

everything from anticolonial struggles to expansionist conservatism, and from theocratic movements to Marxist revolt. Even deeply participatory movements like Kurdish democratic confederalism seem to be identified as among a set of “new challenges” to liberalism coming from the left—partly liberal and partly illiberal—rather than independent ideological horizons. Firmly embracing the book’s call that we do away with dichotomous thinking about revolution, I would suggest that we might do well to also disaggregate revolutions beyond this liberal/illiberal binary.

Yet, *On Revolutions*’ normative approach should be understood within its broader political context: a period during which writers were deeply worried about liberal democracies—including the United States—being hijacked by populist rulers and downgraded into autocratic “illiberal” systems. With this in mind, we should see *On Revolutions* not as declaring the supremacy of a liberal view, but as advancing an impressive defence of revolution’s compatibility with contemporary liberal politics, against an alternative interpretation that would construct it as a necessarily illiberal phenomenon. Here, Part 2 offers us a generous platform, drawing on the thought of Hannah Arendt (*On Revolution*, 1963) to flesh out its normative orientation (Chapter 6), carefully expounding on a variety of important methodological questions (Chapter 7), and engaging in a productive discussion of research ethics (Chapter 8).

An important claim running across the book’s chapters, to which it returns in its conclusion, is that a principal objective for future revolutionary scholarship should be to better grasp a “humbler” breed of revolution that characterizes the current age of political transformation. These “small r” revolutions promise “not earthly salvation but the striving for the *possibility* of radical transformation, of something better, even if that something better will never be fully realized ... more concerned with the everyday, the local and the granular” (p. 210). They are the kind of revolutions that unseat dictators, challenge phony election results, and course-correct societies in danger of backsliding, but they are also the kind vulnerable to rapid reversals, counterrevolutions, and authoritarian reassertions. Given their increasing ubiquity as of late, I sincerely agree with the authors that we need to understand them more deeply.

Yet I wonder if the “Revolution/revolution” dichotomy is more useful than the old “Social/Political Revolution” or “Great Revolution/minor revolution” dichotomies. I for one found it more confusing, not least because the categories are indicated exclusively by written capitalization. As with the aforementioned liberal/illiberal dichotomy, I think scholars responding to the book might wish to pursue a more nuanced expansion of the category of revolution, rather than resorting to a new form of binarism.

All in all, I would commend this book to my colleagues who teach or work on the topic of revolution. Though it

would be tempting to interpret the latter part of this review as criticism of *On Revolutions*’ approach to its object of study, I would urge caution in this interpretation. Rather, it was only by firmly embracing the book’s spirit and mission that I was moved to issue such arguments. In gifting the reader a framework for thinking more critically about revolution, *On Revolutions* provides a service to us all.

Daring to Struggle: China’s Global Ambitions under Xi Jinping. By Bates Gill. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022.

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There is no shortage of books about China’s foreign policy under Xi Jinping, with most centering on Beijing’s actions in particular policy sectors or in different regions of the world. Studies striving to encapsulate all the seismic shifts in China’s recent international pursuits with a coherent analytical framework, a daunting task to be sure, are still scant. Bates Gill tackles this challenge head-on with this timely and important book, *Daring to Struggle*. This engrossing study provides the most comprehensive and convincing analysis to date of what motivates China’s global ambitions and the ways it goes about achieving them.

Underpinning Gill’s meticulous study is the observation that Xi’s China has pursued “a far more ambitious foreign policy agenda with profound effects on regional security, economic and technological competition, and world order” (p. 2). This resurgent China, with ever-growing influence, is increasingly perceived as a challenge by governments and societies around the world. Hence, “a deeper understanding of ‘What China Wants’—the underlying strategic objectives that motivate Xi Jinping and his country’s global ambitions” (p. 2) is warranted. To this end, *Daring to Struggle*’s goal is to offer a “timely, comprehensive, and accessible treatment of the fundamental aims motivating China’s international pursuits in the Xi Jinping era” (p. 2)

Gill’s answer to “What China Wants” consists of six main drivers/objectives underlying its approach to achieving its global ambitions: legitimacy, sovereignty, wealth, power, leadership, and ideas. Although each driver is explored fully in separate chapters (with the six chapters constituting the heart of the book), Gill makes two important overarching arguments. First, ensuring the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is the highest priority. Legitimacy means “gaining acceptance, respect, and approbation for continued CCP leadership of China” (p. 33), which is key to Xi Jinping’s legacy-defining goals of the “China Dream” and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The other five drivers

flow from but also support this core aim. Second, all six drivers overlap and are pursued concurrently, which paradoxically often contributes to contradictory effects on domestic versus overseas audiences. For instance, more forceful and sharper policies regarding unresolved territorial disputes play well at home (contributing to the objectives of sovereignty and legitimacy) but antagonize neighbors, thereby undermining the objective of seeking regional or global leadership. Similarly, leveraging economic power to extract political concessions will compel other countries to reduce their dependence on the Chinese economy. Building off these inherent contradictions, Gill outlines, in the final chapters, the challenges China faces in pursuit of its global goals and provides policy recommendations for the world outside China. As for the question, What will China do next? Gill predicts that, despite both domestic and international challenges, “Xi will drive a foreign policy that first and foremost seeks to solidify the Party’s power—unchallenged, accepted, and respected at home and abroad” (p. 223). In short, China will continue to struggle for what it wants from the world. For those concerned with the broader implications for the international system, Gill envisions that “in the near to medium term, these [China’s] pursuits will not mean achieving global supremacy or remaking the world in China’s image” (p. 224).

A few features distinguish *Daring to Struggle* from other studies of China’s foreign policy. First, it is structured in a refreshingly distinctive way. Gill begins by presenting a coherent framework that captures the complexity of China’s foreign policy objectives. The remainder of the book then delves into in-depth analyses of the six objectives. This structure does a superb job of demonstrating to the readers the logic of and tensions among these objectives. Second, Gill skillfully presents his findings in a way that allows readers first to understand the historical context of China’s foreign policy associated with each objective leading up to Xi, followed by a comprehensive treatment of how Xi is distinguished from his predecessor in the scope and range of policy initiatives in pursuit of that objective. Third, as Gill acknowledges, this book is intended for a broad audience, academic and otherwise. It fulfills that aim admirably. General readers will find the book balanced, informative, and educational. Academic readers will appreciate the author’s granular research and be intrigued by the conceptual framework and cases in support of the arguments. China scholars will find the Notes section particularly useful: it presents a valuable bibliography of recent works, scholarly and nonscholarly, on a wide range of topics related to Chinese foreign policy and domestic politics.

Comprehensive and probing as it is, Gill’s book perhaps raises as many questions as it answers, especially for those who study international relations (IR) and foreign policy

analysis (FPA). For instance, Gill does not discuss much about the process through which he derives the six foreign policy drivers. It would be useful to learn how Gill compares and defends his conceptual framework against other models with alternative sets of drivers (p. 226, fn 6). Another question concerns how the five nonlegitimacy drivers are prioritized by Xi’s China. As Gill acknowledges, there are tensions among these drivers wherein the pursuit of one often incurs damage to or loss in another. When China implements economic coercion tactics to achieve sovereignty-related objectives, such as in the South China Sea, it risks the immediate and potential future diminishing of economic benefits (associated with the objective of wealth). Therefore, using those tactics implies that sovereignty is valued more than wealth. Some important theoretical and policy-relevant questions flow out of these instances of unequal priorities. For instance, how does China rank order or weight different objectives in cases or initiatives with wide-ranging policy consequences? Are certain objectives (e.g., sovereignty) noncompensatory (i.e., to be achieved at all costs), whereas others (e.g., ideas) are compensatory (i.e., can be substituted for by other objectives)? These questions invite further theorizing and analysis. In the book, Gill depicts Xi Jinping as a leader who is adamant and reluctant to back down despite contravening policy outcomes. That makes many FPA scholars wonder to what extent China’s accelerated global outreach is an outcome of historical inevitability or the sheer determination of its current paramount leader. As China returns to the age of strongman politics, how do we distinguish Xi’s interests and priorities from those of the CCP as a whole? Or are those distinctions, if any, no longer necessary for understanding today’s Chinese politics?

In short, in *Daring to Struggle*, Bates Gill offers a clear, convincing, and accessible guide to understanding what China wants from the world and how it plans to achieve its global goals. It is an important addition to the growing scholarship on China’s foreign policy. His analysis and insight will be relevant in the years to come as China continues to struggle on the world stage.

Wicked Problems: The Ethics of Action for Peace, Rights, and Justice.

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Austin Choi-Fitzpatrick, Douglas Irvin-Erickson, and Ernesto Verdeja’s edited volume *Wicked Problems* sets out to explore the “practical puzzles” or ethical dilemmas and trade-offs in the practice of change-making and peace-building. A wicked problem is a complex challenge