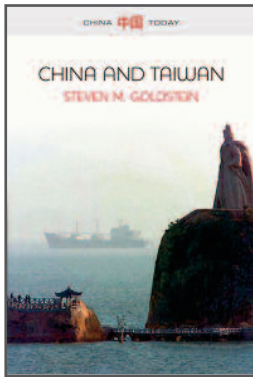


Book reviews



Steven M. Goldstein,
China and Taiwan,
Cambridge, UK, Malden, MA, Polity
Press, 2015, 228 pp.

JEAN-PIERRE CABESTAN

This is a very useful overview of both the history and the current state of China-Taiwan relations. The 16th title of a new collection called "China Today," this short volume is mainly aimed at informing the general public interested in the most striking features of what is now the second world economy and power. However, written by a recognised expert of the relations across the Taiwan Strait, it constitutes both a comprehensive and highly reliable *exposé* of Taiwan's past, its unique trajectory, and its closer but still difficult relationship with China. Moreover, it uses newly declassified materials that underscore the complexity of the issue as well as the ambiguities attached to the positions of each stakeholder, namely China, Taiwan, and the United States. Consequently, students of Chinese affairs interested in better comprehending cross-Strait relations and Taiwan's future are strongly advised to read this book.

Organised in eight brief chapters, Steven Goldstein's work first reminds the reader about Taiwan's past, its late inclusion in the Manchu Empire (1683), the 50-year Japanese colonisation (1895-1945), and more importantly, what the United States (and Japan) still consider its "unsettled status" in spite of its claimed return to the Republic of China (ROC) in 1945. It then adroitly summarises "cross-Strait politics without relations" during the Cold War and what has changed and not changed in Washington's stance on Taiwan since Nixon's trip in 1972. Similarly, it highlights the ambiguities of the Sino-US normalisation in 1979 and the 1982 third communiqué (on the reduction of US arms sales to Taiwan), as well as the importance of the April 1979 Taiwan Relations Act and the refusal of all US governments, including the Carter administration, for that matter (p. 66), to endorse the idea that Taiwan is part of the People's Republic of China.

While for obvious reasons Washington looms large in this book, *China and Taiwan* also gives much space to Taiwanese politics. It rightly underscores what it calls "the challenges of a democratic Taiwan," the impact of democratisation, and the quest for a better statehood both on cross-Strait relations (the missile crisis) and Taipei-Washington relations (a more robust security engagement and military cooperation). Likewise, the Chen Shui-bian (and Democratic Progressive Party, DPP) presidency (2000-2008) is clearly analysed, contrasting the first two years of relative moderation with the

next six years of Taiwanese identity "assertiveness" (my own wording) but also growing rapprochement between the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Entitled "Satisfying Washington and Beijing," the chapter devoted to the Ma Ying-jeou presidency shows both the achievements and the limits of the rapprochement initiated by the KMT and supported by most Taiwanese, at least until 2014 and the Sunflower Movement. This chapter also demonstrates that China won't be happy as long as Taiwan – one of its top "core interests" – capitulates and embraces political negotiations leading to reunification. As a result, the US cannot extricate itself from the key role it plays in this dispute.

The two final chapters present the two well-known paradoxical pillars of the relationship across the Taiwan Strait: on the one hand, a deepening but highly asymmetrical economic interdependence, and on the other hand, a lingering and unsolvable security tension that has forced the US to adopt a "dual deterrence" strategy (to deter a Chinese unprovoked attack as well as a Taiwanese declaration of independence).

There are probably choices and developments in Goldstein's book that other scholars studying cross-Strait relations may object to. For instance, he does not adequately emphasise the close connection between US-China normalisation and Deng Xiaoping's adoption of a policy of "peaceful reunification" towards Taiwan, as opposed to "peaceful liberation," a formula still used by Hua Guofeng in late 1978 (p. 53). This linkage is important because it will later justify the decision made by the Clinton administration to disregard (or *de facto* freeze) the application of the 1982 third US-China communiqué as Beijing decides to remilitarise the Taiwan Strait. Another criticism can be made regarding Lee Teng-hui's decision in 1999 to qualify cross-Strait relations as state-to-state relations: it was more the result of talks held by the Strait Exchange Foundation (SEF) and the Association for the Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) in Shanghai in 1998 than the division between the Clinton administration and Congress (p. 95) that explained Lee's initiative: he did not want to open "political talks" with China, knowing too well where it might lead.

One can also question whether the Chen years were "a period of high danger" (the title of Chapter 5). Goldstein tends to dismiss Chen's caution and Beijing's unaccommodating position in the first two years of his presidency, the latter being the main reason for Chen's change of mind and strategy in summer 2002. More generally, looking back at these years as another DPP administration starts in 2016 under the presidency of Tsai Ing-wen, one wonders what Chen tried and managed to achieve. In 2006 he terminated the National Unification Council, an institution established *before* Taiwan's democratisation and the political legitimacy of which was questionable, but never actually challenged the "one China nature" of the Republic of China's Constitution (as mentioned on p. 102). In addition, regarding the so-called "92 Consensus," the author does not adopt enough critical distance from this concept, coined by the KMT's Su Chi in 2000: in 1992, the SEF and the ARATS reached an ambiguous *compromise* rather than a "consensus" regarding "one China" (p. 103), and as Tsai steps in as the new ROC president, this problem remains unsolved. Finally, while *China and Taiwan* does a good

job tracing the initial statement in 2005 of Hu Jintao's slightly more flexible policy towards the island, it does not mention the important change adopted by the CCP in October 2007, which elevated the priority of the "peaceful development" of cross-Straits relations (as opposed to "peaceful reunification"), an idea that goes back to the first point of Beijing's 17 May 2004 seven-point statement⁽¹⁾ and means that Beijing can accept the status quo for the time being. It is a policy priority that has not been questioned by Xi Jinping, even if the new Chinese president has demonstrated more impatience regarding leaving the issue unresolved for future generations.

China and Taiwan closes just before the November 2015 Xi-Ma summit in Singapore and Taiwan's January 2016 presidential and legislative elections. However, it includes all the ingredients that observers need to be aware of in order to understand the current state and uncertain future of cross-Straits relations. A *tour de force*, as we say in English... and in French.

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1. Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America website, "Taiwan Affairs Office Issues Statement on Current Cross-Straits Relations," 17 May 2004, www.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/twwt/t111117.htm (accessed on 27 April 2016).



Yongshun Cai,
State and Agents in China: Disciplining Government Officials,
Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press,
2015, 264 pp.

JÉRÔME DOYON

This book by Yongshun Cai, professor at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, is concerned with the ways in which the Chinese Party-state ensures internal discipline. Presenting the issue in the formal framework of the theory of agency, he stresses the problems of information asymmetry and moral hazard at the heart of the relationship between the state and its agents. As the state is not omniscient, it does not always know what its agents do or will do, and this could lead the latter to adopt behaviours other than those expected in implementing public policies. In this situation, the state is obliged to adopt methods for disciplining its agents while taking into account possible political costs. By targeting its own cadres, the Party-state risks alienating the main supporters of a regime not based on popular elections. Keeping this risk in mind, as well as its own limited resources, the state can hardly afford to attack all its undisciplined cadres and might be obliged to be selective with rewards and punishments. Thus the state does not need to punish all violations, but only needs to make agents aware of the high level of risk they face and to induce fear of this uncertain discipline.

Major issues regarding the functioning of the Chinese state and its efforts at formalising the conduct of its actors are considered in this work in a com-

parative context. However, the stylisation of conduct is double-edged: with the state set as a "principal" controlling its "agents," it appears disembodied and monolithic. While the book takes into account the different levels of the Chinese administration – this selective discipline applying to the central as well as provincial, municipal, and local levels – it is not quite clear who at each level acts as the "principal." Is it the Party secretary? Or is it a larger leadership, including the divergent interests within it? This is a fundamental question, as it would help determine the intentionality behind the disciplinary actions. This lack of clarity in defining the "principal" thus leads to a certain imprecision as regards the objectives. For Cai, the state's aim is to guarantee its effectiveness as well as its legitimacy among the public. This legitimacy concept is only vaguely defined, as a sort of moral hegemony of the state, and it is therefore difficult to grasp its motivations and link them with the interests of a particular actor. Nevertheless, the numerous cases and mechanisms detailed in the book facilitate an understanding of what underlies the selectivity in the state's discipline.

Two chapters bring detailed focus on the types of undisciplined behaviour that have grown in the contemporary Chinese state and on the political logic that explains selective and differentiated discipline. Cai pointedly notes the large number of violations reported by citizens' petitions (about 60,000 a year in Guangdong during the 1990s, p. 23) and the vast variety of acts in question, ranging from abuse of power to corruption, as well as the pursuit of irresponsible projects or a lifestyle deemed immoral. The lack of correlation between the number of complaints and the number of cadres hauled up shows the selectivity of investigations linked to a singular political logic. Whereas before the 1980s, the Chinese Party-state mainly relied on major political campaigns to bring its cadres in line, a dedicated mechanism has since been set up. In the early 2000s, nearly 300,000 cadres were in charge of internal discipline (p. 49). The model of the Party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, re-established in 1978, was replicated at the local level. A decentralised system of inspections was then established, with each level of the administration being in charge of disciplining the next lower level. In Cai's view, two main variables are considered in deciding to punish an agent or not: the seriousness of the consequences and the agent's level of responsibility. While this seems self-evident, this approach appears to be put in doubt by numerous cases that on the contrary point to the existence of a variety of questions being considered before arriving at a decision to punish an agent: Has the transgression been made public by the media? What factional support does the agent enjoy? What effect would such punishment have on the administration's image and agents' morale?... Thus the agent's responsibility appears to be a highly malleable element depending on the result sought by superiors and the information obtained, or not, by the press, which remains on a tight leash. Power struggles over defining the objectives of the discipline process are not to be underestimated, while the functional rationality of the state that wants to punish an agent for his transgression is not to be overestimated, as Cai tends to in the book.

In the next two chapters, the author plunges into granularity by differentiating the types of transgressions and thus punishments. Focusing at the outset on professional errors linked to the exercise of a function, as opposed to cases of corruption, he notes the large panoply of punishments possible, and the flexibility the state enjoys. By concentrating on cases of social conflict management, Cai brings out the complexity of elements at play in judging a professional error and those responsible. A cadre could well be held guilty of being responsible for a protest, but if that were not the case, he

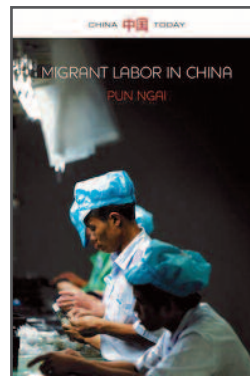
could also be accused of having mishandled the event. Besides, the seriousness of the event from the state's viewpoint depends on a variety of factors, especially the number of protestors, the potential material damage, and the extent of media coverage. The latter is a key element in the management of these crises by upper-level authorities. Media pressure on local cadres can in fact render punishment inevitable despite the high political cost. In such cases, it is important to convey an appearance of disciplining to the public, although the decision may be mitigated eventually. There is less elbow room in corruption cases, and discipline cannot amount to a simple transfer, for example, but could mean the end of a career and legal proceedings. Cai shows the important role that information transmitted by the public to the authorities plays in such cases: between 60% and 80% of the cases examined by the courts originated from such tips (p. 106). However, only a small portion of such information leads to an inquiry, as most is not sufficiently supported or goes against political considerations. This is especially true with regard to high-level cadres, as proceeding against them requires the discipline inspection commissions to obtain permission from higher authorities, and a political consensus thus becomes necessary. As a result, high-level cadres of the Party-state are rarely disturbed. But when they are, it is with the institution's full might and with serious charges. As a result, despite its differentiated treatment of cases, the regime manages to convey the impression of a certain determination in the anti-corruption struggle.

Finally, Cai deals with two more original aspects of this selective discipline. The first is the circumvention techniques of the cadres themselves and what this implies in terms of tolerance of infringement. Cadres do not remain mute in the face of the disciplining state. To avoid punishment, some suppress information, be it through censoring the press, blocking petitioners, or manipulating inspection teams. They evade blame by playing off different levels of administration and by accusing their colleagues. Besides, some use the relative tolerance of the authorities by playing with the rules in order to advance local reforms. This aspect highlighted by Cai is interesting, as it shows that going against the rules can have a positive effect on local governance. However, by not differentiating the types of reform and thus the potential economic and political impact, the analysis remains superficial, and it is difficult to understand why cadres would take such career risks.

To bring out these different mechanisms, Cai relies on a vast set of written material relating to hundreds of cases of transgressions by agents of the state. While he has occasionally relied on interviews, he gives no details regarding the types of people questioned. Overall, Cai's work offers a good view of the totality of the Chinese Party-state's internal discipline mechanism, detailing its institutions and logic. It also rightfully locates the issue of corruption in a larger framework of state control over its agents, thus going beyond major campaigns with large media coverage.

■ Translated by N. Jayaram.

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Pun Ngai,
Migrant Labor in China:
Post-Socialist Transformations,
Cambridge, UK, Malden, MA, Polity
Press, 2016, 204 pp.

ERIC FLORENCE

Noting in the very first chapter that China's socialist development model was challenged systematically for its inability to generate prosperity for its people, Pun Ngai proceeds to explain that she felt compelled to "explore new subjects such as migrant workers" who have paid the "historic debt" of the new economic development model of the post-Maoist era centred on labour commodification and exports (p. 17). While the condition of rural migrant workers remains at the heart of this work, it should be noted at the outset to what extent the book marks a departure from her previous *Made in China*,⁽¹⁾ published in 2005, which helps explain the intellectual path she has traversed since.

First, while *Made in China* essentially relied on an ethnographic study of a specific factory in Shenzhen and sought to show how the subjectivity of rural migrant workers was constituted, *Migrant Labor in China* constitutes the fruits of ten years of work based on several vast research projects that the author and her team initiated and conducted in China. Among them was a major study that brought together 20 tertiary institutions from the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan conducting more than 3,000 interviews with workers at the Foxconn group following a wave of suicides in 2010 at several of its factories.

Second, in *Migrant Labor in China*, Pun considers both male and female workers. Moreover, while continuing to focus on the manufacturing industry, she has over the past five years enlarged her investigation to include the construction industry and its workers. Pun shows how different institutional measures and political decisions starting in 1984 allowed the development of a pyramidal system of subcontracting in which a decoupling occurs between higher levels of construction project managements (property developers and construction companies) and the implementation of projects left to different subcontractors, a system notably leading to numerous instances of non-payment of wages, the absence of contractual relations between the worker and the employer, and the impossibility of direct contact between construction workers and the boss. Pun also shows how this political economy of the construction sector shapes the ways of protestation – in general violent and often outside legal avenues (pp. 41-56). As for forms of contestation in the manufacturing sector, which is tending towards radicalisation, Pun documents how migrant workers profiting from a process of long-term accumulation of experience have managed to proactively mobilise in their daily struggles a range of increasingly vast resources, institutional and non-institutional, individual and collective. Globally, in both the construction and manufacturing industries, different forms of alliances have

1. Pun Ngai, *Made in China*, Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2005.

solidified between local state power and transnational economic forces, helping generate considerable surplus value to the detriment of workers' security and health and in some cases even their lives.

Third, the voices and personalities of migrant workers are on the whole less present than in *Made in China*. The book pays greater attention to the structures of domination and to the political economy of the sectors studied. Perhaps this evolution in the author's work reflects a more pronounced mobilisation of Marxist-inspired analytical tools. It appears that the lesser attention to ethnographic details in *Migrant Labor in China* nevertheless permits a more profound description of politico-institutional, legal, and economic configurations behind the functioning of contemporary industrial capitalism and its complex modalities of reinvention and redeployment. Of course this stress on domination was already present in the author's previous work. In particular, her first article in 1999 ⁽²⁾ minutely described the spatio-temporal control over female workers in the production regime of a Shenzhen factory, combining Foucauldian and Marxist approaches; or again her description of the triple constraints – patriarchy, Party-state, and global capitalism – fashioning the subjectivity of rural women when it comes to their decision to leave their villages. But in *Migrant Labor in China*, Pun goes beyond descriptions of a specific production regime or political economy of labour in Shenzhen in particular, in order to expose politico-institutional processes in the countryside and in urban zones that have led to the development of a labour market largely benefiting capital accumulation, engendering what the author terms an "unfinished process of proletarianization" enabling "a production regime within which a separation exists between the production sphere in industrial regions and social reproduction in rural areas" (pp. 33-34). *Migrant Labor in China* also sheds light on the transformations in contemporary industrial capitalism through the study of the Foxconn group, which represents, according to the author, an example of concentration and centralisation of capital on "an unimaginable scale," an exemplar of "monopoly capitalism" (p. 105). Pun shows how in a context of rarefaction of labour in China's coastal regions and a greater awareness of legal rights among workers, the IT giant (1,400,000 workers employed in China in 2010) managed to re-deploy its production centres to interior regions (southwest, central, and north). This redeployment documented in the book reveals a great capacity for resilience among enterprises, especially in institutionally creating, with the active mediation of regional and local governments, new sources of labour that are more vulnerable and more easily exploitable. ⁽³⁾ This is not without recalling similar processes studied previously at the level of history of global capitalism. ⁽⁴⁾

Finally, the book also contains interesting information on the "second generation of migrant workers" (those born in the late 1980s and in the 1990s). The absence of predictability, security, and dignity defines in a more determining manner the condition and identity of migrant workers, as well as their modes of resistance and contestation of domination structures (p. 150). The author stresses that while differences between first and second generation workers should not be exaggerated, the second generation is on the whole more individualistic, better educated, clearly more oriented towards urban culture and consumption, and animated by an experience of indignity so pronounced that they nurture neither the hope of remaining in the city nor of returning to their native villages. In Pun's view, while the first generation of workers was characterised by the ephemeral nature of its condition, the second is characterised more by the notion of "rupture" through resentment and anger (p. 80).

To conclude, it may be pointed out that some chapters in the book rework articles previously published in journals by updating them and rendering them more accessible to readers who are not China experts or specialists in the political anthropology of labour. This effort at readability makes this work, which clearly articulates theoretical issues and concrete human experiences, accessible to a larger public. It should interest students, researchers, and teachers in the domain of contemporary Chinese studies and human and social sciences.

■ Translated by N. Jayaram.

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2. Pun Ngai, "Becoming Dagongmei: The Politics of Identity and Difference in Reform China," *The China Journal*, No. 42, July 1999, pp. 1-19.
3. In Foxconn's case it took the form of recourse to trainees from vocational schools, with the help of municipal authorities in charge of employment and education, thus contravening labour laws.
4. See Robin Cohen, *The New Helots: Migrants in the International Division of Labour*, Gower, Aldershot, 1987.



**Joe C. B. Leung and
Yuebin Xu,**
China's Social Welfare,
Cambridge, UK, Malden, MA, Polity
Press, 2015, 224 pp.

CARINE MILCENT

Written by Joe C. B. Leung and Yuebin Xu, *China's Social Welfare: The Third Turning Point* is a book that, within the space of some 200 pages, manages to describe the structure of China's major institutional developments in "social welfare," examining them from a historical perspective, as well as within the country's economic, demographic, legal, and social contexts.

China's new social welfare system covers the social protection system and its eligibility (social security benefits and pensions) as well as social services, and their accessibility in both financial and geographical terms. However, it also calls into question the notion of an egalitarian society and the level of economic development required to provide such wellbeing (*xiaokang*). This term is often associated with terms such as wellbeing, social development, and social policy. According to the definition coined by Elizabeth Segal in 2010 (*Social Welfare Policy and Social Programs: A Value Perspective*, Belmont, Brooks/Cole), then echoed by the authors: "In a wider perspective, it is the collective response to social problems."

The first publications to tackle the issue of social welfare began to appear throughout the 1980s. One of these was Dixon's *Chinese Social Welfare System, 1949-1979*, published in 1981 and among the first to provide data on the Maoist era. Other publications would follow throughout the 1990s, such as Cecilia Chan and Nelson Chow's *More Welfare after Economic Reform? Welfare Developments in the People's Republic of China* (1992), in

which the authors analyse developments in wellbeing from both a historical and a theoretical perspective, and Joe Leung and Richard Naan's *Authority and Benevolence: Social Welfare in China* (1995), which brings to light the disruptive effects that the transition from socialist to market economy had on the social system.

The present publication examines the development of the Chinese social welfare system since 1949, a development that in recent decades has been defined by both economic factors (such as the marked proliferation and widening of inequality) and demographic factors (the one-child policy and ageing population). It raises three challenging issues that China is currently faced with. The first is the decentralisation of the economic decision-making powers that were established during the process of reform: the central state makes plans and plots out a course of action, while the provinces put the plans into practice as far as their budget will allow. The second challenge is linked to what was until very recently a period of incredible growth for China; growth, which in fact masks extreme wealth inequality between regions, as well as between rural and urban areas: factors that could lead to social instability. One of the central state's avowed goals is to spread economic growth into areas that have thus far benefited relatively little. The third challenge is the segmentation of Chinese society according to income, which means, among other things, that when it comes to social goods and services, offers via the market must coexist with regulated offers, and their respective levels of quality can vary enormously. Without a certain amount of wealth redistribution, it is likely that society would be forced to divide further still.

The book is divided into eight chapters. The first is an introductory chapter that presents an overview of changing expectations in terms of social welfare, and puts the subsequent chapters into perspective. In this chapter, the authors propose the terminology of the Confucian welfare state: one built on Confucian values that promote social stability, order as opposed to conflict, collective interests as opposed to individualism, obedience to authority, family obligations, the work ethic, and the importance of education. The second chapter offers a historical overview of the major economic and demographic indicators, and makes the point that the notion of social stability played a central role in the decision-making behind the successive reforms made to the social protection system. In particular, the authors draw our attention to the dismantling of the social protection system brought about by the establishment of a market economy, and the associated repercussions in terms of social welfare. Within this context, the third chapter takes stock of three demographic groups, each with distinct social needs: the two generations of only children, the elderly, and migrant workers. It outlines and comments on a set of economic indicators related to inequality, allowing the authors to set out the ways in which the social protection system could be considered lacking.

The fourth and fifth chapters set out the history of the reforms that have an influence on the social welfare system in China. Firstly, Leung and Xu make the distinction between social insurance and social assistance. In addition to social insurance for unemployment, work-related accidents, and maternity leave, the authors place considerable emphasis on healthcare programs, as well as the establishment of pensions for the elderly, who account for an ever-increasing share of the population. There are also historically rooted structural differences between rural and urban areas. Because of this, the authors split their presentation in two, focusing first on the evolution of reforms in urban regions, and, in the following chapter, analysing the situation and issues facing rural areas. It's important to note the in-

creasing role of the position of migrants in the reforms that are taking place. The growing political awareness of the necessity to adapt certain public policies in order to account for migrant populations in cities goes beyond simply monitoring and managing the population, which was the case until recently. A growing preoccupation with the services on offer can now be observed, particularly for medical care and for the elderly. Nonetheless, the statistics put forward by Leung and Xu demonstrate that these reforms are not without obstacles. Throughout the presentation, the complexity of the system is made apparent, attempting as it does to juggle a desire to limit public expenditure while simultaneously providing a social welfare program within the context of the emergence of a competing care market. In other words, the central state is simultaneously promoting greater individual autonomy and a greater diversity of providers (public, private, and mixed), with a view to improving the quality on offer while also aiming to integrate China's poorest, most deprived people into the system. This double objective – which is complicated enough as it is – is subject to tight financial constraints: the percentage of GDP spent overall on social welfare is determined in advance. And all this is taking place within the context of the decentralisation of the social protection system.

The sixth chapter examines the various types of retirement and nursing homes. The authors highlight a shift in philosophy: from filial piety as the one and only means to ensure that the elderly are cared for, to the establishment of a welfare state (albeit in limited form and only to be used as a secondary option), combined with the creation of a funded pension system for future generations. Leung and Xu calculate the changes in health and social benefits provided to the elderly, and the social and economic inequalities that these benefits entail, both in rural areas and in cities (financial accessibility, geographic accessibility). In 1978 there were just 7,000 homes for the elderly, housing a total of 100,000 residents. Only the truly destitute, with no other source of assistance, were cared for free of charge. Now, with an ageing population of up to 30% in places such as Shanghai, and extremely varied levels of income, a large number of reforms have been imposed, notably by broadening the apparently inadequate market to include both public and private operators, with a view to improving the quality and quantity of healthcare and social support.

The seventh chapter is distinct from the others, outlining innovative social management that includes NGOs, independent social workers, and the purchase of services (POS). As the authors point out, the state's decision-making betrays a stark contradiction between the constraints imposed upon these structures and the political awareness of a real social need for these structures to be more widespread, especially given the ageing population and the need to manage social unrest. This could end up redefining the relationship between two camps that, until now, have always displayed a close interdependence (the financial and the legal).

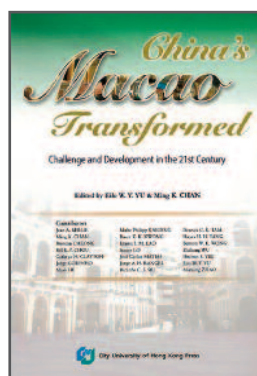
As we have seen, the authors provide a detailed account of the series of reforms to China's social protection system, the development of a market-oriented offers system, and a broad picture of the changing demands of social welfare. Drawing upon a wide array of official sources and scientific articles, the book highlights the reforms' most significant achievements, including the establishment of universal public insurance, covering almost the entirety of the population. That said, it also reveals a process of fragmentation at work in the social protection system, borne out by the fact that the implementation of reform has been delegated to the provinces (which do not have the resources to match) while the government dispenses political directives and financial support. In their conclusion, Leung and Xu question

the future management of inequality and its economic repercussions.

This robustly researched book will be invaluable to anyone wishing to gain a comprehensive overview of social welfare in China.

■ Translated by David Buchanan.

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Eilo W. Y. Yu and Ming K. Chan (eds),
China's Macao Transformed:
Challenge and Development in
the 21st Century,
Hong Kong, City University of Hong
Kong Press, 2014, 412 pp.

ÉRIC SAUTEDÉ

Books dealing with current affairs in Macao, whatever the language, do not come often; good publications about Macao are even rarer. At least three sets of reasons can explain this dearth of academic production. First, the Special Administrative Region is small – 650,000 inhabitants on a land area of slightly more than 30 sq. km – and thus does not attract much attention, as its relevance within the broader perspective of China's evolution is considered marginal and is clearly over-shadowed by Hong Kong's more sophisticated, buoyant, and challenging development. Second, it is commonly acknowledged that starting in 1967, in the wake of the "12.3" incident, Macao's polity, even under the Portuguese colonial administration, has yielded to the People's Republic of China's views on its future, and thus any publication regarding Macao somehow constitutes an update of that deferential position – hence not requiring frequent repetition. And third, sources and surveys, when available and/or funded, often exclude one another: government-sponsored research in social sciences is rarely made public and often gets trapped in excessive praise or un-analytical rebarbative descriptions, while more critical writings, when firmly grounded in first-hand and meaningful investigation, often address segmented narrow issues.

The edited volume published by the City University of Hong Kong somehow comes as a counterpoint to these assumptions, thus showing that Macao is indeed a wonderful laboratory for social sciences, not only in itself but also within the Chinese "living tree," according to the expression of Tu Weiming, and as an embodiment of the "one country-two systems" formula in particular, and a case study of "partial sovereignty" in general. This book is therefore a must-read for anybody with an interest in Macao. Moreover, being a collective work divided into five sections – a long introductory and contrasted first part (105 pages by four authors!), followed by the usual politics, socio-economic issues, socio-cultural concerns, and finally external relations comprised of 15 contributions – this volume easily allows for browsing and selecting among very diverse takes. To choose but one exam-

ple, the admirable final chapter authored by Cathryn Clayton on "Macao Local, Macao Global" acts as a conclusive and far-reaching reflection on the hybrid nature of Macao today, but it will also be of great interest to scholars of globalisation and identity-building alike. The great merits of this publication cannot be stressed enough: first of all because this is the end-product of various seminars and conferences held in Lisbon, Canada, Hong Kong, and Macao starting in 2009; and second because it is one of the few, if not only, truly academic publications released in 2014 in English on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the handover. In this age of excessive celebration for everything and anything, this very fact speaks volumes about the precious character of the whole enterprise.

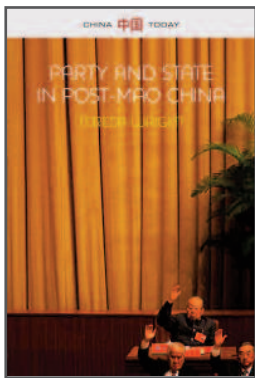
But being a collective endeavour also has the usual drawbacks, which deserve to be stressed. If one cannot blame the book for not being comprehensive, there are several important "loopholes": Bill Chou's chapter on public sector reform is well-rounded, but an additional contribution on public services would have been welcome; then, when it comes to external relations, Macao's place in international organisations or as a signatory to international covenants and agreements deserves attention, and clearly the connection to Europe goes beyond Portugal and Portuguese-speaking countries, even though José Carlos Matias' essay on the latter is – as usual – very thorough. Then, collective books are rarely even in the quality and length of the contributions, and unfortunately this one is no exception. The chapter on political reform written by a law professor is far too short, analytically limited, and clearly too static. The chapter on patron-clientelism and elections – such an important feature of Macao politics – fails to bring anything new (*tongxiang* associations deserve a special section!) and simply ignores significant previous publications such as those by Annie Lee Shuk-ping and Lam Wai-man. One of the chapters on identity within the socio-cultural section is grounded on very incomplete data, thus resulting in far-fetched conclusions bordering on the bizarre while mixing Mandarin and Cantonese transcriptions for no justifiable reason – the name of the cousin of the Chief Executive is transcribed as either Chui Sai Peng (usually) or (very rarely) Cui Shiping in *pinyin*, but not as Chui Shiping!

Yet, most of the papers are truly remarkable, starting with Eilo Yu's introduction, which is an extremely courageous, thought-provoking, and well-argued demonstration of the most salient aspects of the "debacle" of the "one country-two systems" formula in Macao, although he trusts that it is never too late to turn things around. Then, in order of appearance, several chapters deserve a special mention for the quality of their research or the novelty they provide: Herbert Yee's update on the practice of "one country-two systems"; Sonny Lo's renewed exploration of casino capitalism; Riccardo Siu and Miao He's detailed exposition of the casino economy model at work; Hayes Tang's thorough examination of the constraints weighing on academic freedom in tertiary institutions; Derrick Tam's extensive and case-study based analysis of the interaction between heritage protection, tourism, and urban planning; Minxing Zhao's original take on North Korean assets transiting through Macao, and how the case of Banco Delta Asia can be seen as the perfect and renewed illustration of the common Chinese idiom of "killing a chicken to scare the monkeys"; and again, the closing chapter of Cathryn Clayton on a possible narrative to better articulate the transformation of a local identity that is both passive and active when confronting global forces.

To be honest, even the long introductory part, besides Eilo Yu's incisive opening, actually justifies an attentive read. Three very different if not contradictory perspectives act as a stimulus for what is to come in the volume:

a scholar-turned-civil servant insists on the achievements of the past 15 years and somehow blames the previous colonial administration for some of the most important present difficulties – while never failing to make multiple references to the “harmonious” nature of society; a former number two in the colonial administration turned head of an educational institute praises the Portuguese heritage and how “accommodation” provided the perfect conditions for a successful transition, but warns nonetheless that fast-paced development constitutes a threat to Macao’s unique identity – whatever that is; and last but not least, Ming K. Chan’s own chapter manages to reconcile these two by pondering Macao’s history in the long run and what he characterises as current issues of “over-development.” Clearly, a diverse and contrasted take on what Macao is today.

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Teresa Wright,
Party and State in Post-Mao China,
Cambridge, UK, Malden, MA, Polity Press, 2015, 200 pp.

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Party and State in Post-Mao China is one of 15 or so titles thus far in the “China Today” series of Polity Press, an academic publisher whose stated aim is to reach out to the general readership by inviting leading China scholars around the world to write concise introductory books on key aspects of China’s struggles and accomplishments in becoming a leading world power. In this volume, the author, Teresa Wright, professor and chair of the Department of Political Science at California State University, Long Beach, offers her perspectives to decipher the main China paradox: despite the dramatic economic and social changes in the post-Mao period, China’s polity has remained essentially and steadily authoritarian – “Opposition parties are not permitted, the public has no right to vote for top political leaders, the media is censored, and political dissent is repressed” (pp. 3-4) – thus challenging the assumption that authoritarian regimes are by nature unstable, since “at the same time, Chinese citizens have evidenced remarkable toleration of – and even support for – China’s CCP-controlled political system” (p. 4). In Chapter 1, “Sources of Stable Governance in China,” Wright enunciates the two questions her book aims to answer: “(1) how well does China’s Party-state satisfy the basic functions of government?” and “(2) how has the Chinese government’s democratic and authoritarian features influenced its ability to fulfil these functions?” (p. 12).

The book is then divided into two main parts. Part I examines the nature of the Chinese Party-state, contrasting the features that have endured over time (Chapter 2) with the evolving traits (Chapter 3): whereas Chapter 2, “Party and State, or Party-State?,” offers an overview of the principal entities

of China’s political system, from the highest central level to the lowest local level, showing that although the Party and the state are nominally two separate bodies, the Party has been controlling the state, Chapter 3, “Who Serves the Party-State?,” reviews the demographic composition, selection, and ascension process of the members and leadership of both the Party and the state, arguing that in the post-Mao era they have become more meritocratic, regularised, and somewhat more democratic. However, far from having been conducive to the formation of a multi-party liberal democracy, these latter post-Mao trends have rather been a way to *strengthen* and *stabilize* [italicised in the text] the CCP’s rule, creating a polity that “differs substantially from both the Maoist system and liberal democratic systems in the West, and may remain more or less as is for the foreseeable future” (p. 75).

Having depicted the essence of the post-Mao political system, the second part, comprised of chapters 4, 5, and 6, reviews the extent to which the system has actually fulfilled its functions in “Maintaining Public Relations” (Chapter 4), “Managing the Economy” (Chapter 5), and “Providing Goods and Services” (Chapter 6). The author argues that the stability and longevity of the ruling Party-state is conditioned by its successes or failures in those three areas. Chapter 4 assesses how well the Party-state satisfies key demographic groups, namely private businesspeople, college students and graduates, rank and file workers, farmers, ethnic minorities, and environmental protesters, and concludes that “although the Chinese political system remains authoritarian in many ways, in the post-Mao period it has engaged in an adequate – and generally improving – job of responding to public grievances and satisfying the needs of important demographic groups” (p. 110). Chapter 5 assesses economic policy in the post-Mao era, reviewing rural, urban, and international economic policies and results, and demonstrates that “when it comes to managing the economy and promoting economic growth, the Party-state’s record is much more impressive, [enabling] China’s economy to not only grow at an astounding rate, but also to avoid severe crises” (p. 113), and this thanks to “the attitudes and quality of the political leadership [that] are key in determining the system’s success or failure at managing the economy” (p. 144). The third essential requirement of a stable governing regime is how well the latter facilitates access to necessary goods and services, and alleviates poverty, through the provision of pensions, housing/land, healthcare, education, infrastructure, and a healthy natural environment. Here the record is rather mixed, with impressive achievements in some areas and severe regression in others, aggravated by an uneven distribution of goods and services across the populace and across the country. Nevertheless, Wright notes that “with regards to some goods and services (such as infrastructure), China’s lack of elections may allow the regime to act more quickly and decisively than is the case in many liberal democracies” (p. 179).

The concluding chapter, entitled “Stable Authoritarianism?,” maintains that ideology had been replaced by pragmatism, defined as a “hybrid mixture of authoritarian, democratic, state-interventionist, and capitalist features” (p. 180) that have enabled political leaders who are “competent, pragmatic and open to public input” (p. 195) to enact and effectively implement policies that “adequately fulfil the basic functions of a government” (p. 180), as demonstrated in the second part of the book. However, as Wright briefly presents the new developments under Xi Jinping, she warns that his efforts to control public expression are jeopardising the *modus operandi* of state-society relations in the late post-Mao period that used to savily articulate public grievances and the Party-state’s capacity to respond to those more or less satisfactorily.

Party and State in Post-Mao China is definitively an accessible must-read primary reference for students not only in China studies, but also in political science, and especially those with a keen interest in the workings of an authoritarian regime, exemplified by China's contemporary political system. Page after page, from 1 to 195, Wright didactically reckons the whys and wherefores of the unforeseen longevity of the Chinese Party-state, although in so doing, the author could have avoided recounting the same argument with almost exactly the same wording: "a complementary set of work clothes and shoes each year" (p. 98) and "a free set of work clothes and shoes each year" (p. 151); another instance: "they [manual labourers] have had a safety net of land rights back in their home villages in the event that things go awry in the city" (p. 100), and "If things do not work out in the city, these migrants know that they can return to their home village where their family will have land and a home, and their subsistence will be assured" (p. 120). Whereas this is a slight issue that can be easily addressed in the second edition of the book – along with a typo on page 134: "though" instead of "through" – the book has a shortcoming that derives from the very phrasing of the first inquiry the author set out to answer. Indeed, by asking, "How well does China Party-state satisfy the basic functions of government?" (p. 12), the argument is directed to emphasise and outweigh the factors of stability and strength over the elements of instability and weakness: other contingent causes and inherent characteristics of an authoritarian state would have deserved a more thorough review. Indeed, the stability of the regime cannot be explained merely by the fact that the Chinese Party-state has somewhat suitably performed the basic functions of a government; its longevity also relies on how effectively the regime has more or less systematically eradicated all forms of organised dissent and the voicing of politically incorrect positions, thus nipping in the bud any attempt at building a diverse and vivid Chinese civil society, the prerequisite to regime change. Possibly the concise format of the "China Today" book series has not allowed space to delve into those considerations, and one might wish the second edition of *Party and State in Post-Mao China* to include those arguments, or even better, to have another book in the series that would complement Wright's by looking specifically at the totalitarian-turned-authoritarian and currently totalitarian-leaning attributes and trends of China's polity to explain what Andrew Nathan has labelled as "authoritarian resilience."⁽¹⁾

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