

depth and breadth of China's growing presence in Africa, and argue that this goes well beyond commercial interests, as the country's increasing role in peace-keeping and peacemaking missions in Africa demonstrates. They map out and laud the EU's pragmatic response to these changing flows in seeking areas for multilateral cooperation, referring particularly to the EU's 2008 paper on triangular dialogue and cooperation as an example (p. 269). They conclude by recommending trilateral cooperation as "the most optimal approach" (*sic*), and "the first step" in achieving both China and the EU's targets for the African continent (pp. 271–72).

The assumed value of trilateral cooperation, and the presumed interest in and capacity for pursuing it, underpin what is essentially the fundamental concern of the book—can and will China play a positive role in Africa? However, as in so much of the literature on China in Africa, there is unfortunately only fleeting consideration, at best, of the multifaceted nature of who or what "China" is. Most chapters refer to the policies and actions of "China" as representing an undifferentiated approach. The critical question of whether *all* of China's various actors have complementary political, economic or geo-strategic goals is overlooked. Without such a nuanced understanding of who or what "China" is, and what varied interests and internal contradictions exist among the multiple actors, pursuing trilateral cooperation for the benefit of Africa is unlikely to succeed.

Overall, this book provides a useful and wide-reaching discussion of "China's rise" and its implications for Africa, as well as examining how the EU could most usefully respond in a way that best benefits African development. However, by portraying China as a monolithic entity whose rise presents a dichotomous problematic (threat/opportunity) as an issue to be resolved by existing powers—in this case the EU—adopting the correct policy responses, it may run the risk of perpetuating and reiterating existing stereotypes, including that of Africa as the unfortunate arena in which global politics and economics are being enacted.

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Inseparable Separation: The Making of China's Taiwan Policy, by Jing Huang with Xiaoting Li. Singapore: World Scientific, 2010. x + 452 pp. £66.00/US\$96.00 (hardcover).

The summary presented on the back cover says that this book aims to provide "a systematic and in-depth analysis of the evolution of China's Taiwan policy

over the past six decades, against the backdrop of a three player game involving Beijing, Washington and Taipei". The book puts together an impressive amount of recent Chinese-language sources and contributes to a better understanding of relations across the Taiwan Strait, an issue on which both authors, originally from the People's Republic of China (PRC) but now with the Brookings Institution in Washington DC, have developed a balanced and on the whole sensible view, summed up in the chosen title: "inseparable separation".

The book's major objective has been only partly achieved, however; the reader will not find any real analysis of how China's Taiwan policy has been made since 1949. In spite of the extensive use of PRC leaders' writings and memoirs, there is very little about the debates and the decision-making processes regarding Taiwan, because these processes have remained secret and archives have mostly remained classified (for unknown reasons, the PRC Foreign Ministry archives were not used). For example, Huang and Li inform us about the first Small Group on Taiwan Affairs created in 1956 and placed under Zhou Enlai and the revival of this structure in 1979 under the auspices of Deng Yingchao, Zhou's widow, but its investigation and advisory role is not really evaluated. If we measure its influence by the repeated failures of its united front strategy towards the Kuomintang's old leaders, especially in the 1980s, it seems that many of its leaders were ill-informed about the dynamics at play on the island. (This said, the section on the secret contacts across the Strait in the 1980s is one of the most comprehensive on the subject.) Nothing really new is said on the role of the People's Liberation Army and its obedience to the civilian leadership; on the contrary, the military dimension of cross-Strait relations is too often underestimated, including when Jiang Zemin was drafting a more open policy towards the island in the early 1990s. More generally, the authors want to demonstrate that China's Taiwan policy, in spite of its inflexible principles (one China, unification) has evolved under the impact of outside developments, especially in Taiwan and the United States. There is truth in that statement: the Cold War, the US containment policy and then its overtures, the island's democratization or Chen Shui-bian's election, to take a few examples, have all forced the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership to adapt and change its strategy. This is not the whole picture, however. What is striking is how little evidence of debates and diverging views come out of the Chinese sources used. Of course, it is expected that most mainland Chinese would support an eventual unification; but the long-entrenched inability of the CCP to address squarely the sovereignty dispute between the PRC and the Republic of China (ROC), Taiwan's official name, and to accept the other Chinese state's existence and international status underscores a political rigidity which goes back to the circumstances of PRC foundation and stems from the CCP's own ideology.

So what is the added value of this book? First of all, it is a well-documented and rather comprehensive chronology of the triangular relationship between

Beijing, Washington and Taipei since 1949. All important official statements are extensively quoted, although the original source is not always used systematically. Second, it puts into historical perspective several PRC policy concepts that were forged as early as the mid-1950s: “peaceful liberation”, “peaceful reunification”, Taiwan’s political autonomy, status quo in the Strait. Third, it demonstrates convincingly that Taiwan’s room for maneuver has always been narrow, and has arguably become narrower, because of the growing “co-management” by China and the US of the “Taiwan issue”. The island is a prisoner of the status quo: it cannot fundamentally revise the ROC constitution and symbols, or force Beijing to resolve the “inconsistency between intranational flexibility and international intransigence in (its) Taiwan policy”, as the authors nicely put it (p. 344). It is unable to convince the US to support its statehood. In other words, the apparent flexibility adopted by Deng Xiaoping and his successors, especially Hu Jintao, is not aimed at solving the sovereignty dispute, just at containing it.

In such circumstances, we may have some doubts about the conclusions of this book: contrary to what Huang and Li claim (p. 346), it appears that the US is more willing than China to “solve” or find an “interim solution” to the issue. True, they admit the well-known limits to any China–US “co-management” of Taiwan; but the cross-Strait “rapprochement” initiated by Ma Ying-jeou since 2008 directly questions this concept, feeding a debate in the US that has not been touched upon here. Finally, the importance given by this book to the so-called “1992 Consensus” (one China, separate interpretation for the KMT) in the elaboration of any kind of settlement across the Strait (a concept often used in the book anachronistically, or before it was crafted by Su Chi in 2000) does not help in forecasting the future, for example the likelihood of a return to power by the DPP and, in the longer term, a possible regime change on the mainland.

Finally, this book relies too much on particular publications, such as Li Li’s *Muji Taihai fengyuan* (Witnessing the Big Events Across the Taiwan Strait, 2005), Su Chi’s *Weixian bianyuan* (Brinkmanship, 2003) or the even more debatable Ren Huiwen’s *Zhongnanhai lingdao mixinlu* (The Inside Stories of China’s Top Leadership, 1998), published in Hong Kong. These sources should have been used with more care.

In spite of these reservations, one can only commend Huang and Li’s comprehension of the issue and of its multiple and increasingly complex “lawyers’ quibbles” (to recycle Dean Acheson’s well-known 1950 quote, p. 14).

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