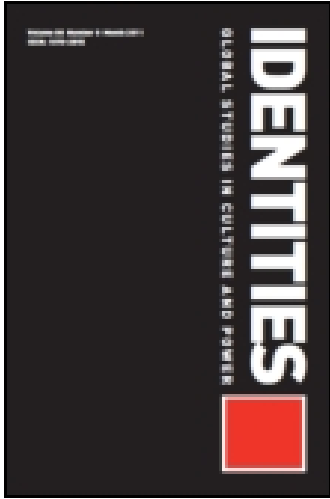


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Publisher: Routledge  
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## Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/gide20>

### Making Hakka Spaces: Resisting Multicultural Nationalism in Taiwan

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Published online: 13 Jul 2009.

To cite this article: R. Scott Wilson (2009) Making Hakka Spaces: Resisting Multicultural Nationalism in Taiwan, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 16:4, 414-437, DOI: [10.1080/10702890903020919](https://doi.org/10.1080/10702890903020919)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10702890903020919>

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## Making Hakka Spaces: Resisting Multicultural Nationalism in Taiwan

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*Projects of official nationalism have long been understood as state-sponsored attempts at enforcing cultural uniformity within the borders of the national territory. Contemporary nationalisms tend to compartmentalize minority cultural groups in a way that marginalizes those who are not seen as belonging to the core of the “modern” nation. Contemporary official Taiwanese nationalism promotes the “ethnic Taiwanese” (Hokkien) majority as the modern center of an otherwise diverse nation, primarily through the funding and ‘preservation’ of non-Hokkien cultural traditions. Though these programs that celebrate local cultures are more inclusive than earlier nationalisms in Taiwan, the terms of inclusion nonetheless function as a form of neoliberal state control of minorities, such as the Hakka (kejia ren). This article examines how Hakka “culture workers” (wenhua gongzuozhe) resist state attempts at spatial and symbolic marginalization. From producing ethnographies that create a Hakka neighborhood to organizing a parade route that symbolically links that neighborhood to Taipei’s government and financial centers, Hakka culture workers resist multicultural nationalism by making Hakka spaces that are resistant to state attempts to marginalize them. I argue that their work is a prime example of how communities and individuals can successfully negotiate the cultural and spatial politics of the neoliberal state.*

*Key Words: Taiwan, Hakka, nationalism, multiculturalism*

Nationalist projects are state attempts to maintain international political legitimacy by demonstrating that the sociocultural borders of the nation are coterminous with those of the political borders of the state (Anderson 1983). Using the institutions at its disposal, the state naturalizes the relationship between the supposedly culturally homogenous “nation” and the physical space of the state, creating what Benedict Anderson termed the “imagined community” by constructing biological, cultural, and historical connections in order for people to *imagine* themselves as part of a (supposedly) culturally homogenous *people* (the nation) in a given *space* (the state) over linear time (Anderson 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992). It is the selective history and purported cultural attributes of the imagined community—a

community that defines itself by excluding and marginalizing the culturally different—that is encoded in the national spaces of many capital cities (Alonso 1994). Monuments, memorial halls, and civic districts, as well as representations of the nation-state in maps and school textbooks, take narratives of the nation as a spatially bounded and culturally pure entity and map them onto physical urban space. And it is these national spaces that are designed to spatially fix minorities who do not fit the officially sanctioned confluence of culture, language, and space derived from state-sponsored nationalism. This spatial marginalization often marginalizes minorities in terms of political participation as well. Though I agree that urban landscapes are fraught with technologies of surveillance, control, and regulation and that they are a prime shaper of the behaviors of many urbanites, here I discuss an example of how ethnic minorities can actively resignify nationalized urban spaces and thus affect sociocultural changes.

As authors such as Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy point out, hegemony in modern societies is difficult to achieve and always incomplete (Gilroy 1991; Hall 1995). If scholars of nationalism are correct that these projects are attempts at assigning cultural uniformity to physical spaces and thereby consigning ethnic and racial minorities to the margins of the “imagined community,” then public spaces are the arenas within which hegemony is secured. However, these spaces are also the ground on which official nationalisms are contested on a daily basis. In the article that follows I look at how the latest phase of official nationalism in Taiwan, which I call multicultural nationalism for reasons that will be discussed below, is being contested on the ground through the work of minority Hakka “culture workers” (*wenhua gong-zuozhe*). How can a more inclusive strain of official nationalism, which provides funding for the celebration, preservation, and display of minority “local” cultural difference, become a means to control and suppress dissent from these same communities? Is it possible for activists to resignify the urban spaces used to carry out these projects? Below I give a historical overview of the problem and explore one detailed example—a religious parade—that illustrates that culture workers can indeed weave themselves into the center of Taiwanese national narratives, on what are intended to be nationalized public spaces.

## Methodology

This article is based on data collected during 18 months of fieldwork in Taipei, Taiwan. I interviewed and interacted with 12 culture workers

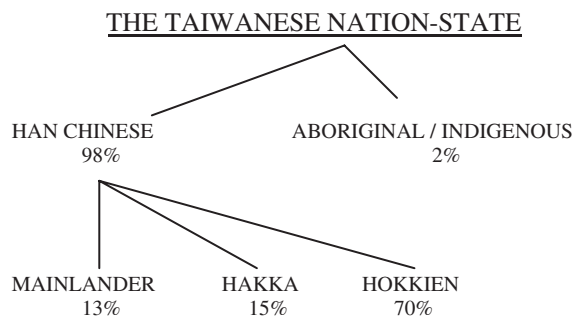
who organize activities for various government-sponsored local organizations, such as the Taipei City Hakka Culture Foundation (*caituan faren tabei shi kejia wenhua jijin hui*) and the Taipei Hakka Arts and Culture Center (*taibei shi kejia yiwen huodong zhongxin*), both of which are funded by the federal government. Much of my fieldwork took place in the areas that culture workers congregated to perform their job-related activities: Hakka culture centers, offices, coffee shops, and the streets of the Tong-hua Street neighborhood. The data and analysis presented here are based on two distinct forms of fieldwork: traditional participant-observation (Spradley 1980) and short-term ethnographic methods designed to collect visual data on the use of space (Taplin, Scheld and Low 2002).

### The “Guest People”: the Hakka in Taiwan

Historically, the Hakka of Taiwan have occupied an anomalous, shifting position within Taiwanese discourses of difference. How do you categorize a people who have been traditionally represented as uneducated, mountain-dwelling hillbillies (*shandi ren*), yet also produced Dr. Sun Yat-sen and one PRC Paramount Leader (Deng Xiaoping), as well as “greater China’s” first democratically elected president (Lee Deng-Hui)? How do the authors of Taiwan’s national narrative account for a group whose collective identity crosses the mainlander Chinese (*dalu ren*)/ethnic Taiwanese (*Hokkien*) ethnic boundary that has played such a large part in post-World War II Taiwanese politics? I argue here that attempts on the part of the state and culture workers to resolve these contradictions have consisted of strategies that confirm, contest, or reconfigure official nationalist narratives.

“Hakka,” or *Kejia*, literally the “Guest People” in Mandarin Chinese, are an ethnic group that originated in Southern China and who are primarily identified by the southern dialect of Chinese referred to as Hakka (Leong 1997; Lin 1933; Norman 1988). Their sense of group identity differs from other Chinese ethnic groups because of how their seventeenth- and eighteenth-century communities in China were located in the mountainous regions between the various provinces of southeastern China. Their homelands—which straddle the mountainous regions between the urban centers dominated by other ethnic groups—led to interethnic conflict with other groups at various points in Chinese history (Leong 1997).

Of the Republic of China’s 22.4 million citizens, roughly 4 million (about 15 percent) are of Hakka descent (Figure 1). As with all ethnic groups in Taiwan, taking an account of population totals is difficult because of how the categories depend on dialects and languages as



Population Percentages of Ethnic Groups in Taiwan, indicating the most important classifications vis-à-vis nationalist categories. Note: The category “Mainlander” also includes many people of Hakka descent, though most of them prefer to be classified as Mainlander rather than Hakka. (Source: Republic of China Statistical Yearbook, 2004)

**FIGURE 1** Ethnic composition of the Republic of China on Taiwan.

markers of ethnic identity. At various points in Taiwan’s history, people have had to learn Japanese, Mandarin, Fujian dialect (Hokkien, or “Taiwanese”), and English to have access to certain resources; the result is that most people in Taiwan speak at least two different languages, if not more. The Hakka in particular are known, both in China and in Taiwan, for speaking the dominant language of the area or nation-state within which they happen to live. In Taiwan, then, this means that the majority of ethnically Hakka people in Taipei do not speak Hakka dialect. This becomes even more complicated by the frequency with which many of Hakka descent cease to identify themselves as Hakka once they achieve middle-class status (Gates 1981).

“Hokkien” refers to the island’s 70 percent ethnic majority, the Han Chinese, national center of the ethnic framework, whose ancestors migrated from Fujian Province (across the Taiwan strait) starting in the late sixteenth century. They are often referred to as “Taiwanese,” Hokkien (the Fujianese name I use most often here), Min-nan people (after the official name of the dialect), Hoklo (a Cantonese term), or “*ben sheng ren*” (“people of this province”). Most post-Cold War Taiwanese national narratives are written in terms of this group’s common origin, common suffering, and common destiny. Often that narrative is written *against* those considered “Mainlanders” (*waighengren*, literally “people of outside provinces,” or *daluren*, literally, “mainlanders”), whose ancestors migrated *en masse* alongside Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist army in a wave of 2 million elites and military

personnel as the Chinese Communist Party seized control of the mainland in 1949. These Han Chinese originated from all over China, and the elites of that group quickly assumed the structural positions of power vacated by the Japanese at the conclusion of World War II in 1945. In fact, the Mainlander/Taiwanese ethnic boundary became a class boundary as well, as many Hokkien were excluded from the higher levels of government and some spheres of extra-island trade networks in favor of the recently arrived mainlanders (Gates 1981; Morris 2004).

Many “Hakka” are also descended from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century migrants from mainland China. The ethnic category “Hakka,” however, differs from the Hokkien in that it crosses the Mainlander/Taiwanese boundary. Those Hakka who migrated to Taiwan from the Hakka “homeland” between the Fujian and Guangdong Provinces after the civil war in China tend to continue to identify as Hakka rather than as a Mandarin-speaking Mainlander. The Hakka defy most attempts to be placed within discourses that divide up minority populations to create representations of the modern Han race/nation (or, *minzu*) from the mosaic of cultures and languages of mainland China. In some instances they are portrayed by Hakka ethnonationalists as a vanguard of modernity with genetic predispositions toward adventure, freedom, and entrepreneurship (Kiang 1992; Lin 1933). In these works, the most important distinction between Hakkas and non-Hakkas is that their women never practiced foot-binding and worked in the fields alongside men, and that they were skilled in highland agriculture, unlike other Chinese. In presenting the Hakka as the most *advanced* of the Chinese subcultures, these authors draw on a popular comparison with one particular diasporic group. My first conversations with many Hakka scholars and culture workers, for example, usually consisted of my being told that the Hakka were the “Jews of Asia” (*yazhou de youtai*). This is a common rhetorical move that relates to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Chinese nationalist comparisons between the Jewish diaspora and the emerging Chinese *minzu* in literatures that were designed to illustrate the “modernity” of the “Yellow Race” by pointing out similarities between it and the “Jewish Race” (Xun 1997). This strategy among Chinese nationalists most likely came from Hakka participants in these movements, because Hakka intellectuals had been calling themselves the Jews of Asia during an even earlier period (Wilson 2005).

In other instances, the Hakka were portrayed as non-Chinese, wild, semibarbarians, who tended to make historically spurious claims on being descendants of the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE) ruling elite. For example, *Geography of the World*, a 1920 English-language Suzhou

middle-school textbook, was written by R. D. Walcott, a foreign teacher, and published by the Commercial Press of Shanghai. In a section devoted to “Guangdong,” Walcott begins: “In the mountains are many wild tribes and backward people, such as the Hakkas and the Ikiias [She] (recounted in Leong 1997: 87).” This single statement, taken from an earlier nineteenth-century work by Welsh missionary Timothy Richard (1908), called the *Comprehensive Geography of the Chinese Empire and Dependencies*, was taken to be so offensive by Hakka residents of Shanghai that they immediately organized the United Hakka Association (*hexi datonghui*), with branches in both Shanghai and Guangzhou. In January 1921, the Association held a conference in Shanghai to publicly reprimand the Commercial Press. Under tremendous pressure generated by the impromptu movement, the Commercial Press soon issued a public apology, notified schools of the error, and agreed to destroy unsold copies of the book (Leong 1997: 87–88). Hakka communities have long been positioned at the margins of Asian and southeast Asian nations, and Hakka communities have well-developed strategies for resisting representations that marginalize them further.

### **Multicultural nationalism in Taiwan**

Throughout most of the postWorld War II period the primary marker of ethnic identity in Taiwan was linguistic difference (Huang 2000; Liao 2000; Tse 2000). Between 1949 and 1987 the Republic of China on Taiwan pursued the Nationalist Party’s project of Chinese nationalism. In part a reaction to the “Japanification” programs pursued by the Japanese colonial authority between 1895 and 1945 and in part due to the island’s diplomatic status as a microcosm for all of noncommunist (“free”) China, one of the primary means of instilling a sense of Chineseness in the non-mainlander population was through linguistic policy. Mandarin Chinese (*guo yu*, the “national language”) was established as the official language, even though only a small portion of the island’s inhabitants—relatively recent and politically powerful immigrants from the Chinese mainland—were fluent in Mandarin (Gates 1981). Thus, both official cultural and linguistic policy, as well resistance to those policies, tended to be framed in terms of linguistic diversity. Identity and language were intimately connected in social relations, cultural production, and political attitudes. Cultural, ethnic, and national identification depended on the language(s) one spoke.

After the lifting of Martial Law in 1987, however, official state nationalism shifted from an imposed ethnic Chinese variety to a grass-roots-based nativist Taiwanese nationalism rooted in the collective



experience of the island's inhabitants. In terms of policy this shift is best illustrated by the incorporation of linguistic difference into the national education system. For the first time, other languages outside of Mandarin, such as Hakka, Southern Min ("Taiwanese"), and aboriginal languages, began to receive state support in the form of preservation programs and bilingual education initiatives at the local level (Liao 2000; Tse 2000). With support from the central government, grassroots identity-based organizations and interest groups arose all over the island in the late 1980s (Lu 2002). In 1988, for example, Hakka protesters took to the streets of Taipei demanding linguistic equality in an event now referred to by activists as the "Give Me Back My Hakka Language! Movement" (*huan wode kejia hua yundong*)—an unprecedented public demand for linguistic equality (Liao 2000: 173). The result of these and similar acts of resistance was the modification of broadcast laws, which were changed to permit a higher percentage of entertainment and news broadcasts in Hakkinese, as well as increased state support for language preservation policies (Huang 2000). While more inclusive than the preceding period of Chinese nationalism, this phase of cultural policy nonetheless revolved around a nativist Hokkien localism that excluded those who were not considered "ethnically Taiwanese" as they were. Literature, art, and music all saw the rise of a fervent celebration of Hokkien Taiwanese distinctiveness from the Chinese in the People's Republic of China. Films, such as Hou Hsiao-Hsian's (1989) internationally acclaimed *City of Sadness* (*beiqing chengshi*), celebrated the forging of a Taiwanese consciousness through the Hokkien majority's survival of Japanese colonialism, as well as the Chinese Nationalist Army's "occupation" and subsequent period of martial law and "White Terror" (*baise kongbu*) after 1949. The liberalization of the Taiwanese state and the lifting of martial law in 1987 opened the floodgates for social change in many directions. Though Taiwan never witnessed a sustained movement on the part of labor, other constructions of identity and bases for social movements did take shape during this period. On the heels of the Taiwan nativist movement came mobilizations on feminist, environmental, aboriginal, and other ethnic fronts, including the Hakka movement. However, it was the ascent of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) after the lifting of martial law in 1987, culminating in Chen Shui-bian's winning of the presidency in the year 2000, that marked the turning point toward a deliberately multicultural model of civic nationalism.

Compared to language in the previous eras, in this new era of multicultural nationalism, "culture" and space became ubiquitous markers of distinctively Taiwanese heritage, as well as powerful

means for controlling increasingly anxious ethnic communities (Chun 2000; Lu 2002). On the heels of a more integrated government, in which more Taiwan-born-and-raised politicians were included within the lower and middle levels of the national government, cultural policy took a decided turn toward the “local” as a basis for establishing Taiwan’s place in international politics. As part of a massive project of exploring Taiwan’s local cultural diversity, government programs, such as the Council for Cultural Affairs’ National Festivals of Culture and the Arts and “integrated community-making programs,” celebrated local cultures as a way of emphasizing the multicultural makeup of the nation-state (Lu 2001: 48). Inventing local traditions as much as celebrating them, this shift in policy was pursued with a fervor equal to the KMT regime’s simultaneous pursuit of the economic development that later came to be known as the “Taiwan Miracle.” In terms of infrastructure, the “local cultures” would soon be explored, categorized, and celebrated primarily through the establishment of county-level and city-level cultural centers (*wenhua zhongxin*). “Local” or “traditional” cultures were spatially circumscribed and removed from the streets of Taipei within the walls of these city- and state-sponsored centers.

On the heels of aboriginal grassroots organizations, the Taipei-based Hakka branch of this project resulted in several cultural, activity, and meeting centers, all sponsored by an endowment from the Taipei City Hakka Culture Foundation (*caituan faren tabei shi keji wenhua jijin hui*), which was first established in 1998 under then-mayor Chen Shui-bian’s Taipei City administration (Chun 2000; Lu 2001). With a 1998 budget of New Taiwan \$30 million, or just under U.S. \$1 million, the Foundation established the Taipei Hakka Culture Center (*taibei shi keji wenhua huiguan*) and the Taipei Hakka Art and Cultural Activity Center (*taibei shi keji yiwen huodong zhongxin*), both of which were designed to integrate, or co-opt, preexisting structures of local cultural maintenance and native-place associations into the fold of islandwide politics. This included organizations such as the Taipei City Revere the Orthodox Culture Association (*taibei shi zhongyuan keji zongzheng hui*), The Taipei Hakka Culture and Mutual Aid Association (*taibei shi keji wenhua xiehui*), and the Miaoli Northward Immigrants Hometown Association (*Miaoli youbei tongxiang hui*) (TCHC: 1998).<sup>1</sup> These moves on the part of the state culminated in the passing of the “Organic Law of the Council for Hakka Affairs, Executive Yuan” in May 2001, which established, officially, a Council for Hakka Affairs in the same branch of government that houses the Atomic Energy Council, the Fair Trade Commission, and the Veterans Affairs Commission (Affairs 2002).<sup>2</sup> Because the Executive Yuan had

also previously created a Council for Indigenous Affairs, Hakka cultural difference had been formally recognized, integrated, or co-opted, depending on one's vantage point.

In "How Does 'Made in Taiwan' Sound?" ethnomusicologist Nancy Guy outlines how minority cultures have been incorporated into the Taiwanese government's programs of multicultural nationalism. Claiming that "social forces, rather than the party-state, became critical in determining the agenda and pace of change," she carefully develops her argument that "popular music was a significant agent in shaping new ways of imagining Taiwan, specifically, new ways of conceiving of Taiwan as a unique, multicultural society rooted in the island's own soil and own history" (Guy 2001: 2). She argues that the cultural production of multicultural music is part of an effective strategy of basing the identity of the island's citizenry in the soil of Taiwan's national territory. By including song lyrics that celebrate difference within the Taiwanese nation—in Hakka, "Taiwanese," Mandarin, and Aboriginal languages—many artists in the Taiwanese popular music scene have managed to fashion a new way of imagining Taiwan. When paired with a generalized fascination, or even obsession, with all things "aboriginal" (*yuanzhu min*) in recent years, the new multicultural national imaginary, in her view, seems to be taking root. When the Euro-pop group *Enigma* illegally appropriated a cappella songs from an elderly Taiwanese aboriginal performer named Kuo Ying-nan for their worldwide hit "Return to Innocence," Taiwanese from across the ethnic spectrum rallied around the cause. Aborigines, Hokkien, mainlanders, and Hakkas alike were outraged when the song was featured prominently in the 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympics, which, of course, excluded Taiwan as an "illegitimate" nation-state. Though resolved by a financial settlement between the group and its record company, the way in which the assault on indigenous property rights was taken collectively as an assault on the Taiwanese national body represented a new age in Taiwanese nationalism (Guy 2001: 8).

Because multicultural narratives tend to marginalize histories of social inequality in favor of the sanitized "preservation" and celebration of ethnic diversity (Prashad 2001: 163), the culture workers' constructions and reconfigurations of Taiwanese national space complicate this state-sponsored project in novel and politically urgent ways. How do the products of culture work inform the struggles between individuals, communities, and capitalist-friendly governments that want—and need—ethnic subjects to be represented in certain ways? I suggest that accounts of multicultural cultural production should also examine how, as Ralph Litzinger (2000: 152) puts it, these "struggles over identity, recognition, and representation work to unsettle how

dominant regimes define just what constitutes the normal, the progressive, or the modern.” The Taiwanese state’s attempts at defining these goals in a multicultural fashion—and the way in which minority cultures became spatially compartmentalized in national space—were made explicit in this excerpt from newly elected President Chen Shui-bian’s inaugural address in May 2000:

Grassroots community organizations have now been developing around the country, working to explore and preserve the history, culture, geography and ecology of their localities. These are all part of Taiwan culture, whether they are local cultures, mass cultures or high cultures. Due to special historical and geographical factors, Taiwan possesses a wealth of diversified cultural elements. But cultural development is not something that can bring immediate success. Rather, it has to be accumulated bit by bit. We must open our hearts with tolerance and respect, so that our diverse ethnic groups and different regional cultures communicate with each other, and so that Taiwan’s local cultures connect with the cultures of Chinese-speaking communities and other world cultures, and create a new milieu of a cultural Taiwan in a modern century (Chen 2000).

On the heels of a more integrated government, in which more Taiwan-born-and-raised politicians were included within the lower and middle levels of the national government, cultural policy took a decided turn toward the “local” as a basis for establishing Taiwan’s place in international politics.

Toward their general aim for a more equitable political involvement for Taiwan’s minority citizenry, cultural activists were also able to make use of substantial grassroots media outlets, as the KMT’s stranglehold on broadcast and print media was loosened, somewhat at least, in the 1990s. In a strategy of co-optation that included the rewarding of positive commentary, rather than the repression of dissent, media outlets such as ethnic-themed magazines, newspapers, and small-scale radio and television stations originally formed as part of previously anti-KMT “outside party” (*dangwai*) activities were mobilized with the aim of helping minority communities “stand up” (*zhanqi lai*) in national-level politics. As Chin-chuan Lee explains, “Taiwan’s movement groups used the little media to wage their guerrilla wars that finally changed the political contour. There was a natural marriage between the resource-poor movement groups deprived of access to the big media, and the little media that were financially and technologically less constraining” (Lee 2000). Hakka activists’ uses of the “little media” included the highly influential *Hakka Storm* (*Kejia Fengyun*) magazine, as well as special issues of

the glossy, urban intellectual-directed *Renjian* (Current Affairs), both based in Taipei. The Formosa Hakka Radio Station (*Baodao Kejia Diantai*) began broadcasting on 18 September 1994, with funding from a grant from the Government Information Office, allotted for Hakka-language broadcasting. With the goal of raising the awareness of the challenges facing the Hakka today, the station continues to broadcast around the clock, offering Hakka-language programs, news programs, and thematic talk shows through much volunteer work and a steady stream of donations from the area's Hakka community (Kildall 1998).

In addition to institutional and media reforms, government policy in the 1990s also consisted of a massive series of educational reforms, as programs devoted to Chinese nationalism were curtailed in favor of new curricula that emphasized Taiwanese nationalism. "We are all Taiwanese" (*women dou shi Taiwanren*) became the new buzzword as textbooks on mainland Chinese history gave way to Taiwan-centered narratives of the island's unique development. At the same time, chapters that explained ethnic categorizations in terms of native-place origins in mainland China were changed so that the Taiwanese population could be classified as either Hokkien, Hakka, Mainlanders, or Aboriginal (Hughes and Stone 1999). As Hughes and Stone (1999: 981) point out, the reforms both reflected Taiwan's ambiguous position in the international arena, as well as having been designed to emphasize a "multi-leveled" conception of identity in which subjects of the state could be both Taiwanese *and* ethnic. This was seen as foundational to the state's pursuance of a multiethnic nationalism that valued, in rhetoric at least, inclusiveness on the part of ethnic and racial minorities. Again, as part of a renewed interest in postindustrial economic development in the 1990s, international legitimacy was pursued by using a completely different strategy from what had been previously used. Rather than reclaiming the mainland, Taiwanese government officials at the time sought to secure the island's fit in global networks of capitalism by developing a viable, middle-class, cosmopolitan workforce that could identify, in terms of personal identity, with Taiwan's tenuous positioning between the posturing of mainland China, the support of the United States, and the promises of a Japan-led "Asian modernity."

Because all nationalist projects require an "Other," the primary "Other" for Taiwan during this phase of the state's project of defining the nation should probably be considered China for a plethora of reasons. For one, the Taiwanese government's fit in networks of global capital necessitated defining itself in contrast to an "other" that had not made the leap from peripheral producer to the global metropole. As cultural aims were also pushing Taiwanese national representations

away from China as “homeland,” these two trends converged, in conversations I had with informants and friends as well as in popular culture, to reconfigure China’s presence in the popular imagination as a semi-third-world, backward, and despotic bully that threatens to keep the emerging Taiwanese national community from realizing its full potential. As one friend of mine remarked, “If we’re forced to reunify with China, we’ll all be poor because each Taiwanese person would have to financially support 100 Chinese peasants.” This was a theme I would hear often, as desires for a Taiwanese modernity often left the very recent, and very wealthy, upper-middle class looking away toward Canada or the United States for an escape from this imagined horrific fate. In the new multicultural national narrative, Taiwan’s economic position as a major player in networks of global capitalism converge with the desire to construct the island as a non-Chinese homeland for cosmopolitan subjects who are both more in touch with the world but also secure in their own ethnic and cultural diversity.

As inclusive as this national imaginary may seem on the surface, however, any urge to cast them as one-sided, simplistic successes on the part of opposition movements should be tempered with the awareness that late-modern social movements are also subject to global capitalist forces. States still need to maintain and reproduce hegemony, however flexible the goals may be. As Alonso explains, “[h]egemonic strategies, at once material and symbolic, produce the idea of the state while concretizing the imagined community of the nation by articulating spatial, bodily, and temporal matrices through the everyday routines, rituals and policies of the state system” (Alonso 1994: 382). The ways in which the national body is compartmentalized into “local cultures,” then, become the primary point of contention between culture workers and the state cultural apparatuses. Because appeals to specificities of place are, in Ralph Litzinger’s (2000: 251) terms, “too easily open to commodification by tourists, nationalists and business interests,” the often contradictory ways in which the new nation is imagined index (and affect) struggles over national belongingness. Cultural work among Taipei’s Hakka culture workers is located between the poles of full political participation and being used as an example to the international community of Taiwan’s human rights record. The products of their labor are sometimes complicit with state-sponsored narratives of multicultural nationalism, while at other times they are disruptive of those same narratives. At their most complicit, however, they reify local “tradition” as a “national past-time” (Anagnost 1997) against which Hokkien modernity can be constructed. At their most oppositional, the productions constitute an

alternative way of contemplating, viewing, and even experiencing the nation—an alternative nation in which Hakka ethnic difference fits more centrally within the boundaries of the Taiwanese national narrative.

### The space of the multicultural nation

One day before my fieldwork period began I was leaving my apartment in Taipei when I noticed that a festival with hundreds of participants had started practically on my doorstep. Amid the dozens of music, food, and craft stalls, as well as various dance performances, I managed to talk to a few of the festival organizers (some of whom would later participate in my fieldwork project). They informed me that I had unknowingly wandered into the second annual “Taipei Hakka Street Festival” (*Taipei Shi Kejia Wenhua Jie*). When I asked why it was being held on this particular street, they responded that this was the largest Hakka neighborhood (*kejia diqu*) in Taipei. I immediately started making plans to do a community study on the relatively small area within which the festival was being held. Following the suggestion of those at the festival, I soon visited the Hakka Arts and Culture Center nearby. There I was introduced to the projects in which these culture workers (*wenhua gongzuo zhe*) were engaged.

I was especially interested in the ethnography of Tong-hua Street itself—*Taipei Hakka Street History: Tong-hua Edition* (Hsu 1998)—which people would give me at every cultural center, radio station, and university Hakka club I would later visit. This had been their first major publication since the Bureau of Civil Affairs started funding the Arts and Culture Center in 1997. What interested me was not only the content of the book—a narrative of the neighborhood’s settlement through Hakka hard work, strength, and determination from the 1960s to the present—but the ways in which the book had been and continues to be distributed as a means of attracting attention to the cause of Hakka language and cultural preservation. I was offered so many free copies on so many different occasions that I started to wonder what was more important: the book’s content or the book’s travels? More than one participant in the book’s publication informed me that they themselves felt like it was more the government’s project than their own and that the street was chosen for the festival and the ethnography *because of its location near the city’s financial and political districts*, rather than because it was a “Hakka neighborhood” *per se*. According to their own estimates, roughly one-third of the street’s residents had Hakka backgrounds—only slightly higher than other similar-sized neighborhoods. Indeed, most of the Taipei Hakka culture

workers with whom I worked would smile knowingly at my own puzzlement as to whether there really was a “Hakka Community” in Taipei about which I could write any kind of ethnography. To many of them, especially the ones who had majored in anthropology, my project would have been much better had I gone to Hsinzhu, Miaoli, Meinung, or any of a number of rural Hakka towns south of the Taipei basin. The reason they produce videos, films, and ethnographies on the Hakka of Taipei, they would answer, is that *someone* needs to *create* a Hakka community in Taipei. The festival and the street history ethnography were both exemplars of the premium placed on culture and space in the context of contemporary identity politics in Taipei. I argue below that Hakka culture workers are successfully using strategies such as these to create distinctively Hakka spaces by, for example, resignifying urban space in Taipei through a yearly religious parade.

I recount this “play for space” because of how neatly it indexes what I argue has been a crucial recent development in Taiwanese identity politics. As discussed earlier in this article, state-sponsored nationalism in Taiwan has shifted away from exclusively Chinese and Taiwanese ethnic nationalisms and toward a more inclusive, multicultural one (Chun 2000; Guy 2001). This has brought public spaces and representations of those spaces to the forefront of ethnic politics. Multicultural nationalisms have become increasingly popular around the world, as various nation-states attempt to impose order on intensifying global flows by configuring ethnic and racial diversity through new, more-inclusive national narratives of unity through diversity. Critics, however, argue that this newer model of diversity management can also function as a new form of “advanced liberalism” (Cruikshank 1999), or “governmentality” (Burchell et al. 1991), in which states rely on the efficiency provided by the institutional production of a self-governing, well-regulated populace. Support for local, indigenous, and minority cultural identities is only on the condition that these more marginal groups maintain their proper “place” in reaffirming the modern ethnic “center” of the nation (Bonus 2000; San Juan Jr. 2002). This center—as with the case of “whiteness” in the United States—is usually constructed as unmarked, rational, and inherently modern, as opposed to being marked, excessively cultural, and inherently traditional (Dyer 1997; Lipsitz 1998; Perry 2002; Prashad 2001; Rosaldo 1989). This dynamic seems as true of Taiwan as it is for the United States, because on many occasions I would hear comments from Taiwanese friends of mine about how female aboriginal pop singers are “naturally” beautiful and gifted in song and dance. These comments would also often be punctuated with remarks about how this is similar to African Americans and Latinos in the United States. In popular



discourse and in older modes of ethnological research, minority groups are often represented as the “colorful fringes” of the more rational and postcultural center of the nation. Perry’s (2002) work on white ethnicity in American high schools is an excellent ethnography on this topic and significantly develops a crucial area of research begun by Rosaldo’s (1989) groundbreaking work on identity politics in America. In this context “ethnic,” minority, or even “multicultural” fairs and parades that are designed to celebrate diversity effectively circumscribe the concerned communities by *locating* them in marginal times and spaces. As devastatingly effective as this form of spatialized subject making on the part of the state can be, it is often met with spatial forms of resistance. Indeed, the ways in which individuals and communities negotiate these topographies of power have become a critical area of research in the social sciences (Smith 1999; Tyler 2007).

Recent anthropological studies of space and culture draw on a rich interdisciplinary literature that explores the linkages between the built urban environment and the production of collective identities (de Certeau 1984; Foucault 1977; Lefebvre 1991; Sennett 1990). Physical space occupies a privileged position in anthropological analyses of culture, and built environments have long been understood as mechanisms and contexts for social control and resistance (Foucault 1977; Harvey 1990). These works have been immensely influential for understanding how power-laden social relations are often encoded into built environments. Designed as conduits of sociocultural power—here understood as an aspect of social relations rather than as an attainable commodity—these spaces then become the sites of subject making (Gregory 1998). Thus, this surveillance, regulation, and ordering of bodies on the part of the modern state often leads to unpredictable, unwieldy, and unstable sociocultural processes. Subject making, then, results from the state’s attempt at *placing* bodies in space and moving them around over regulated time, as well as from collective resistances to those methods of modern government (Ong 1999; Rofel 1999). In this context, acts such as walking, crossing boundaries, and using space in creative ways become highly symbolic acts of resistance to power (de Certeau 1984). Rather than focusing on outcomes, works on these issues seek to understand how public spaces are socioculturally produced as zones of contest between dominant and subversive meanings whether these meanings are related to national narratives, the constitution of local communities, or even narratives of capitalism. The resulting “heterotopias” produced—symbolic and literal spaces of freedom and agency produced on the terms of the “Other”—are the very soil out of which communities, movements, and collective identities emerge (Sennett 1990; Simpson 2000).

The production of space is my focus here because of how Hakka culture workers actively and consciously appropriated and reconfigured nationalized and commodified spaces in downtown Taipei for the purpose of producing a distinctively Hakka *heterotopia* in the midst of Taiwan's then-emergent multicultural nationalism. In this context, representational spaces are not only contentious but are a matter of life and death for communities that struggle against both nationalist exclusions and the ravages of global capital. Rick Bonus, in his work on the politics of space among Filipino Americans in California, also looks at how

space, or in this case, *reterritorialized* space, becomes part of identity articulation itself, as it brings about experiences of diversity, displacement, homelessness, and chaos, while opening up possibilities of community and nationhood in unconventional modes. This is where space, in relation to identity, becomes politicized, as both contestation and reterritorialization become intimately connected to the power to define selves and gain access to resources (Bonus 2000: 4).

In a similar fashion, the social, cultural, and political ramifications of “acting out of place” in Taiwan converge in both the physical *and* representational spaces of multicultural Taipei. Hakka culture workers, I argue, use spatial practices in their jobs that effectively subvert the production of nationalized spaces in Taipei. In doing so they are able to construct uniquely Hakka spaces within the multicultural nation, spaces within which they are able to reconfigure official national narratives. In the following section I examine one instance of resistance in which culture workers produce a novel articulation of culture and space, in which Hakka distinctiveness becomes part of the landscape in Taipei's government and financial districts, even if temporarily. Even more importantly, Tong-hua Street, about which they had previously published an ethnography, became even more entrenched as a “Hakka neighborhood,” despite the fact that it was only one-third Hakka.

### **Producing Hakka space: the Yimin Ye parade**

Yimin Ye, the Patron of Righteous Volunteers, is a popular local deity among many Hakka in Taiwan. Social unrest in the 1700s and 1800s prompted many people around the island to establish trans-village societies for mutual protection. The largest of these, the “Yimin” organization was first formed in 1721, when 10,200 Hakkas from seven hamlets in southern Taiwan united to help the state suppress

an antigovernment uprising among local Hokkien peoples (Hsu 1980). The Yimin Ye parade analyzed here is a commemoration of the anonymous Hakka dead who participated in the suppression of those uprisings. On a yearly basis, his likeness is paraded around the various Hakka enclaves all over the island, culminating in a large-scale procession in Taipei in which he is installed in a temporary temple in a location that changes every year. In fact, the contentious definition of those being commemorated as “righteous” (he represents Hakka complicity with an extra-island colonial administration) makes the decision about whether to build a permanent temple a point of contention between Hakka and non-Hakka residents of Taipei. My focus on the Yimin Ye parade in the following section is only in terms of how the event was a site of contested urban space—an additional “piece of discourse” (Schein 2000: 28)—in the construction of multicultural national space in Taiwan.

At the parade staging grounds, located in the above-mentioned Tong-hua Street neighborhood, I watched as dozens of *shan ge ban* (traditional Hakka ‘mountain song’ classes), various Hakka-themed activity groups, and youth-oriented Hakka language classes organized for the parade, which I was told would last about an hour. Most, but not all of the groups, wore t-shirts with their affiliation emblazoned across the front in bold characters. I was struck by how many of the *shan ge* classes had gone to elaborate lengths to build small floats, atop which sat elaborately costumed elderly men and women who were preparing to sing their favorite mountain songs. Behind the song classes Yimin Ye himself waited in a small, intricately carved red sedan chair, an effigy being carried by a group of four men ranging in ages from their late teens to their early thirties. Dressed in bright yellow outfits bearing the name and location of this particular Yimin’s “home temple,” the four sedan-bearers were flanked on all sides by ten to twelve guards, who would soon escort him on his way through the streets of northwest Taipei, amid thousands of firecrackers. In fact, the firecrackers were so loud that conversation along the parade route was next to impossible, because the ears of most people were in too much pain to be useful for conversation. As with all Chinese religious processions, the firecrackers were to frighten away evil spirits. They seemed to work.

Once the parade was under way, the throng of revelers slowly headed north through the Tong-hua Street neighborhood and night market. While technically there was no “throng” of spectators per se, the small shop owners and neighborhood residents did line the streets and cheered supportively for the parade as it passed by. Many also bought fresh fruits and fireworks for sale in stalls on the sidewalks.

The more enthusiastic of the spectators even made offerings to Yimin Ye as the parade passed. Fish, whole chickens, pork, sodas, and tea were all carefully arranged on tables with bright red tablecloths, with burning incense neatly arranged in front of some of the smaller tables. As the parade, with photographers, reporters, and anthropologists in tow, made its way out of the somewhat cramped Tong-hua Street neighborhood, we turned right onto Xin-Yi Road, Section Four. Upon making the turn, the architectural surroundings changed immediately, in that the brooding, haphazardly arranged housing that characterizes Tong-hua Street gives way to the neatly manicured, tree-lined Xin-Yi Road, on which the small businesses and shops are more removed from the street. It was not until the parade reached Keelung Road that the mood totally changed, as the crowd of spectators disappeared from the scene in this much less spectator-friendly stretch of highway that feeds into the more recently built Warner Village and World Trade Center development, which would later become home to Taipei 101, the world's tallest building.

At this point there were virtually no supportive spectators, only onlookers who seemed to be curious about why all of the streets were blocked off. As I talked with my friends as we followed the parade, one remarked that it seemed less like a parade and more like a "mission" to deliver the god from this point onward. Unfazed by the sudden change in setting, each group sang their particular *shan ge* even more loudly, as if they were playfully provoking the few remaining onlookers, who were unaware of what was happening. I heard a few people make the statement, which I had seen in a brochure at one point, that "the Hakka are in Taipei for good." The fact that none of this—some used tambourines and bells to accompany their singing—was performed in unison confused the onlookers even more. Continuing northward on Keelung Road we soon passed the Hyatt Regency Hotel, which towers over the street at 33 stories in a stand-alone complex to the east. Next to the hotel were the World Trade Center and the International Convention Center, both of which are relatively unmarked, but imposing, modern three- and four-story granite buildings.

Once the procession reached its destination, the staging area between City Hall and Warner Village, those who walked with the parade were treated to a plethora of Hakka-themed and Yimin Ye-themed performances and activities. Passing through a makeshift-gated entrance flanked by flags from around the world (to symbolize that there are Hakkas all over the world, I was told), there were so many activities and displays that it was difficult to see what was going on inside the enclosed area. The most popular attraction seemed to be the "pig raising contest," positioned near the entrance, which featured vertically

mounted pigs that had all been split down the belly, then opened up, and displayed with their backs facing the viewer, with the head at the bottom. The way they were mounted gave them the appearance of being almost spherically shaped and unnaturally fat. It was only upon closer inspection that I found that they actually were not as large as they appeared. Each was framed by a plaque featuring the farmer's (or *shan ge* class') name, location, and the pig's measurements. The other most popular attraction, of course, was the karaoke stage on which some of the older participants sang *shan ge* duets. Because these are almost always call and response songs between male and female groups, there was usually a male and female singer singing to prerecorded backing music. As I watched, one of the younger male parade organizers, to whom I had talked earlier, asked me if I enjoyed the performance. When I replied that I did, he scoffed and laughed, saying that "Yeah, right! That's what old people like. We'd rather have some cool rock bands or something . . . but whatever."

The district within which the Yimin Ye parade took place was one of the more illustrative indices of Taiwan's contemporary position in international politics, circuits of global capitalism, as well as in fields of what many theorists refer to as the rampant "consumerism" so characteristic of the Asian Tiger economies (Nelson 2000; Ong 1999; Ong and Nonini 1997). It should not come as a surprise, then, that parade planners with whom I talked would select this part of the city through which to escort Yimin Ye, to eventually install him temporarily across the street from City Hall to the west and Warner Village mall and cinema complex to the south. One of the newer spaces of economic development in the city, this district has become in recent years the apex of Taipei's immersion in global capitalism and consumer culture. Symbols of the modern nation and local political power are also present in this particular area, as this district is also home to the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, as well as Taipei City Hall. And finally, Taipei's relatively secure position within networks of global capitalism has a looming presence in this neighborhood, as the International Trade Center, the World Trade Center and the International Convention Center can all be found south of city hall on Xin Yi Road, Section Four. The new parade route proved to be an effective choice, because the Tong-hua Street neighborhood, the commercial district, and the government centers were joined during one lively afternoon. I argue that even though the "official" symbolic properties associated with this particular neighborhood are related to Taiwan's position in the above-mentioned arenas, the ways in which the space was appropriated by the Hakka community during the parade successfully resignified the Da An District as a space of an "other" Hakka modernity.

As discussed earlier, neoliberal forms of government control dictate that urban spaces be designed as a means to direct users of the space to conform to a particular subject position in line with specific political and economic aims in mind. Urban spaces seldom uniformly take on the symbolic aspects for which they were designed, however, because social spaces are assigned multiple, overlapping meanings through the ways in which urban subjects use them. As Setha Low (1996: 863) points out, “the social construction of space is the actual transformation of space—through people’s social exchanges, memories, images, and daily use of the material setting—into scenes and action that convey symbolic meaning.” The act of holding and “performing” the parade in this district, then, is the act of resisting a particular subject position inherent in urban planning, or an act of “creating and representing public space rather than subjecting to it” (Low 1996: 863).

I would suggest that “subjecting to” the physical space in this instance would consist of occupying, traversing, and using the space as a spatially bounded minority who knows his or her place in the multicultural scheme of things—sticking to the representational space of the neighborhood—rather than spilling over into the government and shopping district as a modern Hakka Taiwanese citizen and global consumer. Because the dictates of multicultural nationalism would require that ethnic groups explore their own traditions, in place, while subjecting themselves to a greater national good, the spectacle of the parade in this example says otherwise. Intended as a node of capitalism, nationalism, and civic power, in this instance the district “became Hakka” for a day, as the “traditional,” rural style of Hakka cultural production—with its mountain songs and pig raising contests—marked this zone of Taiwanese national modernity as one of Taiwanese *Hakka* modernity. The event insisted that the multicultural national narrative must also necessarily include a space for equal participation on the part of Hakka citizens, but *not* at the expense of having Hakka culture and traditions compartmentalized in the name of state control. Multicultural narratives are disrupted in moments like these—moments within which official articulations of culture and space are rewritten through the organized activities of culture workers and local Hakka residents.

## Conclusion

It is indeed a balancing act between being complicit with government projects and making real political gains, as Chen Yan-hui, a prominent culture worker put it during an interview:

I was aware that they were just trying to disarm us by giving us jobs. It was pretty obvious, actually. But I was thinking that if I did what they wanted me to do—organize lots of events with dancing and costumes—then we could also do something a bit more meaningful, eventually. Some of the more dangerous, or threatening, art could be possible within that structure that they were willing to provide.

As those who work in this context struggle to produce meaningful, political work in their roles as culture brokers, we as social scientists should play close attention to how national narratives are both inscribed on the landscape and resisted by the people that negotiate them. Even in the context of globalization within which urban landscapes are being organized for the necessities of an increasingly flexible and disorganized capitalism, narratives of national belonging are still extremely important. I have attempted to illustrate how the various activities of culture workers, from producing ethnographies about Tong-hua Street to organizing a parade route that symbolically links the neighborhood to Taipei's government and financial centers, ensures that their symbolic position within the Taiwanese multicultural national narrative is not as the "backward," traditional fringe around a "modern," progressive Hokkien center.

It is imperative that social scientists from different disciplines continue to take note of how public urban spaces emerge from contests between local communities, state policy makers, and global capitalism. What is the relationship between various forms of multicultural nationalism and global capitalist subject making? How do individuals craft coherent, stable selves in the context of these overlapping (and often contradictory) projects of subject making? I have only examined one of those projects here, but we need to continue to develop a means for looking at how national narratives and narratives of capitalism overlap in the everyday lives of urban communities. This article is intended to be a first step in that direction.

## Notes

Received 5 February 2007; accepted 15 May 2008.

The research for this article was supported by the Social Science Research Council and would not have been possible without the help of the Hakka culture workers who were so generous with their time, as well as the Zheng family in Taipei. The author also thanks *Identities* editor Jonathan Hill and two anonymous reviewers for their editorial comments on this manuscript.

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1. Taipei City Hakka Culture Center (*Taipei Shi Kejia Wenhua Huiguan*) Introductory Brochure. Published in November 1998.
2. This is a pseudonym, as are the names cited of all other informants.

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