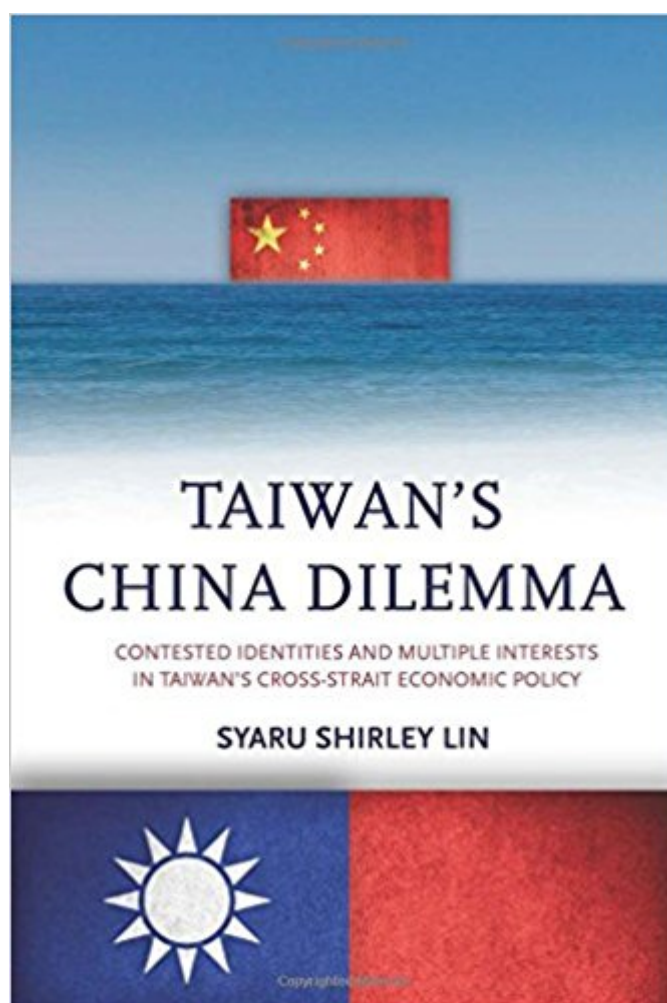


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Taiwan's China Dilemma: Contested Identities And Multiple Interests In Taiwan's Cross-Strait Economic Policy



Synopsis

China and Taiwan share one of the world's most complex international relationships. Although similar cultures and economic interests promoted an explosion of economic ties between them since the late 1980s, these ties have not led to an improved political relationship, let alone progress toward the unification that both governments once claimed to seek. In addition, Taiwan's recent Sunflower Movement succeeded in obstructing deeper economic ties with China. Why has Taiwan's policy toward China been so inconsistent? Taiwan's China Dilemma explains the divergence between the development of economic and political relations across the Taiwan Strait through the interplay of national identity and economic interests. Using primary sources, opinion surveys, and interviews with Taiwanese opinion leaders, Syaru Shirley Lin paints a vivid picture of one of the most unsettled and dangerous relationships in the contemporary world, and illustrates the growing backlash against economic liberalization and regional economic integration around the world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A former partner at Goldman Sachs, Lin teaches part of the year in Hong Kong, and the part in Virginia. She was born in Taiwan and comes from humble stock: one of her grandmothers sold gong wan in the Yuanhuan Market on Nanjing W road for decades. Few people have her breadth of experience in both the financial and academic worlds, as well as her deep Taiwan roots, making her uniquely qualified to write this work. The major idea of this work is that "Identity is treated as an integral part of a more comprehensive understanding of how the Taiwanese have dealt with their

China dilemma." Following Alexander Wendt, she argues that values, such as identity, are how economic interests are chosen. Lin supports her argument with a (1) comprehensive historical review of the debates over the economic approach to China and the rise of the modern Taiwan identity that is (2) not pro-China or pro-KMT but well balanced and inclusive and (3) buttressed by charts and graphs of every type and kind. In addition to placing identity at the heart of the cross-strait decision-making process, Lin also uses the distributive effects of the economic engagement with China on Taiwan, effects that have strong explanatory power for the choices the Taiwanese have made over the last 15 years. Up to date, she observes that Taiwan's identity is rooted in shared democratic values. She also puts her finger on the recent changes in identity as class and socio-economic cleavages created by interaction with China. In short, this is a meaty and informative work that demonstrates a deep grasp of the topic at hand.

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