

Research Assessment Exercise 2020

Impact Case Study

University: [Hong Kong Baptist University]

Unit of Assessment (UoA): 25 Political Science (incl. public policy & administration & international relations)

Title of case study: Promoting the Knowledge and Understanding of Chinese Politics in the International Community

(1) Summary of the impact The impact is based on underlying research into 1) Chinese domestic politics and institutions; 2) Chinese foreign and security policy, with a special focus on cross-Straits relations; 3) Sino-African Relations, with specific reference to China-Africa security cooperation. In terms of reach, Cabestan has been regularly interviewed by both Hong Kong and overseas media and consulted by various countries' diplomatic missions in Hong Kong and China. The significance of the impact has taken the form of confidential advice provided to various governments. Beneficiaries include the French, Canadian and Singaporean governments, the UN and foreign diplomats in Hong Kong and Beijing.

(2) Underpinning research

- The case study is principally based on Jean-Pierre Cabestan's research on Chinese politics, institutions and international relations, which has been nurtured by a 40 year-old relationship with the Chinese world (mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan), and sustained by using first-hand and second-hand materials both in Chinese and in Western languages, as well as multiple interviews in China.
- His work, mainly focusing on institutions and elite politics, represents a substantial corpus, including a comprehensive handbook in French on the Chinese political system in 2014 (over 700 pages) which has become main text for most francophone students of China, in France, Belgium, Switzerland, Quebec and Francophone Africa.
- Stimulated by the debate going on especially in the United States about the sustainability of China's political system, Cabestan's main argument in recent publications is that most Chinese support their government and are not fighting for democracy, hence the rather long life-expectancy of the current regime.
- Cabestan's research on China's foreign and security policy investigates domestic-foreign policy linkages; he has contributed to understanding how these policies have accompanied China's unprecedented economic modernisation and globalisation as well as social transformation, particularly since the 2000s.
- Within this body of research, Cabestan has kept a close interest in the relations across the Taiwan Strait in the context of growing China-US strategic rivalry both under the Ma Ying-jeou and the Tsai Ing-wen administrations in Taiwan.
- Cabestan's research on China-Africa relations has been based on extensive fieldwork conducted in a large sample of African countries (26 nations-states since 2011 and 12 since 2014). It has produced several case-studies, particularly on Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Djibouti.
- While African countries can no longer ignore China's diplomatic concerns, they can balance her growing influence by cultivating closer relations with their traditional partners, especially the ones providing security guarantees or their new emerging partners. This "edging strategy" has been obvious in Djibouti, Mali, Niger and Tanzania, where case-studies have led to scholarly publications.

Key Researchers This body of research is conducted by Jean-Pierre Cabestan, Professor in the Department of Government and International Studies, and Principal Investigator (PI) of three GRF

obtained respectively in 2010, 2014 and 2018. This research has also involved Dr. Jean-Raphaël Chaponnière, retired official of the Agence Française de Développement (France's Development Agency) for the project on China-Tanzania relations and Dr. Jean-Nicolas Bach, Coordinator, CEDEJ-Khartoum (Centre d'études et de documentation économiques et juridiques et sociales or Centre for Economic, Judicial, and Social Study and Documentation), a French government-funded research centre based in Khartoum, Sudan.

(3) References to the research

1. Cabestan, Jean-Pierre, *Demain la Chine: démocratie ou dictature?*, Paris, Gallimard, Coll. « Le Débat », 2018, updated and published in English under the title *China Tomorrow: Democracy or Dictatorship?*, Lanham, MD, Rowman & Littlefield, in 2019.
2. Cabestan, Jean-Pierre, "Beijing's 'Going Out' Strategy and Belt and Road Initiative in the Sahel: The Case of China's Growing Presence in Niger", *Journal of Contemporary China* (2018), DOI: 10.1080/10670564.2018.1557948.
3. Cabestan, Jean-Pierre, "Political Changes in China Since the 19th CCP Congress: Xi Jinping Is Not Weaker But More Contested", *East Asia*, Vol. 36, No. 1, March 2019, pp. 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12140-019-09305-x>
4. "Cabestan, Jean-Pierre, "China's Involvement in Africa's Security: The Case of China's Participation in the UN Mission to Stabilize Mali", *The China Quarterly*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741018000929> Published online: 31 July 2018.
5. Cabestan, Jean-Pierre, "Burkina Faso: Between Taiwan's active public diplomacy and China's business attractiveness", *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Issue 4, January 2017, pp. 495-519.
6. Cabestan, Jean-Pierre, *Tanzania-China All-Weather Friendship in the Era of Multipolarity*, (with Jean-Raphaël Chaponnière), Saarbrücken, Lambert Academic Publishing, 2017, 68 p.
7. Cabestan, Jean-Pierre, *La politique internationale de la Chine. Entre intégration et volonté de puissance*, (China's International Policy. Between integration and will for power), Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, second edition, 2015.
8. Cabestan, Jean-Pierre, *Le système politique chinois. Un nouvel équilibre autoritaire* (China's Political System. A New Authoritarian Equilibrium), Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2014.

Research Funding Support: Prof. Cabestan has obtained over HK\$2 million in competitive research grants as PI to support his research on Sino-African relations: GRF, RGC 2018/19 (12609918) - HK\$841,040; GRF, RGC 2014/15 (12400314) - HK\$ 757,500, and GRF, RGC 2010/11 (240110) - HK\$490,153.

(4) Details of the impact

1) Writing Policy Papers

In 2014, Cabestan was invited to write a comprehensive report on China-Africa relations at the request of the French Foreign Ministry's Policy Planning Department. This report was later published in the *Carnets du CAPS* (the ministry's Policy Planning journal).

On two occasions (October 2015 and March 2018), Ottawa-based Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS), the Canadian government's major intelligence organization, invited Cabestan to participate in the conferences that it organized on China. These conferences were closed-door meetings with Canadian officials from different branches of their government. The written version of Cabestan's presentations were later published, anonymously for security reasons, in a bilingual report issued by the CSIS. The conclusions of this report were submitted to the Canadian government.

In 2018 Cabestan was invited to write a policy report by the United States Institute of Peace based in Washington DC on China's People's Liberation Army's participation in the MINUSMA, United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (C).

2) Formal Presentations to Policy Makers

In December 2014, Cabestan was invited to speak in front of the French National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Commission on China and the recent events in Hong Kong (B).

Since 2014, Cabestan has been regularly invited to the Singapore-France Dialogue on China. Organized by National University of Singapore's East Asian Institute and France's Asia Centre (and later the Institut Montaigne); this dialogue is supported by Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and France's Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Policy Planning Department. It brings together French and Singaporean China experts and government officials. The 5th Dialogue took place in Singapore at the seat of the MFA on 21 March 2019.

Cabestan was invited by the French Embassy in Beijing in June 2018 to discuss his book *Demain la Chine (China Tomorrow)* with the European diplomats posted there.

3) Informal Meetings/Briefings with Diplomats

The quality of Cabestan's research output on Chinese politics, foreign policy, relations across the Taiwan Strait and China-Africa relations has led many diplomats and government officials from various countries to ask for a meeting. Consulate representatives or officials from the following countries have visited Cabestan's HKBU office: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States. In addition, Cabestan has been regularly consulted by the European Union delegation in Hong Kong and in Beijing.

4) Participation in Think Tank Activities

Every year since 2008, Cabestan has participated in the EU group of scholars' visit to China and Taiwan. These regular visits include a conference on the relations across the Taiwan Strait organized by the Shanghai Institute of International Studies (SIIS) attended by officials from the Chinese government's Taiwan Affairs Office, Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council and Foreign Ministry officials and European Union diplomats posted in Beijing or Taipei. Published on the website of the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, the organizer of this exercise, the papers presented in Shanghai also inform the German government as well as the European research community on the latest changes in cross-Strait relations (A).

In 2016, Cabestan was invited to write a report on cross-Strait relations for the 2016 dossier of London-based International Institute of Security Studies (IISS). Titled "The Relations Across the Taiwan Strait: Still a Major Political and Security Problem", this report was part of a dossier presented at the 2016 Shangri La Dialogue in Singapore in June 2016 and widely commented among the media, experts and government and security officials around the world (B).

(5) Sources to corroborate the impact

1). Citations (A-D)

- A. Cabestan, Jean-Pierre, - “Cross Strait Multiple Interactions in an Era of No High-level Contacts”. Available at: https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/projekt_papierre/Taiwan2ndTrack_Jean-Pierre_Cabestan_2017.pdf
- B. Chapter 8, “The Relations Across the Taiwan Strait: Still a Major Political and Security Problem”, in *Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment 2016*, London, IISS, 2016. Available at: <https://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-dossiers/asiapacific-regional-security-assessment-2016>
- C. Table ronde sur les événements de Hong-Kong et la Chine (Roundtable on Hong Kong and China events) en présence de M. Jean-Pierre Cabestan, professeur et directeur du département de science politique et d'études internationales à la Hong Kong Baptist University Available at : <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/cr-cafe/14-15/c1415033.asp>
- D. Cabestan, Jean-Pierre, “China’s Evolving Role as a UN Peacekeeper in Mali”, United States Institute of Peace, *Special Report*, 26 September 2018. Available at: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2018/09/chinas-evolving-role-un-peacekeeper-mali>

2). Witness Evidence [E-G]

- E. Randall T. Graham, Consulate General of the United States of America, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Letter acknowledging Cabestan’s contribution
- F. Alexandre Escorcía, Associate bureau head of the French Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs, Paris, France. Letter acknowledging Cabestan’s contribution
- G. Mark Seniuk. First Secretary of the Embassy of Canada to China. Letter acknowledging Cabestan’s contribution

3). Media outputs (H-J)

- H. Jean-Pierre Cabestan “Sommet Chine-Afrique : « Pékin n’est pas néocolonialiste mais hégémonique » ”, *Le Monde*, 4 September 2018, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/09/03/sommet-chine-afrique-pek-in-n-est-pas-neocolonialiste-mais-hegemonique_5349720_3212.html
- I. “What is Kim Jong-un’s Game?”, *The New York Times*, 8 May 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/08/opinion/china-korea-america-kim.html>
- J. “Hong Kong: La marge de Xi Jinping est étroite”, *Le Figaro*, 5 August 2019, <https://sfrpresse.sfr.fr/article/877ee3f3-4193-4d90-b42c-c8987fbfbdfb>