International Studies in Taiwan Today:
A Preliminary Survey of the Problems and Prospects
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Abstract

International relations, as an academic study, is relatively new. It is much more developed, discussed and documented in the West, especially the US, than in other places. Within Asia, reports about international relations have begun to appear in Japan and China.\footnote{1} This working paper is the first of its kind specifically to examine and make a survey of the study of international relations in Taiwan.\footnote{2}

The paper begins by giving an historical background, and then discusses the academic study of political science, both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels in universities. Particular attention is paid to the activities of the Institute of International Relations, the leading institution in the country with a research focus on international relations and Chinese affairs. It ends by analysing the problems of and prospects for studying international relations in Taiwan.

This analysis is placed within the context of Taiwan’s unique position in the world, its acrimonious relationship with China, its speedy process of democratisation and the recognised need among the country’s elite for a better understanding of international affairs. On the whole the study of international relations in Taiwan is distinctively policy-oriented, with a specific focus on the country’s relations with China and the United States, and with little theoretical interest. However, Taiwan’s unique experience in world affairs offers a fertile ground for theoretical development which may contribute to an enrichment of the existing international relations scholarship.

An Historical Review\footnote{3}

In the 1950s and 1960s, university students in Taiwan majoring in sociology and politics encountered some formidable obstacles in the pursuit of their studies. These included an authoritarian government which stifled academic freedom and creativity, and the lack of suitable textbooks, especially those written in Chinese. It was extremely rare at that time to find professors who were knowledgeable in the scientific methods used in the West. Some who were more progressive tried to use English textbooks in order to introduce new ideas and concepts to their students. However, because of poor command of the English language among students, the learning process was slow.

In the 1970s, a significant number of students returned from their overseas education and began to take up teaching and research positions in academic institutions in the country. They started to introduce new concepts, theories and methodologies, thereby giving the academic community a new breath of life. In the 1980s, a second, bigger wave of returning students merged with locally-trained graduates to produce a new cohort of scholars. Through their research and publications in academic journals and other printed media, they helped to popularise new ideas in the political and social sciences.

The political changes in the 1970s and the process of democratisation and liberalisation in the 1980s and early 1990s have brought forth a surge of interest in the political and social sciences and as well have nurtured a more pluralistic outlook among scholars.
However, the development of political science is still very much constrained by a number of factors. These will be discussed later in the paper.

**Political Science at the Undergraduate Level**

According to the 1996 edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Education in the Republic of China* [4], there are 58 universities in the country, including small colleges with one or two faculties. [5] Of these 58 universities, 32 are publicly established while the other 26 are privately owned. Public universities include those set up by the national, provincial and city governments. Apart from these, there are also junior colleges of commerce, technology and nursing, of which 11 are public and 59 are private. [6] However, if all post-secondary institutions are included, then the number of tertiary institutions will reach some 178. [7]

Of these, five universities have departments of political science, including one with a department of diplomacy (see Table 1).

The first two universities listed in Table 1 are national universities while the others are private ones. The Department of Political Science at the National Taiwan University offers three streams of studies: political theory, international relations and public administration. Within the international relations (IR) stream, courses include international politics (IP), international organisations, international law, foreign-policy analysis and selective readings of IR literature in English, among others. [8]

Some kind of division of course offerings exists between the Department of Political Science and the Department of Diplomacy at the National Chengchi University. While the former department concentrates more on political history (both Chinese and Western), political thought and political methodology, the latter focuses more on diplomatic history, international politics, international organisations and diplomatic decision-making, apart from foreign languages and other subjects. [9] The Department at Tunghai University consists of two streams: political theory and international relations; while the Department at the Chinese Culture University has three: diplomacy, political theory and public administration. [10] The Department at Soochow University, however, consists of four streams: political theory, comparative politics, policy and administration, and international relations. [11] A common feature among the courses offered by these five departments is that IR or IP are included, but not IR theory as an independent course of study.

**Table 1: Departments of Political Science in Universities in Taiwan, 1997**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University department</th>
<th>Year of establishment of the studies</th>
<th>Post-graduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Chengchi</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>MA; PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Taiwan</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>MA; PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soochow</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunghai</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Culture</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>MA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Department of Diplomacy at the National Chengchi University, the only such department in the country, was established in 1930. Currently it offers programmes up to doctoral level. This Department, like most other political science departments in Taiwan, puts heavy emphasis on regional studies. At the undergraduate level, there are eleven compulsory courses; those relating to IR include international organisations, diplomatic decision-making, international politics and international law. [12]
It is interesting to compare the political attitudes of the teaching staff in the country’s top two political science departments, at the National Chengchi University and the National Taiwan University. While the former is more pro-KMT (Kuomintang or Guomindang), the latter is more liberal. More professors from the former were recruited by the government to act as advisers or in some similar official capacity. The reason for this goes back to history and to *guanxi* (personal relationships), as the National Chengchi University was originally established as a KMT Party school. The National Taiwan University, on the other hand, does not have such a historical legacy. Professors there are noted for their support of Taiwan independence.

**Political Science at the Postgraduate Level**

Graduate schools of political science that offer Masters degrees include those in the National Taiwan University, the National Chengchi University, the National Sun Yat-Sen University, the National Chung Cheng University, Tunghai University, Soochow University, the Chinese Culture University and Fu Hsing Kang College (known also as Zhengzhi Zuozhan Xuexiao, Zhengzhan Xuexiao or Zhengzhan). Fu Hsing Kang College is a military school. Its Masters programme consists of studies in the Three People’s Principles, political military affairs and mainland China affairs. The graduate schools at the National Taiwan University, the National Chengchi University, the Chinese Cultural University and Fu Hsing Kang College offer research degrees up to doctoral level.

Interestingly, Tamkang University has a Graduate Institute of International Affairs and Strategic Studies which offers Masters degree programmes. The University strives to promote itself as a centre of excellence in regional studies. Its College of International Studies, established in 1992, publishes a quarterly, *Tamkang Journal of International Affairs*. The College groups together eight graduate institutes: those of American Studies, European Studies, Japanese Studies, Chinese Studies, Latin American Studies, International Affairs and Strategic Studies, Russian Studies and Southeast Asian Studies. The number of full-time staff in these graduate programmes grew from three or four on average in each institute in 1996 to some seven or eight in 2000. Table 2 shows the graduate courses in regional studies, many of which have strong political science contents.

Table 2: Graduate Schools of Regional Studies in Taiwan, 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional focus (China) mainland</th>
<th>Masters level</th>
<th>Doctoral level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>America</td>
<td>Tamkang</td>
<td>Tamkang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>Tamkang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Tamkang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>National Chengchi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>Tamkang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Graduate Schools of Regional Studies in Taiwan, 1996
Table 3 indicates, from the number of full-time teaching staff, that the National Taiwan University and the National Chengchi University are much stronger in the study and research of political science than the others, the latter having an added advantage in that it has the only Department of Diplomacy in the country. Both universities publish an academic journal in political science (see Appendix I). They also have a longer history and are more established. More-over, they are both located in Taipei, the capital city, and therefore close to the centre of power. Tunghai, Soochow and the Chinese Culture Universities are moderate in size and strength, while the National Sun Yat-Sen and the National Chung Cheng Universities do not have undergraduate degree programmes in political science. Tamkang University is, however, unique in the sense that it has a graduate institute specialising in international affairs and strategic studies. Finally, Fu Hsing Kang College is a special school for training military personnel.

Table 3 shows that most of the professors received their postgraduate training in the United States. To a certain extent they reflect an American outlook on international relations and affairs, initially in theory and later on in practice when some of them are seconded to work as advisers to the government.

No department of IR exists in universities in Taiwan, however. IR theory is taught only within courses on IR or IP. At present the study of IR theory remains at the stage of introducing Western theories through teaching, publication and the translation of some selected works from the West. (See Appendix II for a list of these translated works.)

Table 3: Graduate Schools in Political Science in Taiwan, 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>No. of professors*</th>
<th>No. with IR interest</th>
<th>No. with US PhDs (%)**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Taiwan</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14 (67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Chengchi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politic science</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomacy</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8 (62%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunghai</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8 (73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soochow</td>
<td>26 (19)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20 (77%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Culture</td>
<td>21 (12)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Sun Yat-Sen</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 (75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Chung Cheng</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Up to the 1980s, the study of IR theory in Taiwan had focused on the ‘debates’ between traditionalists and behaviourists in the United States.\[21]\ In the 1990s, returning scholars from the United States began to introduce post-modernist ideas to students in the country, including such areas as feminism, culture and identity.\[22]\ In general, as in the study of social sciences in Japan, most scholars in Taiwan borrow their theories from America and Europe and then apply them to the analyses of their local situations. Very few have succeeded in developing original theories of their own.\[23]\ For a long time, the study of international relations had been the product of European political development.

How to move away from this persistent mode of thinking and to develop an IR theory within China (meaning ‘Great China’\[25]\), as suggested by one leading IR specialist in Taiwan, has become an important task for Chinese scholars.\[26]\ This call for the development of an IR theory with an indigenous essence finds resonance in at least some circles in China and Europe.\[27]\ In China, some conservative, traditional scholars call for the development of an IR theory with Chinese characteristics, arousing considerable debate among IR scholars within China and between Chinese and American scholars.\[28]\ However, the prospects for such a development in Taiwan, China or elsewhere are rather remote, given a host of problems, not least the American dominance in the study of social science. European scholars fare much better, for obvious reasons. In the case of Taiwan, however, younger scholars are only just beginning to make some headway.\[29]\

**IR Research Institutes**

Institutions in Taiwan with strong research programmes in IR include the Institute of International Relations, the Institute of European and American Studies, the Society for Strategic Studies and the Institute for National Policy Research. Others with a narrower focus and interest in international and strategic affairs include the Asia and World Institute, the Chinese Council of Advanced Policy Studies and the Chinese National Foreign Relations Association.\[30]\

The Institute of European and American Studies is one of the twenty-five research institutes making up the Academia Sinica,\[31]\ the premier research institution in the country. It publishes an academic journal called the *Journal of EurAmerica Studies*. However, there are no specific institutes or departments with a specific focus on political science or international relations within the Academia Sinica, only individual scholars spread across various institutes or departments. The Society for Strategic Studies, formed in 1979, had been headed for a long time by Chiang Wei-kuo,\[32]\ the adopted son of Chiang Kai-shek. It is accountable to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.,\[33]\ The Society publishes an annual report and a quarterly journal on contemporary political and strategic issues.\[34]\ It helped to establish the Graduate Institute of International Affairs and Strategic Studies at Tamkang University in 1982.\[35]\ The Institute for National Policy Research is a private institution funded by a business tycoon named Chang Yung-fa, who is the founding chairman of the Evergreen shipping and airline group.\[36]\

| Fu Hsing Kang | 27 | 3 | 9 (33%) |
| Tamkang Affairs & Studies | International Strategic | 11 (7) | 4 | 6 (55%) |

* These are full-time staff, including full professors, associate professors, assistant professors and teaching assistants. Those in brackets are part-time teachers out of the total number shown.

** Rounded up to one percentage point. The overall average is 55%.

Of these research institutions, the Institute of International Relations (IIR) at the National Chengchi University stands out as the leading think-tank on international affairs. Beginning as an intelligence unit set up by Chiang Kai-shek in mainland China before 1949, it was staffed by analysts of Soviet affairs, with the aim of analysing and interpreting communist affairs. When Chiang moved to Taiwan in 1949, the unit continued to perform a similar task. The IIR, as it is known today, was officially set up in 1953 as a civic organisation called Guoji Guanxi Yanjiuhui (Association for International Relations). In 1961, it was reorganised and registered with the Ministry of Education under the name of Guoji Guanxi Yanjusuo (Institute of International Relations). In 1968 it helped to establish the Graduate Institute for East Asian Studies at the National Chengchi University. In 1975, the year in which Chiang passed away, it was again reorganised and renamed Guoji Guanxi Yuanjiu Zhongxin (literally, International Relations Research Centre, but its official name in English has remained the Institute of International Relations up to this day). Also in 1975, it became affiliated with and in 1996 fully integrated into the National Chengchi University.

Currently the bulk of financial support comes from the Ministry of Education through the National Chengchi University, although the Bureau still finances some projects and facilities, as do the National Science Council, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Mainland Affairs Council and the National Security Council of the Presidential Office.

At present the IIR has a total staff of 188, of whom 108 are research personnel. It has active cooperation and exchange programmes with some leading universities in the world, mostly in the United States. There are two departments: research and administration. The research department has four divisions: the first focuses on American and European studies; the second on Asia-Pacific affairs; the third on Chinese politics; and the fourth on Chinese economics, social and cultural affairs. About half of the 60 or so full-time researchers at the IIR are devoted to the study of international affairs and the other half to Chinese affairs. In the past the four heads of divisions were appointed by the Director; now they are elected by members of the department, subsequent to the adoption of a more open, transparent operation demanded by young researchers who have recently joined the Institute after their doctoral studies abroad. The Director, in most cases a retired government official, is still subject to Presidential appointment.

In the past few years, the Second Department of the IIR has been responsible for organising the participation of scholars from Taiwan in the activities of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP). The IIR has become the secretariat for managing CSCAP activities in Taiwan. It publishes a newsletter on CSCAP and has set up its own web-site. It has also hosted conferences in Taipei dealing with security issues in the region and has invited CSCAP members from other countries to visit Taiwan. Most of these activities are funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Issues & Studies is a major academic journal on international and Chinese affairs published by the IIR. It started as a Chinese publication in 1955 for internal circulation, but was opened to public subscription in 1961. In 1964, the English edition appeared, followed by a Japanese edition in 1971, a Spanish edition in 1978 and a French edition in 1980. All these editions, with slightly different contents and editorial boards, have continued to publish up to this day. The Chinese and English editions are bimonthly, while the Spanish and French editions appear four times a year. Apart from Issues & Studies, the IIR also publishes two Chinese journals: Mainland China Studies and America & Europe Quarterly.

The English edition of Issues & Studies is the most widely known among the Institute’s publications, and can be regarded as its flagship. It is the only IR journal published in English in Taiwan. So far, roughly half of the articles published in the journal are on international affairs and the other half on Chinese affairs. The cumulative indices, published in 1972 and 1975, list the articles published under two headings: ‘international affairs’ and ‘Chinese communist affairs’. The articles listed under the first heading are country or regional studies. Very few of them discuss IR theory. This pattern began to change in the 1970s, with slightly more articles trying to bring some theories to bear on policy analysis. The country and regional scope has also expanded somewhat. Table 4

Of those articles listed under 'international affairs', only two in the 1999 issue, two in the 1998 issue, four in the 1997 issue, three in the 1996 issue, another three in the 1992 issue and two in the 1991 issue touch, to a greater or lesser extent, on IR theory (see Appendix III). A survey of the articles published during 1990-99 shows that

**Table 4: A Classification of Articles Published in *Issues & Studies*, 1990-1999**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Economics</th>
<th>Social affairs*</th>
<th>International affairs#</th>
<th>Military &amp; security affairs</th>
<th>Cross-Strait relations§</th>
<th>Others¶</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Including cultural and legal affairs.

# Listed as ‘foreign affairs’ in 1997 and as ‘international relations’ prior to 1993.

§ Listed as ‘Taiwan-Mainland relations’ prior to 1996.

¶ Including articles on Taiwan, Hong Kong or Macau, and history. Articles relating to these areas were put under different headings prior to 1997.

**Notes:**

1. The time period of 1990-99 is chosen mainly because of the availability of indices in those years at the time of writing this article.

2. The classification system used follows basically the one used by the journal itself.

3. Some discussions on IR theory can also be found in articles dealing with Cross-Strait relations.

4. The statistics listed in this Table exclude book reviews, documents, spotlight on current events (short commentaries) and research notes.

5. The 1998 volume contains a special issue consisting of eight articles on the ‘clash of civilisations’.

6. 1999 is the first full year in which the journal was published as a bimonthly.

7. Since the beginning of 1999, there has been an increase in the number of articles on Taiwan, especially on its democratic development.

8. This Table is meant to be indicative rather than conclusive.

there have been only a few on Taiwan’s foreign policy and relations, and none on IR theory in Taiwan. Some of the recently published articles on Taiwan’s foreign policy and relations deal mostly with security issues (see Appendix IV).
Another noteworthy organisation is the Chinese Association of Political Science. Founded in Nanjing in 1932, it moved with the Nationalist government to Taiwan in 1949. Currently it has some 1,200 members in Taiwan. In 1971, the association started to publish an academic journal entitled *Chinese Political Science Review*. Up till the end of 1998, 30 issues had been published (see Appendix V for details).

**Library Sources**

Apart from universities with political science departments, the single most important source of literature on political science is the National Central Library in Taipei. This library is a depository of books published in Taiwan. A search through its computer catalogue using ‘guoji zhengzhi’ (international politics) as the subject-search reveals 90 titles as of January 1999. Table 5 shows their classification.

**Table 5: Books on International Relations in the National Central Library, January 1999***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Titles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International relations</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translations of Western IR books**</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International politics and strategic studies</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handbooks</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International relations history</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference proceedings</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional issues</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>90</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Here ‘international relations’ include ‘international politics’.

** Including a translation of a (yearly) survey of strategic forces of various countries in the world conducted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, London.

Notes:

1. Revised editions and second copies are counted individually and separately.
2. This list includes a few books published in mainland China.

It is clear from the table that the holding of IR books in the National Central Library is very small. If translation and other miscellaneous works are excluded, the number of IR or IP books is reduced even further. The same is true for IR journals. A keyword search using ‘guoji guanxi’ (international relations) reviews only 80 titles and a similar keyword search using ‘guoji zhengzhi’ (international politics) reviews 59. These findings give an idea of the limited number of publications in political science and IR in the country.

Sanmin Bookstore, the largest in Taiwan, sells books published by all of the major publishers in the country. A computer search through its collection of IR books in November 1999 reviewed 156 titles, of which 32 dealt in whole or in part with IR
theory. In recent years, Wu Nan Bookstore has published a relatively large number of social science books, including titles in the area of political science. As of November 1999, its politics publications include some 99 titles, [50] of which eleven were IR books. Of these, seven were translated works. So, it is clear from these data that the number of indigenous works in the IR area are very few indeed.

Findings and Analyses: Problems and Features

Having made a survey of the current state of the study and research of international relations in Taiwan today, what can we conclude about the status of international studies in the country? What are their main features and problems? What are the major factors that influence the studies? And what are the prospects?

In Taiwan, IR scholars form only a minority in its political science community. Out of a total of 479 registered members of the Chinese Political Science Association in 1999, [51] only about 150 teach and research in IR, [52] and most of them are concerned with inter-state relations in the strategic, political sense rather than in the broad, liberal sense. The very few who are interested in IR theory are mostly fresh doctoral degree holders in political science from American universities. In general, scholars in Taiwan pay little attention to the development of theories, mainly because of the small market demand for theoretical studies in social sciences. Most of these fresh PhD holders do write something about theory in the first few years upon their return from the US while ideas about theories are still fresh in their minds, but thereafter they usually move on to write policy papers. Consequently the results of theoretical research are rather dismal. [53]

According to a young Taiwanese scholar, [54] the lack of interest in IR theory can be attributed to domestic, practical reasons in that it is easier and faster for most Taiwanese scholars to write in their native Chinese language. [55] Although many political scientists in Taiwan receive their training in the United States, most of them quickly resume their customary way of reading, writing and thinking in Chinese once they return home. The reward system, in terms of earning gaofei (an honorarium for publishing articles in journals, magazines and newspapers in Taiwan), does not encourage theoretical analysis written in English. There is little that the small number of scholars interested in IR theory in the country can do to change the situation.

A distinctive feature of the study of IR in Taiwan is its policy orientation. This can be gauged from the relatively large number of articles written by scholars in academic journals, magazines and newspapers, as well as for conference presentations. It can also be gauged from the teaching programmes and student theses in political science in the country’s universities. Apart from policy orientation, IR studies in Taiwan are skewed towards area studies, especially those dealing with state-to-state relationships. In addition, most scholars follow government policy lines expounded in official statements. An example of this is the heaping of praise on the government’s so-called ‘pragmatic diplomacy’ with little critical assessment. [56]

With few exceptions, the study of IR theory in Taiwan remains at the stage of introducing and elaborating the power school of thought, focusing on the debates between traditionalists and behaviourists in the US in the 1960s. According to one estimate, discussions on IR theory in Taiwan are trailing some 30 years behind those in the Anglo-American IR community. [57] More generally, social science research in Taiwan occupies a peripheral position in the global academic community, the centre of which is dominated by the West, especially the United States. Scholars in Taiwan acknowledge that they are trailing very much behind ‘cutting-edge’ research elsewhere. [58] The small number of publications in international refereed journals has been cited as an indication of this situation.

A major constraint on the development of IR studies in Taiwan comes from China. Faced with China’s threat of using military force against it, Taiwan has to do whatever it can to ensure national survival. The study of cross-Strait relations therefore consumes a lot of energy and resources in political science research in the country. This is not dissimilar to the South Korean situation, where political science research is heavily skewed towards the study of North-South relations.
Apart from the China factor and the concern over cross-Strait relations, IR studies in Taiwan are marked by America’s influence under which the majority of academics in Taiwan work. [59] Roughly 55% of all political scientists working in the major universities in Taiwan received their postgraduate training in the United States (see Table 3). Naturally they pay a lot of attention to relations between Washington and Taipei. In fact this influence goes beyond the academic field to cover the political-economic life in Taiwan. After all the US is the ultimate guarantor of Taiwan’s national security: only the US can deter China from taking military actions against Taiwan. American domination is a fact of life and, to some, even a necessity, since Taiwan is ‘protected’ by the US militarily, politically and economically.[60]

Despite the various connections with the United States, people in Taiwan still harbour a great sense of insecurity, not knowing for sure the extent of America’s commitment to the defence of Taiwan’s interests. Opinion is divided within Taiwan as to whether the country should follow closely America’s lead in world affairs or make greater effort to tread a more independent path in foreign policy in order to protect and promote its national interest. For example, the issue of whether or not Taiwan should join the American proposed Missile Theatre Defence in Asia is a case in point. [61]

Another interesting feature, which derives from Taiwan’s own unique diplomatic position, is a felt need among some Taiwanese scholars for Taiwan to re-position itself in international affairs. This felt need is related to the process of localization and self-identification. Only after having properly positioned (dingwei) [62] itself will Taiwan be able to see the world in proper perspective and plan its political strategies accordingly.[63] Whether Taiwanese scholars should develop theories with a strong indigenous flavour or go international and merge or compete with Western scholarship has been a subject of debate for a long time. The conflict between periphery and centre in international education and research has continued to baffle Taiwan’s academics.

Scholars in Taiwan also face another associated problem of ‘identity crisis’: if they choose to ‘localise’ their studies, then a question is likely to arise as to whether they should ‘Taiwanise’ or maintain the claim that Taiwan is a part of a ‘Great China’ and then look at things from a Chinese perspective. In other words, it is a conflict between the ideologies of the locals and the ideologies of the mainlanders; between the interests of local Taiwanese and those of the mainlanders; between Taiwan’s ‘independence’ and da yitong sixiang (the ‘Great China’ mentality); and between traditional, conservative KMT factions and the ruling Democratic Progressive Party. Some younger, more liberal members of the KMT are more inclined towards promoting the interests of Taiwan. The fact that there exists a Taiwan Political Science Association to ‘rival’ the Chinese Association of Political Science is evidence of this conflict of interest and identity. [64] Interestingly this issue exists not only in political science, but also in the legal profession as well as other areas. Another example of this dilemma can be found in the teaching of geography in Taiwan: at present the teaching of the geography of the Republic of China (ROC) includes the China mainland, Tibet and Outer Mongolia. But if the ROC were to mean only the island of Taiwan and some adjacent small islands, then the geo-strategic position and international relations of Taiwan with other countries would be conceptualised very differently.

The urge to excel in a highly competitive society such as Taiwan tends to divert scholars’ attention from producing high quality research to the taking of part-time teaching jobs, partly to earn some additional income, but more importantly to develop and maintain personal networks and relationships (guanxi) so as to enhance their career prospects. The irony is that the basic salary of full-time professors in Taiwan is not low by Asian standards (except in comparison with places like Hong Kong and Singapore) and research money from the National Science Council is quite readily available. Returning scholars with doctoral degrees from American universities are being sucked gradually into this vortex of seeking money and developing personal relationships. As a result, the development of IR theory receives scant attention. The very few who have a genuine interest in IR theory are inevitably being distracted too by commercial temptations in the prevalent environment.

Two further reasons contribute to the lack of attention paid to the development of IR theory in the country.[65] First, because of the effect of the so-called "administrative
absorption of elites⁶⁶, those who excel in their academic work tend to be lured to work for the government.⁶⁷ When they reach their peak of academic excellence at the age of 40 to 50, they are often attracted to act as consultants or advisers to the government.⁶⁸ The second reason is that government ministries often contract academics to conduct policy research and to write policy papers. As a consequence, university professors are being steered towards writing short, sharp policy papers rather than academic articles with theoretical analysis that is supported by footnotes and references.

Shaw Yu-ming, the former Director of the IIR, is somewhat pessimistic about the development of IR theory in Taiwan.⁶⁹ He thinks that there are no indigenous IR theories in Taiwan that are comparable to such established theories as game theory or rational choice theory developed in the West. However, he admits that there are perspectives, approaches and views which are uniquely Taiwanese. According to Shaw, the development of an IR theory in Taiwan encounters several difficulties. First, local graduates have to serve in the military for at least two years before they are eligible to go overseas for further education. By the time they are ready to do so, they have already reached an average age of 26. Then there is the English language which they have to struggle hard to master in order to cope with their graduate studies. A lot of time and energy is therefore spent on brushing up language abilities. Even when they receive their doctorates and return home to teach, they still continue to struggle to stay in touch with the latest developments in IR theorising through reading, digesting and translating Western works. Many scholars still have difficulties in maintaining effective communication with colleagues in the English-speaking academic world.

An apparent irony exists in the study of IR in Taiwan: on the one hand, the government urgently needs to expand its diplomatic relations with other countries and repeatedly calls for the mobilisation of its people to conduct public and private diplomacy in order to achieve such a goal; but on the other hand, members of the public, including most political scientists, have relatively little interest in international politics beyond those dealing with cross-Strait relations, let alone IR theorising.

To summarise, IR scholars in Taiwan form only a very small group within the Taiwanese social science community. On the whole, social studies in the country occupies a peripheral position in the academic world. Scholars are much less interested in theorising than in policy studies, the focus of which is principally determined by Taiwan’s relations with China and the United States, its international position and domestic changes.

Concluding Thoughts: Prospects

The prospects for international studies in Taiwan lie mostly in the directions taken by scholars both inside and outside of Taiwan and responses from within. Suggestions made by scholars include Steve Chan’s on the study of state-business relations so as to highlight the unique features of Taiwan’s economic development and so that Taiwan studies can contribute something towards the wider IR studies; Wei Yung’s analysis of the ‘multi-system nation’ concept and the ‘linkage community’ concept as possible ways to tackle the problems of integrating China with Taiwan; and Shih Chih-yu’s pluralistic approach to the analysis of political phenomena, especially from a cultural and psychological perspective.

In addition, issues arising from Taiwan’s unique international position as a relatively rich economy with few formal diplomatic relations with other countries also deserve attention. The fact that Taiwan is forced to adopt unconventional means in order to develop and strengthen its ties with other countries, utilising its economic strength as a principal source of power and influence, is pivotal to such issues.

In the course of its development, Taiwan has been pulled by four major forces in different directions. The first one is the ‘Great China’ mentality, the effect of which, though diminishing as the hope of regaining control over the Chinese mainland is gradually fading away, is still prevailing, at least among those belonging to the older generation.
The second force is the process of localisation or ‘Taiwanisation’, the effect of which is increasingly being felt, as the process of democratization grows in strength and as the new generation is paying more attention to local issues than to issues across the Strait. Its influence, though moderate at present, is steadily on the rise.

The third force is ‘Americanisation’, the influence of which remains very strong, as the US is the only country in the world mostly likely to come to Taiwan’s defence against a military attack by China. In fact, Taiwan is more dependent on the US for its national survival than either Japan or South Korea. The effect of Americanisation will remain strong in the foreseeable future, although it has been slightly moderated and balanced by the localisation process as well as Taiwan’s improved relationship with some European countries in recent years.

The fourth force is Taiwan’s own effort to internationalise itself. The process is spearheaded by the government since it has come to realise the difficulties involved in achieving its ‘Great China’ aspiration. As a way to lessen its overwhelming dependence on the US and to ward off possible negative effects of Taiwanisation, internationalisation offers an alternative way out. However, in-ternationalisation is not without its problems because of China’s diplomatic pressure exerted on the parties concerned. It is also very costly: because of Taiwan’s weak diplomatic strength, it has to hand out large sums of money in the form of foreign aid in order to woo countries to establish stronger links with it.

How these four forces interact with each other is likely to carry significant implications for Taiwan’s international status as well as the study of IR in the country. Domestically, the poverty of theorisation in Taiwan is likely to persist, due mainly to its market-driven ethos which gives little credit to serious academic works unless they impinge on the market. Much depends on individual scholars as well as the government to work out ways to change the situation.

Acknowledgements

The field research for this paper was carried out in Taipei in January 1999 when I was a visiting scholar to the Institute of International Relations. I did research in its library, as well as the Library of the National Chengchi University and the National Central Library. I am grateful to the Director of the IIR and his staff for their advice and assistance. I am also grateful to Professor K.K. Leung of the City University of Hong Kong and a reviewer of the ASI Working Paper series for comments on an early draft of this paper.

Endnotes

This paper adopts as far as possible the pin-yin system of transliteration, except for those Taiwanese personal and place names which are known in the Wade-Giles system. Chinese and Japanese names appear with their surname first, followed by their given names.


2 Here international studies refer, in a broad sense, to the studies of international relations and international politics, including foreign-policy analysis, international political economy and international organisations. Little has been written on this topic in Taiwan, except a dated, cursory survey carried out by Phillip M. Chen (December 1988)’Study of international relations in Taiwan, ROC – a preliminary survey’, Zhengzhi xuebao [The Annals (Chinese Association of Political Science), currently known as Chinese Political Science Review], No. 16, pp. 207-23.


5 These include medical colleges and institutes of technology. See the section on universities, colleges and junior colleges, in Directory of Taiwan, Taipei: The China News, 1999. See also Zhonghua Minguo jiaoyu nianjian, p. 1354. Some colleges are established nationally, some are set up by city governments and others are privately owned.

6 Zhonghua Minguo jiaoyu nianjian, p. 1361.

7 A complete list can be found in Geji xuexiao minglu [A list of all educational institutions], Taipei: Ministry of Education, 1998, pp. 5-10. Another official source lists 20 national universities, 18 private universities and 45 colleges of various kinds as of early 1998. See Daxue xiaoyuan zhuzhi guizhen ruobian [Regulations for organisations of universities and colleges], Taipei: Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, 1998, p. 1316.


9 Daxue zheyin – xuexi bian, pp.438-9 and 447.


11 Daxue zheyin – xuexi bian, p. 418.


13 The National Chengchi University, or Chengda for short, was formerly a party school and so traditionally professors there are more pro-KMT, while those in the National Taiwan University have been fairly liberal, less pro-KMT and more research orientated. Chengda’s policy-orientation also stems from the existence of the Department of Diplomacy. Interview with Kuo Lin-wu, Specialist, Office of Councilor Lin, National Security Council, Republic of China, at his office, 27 January 1999.

14 Zhengzhan Xuexiao was formerly known (literally in English translation) as the school for training cadres to exercise political control. This name sounded very Leninist and was eventually changed to its current name. The commissar system is still very much in place in Taiwan’s military establishment. The commissars now look after welfare and logistics issues in the military. Members of the school are military personnel. Interview in Taipei, January 1999.


17 Ibid.

18 Tamkang University Bulletin 1996-98, published (biennially) by Tamkang University, pp. 257 ff. See also www2.tku.edu.tw/~ti, accessed on 21 June 2000. The university is apparently the most forward-looking tertiary institution in promoting regional studies in Taiwan.

19 When central government officials want to consult or seek advice from scholars, they often turn to those near at hand in the capital. Interview with Wu Hsin-hsing, Deputy Secretary-General, Straits Exchange Foundation, at his office in Taipei, 29 January 1999.


21 Tsai Cheng-wen (1989) Dangqian guoji guanxi lilun fazhan ji qi pinggu [The development and assessment of contemporary international relations theory], Sanmin Book Store, p. 1. Tsai, a political scientist at the National Taiwan University and a government official, is one of the leading theorists in Taiwan. This book was written as a result of his ten-month sabbatical leave spent at the University of California, Berkeley.
22 See the courses taught by Shih Chih-yu in the Department of Political Science at the National Taiwan University (http://politics.law.ntu.edu.tw/), Chinese mode, accessed on 23 November 1999).


25 A concept different from ‘Greater China’, which is usually understood to include the southern part of China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. ‘Great China’, on the other hand, includes both mainland China and Taiwan, and carries heavy cultural connotations and some political aspirations.


29 Including Shih Chih-yu, Wu Yu-shan, Ming Chu-cheng and Chu Yun-han, all professors in the Department of Political Science at the National Taiwan University, and Yuan I, a researcher at the Institute of International Relations. Shih brings in cultural, psychological factors to bear on the study of IR and foreign policy, although strictly speaking he may not be easily classified as an IR theorist. His high level of generalisation and eclectic approach have drawn muted criticisms from some quarters within Taiwan. Wu is in the comparative politics field rather than in IR, with a specialisation in the political economy and development of Russia, East European countries and Vietnam. Both Wu and Ming maintain a high standard of academic research and publications. According to one scholar at the IIR, these are aspiring scholars in their respective fields. However, "the two current godfathers of IR theorising in Taiwan" are Professor Lin Bih-jaw of the Department of Diplomacy at the National Chengchi University and Professor Tsai Cheng-wen of the Department of Political Science at the National Taiwan University (interview in Taipei, 21 January 1999).


34 For a record of its activities in the first ten years, see Zhonghua zhanlue xuekan, Spring issue, March 1979, pp. 1-10.

35 See ibid., p. 2 and the summer issue, June 1982, pp. 229-36. For details of the programme of the Graduate Institute, see Tamkang University’s web-site www.tku.edu.tw

36 Chang is President Chen Shui-bian’s senior international policy adviser for cross-Strait issues. See Asiaweek, 12 May 2000, p. 49.

37 For a brief review of its history from 1961 to 1971, see Wu Chen-tsai (October 1971) ‘Guoyansuo shini an [Ten years of the IIR],’ Wenti yu yanjiu [Issues & Studies], Vol. 11, No.


40 The current Director, Ho Szu-yin, who assumed office in early 1999, is an exception. He is a relatively young and very active academic. His immediate predecessor, Shaw Yu-ming, was a former minister of information.

41 Interview in Taipei, January 1999.

42 http://iir.nccu.edu.tw/cscap/


45 The English edition used to be a monthly before 1999.

46 *From the Index of Periodicals Published by the Institute of International Relations, Republic of China*, Taipei: Institute of International Relations, from July 1966 to April 1972 (May 1972); and from May 1972 to April 1975 (June 1975).


48 This was done on 10 January 1999 through the holdings of the National Central Library, Taipei, stored in CD-ROM which listed journals published from January 1970 to December 1997.


51 See the membership list of the Chinese Association of Political Science, in a membership booklet published in January 1999.

52 According to Ho Szu-yin, then Deputy Director of the IIR and Programme Chair of International Affairs of the Association, in an interview with him in his office, 26 January 1999.

53 Interview with Wu Hsin-hsing.

54 Yuan I, Associate Research Fellow, Institute of International Relations. Interview with him on 8 January 1999.

55 According to Yuan, most of the articles authored by IIR scholars and published in the English edition of *Issues & Studies* were originally written in Chinese.

56 For a relatively rare, critical look at the pragmatic policy, see Tuan Y. Chang (April 1998) ‘Shiwu waijiu de fazhan yu queche [The development and choice of pragmatic diplomacy]’, *Wenti yu yanjiu* [Issues & Studies], Vol. 37, No. 4, pp. 1-20.


59 The American influence on IR studies in Asia is undoubtedly great but somewhat uneven across different countries. Scholars in South Korea are more willing to interact with
American academics and their scholarship. They participate more actively in debating and discussing issues with their American counterparts. Japanese scholars are, by comparison, relatively inward-looking. They seem to have greater self-confidence. While some engage in debates with American scholars, others develop their own way of theorising. The reason for this Japanese confidence can be traced back to the Meiji era when Japan started to learn from Europe in a massive way. The situation of Taiwanese scholars is somewhere in between their Japanese and South Korean counterparts (interviews in Taipei, January 1999). In the case of China, scholars are divided between the more conservative and the more liberal camps, with some variations in between. On the whole, the Chinese scholarship is more inward-looking and closed, due mainly to the rather tight control exercised by the Chinese Communist Party over political and social life, although the control has relaxed considerably in some areas. See Chan, *op. cit.*, 1998 and 1999.

60 Interview with Ho Szu-yin, 26 January 1999.

61 Taiwan has acquired 200 US-built Patriot missiles to defend itself against China’s Dongfeng-31, a nuclear-capable missile that can reach as far as western United States. See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 22 June 2000, p. 14.

62 A term carrying a number of meanings, including positioning, searching for a place, seeking a proper role, and going through a process of negotiation in order to firm up one’s position and thereafter being able to avoid future disputes.

63 As where one stands depends on where one positions oneself, according to Yuan I and Tuan Y. Cheng, in an interview with them on 19 January 1999.

64 The Taiwan Political Science Association was formed a few years ago by a group of political scientists with a greater interest in Taiwanese studies and perspectives. The membership of this association overlaps somewhat with that of the Chinese Association of Political Science.


67 For example, Lin Bih-jaw, Su Chi, Tsai Cheng-wen, Wu Hsin-hsiung, Ming Chu-cheng, all notable scholars in political science in Taiwan, have served or are currently serving in some official capacities in the government.

68 Government advisers or councillors are short-term, fixed appointments with no tenure, but their contracts can sometimes be renewed. So professors who have already obtained tenures have to consider very carefully whether they should shift their career paths, otherwise they might have to face the possibility of redundancy if the political wind changes.

69 Interview with Shaw Yu-ming, then Director of the IIR, in his office in Taipei, 26 January 1999.

70 How can Taiwan studies contribute to political science’, *The Annals* (Chinese Association of Political Science), No. 19 (December 1991), pp. 262-70.


1996) 'The ROC’s economic diplomacy after the March crisis: can money talk again?', *Issues & Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 12, pp. 22-35; and Vol. 32, No. 12, pp. 51-66 respectively. A recent example is the controversial establishment of diplomatic relations with Macedonia in January 1999. It was reported that Taiwan had promised to provide some US$1 billion worth of investments to the country as a pre-condition. See *Lianhe bao [United Daily News]*, 31 January 1999, pp. 1 and 4. A similar case of aid for diplomacy for a reported sum of US$2.35 billion occurred in July 1999 when the ROC and Papua New Guinea decided to establish diplomatic relations with each other. The breakdown of this huge sum can be seen in ‘Taiwan move in line with Look North policy’, at www.wr.com.au/national/990708n6.htm (accessed on 9 July 1999). However, the decision to establish diplomatic relations was quickly rescinded by the new incoming government in PNG.

**Appendix I: Content Analysis of The Journal of International Relations, 1978-1997**

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<th>No.</th>
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<th>No. of Articles</th>
<th>No. of Book reviews</th>
<th>Appendices</th>
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Note 1: This journal is published by the Department of Diplomacy and the Graduate Institute of International Law and Diplomacy, National Chengchi University, Taipei.

Note 2: The Department of Political Science, College of Law, National Taiwan University, publishes another journal called *Political Science Review*. The first issue came out in March 1990 and the latest issue, No. 11, was published in December 1999.

Note 3: Fu Hsing Kang College, a military training school, publishes a journal called *Fu Hsing Kang Academic Journal*, the latest issue being No. 64 published in September 1998. The frequency of its publications (two to three times a year) and its substantive
Appendix II: International Relations Books Translated into Chinese in Taiwan*

* This selective list excludes works on area studies.


Appendix III: Articles on 'Foreign Relations' that Discuss IR Theory in *Issues & Studies*, 1990-1999

1999, Volume 35:


1998, Volume 34:

- ‘Toward an international relations theory with Chinese characteristics?’, by Gerald Chan, No. 6 (June), pp. 1-28.

1997, Volume 33:

- ‘From "multi-system nations" to "linkage communities": a new conceptual scheme for the integration of divided nations’, by Wei Yung, No. 10 (October), pp. 1-19.
- ‘International studies in China: origins and development’, by Gerald Chan, No. 2 (February), pp. 40-64.

1996, Volume 32:

- ‘The political economy in East Asia’s security prospects: a critical review of the literature’, by Li Chien-pin, No. 11 (November), pp. 31-49.

1992, Volume 28:

- ‘Circling the wagons: the trend toward economic regionalism and its consequences for Asia’, by Karl J. Fields, No. 12 (December), pp. 73-96.
- ‘Given a unique model of bilateral relations, can Taiwan be an actor on the world stage?’, by Françoise Mengin, No. 10 (October), pp. 44-70.

1991, Volume 27:


Note: Of the 15 authors cited above, only four (Yuan, Wei, Shih and Lin) are based in Taiwan. Perhaps, strictly speaking, only Yuan can be counted as an IR theorist.

Appendix IV: Some Recently Published Articles on Taiwanese Foreign Policy and Relations in Issues & Studies, 1996-1999

• ‘Security in East Asia and Taiwan’s role’, by Ho Szu-yin, Vol. 32, No. 9 (September 1996), pp. 87-102.


Note: Articles on cross-Strait or Taiwan-China relations are excluded.


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* Excluding those on cross-Strait relations and US-ROC relations.

Note: The percentage of IR articles against all articles is 13.4 or one in about 7.5 articles.

Gerald Chan is a senior lecturer in the School of Political Science and International Relations at Victoria University of Wellington. His recent publications include Chinese Perspectives on International Relations (Macmillan and St. Martin's Press, 1999), International studies in China (Nova Science, 1998), and a book chapter jointly written with Xiaoming Huang entitled 'Beijing-Taipei Relations: New Directions in Post-Lee Era' (Centre for Strategic Studies, forthcoming).