

Exploring the Structures of Feeling in East Asia: Taiwanese Nationalism in a Comparative Perspective

Hornɡ-luen Wang 汪宏倫

Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, Taiwan
中央研究院社會學研究所

This paper intends to put Taiwan in a comparative perspective by situating its nationalism in the context those of the other two countries in which it has been caught between, namely, China and Japan. When juxtaposed together, nationalisms in Taiwan, China and Japan since the 1990s are found to share a common feature of resentful sentiments. Where do such negative feelings come from? What kinds of effects have they brought about? How can we make sense of these phenomena? These are the questions that this paper aims to investigate. Drawing on the theoretical insights from Raymond Williams's concept of "structures of feeling" as well as Max Scheler's analysis of *ressentiment*, among others, this paper provides a preliminary exploration of what can be called "structures of feeling" in East Asia. Three dimensions of these structures are outlined for analysis: (1) humiliation and the politics of memory; (2) resentment (or *ressentiment* in Scheler's terms) and value systems; and (3) power relations and the multi-layered structures of *ressentiment* in East Asia. Towards the end of the paper, the implications for the reconciliation in the region will be further explored.