

process of “alter-production” through which the censors and netizens together shape the production of online content.

Another major merit of the book is its historical sensibility. The historicity of the Chinese internet is evident in the co-evolution of institutions, practices and technological advancements in the past two decades. In particular, the introduction of Weibo, as emphasized in the book, marked the beginning of a new period of citizen activism and state control – both with distinctive features not found in the pre-Weibo era. By organizing the chapters into pre-Weibo and Weibo eras, the volume conveys a sense of both continuity and change in the historical process.

Much can be learned from the informative and inspiring analyses in the book. But readers are insatiable in that we always expect more, sometimes quite unreasonably. First, though “the Internet has taken on distinctly Chinese characteristics” (p. 1), making it a “Chinese Internet,” an alternative “Internet in China” perspective – studying China comparatively – can be fruitful. This is by no means to deny the value of the “Chinese Internet” perspective. Rather it echoes the call to bridge China studies and other academic disciplines, especially considering the lack of comparative studies in the field. Second, the interpretive nature of some chapters may also be a concern as readers may question its validity and reliability, particularly given the fluidity of online communication. Moreover, for some readers, much needs to be done to reveal the “politics” behind phenomena such as *diaosi* and the contestation of ethnic and racial identity. After all, events rise and fall and memes come and go, what are the more tangible political implications? In this sense, the book serves as a nice starting point for further research.

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Citizen Publications in China before the Internet

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In contemporary China, the regime encourages people to take no interest in public affairs but to “cultivate such ‘private’ concerns as career and family life.” In this sense, the legacy of most unofficial magazines was twofold: opposition to totalitarianism, but also opposition to the kind of cynicism that many Chinese magazines cultivate today. From today’s vantage point, we can see *minkan* as a defender of virtues that are also endangered by the new face of totalitarianism as represented by the party’s propaganda that evokes a harmonious society. (p. 179)

The conclusion of Shao Jiang’s book is refreshing: the author does not shy away from defining the true nature of the regime as “a new face of totalitarianism” after having presented an almost comprehensive history of resistance during its first 40 years of existence.

The book’s title, *Citizen Publications in China before the Internet*, is a little awkward. As Shao tries to show in his introductory chapter, Chinese subjects of the Empire, of the Republic and of the PRC have seized all opportunities, whatever the risks, to express their voices when they have clashed with the authorized media. Traditionally, information has been regarded as an instrument in the hands of the state, and the Communist Party has attached great importance to its control.

Despite this fact, Shao Jiang reveals that citizens have tried to make dissident voices heard ever since the foundation of the new regime, despite the fact that the Party had installed its monopoly on publications. From the 1957 Hundred Flowers Campaign to the 1989 pro-democracy movement, courageous citizens have risked their freedom, even their lives, to express their ideas on the nature of the regime.

In four chapters divided along chronological lines, Shao Jiang presents the main “citizen publications” (the author has chosen this term rather than “unofficial publications” to translate *minban kanwu* or *minkan*). He rightly points out that “this citizen practice constitutes the possibility of a civil society and creates a forum, space or sphere that is independent of a bourgeoisie or a free market as necessary background preconditions” (p. 26). I think that it is very important to emphasize the fact that citizens’ participation has occurred every time an opportunity arose since 1949. The mere existence of the *minkan* shows the inability of a totalitarian regime, however all encompassing, to exert absolute control over society.

Those who are interested in this subject will not learn much new, as all the media presented in the book are well known. But they have been analysed in disseminated articles, and one merit of Shao’s is that he has collected them in a single volume, thus showing the importance and the durability of what has become an historical phenomenon. He has carried out extensive interviews with the founders of the journals (when they were still alive), and has read all the “citizens’ publications” that have survived. This allows him to give an exhaustive overview of this extremely important (and often overlooked) aspect of political life in the PRC.

In the first chapter, devoted to the Hundred Flowers campaign, he presents the much-too-ignored magazine *Guangchang* (*Square*), founded by Beida students on 19 May 1957 (pp. 42–49). He describes the way this *minkan* developed, and presents its founders’ itineraries, though surprisingly he does not mention Tan Tianrong, who played an important role in the journal, and who can be readily interviewed (as shown by Hu Jie’s movie, *Searching for Lin Zhao*). Shao also presents the extraordinary adventure of *Spark*, the mimeographed journal founded by a group of Lanzhou rightists after they had been sent for re-education through labour in Gansu’s countryside. *Spark* carried very penetrating analyses of the regime through denunciations of People’s communes and of the Great Leap Forward (pp. 49–54).

Shao Jiang has the courage to include in his book ideas circulated during the Cultural Revolution – such as Yu Luo’s denunciation of the “blood lineage,” and Yang Xiguang’s criticism of the bureaucratic dictatorship – as examples of citizens’ resistance. Many intellectuals in China refuse to consider Yang as a resister to totalitarianism, a big mistake rightly redressed in Shao’s book.

The chapter on the Democracy Wall is interesting, but obviously well known to the students of resistance in China.

One could criticize Shao’s inclusion of book series such as *Zoujiang weilai* (*March towards the Future*), which aroused youths’ enthusiasm during the 1980s, in the *minkan* (pp. 151–54). This series was created in a very special period, when the Party leadership needed to renew its ideology and therefore accepted the existence of a relatively uncontrolled public space. Shao does describe how its MTF founders used the loopholes that appeared when publishing houses became accountable for their losses and therefore needed to publish sellable books. But is it justified to characterize this book series as “citizen publication”? It was still part of the system and differed greatly from the journals presented in the previous chapters. However, one must admit that its promoters displayed a very creative use of official institutions by citizens.

Shao also shows how a “civil society with Chinese characteristics” emerged in the 1980s, with institutions such as Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao’s Beijing Social and

Economic Science Institute (here, Shao should have cited Merle Goldman's pioneer work *From Comrade to Citizen*, [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005]), and media such as the *Jingjixue zhoubao*). Although the characterization of *minkan* for this media can be argued, I think it is interesting to include it in this category.

Finally, this reviewer considers the conclusion overly optimistic, as Shao Jiang emphasizes the continuity of *minkan* contents over 40 years, without noting that there has been very little progress in terms of system analysis from *Square* to the *Jingjixue zhoubao*. This fact reveals that state repression has obliged promoters of *minkan* to start from scratch every time they had an opportunity to express themselves, and has prevented them from drawing the lessons of previous experiences.

But this critical remark does not lessen my enthusiasm for the book. It is absolutely necessary reading for anyone interested in citizens' participation in the PRC. A last remark: it is ironic that, in order to analyse publications before the internet, most of the sources he has used are actually ... websites!

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Reforms in China's Monetary Policy: A Frontbencher's Perspective

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China's recent inclusion in the IMF's SDP (Special Drawing Rights) currency basket has once again focused attention on the inner workings of China's monetary system. China is a major participant in global finance in a way that other developing economies never have been. Yet, despite commitments by the leadership to accelerate capital account liberalization alongside the welfare costs attached to capital controls, monetary policy remains one of the more opaque parts of China's economic system. A devaluation of the yuan earlier this year appeared to take many by surprise while reformers have long been wary of the threat to financial stability posed by capital flight. Against this background Sun Guofeng, the deputy director general of the People's Bank of China's monetary policy department, has written an interesting, although heavily descriptive, insider's perspective on the workings of China's monetary policy. Although described as a frontbencher's perspective, the book is perhaps better described as a series of research papers and thoughts on monetary issues in China.

The book begins with Sun's views on the theory of money creation. Drawing on his early experiences in the accounting department of the Harbin branch of the Agricultural Bank of China, he critiques conventional economic theories on money creation. These views are not unlike those expressed in a 2014 paper on the topic from the Bank of England and are extremely important in the light of the 2008–09 global financial crisis, but have been slow to gain traction in mainstream economics. Sun goes on to make a number of observations regarding the unconventional nature of Chinese monetary policy, especially the frequent use of reserve ratio adjustments. He lays the blame for ineffective monetary transmission on the lack of diversity in household savings. One of his more interesting remarks refers to the effects of wealth polarization, especially how it has led to wealth flowing to those unwilling to