

Taishang and Cross-Strait Integration: A Rising or Declining Research Field?

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The study of Taiwanese entrepreneurs investing on the Chinese mainland has only recently been called an emerging research field stretching across different disciplines and covering a whole range of issues, including Taishang identity and political agency in the evolution of cross-strait relations. Taishang have been called a (potential) ‘linkage community’ connecting both sides of the Taiwan Strait by their economic interest, political influence and social experience as a migrant group. However, as China’s market economy has entered structural change and cross-strait relations have turned more amicable over recent years, Taishangs’ significance seems to decrease as both economic energisers and political agents. This paper clarifies if and to what extent Taishang are still an important constituency in the process of cross-strait integration. It also revisits the field of Taishang studies, takes stock of the knowledge this field has generated so far, and explores future directions of meaningful research.