

Kirton's own analysis is generated by the application of his own "systemic hub model of G20 governance" adapted for the study of a single G20 member country. This model develops six criteria to measure summit performance that include the commitments made by summiteers and the extent to which they comply with them. What enables this approach and distinguishes this as a research monograph is that Kirton (and the G20 Research Group he heads) has been accredited to attend every G20 summit to take place so far. This enviable access complements and enriches the English and Chinese language secondary sources upon which his analysis is built. The ongoing reports on G20 countries' commitments and compliance, conducted for some years by the G20 Research Group based at the University of Toronto, provide another important source.

Within the literature on the G20 and global summitry more broadly, a plethora of monographs, articles and working papers focus on the evolution of the G20, its effectiveness and evolving agenda. However, there is a perplexing paucity of country-specific research that seeks to understand how member countries approach this forum of global governance. At the same time, the China studies literature has tended to neglect China's role in global governance, or has prioritized the more longstanding institutions such as the UN, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Although not an area studies specialist *per se*, Kirton's focus on China is long overdue in both literatures.

Although I would question the methodology associated with the compliance reports and welcome a broader discussion of the concept of leadership, this book represents an important point of reference and will provide inspiration for further theoretical and empirical work. It will appeal to higher-level students as recommended reading in courses ranging from China's international relations to global governance more broadly defined. In addition, researchers and policymakers of all nationalities who want to trace China's growing leadership role in global summitry should take note.

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The Politics of China–Hong Kong Relations: Living with Distant Masters

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From constitutional reform debates to the 2014 Umbrella Revolution, and from the 2016 Fishball Revolution to the growing voices of self-determination and independence, spotlights have been focused on Hong Kong politics in recent years. How can we understand Hong Kong's politics in a macro and historical perspective? What are the factors that have driven Hong Kong's contentious politics in recent years? What are the possible scenarios of Hong Kong's political future? From these perspectives, Peter W. Preston's highly readable book is a timely and comprehensive account of Hong Kong's political developments.

This book is divided into five major chapters. Chapter one ("Framing the debate: London, Beijing and Hong Kong") frames the discussion of Hong Kong politics as forms of interaction between local elites and distant masters, i.e. London before

1997 and Beijing after 1997. Chapter two (“Hong Kong’s historical trajectory”) traces the historical trajectory of Hong Kong from the founding of the colony to the post-war period. Chapter three (“After 1997: creating and embedding the new political settlement”) discusses the new pattern of political settlement after 1997, including the formal machineries of governance under the Basic Law, the relationship between local elites and local population, the formal authority of Beijing, and its presence in Hong Kong. Chapter four (“Popular politics”) discusses Hong Kong’s popular politics by reviewing recent popular protest actions such as patriotic education curriculum demonstrations, protests against mainland mothers, tourists and parallel traders, and the 2014 Umbrella Movement. Chapter five (“Imagining routes to the future”) sketches out the different possible scenarios of Hong Kong’s future political development including the continuation of its existing trajectory, the Singapore model, the deep integration with China, slow dissolve and rational authoritarianism.

Readers seeking new empirical insights and findings on Hong Kong politics may be disappointed with this book, as it offers little original research on the political dynamics of the city-state. The value of this volume lies in the author’s novel interpretation and reinterpretation of Hong Kong politics within a framework of “local elites versus distant masters.” Preston argues that the major clue to understanding the nature and characteristics of Hong Kong politics is to examine “the ways in which local elite agents read and react to enfolding circumstances in order to sketch out a route to the future for the territory, where these circumstances include the intrusive demands of powerful external powers” (p. 4). By re-examining and reinterpreting Hong Kong’s political trajectories from British colonial times to the Chinese SAR period, Preston argues that local elites successfully established and managed their working relationship with the distant master in London during the colonial time, therefore contributing to the prosperous development of the city-state into an important financial and business centre, while after 1997 local elites and local population still struggle in the process of creating and constructing a working relationship with their new distant master in Beijing. Apart from re-examining Hong Kong politics within a framework of “local elites versus distant masters,” Preston also cleverly describes the nature of the transfer of Hong Kong’s sovereignty from Britain to China in 1997 as “transferred colonialism,” arguing that “authority has moved from one elite to another, both external to the place itself, and the territory’s condition remains in essence the same: it was a colony, it is a colony” (p. 13).

While I agree very much with Preston’s notions of “local elites versus distant masters” and “transferred colonialism,” it is important to point out that London and Beijing actually adopted very different strategies in governing Hong Kong. London was a “real distant master” because it adopted some forms of “indirect rule” relying on the governor to manage day-to-day affairs in the city-state and co-opting the local business-professional elites. Beijing, on the other hand, is “not really a distant master” because it directly engages itself in the co-option and making of the post-1997 governing elites and because it exerts stronger and stronger direct influence in Hong Kong politics through the Central Liaison Office (see Brian C. H. Fong [2014], “The partnership between the Chinese government and Hong Kong’s capitalist class: implications for HKSAR governance, 1997–2012,” *The China Quarterly* 217, 195–220). In other words, while the frameworks of “local elites versus distant masters” and “transferred colonialism” are brilliant ideas for interpreting the nature of Hong Kong politics, these frameworks could help us know more if we did not just look at local elites’ actions and responses but also at the distant masters’ governing strategies and tactics.

All in all, this book does a valuable job in providing a concise account of Hong Kong politics from the British colonial times to the Chinese SAR period. Experienced researchers of Hong Kong politics will find this book illuminating while new readers of Hong Kong politics will find it a good and handy introductory text.

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The New Great Game: China and South and Central Asia in the Era of Reform

Edited by THOMAS FINGAR

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Keeping a firm eye on both the policy community and the academic environment, Thomas Fingar has edited a most relevant and interesting book on China and its neighbours in South and Central Asia. The stated purpose of this book is to describe and explain China's interaction with selected countries in South and Central Asia, as well as to facilitate comparisons among regions. There is no ambition to offer a complete picture in this first volume; rather, it forms the basis for a more comprehensive overview in subsequent books. Fingar has selected a relevant and adroit range of authors to accomplish this. Each produces a case study of Chinese relations with individual states or regions. It is undoubtedly a relevant book for those interested in China and also contributes to academic discussion.

Part of the novelty of this book is the focus on two, at times very disparate, regions (South Asia and Central Asia), and China's interaction with them over time. However, this focus also creates some problems regarding the analysis. Several authors note that China's engagement is largely dependent on security concerns as well as on sustained economic growth. Considering that these elements form the rationale behind the regional focus of the book, it would have been useful to include a chapter on China's overall security, economic considerations and policy. Bearing in mind that the EU and the US are China's main trading partners and that the Middle East is the primary source of its energy resources, it would have been pertinent to include this in an introductory chapter or even in a first volume. Fingar notes that the regions he has included were of lesser importance during the 1980s in comparison with North America, the EU or Northeast Asia. Nevertheless, China's focus on these three regions is consistent or even growing, especially regarding security issues.

As identified by several authors, not least Fingar, Igor Torbakov and Srikanth Kondapalli, the security considerations of all these states build on a broader security concern that is based on domestic, bilateral or regional threats. China's main security concern lies neither in Central nor South Asia but in East Asia and the perception in Beijing that the US is encircling China to counter its rise. Before military reforms, the Chinese PLA and the PLA Navy were largely understaffed and underdeveloped in China's west and south. This was not necessarily because the threats there were non-existent. Rather, the security challenges in the east and the relations with US were and still are significantly higher priorities, even in light of the dispute in the South China Sea, which has intensified considerably and will undoubtedly affect China's relations with South Asia. Indeed, the focus on East Asia and the US has had a massive impact