

Take a look at the political map of the world and you will see that almost every piece of land belongs to a state. This division – in contrast, for example, to the split created by a valley between two mountains – is man-made, imaginary, and arbitrary, and therefore can be easily questioned. Indeed, in addition to the multiple disputed borders that permeate the world map, some countries are not recognized or partially recognized. Other states decide whether a certain political unit can be recognized as sovereign. Again, even though their decision concerns imaginary divisions created by borders, accepting or rejecting them has far-reaching consequences in real life. The unrecognized country stays outside of a club of sovereign states, which makes cooperation with its members very difficult or even impossible. It has no choice but to invent novel ways to conduct external relations. Moreover, this specific international situation has a major impact on its politics, people's lifestyles, culture, etc.

This book is about just such an exceptional entity in the international community of states – Taiwan. It explains how the island's specific international situation influences the developments in its external and internal affairs.