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October, 2016

Review: So, Alvin Y., and Yin-Wah Chu. The Global Rise of China. Cambridge, UK & Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2012. 232 pp.

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/dannerlu/47/

BOOK REVIEWS

SO, ALVIN Y., AND YIN-WAH CHU. *The Global Rise of China.* Cambridge, UK & Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2012. 232 pp.

Alvin Y. So and Yin-wah Chu, professors at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and Hong Kong Baptist University, respectively, are the authors of this valuable and topical contribution to development studies literature on the (re-)rise of China. Talking about this important topic which received much attention over the course of the last decade, So and Chu attempt to add something new by drawing a more complete picture, taking into account not just the historical and more recent economic development of China but also the manifold trials which China has faced and will continue to face in the future, including environmental, political, or security challenges. In this regard, the word *global* in their title *The Global Rise of China* should not just be understood to mean *geographically* global but also, and perhaps even more importantly, also *comprehensively* global.

The book has a clear content outline divided into two parts. The first part encompasses three chapters on the economic development of China, from Mao's socialist beginnings to Deng's transition to opening China's market to capitalism, and a third chapter focusing on the development trajectory in the 2000s, with a special focus on measures taken since (and in reaction to) the 2008 global financial crisis. The second part of the book addresses the challenges associated with China's rise. It consists of four chapters, each thematizing a separate challenge: technological hurdles, political obstacles, China's often-discussed environmental problems, and finally territorial disputes and resource competition.

The introductory chapter gives a nice synopsis of the theoretical centerpiece of the book, which is *state neoliberalism.* Naturally, So and Chu's neologism is interesting since these two terms are usually seen as opposites: On the one hand, the controlling state intervenes in the market in order to regulate the economy and steer development; on the other hand, neoliberalism believes in minimal intervention of the state in the market, along the lines of Adam Smith's understanding of the market and the idea that the market self-regulates and is more effective when left alone by the state. In terms of development studies, the former feature of state neoliberalism is basically that of the *developmental state,* whereas the latter is close to the *Washington Consensus* understanding of development via free trade, deregulation, and privatization. However, the authors argue that China's development has featured both of these contradictory ways of operating (and developing) its economy. Given this marriage of concepts, their theoretical framework is one that is state-centric and defined by three features: "First and most fundamentally, state neoliberalism signifies the tendency for the communist party-state to promote neoliberalism as part of its strategy to facilitate national development. (. . .) Second, [it] highlight[s] the state's continued appeal to socialism while pursuing neoliberal practices and, hence, acute tensions and contradictions that arose. (. . .) Third, [it] highlight[s] the policy changes and reversals that China has experienced, which were perhaps expected

given the acute contradictions and the communist party-state's determination to stay in power" (p. 225f.). Chapters two through four (i.e., the first part of the book) focus on China's past seven decades of economic development, then re-interpret the previous development in the theoretical light of So and Chu's state neoliberalism.

Chapters five through eight—the second part of the book, which looks at the future development hurdles China is facing and will continue to face—focus on how the state has chosen to meet all kinds of challenges for the future related to development—with or without neoliberal policies. While the authors find that China is doing well in terms of legitimizing its existence, staying in power with the help of a growing economy, and catching up technologically to the West, they are troubled by the handling of the state in terms of pollution of the environment and rising international tensions. Their rather bleak prediction for the future is that China's "bid for global ascendance will trigger more conflicts, more uncertainties, and more chaos in the global economy of the twenty-first century" (p. 232).

In this book, So and Chu took a trend in China's development that seemed obvious to most scholars (perhaps even one that was taken for granted and thought of as nothing new) and re-painted it in a whole new light. From the unique case of China's development, they were able to extract a valuable theoretical contribution to the field of development studies—that of state neoliberalism. However, they do maintain that China's case is *sui generis*, and thus, "unless third world developing countries have a state as strong and as autonomous as the Chinese communist party-state, they will not be able to copy the 'flexible process of adaptation' of China" (p. 229f.). *The Global Rise of China* will undoubtedly have an influential, much-cited impact in academia. In addition, due to its survey character, it will also serve as a solid choice for textbook adoption in undergraduate and graduate courses covering China's development.

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STEPHEN R. HALSEY, *Quest for Power: European Imperialism and the Making of Chinese Statecraft*, Harvard University Press, 2015, 346.

The author argues for the interactive links between China's rise as a great power in the modern era and the influences of the Western powers on Imperial China in the nineteenth century. In contrast to negative description of imperial decline and decay in the late Qing dynasty, the author provides a comprehensive, detailed historical account of the Chinese military-fiscal state in their active efforts to develop a new form of modern nation state. An innovative approach and framework beyond political frontiers and conventional temporal boundaries was adopted in this study, applying concept of military-fiscal state to different continents, culture, and time period (p. 13 and p. 17).