

eschews the objective and impersonal tone found in most social science writing in favor of a decidedly more partisan stance: “For the purposes of foreign governments, civic groups, and individuals with a stake in democracy in China or wishing to support it, I have sought to draw out the policy implications throughout the narrative. If this book helps accelerate that process wisely, so much the better” (p. xiv).

The book is divided into three sections. Part one describes the broad contours of what Gilley refers to as the current political crisis in the PRC. Since the fall of imperial rule in 1911, Gilley argues, China’s paramount leaders—Yuan Shikai, Chiang Kaishek, Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and, currently, Hu Jintao—have consistently chosen to subvert the democratic impulses of the Chinese people and to quash their repeated calls for self-determination. Yet, nonetheless, those in power have relinquished a measure of authority in recent years, inadvertently creating a range of social resources from which reformers can draw. Gilley evaluates the range of institutional and economic forces that comprise China’s nascent civil society, and finds it increasingly conducive to a democratic breakthrough. Part two evaluates probable transition sequences, including gradual imposition of democratic reforms, a sudden, crisis-driven political collapse, and endemic popular contention possibly leading to the violent overthrow of the state. However, the most likely trajectory is regimel- extrication, whereby reforms spearheaded by an elite faction and supported by the masses produce an interim regime that will push for both elections and a new constitution. Finally, in part three, Gilley considers the possible future courses of democratic consolidation in the PRC: the types of institutions that are likely to be adopted, how democratization may impact further economic development, and China’s foreign policy.

While Gilley has produced a lucidly written portrayal of a Chinese polity that may indeed exist one day, its merits are difficult to evaluate precisely because the work is primarily predictive in nature. The a priori assumption of China’s democratic future either delimits consideration of a fuller range of more-nuanced political possibilities, or elides it. When Gilley offers Mongolia, Taiwan, Singapore, and Bangladesh as examples of functioning Asian democracies, it is not at all clear how he is defining the term, and, therefore, China’s progress toward that ideal.

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China at the Crossroads by Peter Nolan. Oxford, UK, Polity Press, 2004. 224 pp. Cloth, \$61.95; paper, \$26.95.

China’s New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy by Peter Hays Gries. Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004. 244 pp. \$24.95.

In an intriguing but uneven study, Peter Nolan addresses the question: “Is it possible for China to build a civilized, socially cohesive society over the next few decades, during what is still the early phase of China’s industrialization, and during which time there will still be a huge rural reserve army of labour?” (p. 1).

Nolan's analysis is organized into three parts. In the first, and best, section, he describes challenges facing China's leaders, including income inequality, environmental degradation, diminishing state capacity, uneasy relations with the United States, corruption, and a looming financial crisis. Given these formidable challenges, he asks, how can China develop beyond the crossroads in which it currently finds itself?

The second section addresses this question through an examination of "a variety of models [that] have been suggested" (p. 60). These include a "Realist" development strategy of primitive capitalist accumulation, a "human rights" approach, and a return to the "mass line" politics of Mao Zedong. In describing the Realist developmental model, Nolan rejects the claim that the East Asian "tigers" are the obvious economic models for China. Rather, China's vast labor surplus in the countryside makes its current situation more analogous to England during the early stages of industrialization and to Meiji Japan, both of which prolonged the more socially disruptive transformation of labor from a predominantly rural force to a primarily urban one.

The section somewhat misleadingly labeled "human rights" along the U.S. model is quite thought provoking, particularly because it delivers such a blistering critique of the United States. At the same time, however, Nolan creates something of a straw man, inasmuch as very few thoughtful analyses of China would seriously offer such a literal prescription as that suggested by Nolan's paraphrasing of the debate.

The third model is even more tenuous. A few graying cadres aside, there is little support in China for a return to Maoism. The fact that General Secretary Hu Jintao cited Mao during his early speeches does not signal a turning back of the clock. After all, Deng Xiaoping's two clarion calls for reform—"seek truth from facts" and "practice is the sole criterion for truth"—were also quotations from Mao, deliberately cited out of context. Hu's shift toward populism is seen by many as a healthy realignment away from the economic excesses of the Jiang Zemin era, not as a return to mass line politics.

The current wisdom of how China has succeeded so far under reform is that its leadership has mastered the art of muddling through. This is, in fact, what Nolan prescribes, after a fashion, in section three. Unfortunately, in this final section, the analysis diverges sharply, and jarringly, from what has come before.

Rather than calling for a retreat of the state, Nolan argues that Confucius and Adam Smith share a number of similar insights that could act as important guidelines for China. These include benevolence, admonition of blind pursuit of wealth and social position, commonly held ethical views as the cohesion of social order, civilization and creativity, the family, education, ethics, and tranquility and happiness. This unorthodox normative prescription closes out the book.

Throughout the study, Nolan draws from sources that are either immediate (mostly newspapers), dated, or that are from non-China-specific classics of economics and politics. By ignoring the current work on Chinese politics, Nolan's own analysis ends up sounding strangely detached from its subject.

However, even if the whole is less than the sum of its parts, this book is a provocative, if ultimately flawed, application of economic history to contemporary China.

Peter Hays Gries tackles the subject of Chinese nationalism. Drawing from social psychology, Gries defines national identity as “that aspect of individuals’ self-image that is tied to their nation, together with the value and emotional significance they attach to membership in the national community” and nationalism as “any behavior designed to restore, maintain, or advance public images of that national community” (p. 19). Discussing the concept of “face,” or “collective self-esteem,” (p. 111) Gries argues that such “an interplay of self and society in the process of constructing personhood” (p. 23) is a universal phenomenon. In discussing misunderstandings between China and the United States (and to a lesser extent between China and Japan), Gries suggests that these bilateral relationships, when centering on an emotional issue, involve issues of face on *both* sides, exponentially complicating the situation. This de facto comparative framework of nationalism is alone worth the price of the book. Other discussions, such as the bottom-up nature of Chinese nationalism that seeps beyond the bounds of state control are also very insightful.

However, the comparative dimension also reveals some shortcomings in the analysis. For example, Gries draws from a number of Chinese sources, but focuses predominantly on a handful of polemics written between 1995 and 1997, when Sino-U.S. relations were at one of their lowest points since 1972. The reader who places reliance on these sources will be unable to evaluate whether the nationalism expressed within them is representative over time. Even more to the point, it is impossible to discern how China’s current victim-oriented nationalism evolved from the victor-oriented nationalism that existed under Mao.

Another limitation of the analysis exists along a spatial dimension. Specifically, it does not adequately address the question, is nationalism the same all over China? On the one hand, as Gries amply illustrates, mass protests against the May 1999 U.S. bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade took place throughout the country. However, Gries treats these as nationwide expressions of outrage, as if they were more or less uniform. But the specific actions of the protesters were, in fact, quite varied: protests were limited in Beijing and Guangzhou, they turned violent and destructive in Chengdu and Beijing, and they remained comparatively low-key and orderly in Shanghai. What accounts for such variation? Are there other variables such as self-perceptions of economic well-being that can intensify or moderate expressions of Chinese nationalism? Gries does not explore this.

These quibbles notwithstanding, Gries’s book should be required reading on the subject of contemporary Chinese nationalism.

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