

Book Review 【書評】

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**Mikael Mattlin, *Politicized Society: The Long Shadow of Taiwan's One Party Legacy* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2011)<sup>§</sup>**

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Mikael Mattlin, a professor of International Studies at the University of Helsinki has given us a new way of understanding the nature of the relationship between politics and society in modern Taiwan. His book, *Politicized Society: The Long Shadow of Taiwan's One Party Legacy* is a skillfully organized, well written, and sophisticated—but not dense and opaque work of scholarship—that is a wonder for what it is and a gift for what it is not—another heavily statistical and theory-laden tome that seems to be the norm in discipline of modern political science.

In this review I first introduce the author and his unique and fascinating homeland, Finland, and then discuss at length, the nature of his book. I discuss its chapters and subchapters in some detail and argue why I see it as a modern near-masterwork that tells us much about modern Taiwan's political system and political culture as it has evolved since the Nationalist takeover in 1945.

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§ Mikael Mattlin, *Politicized Society: The Long Shadow of Taiwan's One Party Legacy* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2011), 303p.

馬特林：《政治化社會：臺灣一黨獨大遺緒之陰影》（哥本哈根：北歐亞洲研究所，2011年），303頁。

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## **Introducing Mikael Mattlin**

Mattlin is a young scholar who completed his doctorate in social science at Helsinki University in 2008. He focused upon China and Taiwan and has done his research and writing primarily on those interlocked nations as well as on other nations in East Asia. He has been involved in research and publication since 2005, when he had his first article, "Structural and Institutional Integration: Asymmetric Integration and Symmetry Tendencies" that was published in the journal, *Cooperation and Conflict* (Vol. 40, No. 4, Dec., 2005, pp. 403-421). As his on line CV shows us, he has been active since then, giving talks, presenting papers, publishing articles and writing his monograph. I see him as very much the model of a young and active and already very sophisticated student of East Asian politics and international relations. I also see that he is a member of the larger community of scholars who are related to the key centers of Chinese and Taiwanese Studies in the UK and Germany and his homeland, Finland.

## **Taking the Measure of *Politicized Society***

Mattlin's book is organized into six chapters and an afterword and is 302 pages long. Length does not make for dull reading however and, while one must read closely and then read again, to take in the full measure of Mattlin's narrative lines and his subtle, carefully spelled out analyses, one never feels one must slog through. One does have a sense that the author is giving us a set of perspectives on Taiwanese past and its present that one has not encountered before. I say this as one who has been doing research on, studying the secondary and primary literature on, and writing about Taiwan for about thirty three years now.

Each of Mattlin's six chapters has its own perspective and distinct flavor and I try to capture this in the discussion that follows. Your reviewer writes from a multi-disciplinary perspective. While formally trained as an historian, I have

made use of a variety of disciplinary methodologies over the decades and written in a number of these. They include political history, the history of Chinese/Taiwanese religion, Taiwanese literature, and, most recently the Taiwanese economy. Mattlin touches of much of these areas of scholarly concern in this book and does so in a clear and concise manner, never trying to impress or overwhelm the reader with his methodological expertise, or the fact that he is the omniscient master and the reader is not.

### **Exploring *Politicized Society***

Let us begin by examining his very useful introductory chapter.

Chapter I. is titled, "Political Transitions and Politicization" and that title states just what the chapter is about in no uncertain terms. His grand agenda—and the way he wants to fulfill it—is suggested in this chapter and it does give the reader a very clear idea of what lies ahead. He begins with the process of political transition.

Mattlin begins by discussing what he sees as the processes involved in political transition in what one must call the economically developing and democratizing nations of the world. He holds the position of Researcher in the Finnish Institute of International Affairs and, as suggested earlier, has focused on Chinese and Taiwanese relations, on Chinese foreign policy and, as the case with this book, on the evolution of the Taiwanese political system. While East Asia is what he studies at close hand, he does have a broader view of the process of transition and sees it as a phenomenon that has embraced much of the world beyond Western Europe writ larger, and that process has taken very different directions while seemingly aiming at the same result—the creation of viable democratic states throughout the world. He uses Taiwan as one example of a nation that has undergone—and is still going—through such a transition. In this

he has followed a larger pattern one finds when studying Taiwan—that it serves well as a positive example of a number of large scale transformations in many aspects of national life—from the political realm to the economic system, to gender relations to cultural and intellectual life and to the religious sphere as well. I must add that I have written on this theme of "Taiwan as paradigm" in a number of historiographical essays and that I agree with Mattlin's decision to view Taiwan as a important and instructive example of the complex process of democratization in what was in 1949, a Leninist-like totalitarian state that was the Kuomintang-dominated Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan.

What Mattlin sees is that the very nature of the totalitarian state limits the development of a political culture that contains elements of give and take. What then happens is that the lack of a viable public sphere results in the seepage of politics into many of the other realms of society writ large and that results in the "politicization" of those spheres. While, as he shows us in this and later chapters, that the political process did open up, the legacy of the harsh totalitarian and quasi-totalitarian decades was the on-going politicization process that remains to this. This legacy of politicization in the Kuomintang-dominated state is the central focus of this book, and in the central chapters that follow this fine introduction, Mattlin lays this out in detail. However, before working this theme through, Mattlin is careful to provide the larger nature of Taiwan's socio economic and political environments. By doing so he gives us a much grander and deeper sense of what Taiwan has become and thus whether consciously or by fortunate accident gives us a book that more than the political scientist would find important.

We see this process of foundation building and contextualization carefully spelled out in Mattlin's second chapter, one that he calls "Historical Origin and the Structure of the Kuomintang (KMT) System." He begins with a brief history of the roots of the KMT that he calls the KMT's turbulent mainland origin. In this first of his subsections he looks, very briefly, at the KMT evolution since the

1910s. He shows why the party is Leninist and thus closer to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) than many might think. He covers KMT development through the war years and gives a good Idea of the reasons they failed. He shows that the KMT did have a fair degree of success during the Nanjing decade. He covers KMT development through the war years and gives a good Idea of the reasons they failed in their war effort and in their attempt to hold on to China after the war. He then shifts to Taiwan and looks at the basic patterns of Japanese rule. He argues that the structures of governance the Japanese put in place as well as the development of the infrastructure were key elements in the KMT ability to take control of the island and its people and hold on to it even during the first disastrous months and years of their rule.

What he also makes clear is that the KMT was in a weak position when it first took over in the late summer of 1945. The actions of the army troops and many of the civilian officials who accompanied them made the situation worse. The choice of Chen Yi to command the island was also a major mistake, as logical as it might have seemed on the surface.

These years of the reign of Chen Yi that led to the revolt of the Taiwanese, the 2-28 Incident and its aftermath are spelled out in a nice and very succinct fashion. One gets a real feel for a difficult period to deal with, given its many actors and historical threat. He also captures some of the feeling of pain that the Taiwanese experienced and makes clear that the first years of KMT rule on Taiwan set the stage for the difficult times the majority population would have to endure. At the same time he is clear about the KMT's recognition that changes had to be made for its rule to be long lasting and productive.

He then moves from a large scale narrative to a series of smaller narratives and analysis of structural and constitutional issues that are more limited in their focus than this initial subsection. He proves to be strong political historian in the

three sub-sections that make up the remainder of this chapter. Each of these subsections moves the larger narrative of political development forward.

The first of these sections, Structure of the KMT Political System and Party, covers the years of KMT "hard totalitarian" and then soft totalitarian rule from roughly 1945 to the early 1980s. These were the years in which Taiwan was placed under martial law by the leaders of the ROCs government's Executive branch. By doing so, Chiang Kai-shek and his son Chiang Ching-kuo were able to minimize other branches of the government as defined by aspects of the 1947 constitution that ROC China and then ROC-controlled Taiwan were governed under. As it turned out, by late 1949, the only China the ROC regime did govern was the island of Taiwan, a number of smaller islands to the east of Taiwan, the Pescadores and a few islands, most notably Quemoy and Mazu that lie close to the coast of Fujian province, the ancestral home of the Minnan speaking majority.

The ROC operated on a constitution that was, Mattlin tells us, adapted from the ideas of Sun Yatsen, the founding father of the KMT and the ROC that the party ruled. It was then promulgated in 1946 and had five distinct branches. Three are similar to those we find in the US—executive, legislative and judicial and two taken from Chinese traditional imperial governance—the examination branch that was responsive for governmental exams and the control branch that monitored all government activity. There was also a National Assembly that had very high level powers such as the ability to amend the constitution and impeach the president. When the mainland was lost, a period of "martial law" was declared and this put power in the hands of a very strong executive branch that was controlled first by Chiang Kai-shek, then by his son Chiang Ching-kuo and by Chiang Ching-kuo's Taiwan-born successor, Lee Teng-huei. The state of martial law only ended in 1987, with Chiang Ching-kuo's announcement of a number of dramatic changes in ROC-PRC (People's Republic of China) relations, and changes in monetary control policies.

Mattlin first looks at the KMT as a political body and argues that, like the CCP it is a Leninist party. He also argues that the ROC is like the PRC in the way that, during the Martial Law decades, party and state were integrated entities that had strong monopolies on political power, economic development and modes of social, intellectual, and cultural control. There, were, however, differences and one of the most important of these was the KMT's willingness to have fairly high levels of local, county and "provincial" control and that citizens had the ability to organize themselves in cliques that struggled for power on the grass-roots level.

What Mattlin did not say was that the KMT also had a distinctive admiration of the modes of activity in Nazi German when it was governing on the mainland and created its own version of the Brown Shirts as a sign of this. I would also add that during these halcyon years, it brought in German military officers such as the Prussian nobleman Von-Seeckt to help it reorganize its land forces in the civil war against CCP forces. It also created its own internal security forces, again with the Himmler's Gestapo in mind—as well as the Garrison Command that insured domestic stability. The Teutonic envy is also see in the ROC search for military innovations and this is demonstrated when the technocrat in training Li Kwoh-ting went to Germany after his years as visiting scholar in physics at Cambridge in the mid-1930s. This may all be peripheral to Mattlin's main theme but it does give a sense of KMT-in-China's mindset.

Mattlin provides a clear view of the governance provided by the KMT and we see that changes—i.e. a lightening of the heavy hand of the state—take place by the 1970s. What we also see is that under Chiang Kai-shek's son, Chiang Ching-kuo, the Taiwanization of the KMT is well underway. The part is no longer only an Waishenren (outside the province) party.

What we don't see in this and related sections—and I think this is important, and might have been mentioned by Mattlin—is that in the 1950s, the ROC finds a different savior and role model, one that also bankrolls the government. This is

the United States. The US provides funds, military expertise, and advisement in both agricultural and industrial expertise and training. And the US through the US embassy and through the AID, the Agency for International Development, did serve as a watchdog and push an opening up of a totalitarian system.

One other point must be made here. What Mattlin does give us is a discussion of the role that the KMT plays in the ROC economy as major owner of a number of large firms. These firms provide revenue that helps the government as elections become more open and in other ways. I think this KMT role is too often overlooked and Mattlin has the sense and the courage to bring it to reader's attention. Bravo!

The next section in this chapter is titled "[the] Organization and Expansion of Elections." Here we see a parallel narrative and an analysis of the nature of the system of elections that evolved as a major element in KMT governance. This a detailed and well structured section and in it Mattlin gives the reader a good idea of this process over time. He makes use of the scholarship of Arthur Lerman, a Princeton Ph. D. who taught for many years at Mercy College in NY's Westchester County, along with that of Bruce Jacobs, a Columbia University-trained political scientist, who were American pioneers in the study of Taiwanese local and provincial politics. Lerman's book on the world of the members of the Taiwan Provincial Assembly is a very important work and here it gets its long awaited recognition. Jacobs has continued to publish articles, books and papers and remains a major voice in the field—and has spent his career in Australia. Mattlin makes good use of both Lerman's and Jacobs' work in this book. I would add here that he also makes use of the work of a host of Taiwanese scholars whether based on Taiwan such as Chu Yun-han or Cheng Tun-jen based in the United States—at William and Mary College. I will go back to this point later.

The final section of this chapter takes the political narrative from the late 1980s to about 2000, when the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidate,



Chen Shui-bian is elected president and his controversial feminist running mate, Lu (Annette) Hsiu-lien is elected vice president. I found myself totally involved in working through this section. It was the period in which your reviewer moved from studying Taiwanese religion—as an element of that broad spectrum, the distinctive patterns of Taiwanese Christianity—to Taiwanese politics, seeing closely how the events of 1990 and the dramatic years that followed unfolded and getting to know some of the major actors and lesser actors in the KMT and the newly legalized DPP. Mattlin sees it from afar, but has gotten the details right and lays out the narrative in a clear, concise and useful fashion.

In his conclusion to this expansive and well-crafted background chapter, Mattlin pulls the threads together and prepares us for his take on the development of Taiwanese politics in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century—as a second and necessary prelude to his discussion of his central topic, politicization in Taiwan's socio-political development. I see this chapter is a marvel of its kind. Mattlin manages to spell out in detail yet in a light-handed way the grand drama of Taiwan's administrative and political development and also gives a clear picture of the on-the-ground nature of the ROC's political, constitutional and administrative systems.

The third chapter is devoted to a narrative and analysis of Taiwan's political realm under the DPP. Taiwan can be seen as a full-scale democracy—or can it? These are the questions that are asked in explicit and implicit ways over the course of this very well-written, provocative and most useful chapter. What seen from start to finish is that Taiwanese politics are "politics in the raw" and make this author—who for many years taught a course in American colonial and early Republic history—of the kind of politics—and political culture—that one saw in the Washington, Adams and Jefferson presidencies and beyond. They have, as did the early American Republic and the ante-bellum Republic as well, a certain rough and tumble and no-holds-barred flavor about them—with fierce party and inter-party rivalries, verbal jousts and, on occasions, physical attacks between

members of the different parties—that remind us of what we now see on the floor of the Legislative Yuan. No "anti-Morisi/anti Moslem Brotherhood coup/not exactly coup" are to be seen but sometimes one could feel that some from the old ruling party would have been happy with such step being taken to restore order and decorum—if not the true give and take of democratic process.

What Mattlin does is capture this stormy decade with finesse and style over the course of this important bridge chapter, as I shall now suggest. We first see the flow of political development. Mattlin takes us through giving a good sense of the nature of the Chen Shui-bian presidency, warts and all. He shows us that the first years were rocky in a number of ways. There was tension between president and vice president that grew deeper as the first year continued. He also shows us that Chen may have wanted to put an agenda in place but did not the legislative votes to do so. Though the KMT was shocked by the loss of the presidency, it soon learned how it could work as an opposition party in a deadly and powerful way, stopping the president from getting his way.

What we also see is that Chen was not able to put in place policies he had promised he would and that he was subject to harsh criticism and to lobbying against his programs that he responded to by backing down. He was Obama eight years before Obama in his attempt to meet the needs of both parties. But, unlike Obama, he never found a way to change his course and win much needed victories. Yet his party did make headway and won some key elections. The actual role of the voters and the way people decided whom to vote for was spelled out here even as the narrative was laid out. What he gives us is a sophisticated take on the process and the nature of national and local politics in the post-KMT era.

I enjoyed this first section for it brought back memories of that time for me. I had contacts in the DPP and worked with them on various projects, editing some of the English-language statements they wanted to publish. I had worked

with members of the DPP in the US and knew some of the party leaders and the heroes of the 1970s and 1980s as friends. Hsiao Bi-khim, the head of the Foreign Policy division of the DPP at headquarters was one such friend. I also met with Shih Ming-teh and his American wife—and Taiwanese heroine—Linda Arrigo (Ai Lin-da) during the 80s and 90s and then again in the early 2000's. So when the DPP came to power I did get to meet Vice President Lu Hsiu-lien at the presidential palace. Mattlin captures this period and does so in a way that made me think of these exciting years.

The second section captures the role of intellectuals in the DPP and in the KMT as well and lays out why these scholars were willing to play key roles in the Lee presidency and in the Chen presidency that he covers so well. He knew these people, as I did and makes very good use of interviews of them. In Taiwan, at least, intellectuals had important roles to play in the political process even as they may have compromised their scholarly objectivity. Mattlin captures this group and their role very well indeed.

The final section of this chapter looks at the political process on a deeper level and show how parties function and also how politicians were able to leave their parties at times and still get elected. One gets the sense that Taiwanese politics has its own distinctive ebb and flow.

In Chapter Four, Mattlin turns to the core process he wants to explore in this book, politicization. The title of the chapter is "Four Cases of Politicization." He gives us just what that short title says and each of the case studies is one that Taiwan Hands are familiar with, but from different perspectives. Mattlin's central thesis is that politicization of life became the norm during and after the years of KMT domination. Here he presents us with cases that make the case for his larger thesis. What he also does, and this is another gift of knowledge he gives the reader, is a deep and abiding sense of how politicians and the public at larger

experienced and affected a number of key moments and movements of the A-Bian (Chen Shui-bian) presidency.

The first of these was the battle over the construction of Nuclear Reactor Number 4 that took place early in Chen's first term. Taiwan had no oil resources and had a growing need for electric power. They made a brave decision to turn to nuclear power and had three built power plants built, each in a different section of the island. One was on the northern coast above the port city of Tamsui and the national capital of Taipei. A second was in the Deep South, on the western side of the large bay where beaches of one of major vacation resorts were located. By the early 2000's, with the island's industry still expanding, more power was needed and a fourth plant was now under construction. However, as was the case with Japan, Taiwan was right on the Ring of Fire, the fault line that begins in Indonesia and moves steadily north and then loops across the Pacific and down along the Alaskan, and then Canadian and the US's west coast. Taiwan was prone to earthquakes, though not as prone as Japan and here lay a problem—and the possible danger—of having too many nuclear power facilities. In 2000 a major earthquake had hit the middle of the island just to remind the citizens of Taiwan people of power of this shift in fault lines and movement of tectonic plates. The wisdom of yet another plant was now open to question. The battle was joined during the first term of Chen's term in office and many people got into the act, Taiwanese and foreigners alike. Here was politicization writ large. The debate over the wisdom of finishing the plant reached all of the population, and actors of all types became a part of the struggle.

I saw this struggle and this process of politicization first hand because of my friendship with Linda Arrigo, the DPP activist—now divorced from Shi Ming-teh—who was involved in a host of leftist causes and environmental causes. She brought me to a meeting of foreign anti-nuclear activists and I heard them make the case against the new plant. Having friends in the business community, I also attended an event where I met members of the Taiwanese corporate community

and westerners who worked with them. They were in support of the new plant and made the case for it. What Mattlin captures in this section of his chapter is the dynamics and nature of the battle. Here we see that a governmental project was turning into a large argument over the best direction Taiwan should take on this important decision. His account captures the events even as he makes a strong case of seeing these events as one aspect of the politicization process in action.

There are three other cases studies that Mattlin gives us. The battle for the power plant had set the stage and was simply a prelude of the battles between the two parties that followed this first large scale encounter. Mattlin's second case study is much broader in nature and involves the many conflicts over the legislation that took place during the remainder of the first of Chen's two terms as president. What the DPP wanted to do was change the nature of local political government as a means of negating the power that the KMT had on those levels. The KMT had developed these power bases over time and the DPP was too new a party that lacked expertise on this local level. The attempt to change the system was at the heart of this battle for power and as the struggle took shape more people became aware of the how these changes could redefine—in a way better for DPP—what the political landscape looked like. The KMT leaders on each of these levels were aware of this and the struggles that followed were messy and loud and resulted in KMT victories in ending a challenge to the old system that had worked so well for them.

The third example of politicization that Mattlin examines is in the related realms of cross-strait policy and foreign policy. Given the various actors, these were complex and very important and often inter-related spheres. As we have seen in the USA in the Bush and Obama administrations, such politicization in the this same set of spheres often takes place. The fight over the details of the Libyan embassy attack is one example. Given the proximity of the PRC and the ROC such battles over ties became politicized as well especially since Chiang

Ching-kuo opened up travel to China in 1987. Mattlin charts this out in a clear manner.

Let me add an updating here, based on recent experience. Direct links between mainland China and Taiwan had been put in place after the return to talks on the issue in 2008, after those talks had come to a halt as a result of the 1996 ROC presidential race and President Lee's trip to the USA. The direct cross-strait travel meant the possibility of even closer PRC-ROC ties and yet politicization took place and the closeness of the populations did not take place. Rather, the people on each side became more aware of their own special natures and that created a clear distain for the tourists going to China from Taiwan and those going to Taiwan from China. Each side likes the sites they visit but not necessarily the people who live and work in those places. I saw this clearly in a trip to Taipei, for a conference on Taiwan Studies, in the spring of 2012. From what I know of the evolution of this cross-strait relationship—people to people and business to business, Mattlin's analysis has it right.

The fourth and final case study of politicization that Mattlin presents is as dramatic as the first and of even greater significance. Chen saw the lack of progress his party had made in a goodly number of the legislative battles and decided to make the 2008 election more than simply a presidential election, as important as it was. He also decided to introduce a referendum on Taiwan's relationship with China. By introducing this wild card, Chen politicized the election and brought the whole population of the island into an act that had potentially damaging consequences to Taiwan and its previous government's careful and measured approach to the relationship in China. Here bringing everybody to the table—the essence of what politicization really means—was a way of treading on very thin political and diplomatic ice.

In Chapter Five, Mattlin continues his discussion of politicization but from a different perspective. In this chapter, "Informal Political Structures and

Politicization," he argues that one must look at Taiwanese politics in its formal mode, as many political scientists do and also in its informal mode, as anthropologists tend to do. Using concepts that he spelled out in his 2004 article in *The China Quarterly* "Nested Pyramid Structures: Political Parties in Taiwanese Elections," (Vol. 180, Dec., 2004, pp. 1031-1049) he explores the way the more informal system works. He is interested in the way political support is built and then introduces what I see as the important concept of what he terms nested structures. These are local interpersonal patterns local politicians use to develop networks of supporters. Here we see Mattlin as political anthropologist, following the lead of Robert Weller and Joseph Bosco, two scholars who dealt with on-the-ground political development as part of their larger attempts to examine the dynamics of Taiwanese society. Out of the "nested pyramid" concept comes a broader discussion of what Mattlin has termed, in the title of this chapter's second third section, "Political Cleavage and the Patronage State". He then takes us to an even broader and deeper level of analysis by introducing and spelling out in detail what he sees a crucial, but not often studied, phenomenon of *zaoshi*, a term he translates as the creation of power. This is, he argues, not an academic concept, but one found on the ground and made use of when political actors talk about what they do in the spaces of the Taiwanese political arenas that *they* work in. I find that this concept is a clear and very comprehensible one, sort of akin to the idea of "youguanxi"—having influence. Youguanxi is yet another of those terms, known well and used often in a person-to-person basis, which is a popular concept that social scientist have studied and make use of in their attempts to understand both traditional and modern Taiwanese and Chinese (PRC) societies.

This chapter shows politics from the actor's perspective and gives the reader a clear idea of what people think and what they do to create matrices of networks that allow the individual to involve them in the process of *zaoshi*.

Here we see the process of political development and the politicization in their most primal inter-personal form. This is a presentation of these linked processes that are at the core of the political process on Taiwan and makes for some fascinating reading. It is that all too rare intellectual entity, "readable political science" and as I see it, Mattlin follows the lead of Professor Alan Wachman, a young member of the Fletcher School of Tufts University who died of cancer a few years ago.

Mikael Mattlin has one more daunting task—pulling the various threads of his ambitious and important book together. He does so in his sixth chapter and the book's conclusion, "Explaining Taiwan's Structural Politicization." In but a few pages, he neatly summarizes his basic themes and then gives us a sense of how the KMT's governance of Taiwan during the five and a half decades of its rule created a socio-political system that was closed in most ways, but open enough on the ground level to give both space and the option for politicization of many of the important issues that arose—outside the relative small formal political sphere. What he also suggests is that this tactic of providing social space but not total control did become a problem that can be seen in the fractious politics and the politics of emotion that sometimes dominate the island's legislative organs and the larger spheres of socio-political discourse.

Mattlin has more to say, however and in a brief "afterward" summarizes the KMT government in the post-Chen Era that we have today. This is a nice neat way to end the discussion. However he has more to say.

He adds one more substantive section to the book—a discussion of his methodology and an even deeper and more powerful—and very useful—discussion of the key differences between the political anthropologist and "political scientist" as that field is now defined by its highly theory and statistics driven approach to political behavior and political development. I find it refreshing and very useful addition to the book.



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Over the course of this long review, I have attempted to summarize what Mikael Mattlin has given us in the very different and distinctive chapters of this book.

My approach to this review has been, I think, a useful one. I would argue that he gives not only a picture of politics in Taiwan today but how it got that way. I, the reviewer, have seen the same set of events and patterns of political, societal, economic and cultural developments, but from somewhat different perspectives.

Let me say, very simply, that I see the book as very well researched and written and believe that it captures certain hard realities of modern Taiwan that few scholars have dealt with before. Mattlin has been careful to develop his work on the foundation of those Taiwan scholars on Taiwan and in the west who have pioneered the field as it and the nation that field—or sub-field—covers as has evolved. He has then given us his own take on these developments in a careful way that provides those in a host of different disciplines much to think about and make use of. I would hope that this book finds the large audience that it deserves.