. So that's the difference. And in the context of China's rise, just as I mentioned, I believe Taiwan will be one of the important cases for China impact studies. So in this sense, I think that would be fair to China as another important independent variable, of course. One of the most important external chapter of actors from Taiwan's studies. That's my point. Thank you.

- So Lawrence, before you jump in, because we're slightly running out of time, I want to sort of collapse different questions together. And since you talked a lot about Southeast Asia, I think we gotten questions on how to, and aside from the China question, right? How do we situate Taiwan with other areas studies tradition? So we have a question about connecting Taiwan with the Global South in Southeast Asia in particular, you know, with the increase of Southeast Asian migrants in Taiwan last few decades, we have a sort of increasing interest in looking at the connection between Taiwan and South Asia, and also maybe throwing it back to Lev also, how do we situate Hong Kong in Taiwan Studies, as I know, you've worked a lot on Hong Kong as well, so yeah, so I'm sorry we have to sort of collapse all these

questions together, but you know, we, I think we're running slightly over time, so we'll just spend the next couple of minutes trying to get as many questions as we can.

– So, just quickly, I think there's a couple of questions that can sort of touch upon together is one is how do we situate China in relation to Taiwan, and also particularly my own concern, how to relate that to the South, and for that kind of knowledge project known as the Bandung conference or the inter Asia or critique of the global north, I think China is just there, and it's going to be there for a future, especially that legacy of the global self discourse from Bandung was recycled into the Belt and Road rhetoric of diplomacy. And I think the way to... The two cases I was just showing is that by activating more and more alternative historical cases in history, we might be able to engage with that knowledge of project and of whether that's inter Asia referencing or into the Asian media network or infrastructure. And we might be able to activate and dig out an alternative historiography. That's one thing, but on the other hand, in the current stage, which is the third case I didn't get to share is about how this new initiative about digital platform, Bitcoin, Blockchain, and how collaborated with the Belt and Road initiative in Southeast Asia with the ASEAN market also generate a new way from Southeast Asia imagination, locally from Southeast Asia. And I think for my own vision, I think it is also time for Taiwanese film and media scholar not just to think about how a film the media represent the empire, represent Southeast Asia through the empire, but also to look into, especially the recent rise of South Asia locally produce a film and media products and how they project Taiwan in relation to China. And I think that's the third case I didn't get to share, which is a film about how Vietnamese locals are imagining a kind of Blockchain and Bitcoin network outside China, but through Taipei, which is kind of a weird, because Taipei was never the center or the hub for that kind of high finance platform. So which is a symptom by itself that produced locally by Vietnamese. So I think there's a kind of a next step I would suggest.

– In terms of integrating Hong Kong studies into Taiwan Studies. I mean, that's certainly central what my own work looks at. I think we're going to see an entirely renewed interest in comparing Taiwan and Hong Kong. I think traditionally the main comparisons for Taiwan, has been Taiwan, China, Taiwan, South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, but in light of 2019, the anti extradition protests and national security law, the prominence that Hong Kong has become as a domestic issue in Taiwan. I am anticipating that in the next few years, we're gonna see a pretty much an explosion of Taiwan, Hong Kong comparative studies, both from Hong Kong studies and Taiwan Studies. But, you know, I think, I mentioned this briefly, but I really think it is a cool moment that Taiwan Studies could be a part of because Hong Kong studies is increasingly growing in spite of the negative news coming out of Hong Kong, Hong Kong as a study and as a subfield is growing.

So the society for Hong Kong studies just had their annual conference. It was a great success. And I think it would be really cool if Taiwan Studies and Hong Kong studies can collaborate in the future to try to speak to each other's research. And I think as Hong Kong and Taiwan become compared more, I think we're just gonna find more and more cool comparisons to be found between the two, historically, both from colonial and de-colonial perspectives, political development in ways that we wouldn't have thought of before. So I think Hong Kong studies is quickly becoming more integrated with Taiwan Studies, and I think we're gonna see some cool results with that going forward.

- All right. So we have a question from the University of Maryland. His question is, what are some of the other research topics beyond some of the stuff we talked about today that I feel haven't received enough attention in Taiwan Studies that there other blind spots or other new fields that we should pay attention to, any of the participants can jump in, or maybe it's Jaw-Nian.

- All right, actually is one of my good friends for over 20 years. So actually we may have a talk later. I'll try to talk about this a bit. I have a shoulder response about his question, His question, let me see. Why is about a comparison between Taiwan Studies and political science, Western academic community? I think in terms of methodology, I don't think it's easy to do compare because Taiwan Studies include, a lot of different disciplines and the basically we know different disciplines require different methodology. So I don't think it is an easy question to answer. So basically I don't have any smart answer to this and basically let me see other question here. Is some of the coverage of Taiwan study? What's that?

- Any sort of research topics that we haven't seen a lot of people talk about.

- Oh, yeah. I think basically the status of Taiwan's studies is keeping changing of following my logic of geopolitical perspective. We could see that actually geopolitical situation keep changing all the time. So for example, the United States geopolitical policy, the United States, China policy, actually now we basically need a historical turning points, right? So under the situation, I would say direction of Taiwan Studies are basically to follow the direction of geopolitical changes. So here, actually, we could see Taiwan basically caught the attention between China and the United States. So maybe we may try to follow these check to see any new topics are important. For example, recently we have vaccine issue by under the, during the pandemic. So the production and distribution of the vaccine will be one of the topic nowadays important around the world. For Taiwan, basically, I was thinking it's not only a vaccine issue but also a geopolitical issue as well. So I believe they have some new direction following the logic of geopolitical changes.

- So if none of the other panelists want to answer, let me just finish off with, I think one sort of big question, I'm collapsing two questions. So from old friend Mark McConney currently at National Sun Yat-sen University and also from Maggie Lewis, you know, this, and really the question is about, how does Taiwan Studies position itself with China in this current geopolitical environment? So has U.S., China tensions increase how not to, so you have maybe on the one front, you can think about not having Taiwan Studies, as being seen in contrast to China studies, and also, you know, does Taiwan Studies have to have a critical or even oppositional relationship to China or other ideas of China, right? The idea of Zhonghua or like the Chinese civilization. So it's really interesting because obviously there are a lot of shared cultural similarities and language and a lot of these cultural resources, but how do we position ourselves, I guess, at the end of the day with China under this current geopolitical environment. So Lawrence, Lev?

- I think I got kind of an answer or both Mark's question and Boxiang question about there's a different representation. Is together, it's actually, it doesn't have to be a position or especially in my case about, for example, in a projection of Taiwan is either as urban or is rural by the U.S Aid at cinema or by the Singaporean commercial cinema. That question, that difference of representation of rural or urban or different version has to do with how the Southeast Asian Chinese project Zhonghua through Hong Kong because the Singaporean filmmaker was trying to project Taiwan as an urban space, but to be sold that film product to be sold to urban Hong Kong and where is more of the urban audiences. So we're still these overseas or the Malaysian Chinese or Singaporean Chinese film making, you know, they're projecting Zhonghua as a kind of an urban Taipei, but to sell that image as the free China to Hong Kong audiences. So that's a kind of thing. And on the other hand, because the U.S. propaganda filmmaking was trying to project Taiwan is a showpiece of the green revolution as it has to continue that urban reform project that started out before 1949, which is China, which is Zhonghua. That kind of land reform agenda must be re represented in post-war film production in Taiwan, to be able to sell to Southeast Asia film markets or to be able to propagate it or to sell their image of successful agrarians modernity to Southeast Asia. And I think there is a kind of a Zhonghua is still there, is always there. And in this propaganda project, it, the seller, the filmmaker, the artist tailor make all these projects in relation to Zhonghua through Taiwan, but also project that market either to Hong Kong or to Thailand or to Southeast Asia. So I think this is my way of answering both the Zhonghua question and Hong Kong Southeast Asian question.

- I'll just say very quickly, on the contemporary geopolitics question, Maggie, I think you bring up a great point about, how with so many people coming to Taiwan for language learning, it definitely presents an opportunity for more people to notice and study Taiwan.

And that there most certainly is good reason to try to not present us as an opposition though, to China studies. Interestingly, from the 2017 piece, wrote that one of the ways that he finds success in Taiwan Studies was to try to make Taiwan study, seem as non-partisan as possible. And he also writes anecdotally how incredibly difficult that is, because if you invite one speaker who happens to have a certain political affiliation, people will paint Taiwan Studies as, oh, they're all just a bunch of green supporters. Or if you invite Ma Ying-jeou, oh, Taiwan Studies, a bunch of sell outs, they're not pro Taiwan. And how given the increased tension between the U.S and China, I had to anticipate that that's gonna be very difficult for Taiwan Studies to navigate about trying to maintain sort of scholarly integrity and for us not to be seen in opposition to any sort of China related research. But I think that's definitely something we should be cognizant of in the future.

- All right, on that note, we are already way over time, but before we go, I just wanna give a big thanks to Fairbank Center in particular, Mark Grady, who's working behind the scenes as the event coordinator for making things run very smoothly today. And for Dan Murphy for setting all this in motion. So again, thank you all for participating and we hope to see you all in events in the future. All right, stay safe, have a good day. Thank you.

- Thank you so much. A great discussion. Thank you.