China Perspectives

2015/3 | 2015

The Garment Industry between Local Configurations
and Global Flows

Greg Austin, *Cyber Policy in China*,
Cambridge & Malden, Polity Press, 2014, 203 pp.

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Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/chinaperspectives/6809>

DOI: 10.4000/chinaperspectives.6809

ISSN: 1996-4617

Publisher

Centre d'étude français sur la Chine contemporaine

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 September 2015

Number of pages: 58-59

ISSN: 2070-3449

Electronic reference

Séverine Arsène, « Greg Austin, *Cyber Policy in China*, », *China Perspectives* [Online], 2015/3 | 2015,
Online since 01 January 2017, connection on 23 September 2020. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/chinaperspectives/6809> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/chinaperspectives.6809>

Book reviews

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Cyber Policy in China,
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In *Cyber Policy in China*, Greg Austin traces the evolution of China's informatisation strategy since 2000. It is perhaps the first such work to gather and analyse in a synthesising manner such a comprehensive set of official documents on the issue. These documents are of varied origins: top leaders' speeches, five-year plans, "National Plan for Informatisation 2006-2020," official and academic reports, and regulatory texts, etc. As Austin explains in the first chapter, these official documents certainly do not provide clear views of how the central government's vision is realised on the ground subject to interactions with local leaders, private enterprises, and civil society. However, they reveal the "information society" vision the state leadership cherishes. The concept has been much bandied about over the past 30 years in international reports and has led to numerous development plans for digital infrastructure across the globe. It was also adopted in China in the context of the Communist Party seeing in the digital sector a source of threat, in that it might be accompanied by the growth of political dissidence, risk of cyber war, or possible economic backwardness.

The second chapter looks at the historical background in the domain of information technologies. The Maoist era was characterised by a freeze on innovation and obstacles to information circulation. With the advent of economic reforms, the leadership has in fact set store by the development of an "information economy" in order to speed up China's modernisation. This has given an impetus to electronics and information technology, making no provision, however for the notion of free flow of information. In the 1990s, the State Informatization Leading Group (SILG) of the State Council was set up, a massive network of national operators such as China Telecom was developed, contacts and cooperation with foreign companies and scientists proliferated, and private firms engaged in online services flourished (Sina, Alibaba, Netease, etc.). However, technologies and control mechanisms were put in place at the instance of the Ministry of Public Security.

The third chapter deals with measures taken in the 2000s to develop "e-government" in order to raise administration efficiency with the help of information systems, development of public services, and public consultation campaigns. The chapter also highlights efforts by the authorities to build confidence in an environment of rising cyber-crimes and attacks on private per-

sons. But these measures were applied most unequally on the ground and inevitably confronted policy limits such as protection of "state secrets," which could include anything from top leaders' wealth to the casualty figures in the 2008 Sichuan earthquake. Meanwhile, with the rapidly growing Internet, the government faced an "information society" no longer limited to just an "information economy." In response, the leadership has on several occasions overhauled the governance apparatus, especially with the increasing might of the SILG and the formation in 2014 of the Central Leading Group for Cybersecurity and Informatization, while at the same time the Ministry of Public Security was assuming an even higher profile through these leading groups and through the Golden Shield Project aimed at filtering online information so as to censor and identify dissidents. However, Austin believes that the considerable information flows in China constitute an inexorable force that can only diminish the space for secrecy that the Chinese state can still enjoy.

The fourth chapter is devoted to China's policy of supporting innovation in the domain of information technologies. Relying notably on World Bank expertise, China's leadership has progressively been attaching priority to issues such as enhancement of institutions (including the rule of law), training of qualified human resources, overhaul of the research and development infrastructure, and even acquisition of foreign know-how. The private sector, too, has received encouragement to grow. Since 2005, noting that innovation was mainly concentrated in the Academy of Sciences or foreign enterprises or was financed by foreign venture capital, and that China possessed few patents, the leadership has emphasised "indigenous" innovation and the formation of an "innovating class." Austin predicts that China could henceforth be at the cutting edge in areas free of bureaucratic oversight or which do not touch on state secrets, where the private sector has the initiative and where foreign investment and free information exchange are possible.

Finally, the fifth chapter deals with the issue of cybersecurity from the Chinese leaders' viewpoint. Around 2000, noting that informatisation of society was irreversible and threatening Chinese territorial sovereignty, and that it would take a predominant place in armed conflicts, the Central Military Commission headed by Jiang Zemin accorded urgency to developing capacities of defence and dissuasion in the digital domain. In 2004, the People's Liberation Army was vested with "new historical missions," expanding its role to the protection of national interests in areas as diverse as the economy, science and technology, social life, culture, information, and ideology in addition to defence proper. Despite progress deemed rather slow, China has advanced considerably in the areas of space conquest, cyber-espionage, and the capacity to mount a precise offensive digital attack, this last leading to much disquiet in the United States. Meanwhile, the author stresses that China and the United States share a strong interest in maintaining stability and digital security given their economic and technological interdependence (especially via Taiwan) and that a strategy is needed to manage the imbalance in power between the two major powers in this area, otherwise China as well as the United States will embark on a course of digital armament, something neither desires. Meanwhile, China has been aggressively defending the principle of digital sovereignty and cybersecurity

through numerous multilateral initiatives, from the United Nations General Assembly to ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), not to mention APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation).

In the last chapter, Austin explains that the digital domain is not an issue of public policy like the others. In his view, the adoption of information technologies should lead to thorough changes in the regime, perhaps like Singapore, deemed a model single-party regime that has succeeded in putting in place a modern information society (which I see as a problematic assertion, given the limits on free expression in the city-state). Austin's conclusion nevertheless ends on an optimistic note, wagering that China's leadership will have opted for wise solutions by 2025.

The book contains a chronology, a table of abbreviations, a selected bibliography, and an index, all of which make for a veritable introductory manual on China's digital policy that is accessible and easy to use.

However, I remain perplexed over the general argument put forward in the first chapter to justify the book's structure. As it focuses on the Chinese leadership's ethical choices and values in the area of the information society, Austin has decided to deal with the subject in a normative manner, evaluating at the end of each chapter the Chinese strategy in light of "nine ideal values for information society policy" (p. 9). These values are divided into three groups: first, "national information ecosystem," which includes freedom of information exchange, protection of information exchange, and trusted information; second, "an innovative information economy," including "transformation intent," an innovation system, and the existence of an innovative class; and finally, a "global information ecosystem" covering the notion of strategic stability, the need to bridge military divides, and the need for an interdependent informatised security (p. 16). Even if inspired by international works and reports, these nine values seem to have been chosen arbitrarily. They add nothing to analyses of the Chinese leadership's dilemmas, which have been very well dealt with in the book. Therefore, this approach seems to be quite superfluous in a book that otherwise contains a clear and sufficiently complete synthesis of China's digital policy.

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Hu Angang,
China in 2020: A New Type of Superpower, Washington D.C.,
Brookings Institution Press, 2011,
213 pp.

MAOLIANG BU

The economic rise of China has not only inspired new books on how to understand China's economy and its influence on the rest of world, but has also been accompanied by pessimistic views on China's impending collapse. A recent example is David Shambaugh's article "The Coming Chinese Crackup," published in *The Wall Street Journal*. Given that these books and views are fairly mixed and mainly published by non-Chinese scholars, it is of increasing importance to explore the perspectives and hear the voices of native Chinese scholars. Hu Angang's book *China in 2020* serves this aim well. As mentioned in the introduction by Dr. Cheng Li, "(...) arguably no scholar in the PRC has been more visionary in forecasting China's ascent to superpower status, more articulate in addressing the daunting demographic challenges that the country faces, or more prolific in proposing policy initiatives designed to advance an innovative and sustainable economic development strategy than Hu Angang."

China in 2020 covers two themes of particular interest: Chinese optimism and exceptionalism. Hu has been consistently optimistic about China's socioeconomic transformation. He declares that if current development trends continue, the day when China overtakes the U.S. in a variety of respects – not only in economic power but also in human capital, science, and technology – is not far off. The sources of his confidence in China becoming a superpower are detailed in different chapters of the book: economic power (Chapter 2), human resources and capital (chapters 3 to 5), science and technology achievements (Chapter 6), and the ability to address climate change (Chapter 7). All of these optimistic assessments are supported and explained by a wealth of information and statistics, in the accessing and collecting of which Hu has an incomparable advantage and rich experience. Hu founded and leads the Center for China Studies at Tsinghua University, which has carried out considerable work on China's national reports (*guo-qing baogao*) covering various social and economic aspects over the long term (since 1998). More importantly, Hu's confident optimism regarding China is built upon a deep understanding of the patterns and efficiency of China's resource allocation, often covered by eyeball-catching topics that are overlooked by observers both inside and outside of China.

As for the second theme, it is widely acknowledged that an emerging superpower will destabilise the existing international system. However, Hu points out that China's rise to superpower status will be an exception, which he names a "new type of superpower." He believes that China has neither the resources nor the intention to replace the U.S. and become sole leader of the world within the waves of globalisation. On the contrary, China needs to cooperate with the U.S. in order to meet global challenges. Furthermore, the book covers a great deal of the thinking behind China taking more re-