



SOCIAL SCIENCES AND
MISSIONS 38 (2025) 1–25



Transnationality and Symbolic Capital

The Role of Entrepreneurs in the Rise of the Christian Right between Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China

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Received 13 January 2025 | Accepted 13 October 2025 |

Published online [UNKNOWN] 2025
to be inserted by typesetter

Abstract

This paper tackles the role of entrepreneurs in the rise of the Christian Right in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China. I argue that in Taiwan and Hong Kong, the emergence of the Christian Right was backed by transnational entrepreneurs and big companies. These entrepreneurs are characterized by their flexible citizenship. First, they strive for professional success while embracing pro-family values to find a balance between their work and mobile lifestyle. Second, their proselytizing practices inside the workplace in Taiwan are embedded in the political goals of the Christian Right. They also proselytize within factories located in Chinese cities. Third, they establish associations, businessmen's fellowships, and exclusive gathering spaces to cultivate their symbolic capital between Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Chinese cities.

Résumé

Cet article s'intéresse au rôle des entrepreneurs dans le renouveau de la Droite chrétienne entre Taïwan, Hong Kong et la Chine. Je montre qu'à Taïwan et Hong Kong, l'émergence de la Droite chrétienne a été soutenue par des entrepreneurs transnationaux et des grandes entreprises. Ces entrepreneurs se caractérisent par leur citoyenneté flexible. Premièrement, ils sont en quête de succès professionnel tout en adhérant à des valeurs pro-famille pour trouver un équilibre entre leur travail et leur style de vie mobile. Deuxièmement, leurs pratiques d'évangélisation au sein du monde professionnel à Taïwan s'insèrent dans les objectifs politiques de la Droite chrétienne. Ils font

également du prosélytisme au sein d'usines localisées dans les villes chinoises. Troisièmement, ils établissent des associations, des communautés d'entrepreneurs et des espaces exclusifs pour cultiver leur capital symbolique entre les villes de Taïwan, Hong Kong et la Chine.

Keywords

entrepreneurs – flexible citizenship – Christian Right – Taiwan – Hong Kong – China

Mots-clés

entrepreneurs – citoyenneté flexible – Droite chrétienne – Taïwan – Hong Kong – Chine

1 Introduction

The Wang family is one of the great families in Taiwan (大家族 *dajiazu*). Wang Yung-ching (1917–2008) was the chairman of Formosa Plastics Corporation, one of Taiwan's most prominent plastic conglomerates. Wang's second wife, Wang Yang Chiao, was a devout Christian. Several of her children, who were raised in Los Angeles, are also well-known for their Christian faith. Among them, Cher Wang 王雪紅 comes closest to rivaling her father's wealth.¹ Once the wealthiest woman in Taiwan, Wang is the founder of HTC Corporation (a company specializing in mobile and immersive technologies) and VIA Technologies (a global leader in AI and computer technology). More recently, Wang's Christian activism has raised debates in the Taiwanese public sphere. The Faith, Hope, and Love Foundation 信望愛基金會, a Christian philanthropic organization founded by Wang, sponsored an anti-gay event organized by the International House of Prayer, a US conservative church.² The Foundation also acquired land from the Chinese government in Guizhou – one of China's poorest provinces – to establish the Forerunner University, a vocational school that recruits 1,300 students each year, with the support of local Party-

1 <https://web.archive.org/web/20110520195641/http://members.forbes.com/global/2006/0109/045A.html>.

2 <https://fareasternpotato.blogspot.com/2013/12/who-is-behind-happiness-of-next.html>.