

TAP: An Introduction

The TAP project was an interdisciplinary, interregional postdoctoral research initiative that aimed to strengthen and connect Taiwan Studies within Sinology. Its research explored Taiwan's place within Sinology and beyond, with particular attention to Taiwan's role as an innovator in relation to global megatrends. Bringing together postdoctoral scholars from political science, anthropology, literary studies, and history, the team engaged with the major disciplinary debates in their respective fields while collectively advancing Taiwan-focused research. Shaped by regional influences in East Asia and by centuries of contact with Western traders and cultural currents, Taiwan's history has been marked by contestation and successive regimes. At different times, the island served as a port of call for Jesuit missionaries and as an administrative and commercial hub for imperial Chinese networks and European powers alike. It later came under Japanese colonial rule and was subsequently transferred to the Republic of China after the Second World War. Owing to its strategic location, Taiwan has remained central to the geopolitical calculations of competing great powers for well over a century. In recent decades, Taiwan has developed into a dynamic and plural society, characterised by vibrant political and civil-society life and a distinctive capacity to navigate global challenges. Its innovative strength and social inclusiveness—together with its pioneering role in Asia, and among Asian democracies in particular—were key reasons why the TAP team identified Taiwan as an especially compelling case study. Beginning with a preparatory workshop in May 2021, the

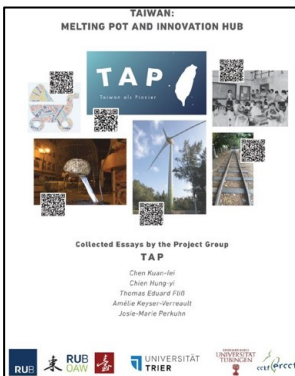


Fig. 2: Taiwan as Melting Pot and Innovation Hub” cover page.

TAP team developed its research perspectives, culminating in its first publication, Taiwan as Melting Pot and Innovation Hub, which was presented at the European Association of Taiwan Studies (EATS) book launch in April 2022. The volume was edited by Prof. Dr. Christine Moll-Murata, a specialist in Taiwan Studies at the Research Unit for Taiwanese Culture and Literature (TRU), Ruhr University Bochum. It examines Taiwan's emergence as a political, environmental, and social pioneer in the context of globalisation.



For the full list of publications, see:

From its rapid response to the novel coronavirus and the successful containment of COVID-19 in 2020 to the broad promotion of digital infrastructures and innovation hubs, Taiwan has often been discussed as an Asian leader in digitalisation and a model for networked societies in the 21st century. The establishment of a Digital Ministry under Audrey Tang 唐鳳 (born 1981; in office 2016–2024; later serving as Ambassador-at-Large) fostered new participatory and responsive platforms. Leveraging its world-leading IT and ICT industries, Taiwan developed highly effective channels for detecting disinformation and election manipulation, alongside robust cyber defences within the administration. Dr Perkuhn examined Taiwan's pivotal role in global digital transformation, positioning it as one of the most compelling case studies for understanding preparedness in the face of global megatrends while driving innovation.

Taiwan has been discussed as a forerunner in numerous fields, from responses to the challenges of the Anthropocene to its place within the civilisational condition of compressed modernity. The composition of the TAP postdoctoral team reflected this interdisciplinary approach, bringing together researchers from political science, sociology, literature, and history. The team worked across eight key elements and forms of mediation aimed at fostering dialogue both within the disciplines and with the public: strengthening the subject network, establishing a shared database, conducting individual studies across different disciplines, undertaking joint cross-perspective analyses, publishing research results, drafting a methodological manual, creating digital teaching modules, and establishing a certificate programme.

For instance, Dr Keyser-Verreault highlighted in her work the development of the Yuezi Centre 月子中心 as an example of this trend; she later moved to Academia Sinica in Taipei. Dr Fliß examined Taiwanese eco-poetry, which has developed since the early twentieth century, focusing on how dialect poems—particularly those in Taiwanese Minnan—intertwine with self-identification amid global shifts that challenge the ontological foundations of national identity. This analysis also addressed the diversity of dialects and their influence on Taiwan's responses to global megatrends.

To understand the pioneering characteristics of contemporary Taiwan, it is also crucial to study its past. Dr Hsu Yu-yin 徐郁縈 explored the historical development of medical education and training as a driving force of modernity during the colonial period, examining the innovative policies and transformations that shaped Taiwan over the past century.

Prior to her departure from the TAP project in August 2022 to take up a post at National Cheng Kung University as an Assistant Professor in the Department of History, Dr Chien Hung-yi 簡宏逸, while based at Ruhr University Bochum, worked on education as a driver of modernity.

After several fruitful years of collaboration, Dr Amélie Keyser-Verreault likewise concluded her involvement with TAP, taking up a position at Academia Sinica in late summer 2025. She was formally bid farewell at the Fourth International Workshop, “Taiwan’s Responses to Global Megatrends”, which also marked the official conclusion of the programme. This booklet documents both TAP’s scholarly network and its contributions to the Taiwan Studies community, as well as the project’s academic trajectory from 2022 to 2025.



Fig. 3: East Taiwan Coastline, Taitung, 27 March 2025.