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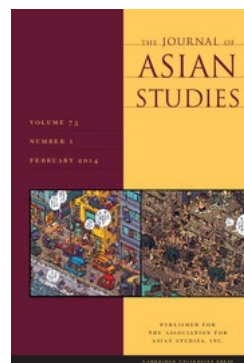
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***China's Resource Diplomacy in Africa: Powering Development?* By Marcus Power, Giles Mohan, and May Tan-Mullins. London: Palgrave, 2012. xix, 329 pp. \ \$95.00 (cloth).**

Ian Taylor

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revolutionary inheritance in ways that encourage its inspiring vision to triumph over its appalling violence” (p. 296).

TIMOTHY CHEEK

*University of British Columbia*  
t.cheek@ubc.ca

*China's Resource Diplomacy in Africa: Powering Development?*<sup>9</sup> By MARCUS POWER, GILES MOHAN, and MAY TAN-MULLINS. London: Palgrave, 2012. xix, 329 pp. \$95.00 (cloth).  
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In recent times, there has been growing international interest in Africa, so much so that there is now talk of a “new scramble for Africa.” Africa has now emerged as a hugely important source of oil in the global economy and an increasingly important region in international relations. This is largely due to new discoveries and the instability of oil markets in the Middle East, which compels the search for alternative supply locations.

Focusing specifically on China, within the academic realm there has been an equally exponential rise in the literature on China's ties with Africa. From a backwater of academia, with one or two people working on the subject, carefully basing their work on field research, the subject has now attracted a plethora of experts. One cannot open a journal or visit a bookstore these days without being confronted with the latest article or volume on these “new” phenomena. The book under review is another volume on the topic but it is qualitatively better than many previous efforts.

The authors have done an excellent job in bringing together existing work on the topic and also first-class field research. As a result, the volume has a more nuanced understanding of Beijing than many other previous books on the subject. Due to the in-depth fieldwork, the authors avoid the mistake, common in much other work, of treating China as a monolithic actor. As the book shows, China's foreign-economic policies are put into practice by an increasingly diverse set of actors under pressure from a wide variety of interest groups and constituency demands.

Central government ministries as well as provincial and municipal bureaucracies all have input, while state-owned enterprises now have to be sensitive both to general government policies and proclamations and to the profit motive. Although the central government may have a broad Africa policy, it has to be mediated via the economic interests of private corporations and the political motivations and aspirations of local state officials who, with growing autonomy, may not share the enunciated central vision. What has been termed “fragmented authoritarianism,” where policy made at the center becomes ever more malleable to the organizational and political goals of the different parochial and regional agencies entrusted with enforcing policy, is a reality in contemporary China. Throw into this mix the facts that commercial organizations in China are ever more centered on profitability and that the numbers and types of actors within the fragmented-authoritarianism framework have increased dramatically, and the decreasing willingness of many Chinese actors to perform activities willy-nilly at the behest of Beijing becomes clear.

The above understanding then allows the authors to explore how policy is made and implemented vis-à-vis resource diplomacy. Demonstrating that new and still-changing combinations of forces remake Chinese foreign policy, a development intimately

linked to the reform era, allows the reader a good insight into the real story, behind the dramatic headlines. Competition and compromise with respect to policy formulation are now the norm at all levels of government as the policy process has become more open, facilitating greater, more proactive input from various agencies rather than the former reactive version. Although the role of the paramount leader continues to be significant, in general, policy direction is increasingly open to advice from academics and business associations, and China's policies toward Africa are becoming more nuanced as a result.

However, a weak link is also in evidence concerning policy implementation. It is here that the Chinese state reveals itself as a bargainer and negotiator. At the same time, some of the pathologies associated with the post-Maoist liberalization regime, such as an inattention to environmental safeguards and workers' rights, are being replicated abroad as Chinese corporations increasingly operate outside of China, notably in Africa. These create serious problems for Beijing policymakers intent on maintaining Chinese "face" abroad.

Even with regard to ostensibly strategic arms of government, policy coherence has its limitations. For instance, Beijing has been incapable of enforcing a geographical division of labor among the main national oil companies, namely the China National Petroleum Corporation, the China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation, and the China National Offshore Oil Company. The result is overlap and competition among China's national oil companies, even though they are all ostensibly central to Beijing's energy-security policies. All three corporations possess subsidiary companies and have independent seats on their executive boards, meaning that various agendas are often pursued. There is arguably little in the way of a unified strategy to secure an entrée into specific oil and gas fields; in some instances, national oil companies have even bid against one another. These are all realities of modern China, and it is necessary for analysts to recognize these complexities. Anyone interested in Sino-African ties needs to read this book.

IAN TAYLOR

*University of St Andrews*  
[ict@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:ict@st-andrews.ac.uk)

*Die Plünderung des Yuanmingyuan: Imperiale Beutenahtme im britisch-französischen Chinafeldzug von 1860* [The plunder of the Yuanmingyuan; Imperial looting in the British-French China campaign of 1860]. By INES EBEN VON RACKNITZ. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012. 328 pp. €48.00 (paper).

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The total destruction of the Qing summer palace of Yuanmingyuan in the fall of 1860 is a momentous episode in the history of late imperial China that continues to haunt China's relationship with the Western world. The recent efforts by official organizations and private individuals to identify and repatriate twelve bronze animal heads representing the Chinese zodiac, which were looted from the imperial complex 153 years ago, are but one example of this troubled legacy.

Drawing on recent advances in "new military history," Dr. Ines Eben von Racknitz set out to write the story of the destruction of the famed palace as a "history of events" (*Ereignisgeschichte*), a genre of microhistory in the *Annales* tradition. Within this framework, she endeavors to explore looting, pillaging, and plundering as a "cultural