

tive dimension. However, these works do not well blend the normative dimension and structural dimension. Unlike the earlier works, Calder and Ye combine structural constraints and agential influences in a process of making new regional institutions.

The third strength of Calder and Ye is their in-depth narrative of the development in Northeast Asia in recent decades. The Asian financial crisis in 1997–1998 has enormously affected East Asian political and economic conditions and also changed the discourse and endeavor of Asian regionalism. Calder and Ye directly portray what has happened and changed after the Asian financial crisis in Northeast Asian countries' domestic politics and foreign policy orientations and what these effects are on Asian regionalism. They timely present information about political and economic developments in Northeast Asia after the Asian financial crisis to a broader audience. As a joint effort between a Japan specialist and a Chinese native, their book is perhaps the most updated textbook on Northeast Asian foreign relations.

However, although Calder and Ye prove their skillful excellence in refining a theoretical framework and narrating empirical details, there is a delicate confusion between reality and aspiration. They emphasize the evolution of coherent Northeast Asian regional institutions with evidence such as the Chiang Mai Initiative and the East Asia Summit in the 2000s. They illustrate optimistic vision on Northeast Asian regionalism and try to differentiate their position from the earlier works' pessimistic and more cautious stance. However, the vigorous endeavor of building more Northeast Asia–centric regional integration itself is not enough to guarantee the solid institutionalization of a regional cooperative process. They underscore the institutionalization process excessively and so neglect to balance structural constraints and procedural potentials.

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Contemporary Chinese Politics: New Sources, Methods, and Field Strategies. Edited by Allen Carlson, Mary E. Gallagher, Kenneth Lieberthal, and Melanie Manion. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 328 pp. \$31 (paper).

This volume brings together three generations of China-focused political scientists for a comprehensive assessment of the state of the

field. While individual chapters draw on research pertaining to many different topics, the primary focus of this edited volume is not on substantive debates or research findings. Rather, the volume zeros in on the craft of conducting research itself. As the editors explain, the study of Chinese politics has been transformed in recent years both by the veritable flood of data from new, previously unimaginable sources, and the application of new methodological techniques drawn from the broader political science discipline. For students and seasoned scholars alike, *Contemporary Chinese Politics* offers illuminating discussion of the range of data sources that are now available, the various strategies that should be considered for navigating these sources, and the wide array of analytical tools and methodologies that have been applied successfully in recent years. While this volume strikes many appropriately cautionary notes, it more than anything else underscores the extraordinary degrees of analytical and methodological freedom that scholars entering the field today enjoy. And, it provides sensible guidance on how to put that freedom to best use. As such, the volume is absolutely essential reading for anybody contemplating China-related research, not just in political science, but any social science discipline.

The first part of *Contemporary Chinese Politics* deals primarily with describing—and providing tips on how best to use—new sources of data that have recently become available to scholars. Important contributions here include Xi Chen's chapter on dealing with an ever widening array of officially generated, publicly available data sets; Neil Diamant's chapter on navigating newly opened (and in many cases, quite local) state archives; Allen Carlson and Hong Duan's chapter on the proliferation of Internet sources for foreign policy studies, including both formal online journals and informal blogs; and Daniella Stockmann's chapter on keeping up with and making sense of China's rapidly expanding online media outlets.

The second part of *Contemporary Chinese Politics* shifts to a more direct discussion of methodology. What kinds of analytical techniques are now being applied to China-focused research, and how are they affected by the various regulatory, political, and social conditions that obtain in China today? Equally important, for what kinds of questions are particular techniques most appropriate? The chapters by Calvin Chen and Benjamin Read, respectively, are particularly helpful for understanding the ongoing need for—and substantial challenges still surrounding—ethnographic work in grassroots-

level Chinese society. At the opposite end of the methodological spectrum, Melanie Manion's contribution on survey work offers an excellent overview into what has already been accomplished in the China field by scholars employing large-N statistical methods, and this despite substantial (though not always enforced) Chinese government restrictions on such research. Pierre Landry's chapter on spatial sampling emphasizes the ways new technologies, namely, GPS and geographic information systems, can be applied to improve traditional survey techniques, though again, Chinese governmental restrictions—some of which have been expanded since the publication of this volume—pose potential obstacles.

A clear message of these chapters is that the newest generations of scholars are employing state-of-the-art social science tools with extraordinary creativity. And they are doing so through increasingly international and cosmopolitan networks. Returnees from the United States and Europe now routinely populate the faculty ranks of leading Chinese universities, thus expanding the possibilities for truly collaborative research and blurring the boundaries between scholarship traditionally deemed "foreign" (and, thus, subject to increased regulation) versus that deemed purely domestic.

At the same time, the volume makes clear that problems, some unique to China, still remain. For non-Chinese and Chinese researchers alike, certain topics remain politically sensitive or off limits entirely in China's authoritarian context. Examples noted in the chapters include the Falun Gong religious sect and forced abortions and sterilizations surrounding family planning efforts. Though not addressed in the volume, one might also add to the list a wide range of topics involving ethnic minorities, especially Tibetans and Uyghurs. In several cases known throughout the field, scholars working on these topics have been banned—seemingly indiscriminately—from entering China. That then raises questions about whether and to what extent other researchers have responded by engaging in self-censorship, effectively steering clear of state-defined "no go" zones in order to ensure better access to information on less sensitive topics.

For most scholars, however, a more pervasive challenge, one encountered on an almost daily basis in the field, involves the whole issue of contextualization. As Lily Tsai's outstanding contribution on this matter points out, regardless of the methods employed—large-N or small, qualitative or quantitative, technology

intensive or traditional—undertaking research in China still requires tremendous understanding of local context. And such understanding comes only from time in country, familiarity with language, and extensive face-to-face dealings with facilitators and research subjects alike. As *Contemporary Chinese Politics* underscores, the China field has benefited greatly from the adoption of modern social science methods, including statistical techniques that permit the aggregation and assessment of vast amounts of data. Yet, such techniques, rather than obviating the need for local knowledge and interaction, in many respects make that need only stronger. How else to ensure that survey questions actually convey the meanings their designers intend, that respondents understand and trust the processes to which they are being exposed, and that the subjects of study do not intentionally distort the information they are being asked to provide?

The point really is that there are no shortcuts to be had. Far more information is available now than in the past, and all manner of advanced methodological tools can now be brought to bear to assess that information. But as *Contemporary Chinese Politics* makes clear, for those tools to be used effectively and accurately, they must be coupled with traditional investments in the study of language, history, and culture. That is a point worth considering not just for the China field, but for political science as a whole.

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Will This Be China's Century? A Skeptic's View. By Mel Gurtov. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013. 205 pp. \$49.95 (cloth); \$19.95 (paper).

China is rising. People can draw this conclusion from many facts such as China's rank as the second-largest economy in the world, the rise of China's military power, and her assertiveness in the related territorial conflicts. It is easy to move, then, to the following questions: Will this century be China's century? If yes, what are the implications for the United States and the world? How does the Sino-US relationship evolve in the twenty-first century? Mel Gurtov tries to answer these questions in his new book.

In *Will This Be China's Century? A Skeptic's View*, Gurtov tries to address the question, "To whom will this century belong?" Gur-