
*Taiwan In Africa: Seven Decades of Certainty and Uncertainties* is published in 2023 by Lexington Books, an imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Group, Incorporated of Lanham, Maryland, USA. Its editor, Sabella Ogbobode Abidde, serves as Professor of Political Science and a member of the Graduate Faculty of Alabama State University in Alabama, USA. Thematically and subject-wise, the edited volume is both comprehensive and of great historicity. The dedication, in itself, is remarkably memorable: indeed, “dedicated to two great African scholars and intellectuals, Professor Alaba Ogunsanwo [Nigerian] for his ground-breaking work entitled *China's Policy in Africa 1958–71*; and for the late Emmanuel John Hevi [Ghanaian] for his two brilliant books, *An African Student in China*, and *The Dragon's Embrace: the Chinese Communists and Africa*,” (p. v).

Editor Abidde informs his readers that an array of scholars – from both diverse and complementary backgrounds as well as academic disciplines – have been assembled “to examine many of the important aspects of Taiwan's role and place on the African continent,” (p. x). Apart from being seen in impressive terms, *Taiwan in Africa: Seven Decades of Certainty and Uncertainties* can also be described, in the editor’s words, as “a novel undertaking in that it is the first of its kind in many decades, in the English language, that’s devoted entirely to Taiwan’s engagement with Africa,” (p. x).

For students as well as advanced researchers and the general reader to find the volume uncomplicated, it has been divided into three distinct parts: Part 1 is sub-titled “Taiwan in Africa: Then And Now”; Part 2, “Diplomatic Recognition And Geopolitical Considerations”; and Part 3, “Economic And Geopolitical Consideration”. Within the three parts are eight substantive chapters,
which were contributed by several distinguished scholars, who were invited by Editor Abidde.

Apart from the lucid introduction provided by Editor Abidde, he also wrote the preface as well as Chapter 1, which is titled “Taiwan in Africa: The Early Years and Years of Developmental Assistance.” Here, he traced the early beginnings of both China and Taiwan on the African continent up to the time of the 1971 expulsion of Taiwan from the United Nations, and subsequent events, including Washington DC’s 1979 recognition of China in place of Taiwan. In Chapter 2, “Taiwan-Africa Relations: Exploring the Changing Trends,” Associate Professor Felix Kumah-Abiwu of Kent State University discusses Taiwan in the context of a democratic nation “that has continued to face problems on its political status or statehood for decades,” (p. 3). The chapter deserves a thorough examination by readers.

In Chapter 3, “Imperialism and Taiwan Question: The Tragedy of the United Nations and Africa's Helplessness,” Benson Idahosa University (Benin City, Nigeria) Associate Professor Felix O.U. Oriakhi discusses Taiwan in its relationship with China. Here, readers will enjoy perusing the entire chapter, from which they are to be confronted by the nuance of China insisting on a one China policy, in which Taiwan is to be seen as an integral part. Chapter 4, “Taiwan's Overture to Somaliland”, is contributed by African Union’s Dr. Walters Samah, whose expertise and position enabled him to offer readers a discussion on the agreement that Taiwan signed with Somalia's breakaway region, Somaliland; he pointed out that the measure underscored, for Taiwan, “how badly it needed allies in Africa,” (p. 4). Chapter 5, “Taiwan and Apartheid South Africa”, was ably contributed by Journalist Charmaine Pretorious; it provides an enlightening discussion of the forged relationship between Apartheid South Africa and Taiwan, which dated back to 1948-1994, coupled with the isolation in which both nations found themselves in the end.

While China eclipsed Taiwan on the continent, future President Nelson Mandela and his allies also replaced Apartheid leaders after democratic polls; in the end, South Africa’s Apartheid regime and Taiwan remained mere big-time trade partners until the Mandela victory at the polls ended the relationship. Taiwan's formal recognitions, including that of the United Nations, were imperiled in 1971 after the United Nations replaced China with Taiwan in the organization; the discussion is done in detail by University of Johannesburg Professor Siphamandla Zondi in Chapter 6, which is titled “Taiwan’s Non-formal International Engagement in the Absence of Formal International Recognition”. Readers are, however, informed in the end in this well-argued essay: “Taiwan has found innovative ways to compensate for its loss of formal sovereignty in non-official international diplomacy with some success,” (p. 5).
Zimbabwe-based Lupane State University (LSU) Senior Lecturer Gorden Moyo contributed Chapter 7, “China-Taiwan Geoeconomic Competition for Diplomatic Recognition: Battling for the Soul of Africa.” In the chapter, Dr. Moyo brings home to his readers how China and Taiwan have, over the years, had economic turfing and, in the end, how China has won for Taiwan – in the author’s words – “to operate in ‘tight-corners,’” (p. 5).

The final chapter (Chapter 8), which is reserved for a discussion of African and Taiwanese issues, is sub-titled, “Building Capacity in Africa: An Overview of Taiwan-African Relations 1960–1971”. In this section, Alabama State University Associate Professor Alecia D. Hoffman has confirmed for her readers that between 1960 and 1971, Taiwan “made significant international connections as a rising star,” (p. 6). Readers are to learn further from the well-crafted essay what prompted Taiwan to lose its international standing during the period. Also excellently discussed briefly is Taiwan-Soviet Union (now Russia) relations. *Taiwan in Africa: Seven Decades of Certainty and Uncertainties*, the 172-page volume, should be of tremendous benefit for students, researchers as well as the general reader in search of very useful discussions centered on China-Taiwan presence in Africa.

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