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10 YEARS | 2013 - 2023



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China Center

NEWSLETTER N°21

Articles, news and events on China.

The China Center is an interdepartmental and multidisciplinary Research Centre of the University of Macerata, founded in 2012 within the initiatives of the Department of Law.



"2023 marks the 10th anniversary of the China Centre, which we are very proud of. 10 years of research projects, cooperation initiatives, training and public engagement across Europe and China.

We have grown thanks to the passion and dedication of many colleagues, entrepreneurs and experts.

We are happy to launch this newsletter as well as a rich calendar of activities for our community."

- Francesca Spigarelli, Director China Center

Scientific Articles

Provinces in Command: Changes in Prefectural Appointments from Hu Jintao to Xi Jinping (2003-2020)

Written by Xinhui Jiang, Sarah Eaton & Genia Kostka, published online on 19/04/2023

The 'Xi-Li era' in China is characterized by the consolidation of power at the central level and the

strengthening of Party authority. This study aims to examine whether these trends are reflected in local appointment practices since Xi Jinping assumed office in 2013. Through a comparison of the career trajectories of 3,682 prefectural mayors and Party Secretaries during the Hu-Wen and Xi-Li administrations, we have found that while there have been changes in appointment practices, they do not completely align with the narratives of center- and Party-strengthening. Firstly, the developments observed in the Xi-Li era indicate that provincial authorities increasingly make use of prefectural appointments for their own interests, but decisions still maintain a significant influence from the central level. Secondly, evidence to suggest that cadres with a strong Party background have a distinct advantage during the Xi period was not found. Instead, individuals with a proven track record in key functional areas, particularly those with expertise in the economic domain, are still the most likely to attain leadership positions. These findings contribute to the ongoing discourse on the nature of power reconfigurations taking place in Xi's China.

A bargaining and property rights perspective on the Belt and Road Initiative: Cases from the Italian port system

Written by Cristian Luise, Peter J. Buckley, Hinrich Voss, Emmanuella Plakoyiannaki & Elisa Barbieri, published online on

25/11/2023

Infrastructure assets play a crucial role in a country's economic and social development. While governments are typically responsible for regulating and managing these assets, multinational enterprises (MNEs) are involved in their development, construction, financing, and operation. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) aims to deliver infrastructure projects that bring economic and social benefits to both the host country and the MNEs. However, the success of Chinese MNEs' foreign market entry activities in infrastructure projects is not guaranteed. To understand the factors at play, this paper combines insights from the bargaining power literature with the economics of property rights perspective to examine how host-country actors at different governance levels influence foreign direct investment. Through a comparative case study approach, the paper analyzes four instances where Chinese firms sought to negotiate access to Italian ports. The findings highlight the importance of aligning the various actors involved in the property rights nexus to enable BRI port investments. Chinese investors need to understand the bargaining positions and property rights of actors at multiple levels and across different geographic locations, while also being mindful of changes over time when negotiating infrastructure investments. Host-country governments, on the other hand, should develop a clear port infrastructure strategy to avoid resource wastage in lengthy negotiations and unnecessary infrastructure projects.

News from China

**'De-risking' not in the interest of
EU**

Written by Liu Zuokui, posted by on 29/06/2023

The upcoming European Summit in Brussels will discuss various issues, including the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the economy, security and defense, migration, and a strategic discussion on China. This indicates that the EU has yet to make significant changes in its policy towards China as a “partner, competitor, and systemic rival”. There is an ongoing debate within the EU regarding its China policy. The COVID-19 pandemic and the spillover effects of the Russia-Ukraine conflict have led to intensified efforts by the United States and some Western powers to demonize China. Consequently, Europe’s perception of China has become increasingly negative. Communication and interaction between China and the EU have decreased due to the pandemic, and the Ukraine crisis has further biased the EU against China. The US narrative of “democracy versus authoritarianism” has gained traction in Europe. Enlightened leadership from both China and Europe is needed to eliminate biases and recognize China’s role as the world’s second-largest economy ready to collaborate for the common good. The concept of “de-risking” from and avoiding over-dependence on China has gained popularity in the West, with specific policies targeting China becoming more common. The EU’s major economies often indicate the overall direction of the EU’s China policy. Despite concerns, some EU countries prioritize their own path instead of aligning closely with the US.



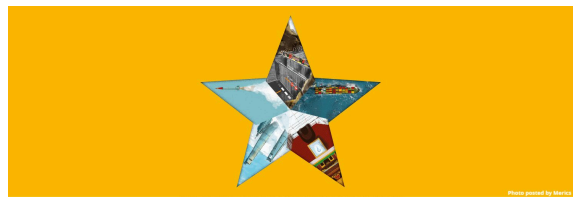
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Report-Shaky China: Five scenarios for Xi Jinping's third term

Written by MERICS and Fraunhofer ISI experts, posted by MERICS on 28/06/2023

In March 2023, Xi Jinping secured a third term as the leader of both the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese state. This event marks a period of growing uncertainty for China, with significant implications for its population and the global community. To address this, a study presents five potential scenarios for China's future path, aiming to help formulate strategic responses. The baseline scenario, named "Shaky China", portrays an unstable status quo where China's economy, politics, and global engagement follow the trends observed at the beginning of Xi's third term. The report emphasizes the importance for European policymakers and private businesses to grasp the realities of a more uncertain "Shaky China" and consider the possibility of more extreme scenarios. The other scenarios outlined in the report include "Confrontational China", "Successful China", "Restrained China" and "Reform China".

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Living Heritage: Guqin

Written and posted by China Daily on 29/05/2023

The guqin is a plucked seven-string instrument with a rich history in ancient China. It is known for its wandering sounds, irregular rhythms, and ability to evoke gentle emotions. The earliest guqin discovered dates back to the Zhou Dynasty, showcasing its long-standing presence in

Chinese culture. Crafted from lacquered wood and twisted silk strings, the guqin's simple appearance belies the demanding craftsmanship required to create it. The instrument's quiet and ethereal tone, characterized by suppressed vibrations and abundant empty notes, creates a sense of lingering and connection with the listener. In ancient times, the guqin was favored by literati, and the most renowned guqin musician was Yu Boya, whose music formed a deep bond with a woodcutter named Zhong Ziqi. This story gave birth to the famous guqin piece, "Flowing Water, High Mountains", which has been passed down through generations. Today, the graceful dialogue of the guqin continues to captivate audiences, transcending time and bridging ancient and modern eras.

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Upcoming Events



China Center 10th Anniversary

5th
July
2023

2:30 pm - 5 pm

Campus Simonelli Group

Via Carlo Urbani 5, Belforte del Chienti (MC), 62020

Integrating Market and Nonmarket Strategies for Corporate Success in a World of High Tech Conflict



Special guest speaker: Prof. Vinod K. Aggarwal

University of California Berkeley; Alan P. Bedford Professor of Asian Studies at Travers Department of Political Science, Affiliated Professor at Haas School of Business, Director of the Berkeley APEC Study Center (BASC)

Registrati qui



Introduction: Prof. Marco R. Di Tommaso

Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna, Director of CIMET Italy's National University Centre for Applied Economic Studies, Honorary Professor at South China University of Technology

Discussants:



Francesca
Spigarelli
Director of the
China Center



Marco R.
Di Tommaso
Professor UNIBO
and CIMET



Emanuele
Frontoni
Professor
UNIMC



Benedetta
Giovanola
Professor
UNIMC



Elisa
Barbieri
Professor UNIVE
and CIMET



Mattia
Tassinari
Professor UNIMC
and CIMET

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Organizational Secretariat: China Center Macerata - <https://www.unimc.it/chinacenter/it>

On July the 5th the China Center will celebrate its **10 years Anniversary**.

Register

The **Summer School on Western Culture and Civilization** will be held from July 3rd to July 16th, 2023 and the application deadline is 20th June 2023. [More details](#)

After two years of online activities and webinars, the international conference **China Goes Global** returns in person in Bologna in July 2023.

CGA's [website](#)

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