

Call for Papers:

Taiwan in the Era of Africa-China Relations: Hidden Histories and Futures

April 25, 2025

Taiwan has played a forgotten role in the story of Africa-China relations. The Dutch linked Africa and Taiwan for a brief period in the 17th century, and African troops fought in Koxinga's army. Taiwan was also colonized by Japan during the same period as the European colonial "scramble for Africa." As the last refuge of the Republic of China after 1949, Taiwan represented "China" itself for many newly independent African countries. Taiwan competed against the People's Republic of China through development programs and exchanges embodying another dimension of South-South relations, which may have been more similar than Cold War narratives assumed. Taiwanese migrant entrepreneurs were also among the first to establish "Chinese business associations." Notwithstanding a diplomatic push in the 1990s to recover diplomatic partners, a history that remains to be written, the story of Africa-Taiwan relations has been subsequently subsumed or hidden by the story of Africa-China relations. The People's Republic of China is now the largest trading partner and investor for many African countries. In a context where the discourse of Africa-China relations imagines world orders otherwise, what role do Taiwanese actors play in that story? To what degree have Taiwanese contributed to or participated in the development of Africa-China relations, and to what degree have their relations with Africa been either disconnected from or constructed in opposition to Africa-China relations, especially in the context of (New) Cold Wars and Taiwan's relation to the Sinophone world? What role have African actors played in developing relations with Taiwan and China? In what way might interrogating the similarities and differences help us deconstruct assumptions about Africa-China relations, Africa-Taiwan relations, global China, global Taiwan, and global Africa? We welcome papers that consider these and related questions from historical and contemporary perspectives using a wide range of methodologies. We especially welcome papers that consider the hidden histories of Taiwan in Africa-China relations, and the Africa-China moment and its impacts on Taiwan.

Please Submit an Abstract by October 31st to dsheridan@gate.sinica.edu.tw