



**Book Review: Cooper, John F. Taiwan Nation-State or Province? Boulder: Westview Press, 2009. 288 PP.**

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**Abstract**

This article aims to describe about my analysis of Cooper (2009) perspective in how we understand Taiwan as identity. There are two perspective that to see Taiwan in recent day. First of all, for nation who believe One China Policy, they assume that Taiwan is a province of People Republic of China which is Taiwan is part of Beijing government. Secondly, for nation who do not believe it, they assume that Taiwan is independence identity, a nation identity, and also sovereign country which is separated from mainland China influences. In this discourse about how we understand Taiwan, this article is going to review from John F. Cooper which is in his book, Taiwan: nation state or province?. This book not only discuss how we can see Taiwan, however, how Taiwan in the future in political dynamic especially after US president Donald Trump who intent to support Taiwan as independence identity.

**Keyword:** Taiwan; Nation; State; Identity

**The book written by John F. Cooper makes me interested to discuss how Taiwan actually be seen in a political perspective.**

There are two main perspectives to understanding how Taiwan as a single identity. The way of thinking is then going to affect us to understand the dynamics of international politics especially in seeing how aggressive China to other countries seeking to establish political ties to Taiwan.

First, Taiwan in the perspective of the countries that adhered to One China Policy is considered as part of the province in People Republic of China. That means Taiwan is not considered as a sovereign country, Taiwan is just part of Mainland China who could not do G to G diplomatic relations with other countries. Thus, in this perspective, there is some sort of a barrier fence that cannot be traversed by a country to make political relations as long as a policy oriented to Beijing.

Second, Taiwan is regarded as an independent and sovereign state separate from the Beijing government. Thus, who embrace this ideology tends to be more freely establish political ties to Taiwan, of course with a little overlook how the Chinese mainland pressure on already established diplomatic relations.

Before going further into the discussion of the two perspectives proficiency level, i would be a little notice about the shadows paradox inherent in the discourse of these two thoughts.

In fact, Taiwan's political system is more democratic than the Chinese mainland. Election is done routinely in order to keep change of power has become commonplace in Taiwan's political system. Elections conducted routine which involves all the people.

On the other hand, in the real economy is still in the grip of mainland China that it means there is some kind of dependency between Taiwan and mainland China in particular economic sectors. Thus, it was difficult to see Taiwan as a country that sovereign for this country cannot escape from the domination of economic dependence on mainland China.

Taiwan consists of two groups, namely the majority of Taiwanese Chinese Fukien or Hoklo and Hakka. Each ethnic group has a distinct ethnic considers determined from the province of residence and time of arrival in Taiwan. Which I think is interesting, because Taiwan in the same times like a "melting pot"

that contains a variety of ethnic groups together in national identity named Taiwan.

In general, Taiwan culture influenced by Japan and the United States. Japan looks strong influence of the education system adopted many education systems in Japan and also the influence of language daily. Japan also looked at the influence of the arts, culinary, religion and martial arts.

Cooper with a very comprehensive set out how we can answer the big questions of Taiwan. Apparently, there is another answer that is out of the two major perspectives today. There is another side that needs to be seen in the eyes of political science of Taiwan as a nation state or province.

Taiwan is a unique area from the point of geography. In addition, because the region is the small island across from mainland China is very large, Taiwan also has the characteristics of a different nature to neighboring mainland China. The political system in Taiwan adopted a democratic republic political system designed by Chiang Kai-sek. Political system combine presidential and Parliamentary system.

Politically there is a kind of legal effects that can occur when Taiwan is recognized as an independent state separate from mainland China. Taiwan form the island country has regions other small islands nearby. So, if Taiwan is recognized as an independent state, it will have an impact on the potential for the transfer of power on small islands in the sea south of China.

### **Discussion of Conventional Response**

This book reinforces my curiosity to discuss how the discourse on Taiwan. In a simple real People Republic of China regards Taiwan as part of an integral territory. To maintain this conventional response, it appears that the Chinese mainland will use military force. In my point of view, the use of military force until the war is thought to be avoided. I am among those who do not agree with the use of military force to solve a problem.

In certain circumstances, it seems Taiwan issue can trigger a world war involving two major power between China and the United States. However, most of the people of Taiwan want their peace. War is a condition that must be avoided. Understanding the condition of Taiwan is to understand the political relations between China and the United States.

Discussion about Taiwan is also essentially a form of dependence on the United States. If China's military assault to Taiwan without the support of the power of the United States, it can be predicted Taiwan will be destroyed. Likewise, if Taiwan is fully supported by the strength of the United States then it is likely that happening is different, China is who will suffer destruction.

To sum up, discussion author concludes that the future of Taiwan is not only determined by Taiwan, but also involves the effect of the strength of China and the United States. There is a kind of economic

considerations that make the most of the people of Taiwan choose the status quo. In my opinion, the discourse on Taiwan not only economic considerations, but also world peace should be maintained in the region.

### **Alternative Response**

If we use history as a basis for determining the sovereignty of Taiwan, it seems it is not effective to be able to fully explain. There is a kind of inconsistent policies in government. For instance, President Lee Teng-hui never convey the idea of Unification, but in implementation he turns tend wants Taiwan became an independent and sovereign state. In addition, President Chen Sui-tire with very firm to promote the idea of separation from mainland China but in the sole discretion not the same as what is presented in an official speech.

To be an independent and sovereign nation, Taiwan seems not meet one of four conditions in traditional international law. At least, a nation can be called as a sovereign nation must qualify diplomatic relations with other countries. This requirement is unmet by Taiwan to be referred to as a sovereign nation. Although, Taiwan's own territory, people, and government.

The strong influence of China in international politics in the world is very effective to suppress other countries that have not established diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Economic power and political influence of China held great influence on

international recognition to Taiwan. China's influence is also very visible in the international organization the which closes access to Taipei in involvement in international organizations. Thus, the countries in the world are directly does not recognize the full existence of Taiwan as a sovereign state.

The situation regarding the recognition of other countries to Taiwan this time seems to be very difficult to change forever. The strength of China as the country with the highest economic growth in the world will further strengthen China's influence in the international organization. Other countries would avoid conflict with China to safeguard national interests. Especially if there are countries that are heavily dependent on trade relations with China, of maintaining good relations with China is more important than building a new relationship with Taiwan.

There are five threat presented by Beijing to Taiwan. First, Beijing would use military force if Taipei provide access to a foreign country to establish diplomatic relations across the Taiwan region. Second, Beijing will also deploy military force if Taiwan develop nuclear weapons. Third, the internal chaos in the region of Taiwan. Fourth, the state declared independence of Taiwan. Fifth, the Taiwan government refusing to negotiate with the Chinese government about the long-term reunification program.

Five terms it is a condition that must be avoided if you do not want a war in the Taiwan. Creating peace is the hope of all countries,

including Taiwan. Thus, there is a kind of dependency created by China to international countries to abide by the terms desired by China. However, look at the circumstances that occurred in Taiwan last few years, it seems the Chinese threat to Taiwan will not be done. Peace and political stability in Taiwan and the absence of diplomatic relations are built to give effect that the battle was not the case.

### **Indonesian Perspective**

Taiwan in perspective Indonesia is a very important partner countries. Trade relations between Taiwan and Indonesia provides great benefits for both countries, especially Indonesia. As a fellow Asian nation, international relations are conducted is to create political stability in the region respectively. Indonesia has an interest to Taiwan as an export destination countries with sizeable number of trades.

On the other hand, Taiwan also provide many jobs for workers from Indonesia to help industrializing in Taiwan. Trade relations between the two countries are like this are very good and provide mutual benefit. Interwoven relationship between two countries based on mutual benefit is very good indeed to be developed and expanded to provide a positive impact for both countries.

Indonesia as the country receive very large investments from China would have to respect the One China Policy to regard Taiwan as a part of the People Republic of China. Therefore, Indonesia would not violate the

terms proposed by China to keep peace in Taiwan and Indonesia. Maintaining world peace is the task of the Indonesian government because it is in the Indonesian constitution.

International politics run by Indonesia is politically disinterested in any one group. Indonesia always give priority to peace in the world rather than the interests of one country. Thus, to establish good trade relations with Taiwan are also at the same time maintaining diplomatic relations with China is the Indonesian government measures taken to maintain international political stability.

Connections made by Indonesia to Taiwan is a trading relationship. Thus, even though Taiwan does not have diplomatic offices in Indonesia is official, but Taiwan has a trade office in the two largest cities in Indonesia. I consider in the future the relationship between Indonesia and Taiwan can escalate into diplomatic relations. To be able to create diplomatic relations between Taiwan and Indonesia, Taiwan seems it should also have the power and political sovereignty in international organizations so that there is some sort of international reaction.

The principle of maintaining world peace in Indonesia's perspective is to maintain trade relations with Taiwan but also to avoid a war that might occur if Indonesia are in a dangerous condition. Indonesia is a sovereign country which also has the greatest economic power in Southeast Asia. Thus, Indonesia also had to maintain political stability in the region

which will indirectly affect the stability of the international economy.

In addition to trade relations, Indonesia and Taiwan also engage in the field of food security. All agricultural potential which is owned by Indonesia used to support the food needs in Taiwan. Likewise, to support the application of technology in agriculture, Indonesia also import technology from Taiwan.

Education aspect is also becoming an important relationship by Indonesia to Taiwan. The number of Indonesian students studying in Taiwan very much. This condition is a form of rapport the two countries continue to provide benefits for both countries.

In conclusion, Indonesia as a sovereign state has an interest in maintaining world peace continues to ignore the war as a way to resolve the problem. Peaceful means remains the top choice for the government of Indonesia. Thus, Indonesia took a middle ground to answer questions about the condition of Taiwan today. Indonesia has always to avoid potential conflicts that may occur in the future. But Indonesia would support Taiwan as a sovereign state if Taiwan has the power and sovereignty to declare as the independence of country.