

anced if the author had delved more deeply into some of the classical works on education in the Sinological literature. Errors such as the association of the term for traditional private schools, *sishu*, with the Four Books (also romanized as *sishu*), on p. 61, also might have been avoided. However, this is a minor quibble, given the enormous scope of the study. There is some justification also for the decision to omit reference to other important educational traditions in China, such as those of Buddhism and Daoism (p. 55), given the overall focus of the argument. However, it would have been interesting to explore whether or how persisting values from these traditions may have affected both policy and implementation. This is a work that will stand as a key source of information and understanding for a long time to come. The author notes how the comparison between radical and moderate policy and their impact on the rural/urban gap could be instructive for designing contemporary policy (p. 464), since this gap remains a key concern at the present time. The formulation of solid and convincing policy advice for the future development of basic education in China, drawing on this analysis, would be an extremely valuable next step.

RUTH HAYHOE

Taiwan's Informal Diplomacy and Propaganda. By GARY D. RAWNSLEY.
[London: Macmillan and New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.
xiii + 182 pp. £42.50. ISBN 0-333-75119-1.]

Never before in human history has a country been as constrained in the international arena as the Republic of China on Taiwan (ROC or Taiwan). This thin volume offers a unique opportunity to uncover some of the mysteries of this unprecedented episode. The author employs a combination of structuralist and culturalist views to expose some of the chronic problems of ROC propaganda. These problems include a world view moulded by the lengthy reign of the Kuomintang (Nationalist) regime, the fragmentation of responsibilities within the government (and the resulting divided messages intended for their targets), a failure to distinguish between allies and non-allies, and the preponderant factor of the PRC. The book also succeeds in avoiding a US-centric approach – the perspective is broadened to include some European as well as African viewpoints.

The theme of the book, as the author suggests, is to explore “how governments which are obliged to enter into informal diplomatic relations with other governments are required to engage in propaganda” (p. 135). Consequently, most readers would inevitably look for answers to a variety of questions. How does an informal diplomacy work? Who are the targeted audiences for the information to be disseminated? Is the message propagated by these governments the same across the geographical and sociological divides? What are the goals? What are the channels? Are they effective? Unfortunately, the author fails to answer these questions. The

method employed – namely interviewing a small number of officials – is much too unsophisticated to provide the answers.

An example is provided by the case of the overseas Chinese communities. The institutional approach enables the writer to delve into the work of Taipei's Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission. It also helps him to successfully unveil the inter-agency squabbling over jurisdiction. But the author fails to identify the various strategies that the government adopted largely for domestic political purposes, a practice that is quite different from the stated policy of uniting overseas Chinese communities for the purpose of promoting the reunification of China. He also fails to differentiate between the old *huaqiao* (overseas Chinese) and the new émigrés *taiqiao* (overseas Taiwanese). Anyone even remotely familiar with this situation knows that these groups differ significantly. And since he fails to distinguish between these factions, the author is unable to discern the bitter partisan infighting within the overseas Chinese communities – battles over national and ethnic identity that often are more fiercely fought than those in Taiwan proper – and the likely impact on Taiwan's propaganda policy. In a similar vein, the author exposes himself to potential criticism when he identifies the U.S. as the most important target of the ROC's propaganda, but fails to examine whether certain sectors of the American populace have been prioritized and/or targeted. The reader is left wondering whether Taiwan conducts studies to locate the more amiable audiences in the USA. Also left unanswered are questions about the corresponding measures Taiwan adopts to reap desired results.

A part of this book's troubles may be traced to the nefarious relationship between the two themes under investigation: informal diplomacy and propaganda. While the author identifies some of the objectives of ROC's diplomacy (p. 36), he has nevertheless failed to pinpoint the objectives of propaganda. Unlike other LDCs whose propaganda very much serves as catharsis to whitewash domestic irregularities, the main goals of the ROC propaganda have been to compete against a Goliath, the PRC, for support within the global community. This lofty task has been complicated by the need to project its image as a sovereign entity against overwhelming odds. ROC propagandists are more than beauty parlor specialists whose obligation is simply to make their clients appear attractive. As the intimidatory menace from Beijing has never relented, Taipei's propaganda is best viewed as part of a grand strategy for national survival and preservation. Being disparaged as a troublemaker in the trilateral Washington–Beijing–Taipei relations could mean the difference between continuing international support and isolation and defeat. The author's failure to discuss these points is ill-conceived and incomprehensible.

This leads one to questions about the effectiveness of the propaganda employed by Taiwan. The author is certainly correct when he suggests that there is no way to quantify the precise impact of Taipei's propaganda campaign. But it is not impossible to glean some general conclusions. One of the biggest drawbacks of this book is a lack of corresponding investigation at the other end of the author's interviews. That is, the

author's arguments could have been substantiated if he made contact with the audience that received the disseminated message. For instance, what is the component breakdown of the 35,000 subscribers of the two official publications of the GIO – the Taipei Journal and the Taipei Review? What is their circulation beyond the overseas Chinese community? Are they providing information vital to the making of relevant policies inside the Washington beltway? How frequently are they being cited by China hands and journalists? How much money does the ROC government spend on advertisement in major international newspapers? Are there favoured media agents overseas? Answers to such questions might readily have surfaced if the author had only pursued them. Furthermore, the author correctly states that economic diplomacy is inextricably linked with Taiwan's propaganda. But one is left wondering how this differs from the economic instruments applied by countries that conduct so-called "normal" diplomacy. And how effective is economic aid in helping the ROC's diplomatic cause? Or how is economic aid perceived by a recipient country when rumours of Taiwanese bribery or malfeasance surface? Again, more unanswered questions.

The author has undertaken a noble cause in tackling an unprecedented saga in human history. How Taipei fares in its propaganda battle with Beijing could very well become a legacy worthy of future study. As pioneering an effort as it is, however, the book could have been more diversified both in terms of the sources referred and methods applied. Unfortunately, this book raises many more questions than it answers.

CHIEN-MIN CHAO

China and Southeast Asia's Ethnic Chinese: State and Diaspora in Contemporary Asia. By PAUL BOLT. [Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000. 184 pp. £47.95. ISBN 0-275-96647-X.]

This book is concerned with the triangular relationship among China, the states of South-East Asia, and South-East Asia's ethnic Chinese, focusing on the latter's role in "contributing to China's economic development since 1978 and the political ramifications of this role for both China and the region [of South-East Asia]" (p. 4). Drawing theoretical insights from the discussions on the nation-state, international politics, and diaspora networks, Bolt demonstrates his keen awareness of the paradoxical nature of the questions under examination and his competence in analysing these complexities in a jargon-free and well-structured manner.

The first leg of the diaspora relationship connects China with Asia's ethnic Chinese. Historically, they were an important external source in fuelling China's modernization. Their significance has increased dramatically with China's open door policy and its improved relationship with South-East Asia. It is estimated that ethnic Chinese capital originating from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South-East Asia accounts for 70–80 per cent of foreign direct investment in China. "The ethnic Chinese," Bolt