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Some reflections on the current situation in China

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Some Reflections on the Current Situation in China

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Title:

Some Reflections on the Current Situation in China

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Abstract:

The paper examines recent political and social developments in the People's Republic of China. It highlights some of the principle features in current Chinese politics: fragmentation of both the system and its actors; the role of the Chinese state as a developmental state; the issue of whether the party state exhibits stability and legitimacy. Furthermore, the discourses on political change within Chinese politics and intellectuals are addressed, the preconditions for a stable democracy are discussed and finally the function of the current Chinese state will be assessed.

Keywords:

China, food security, food safety, agriculture, environmental pollution, NGOs, civil society, consumer protection, grain self-sufficiency, global food trade, waste management

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A survey conducted by the Chinese newspaper "Huanqiu Shibao" (环球时报, Global Times) illustrates what people in China conceive of being the greatest challenges to stability in the next decade: unequal income distribution (36 %), corruption (24 %), lacking social security systems (13 %), ethnic separatism (13 %) and inflated real-estate prices (11 %).[1] Beyond these issues I count the falling apart of society, the growing influence of vested interests, a strong value crisis, a lack of efficient channels for conflict solution, the impasse of legal system reform and a lack of checks and balances to be part of the core political problems. The multitude of economic, social and political problems makes China's political leadership scared (as Mao once said) that "a single spark can start a prairie fire" (星星之火可以燎原). Thus they strictly prohibit or persecute organized political oppositional forces.

In the following, it is my intention to highlight some of the principle features in current Chinese politics: fragmentation of both the system and its actors; the role of the Chinese state as a developmental state; the issue of whether the party state exhibits stability and legitimacy. Furthermore, I will address the discourses on political change within Chinese politics and finally assess the function of the current Chinese state.

Fragmentation of the System and of Actors

China is not a homogeneous authoritarian entity but rather a highly **fragmented system**. This system is characterized by three features. In the first place, we have to deconstruct our concept of the Chinese "state": It has to be conceived as an ensemble of various organizations interacting with society at various levels and shaped by inner tensions and conflicts. Second, there are different actors affecting political output: the central state, the provinces, the local state, the military, new social strata and new social organizations, public opinion, etc. This holds true for both domestic policies and foreign policies. A growing public sphere has emerged, for instance via the Internet, micro-blogging and NGOs, and public opinion increasingly influences domestic as well as foreign policies. We have, however, to discern between a benign and a malign public sphere. The benign one is rather concerned with improving governance, greater political transparency, citizens' participation, providing information on social injustice and abuse of power, etc. In contrast, the malign public sphere relates more to strong chauvinist or nationalist sentiments, calling for military actions to solve conflicts with neighboring countries or to reinforcing authoritarian policies and structures.

Third, it needs to be stressed that in spite of the existence of system corruption and power abuse we find at the local level also effective development programs and contrasting and diverging "models" (I call this phenomenon "one country, a thousand systems"). In Huaxi (华西) in Jiangsu province, for instance, a clan-based economic empire has generated extremely wealthy and prosperous villages based upon market structures. In contrast, Nanjie village (南街) in Henan Province has created a neo-Communist model with a strong new Mao cult and a single ownership system permitting collective ownership only.[2] These and other models co-exist and are accepted by the political leadership.

The fragmentation is partially the product of different models and concepts of development. These differences range between two contrasting poles: On the one hand, we find models which may be classified as neo-traditionalist authoritarian models, among others represented by the "Chongqing model" (重庆模式) under the ousted former party secretary Bo Xilai (薄熙来)[3] and denoted by a set of populist policies that include the preference for a maximal state and a more nationalist foreign policy. On the other hand, we find liberalizing authoritarianism, represented for instance by the "Guangdong model"

1 *Huanqiu Shibao* [Global Times], 10 August 2010.

2 See the section on *Nanjie* in Thomas Heberer and Sabine Jakobi: Henan as a Model: From Hegemonism to Fragmentism. In: John Fitzgerald (ed.): Rethinking China's Provinces. London and New York (Routledge) 2002: 109–117.

3 See Francois Godemont: China at the Crossroads. European Council on Foreign Relations http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR53_CHINA_ESSAY_AW.pdf: 5 (accessed 2 August 2012); on the "Chongqing model": Romain Lafarguette: Chongqing: Model for a new economic and social policy? In: *China Perspectives*, 4/2011: 62–64.

(广东模式)[4] and characterized by more liberal policies, a greater push for reliance on the legal system and rather "harmonious" foreign relations. However, the social problems to which the Chongqing model has pointed, particularly the falling apart of society and the pressure to find tangible solutions particularly for the problems of ordinary people are still on the agenda, and there is no evidence that the Guangdong model will be successful in finding appropriate solutions.

At the structural level, we concurrently find two patterns of fragmentation: On the one side both the state security bodies, predatory authorities at the local level, strong interest coalitions between members of both the political and the economic elite (for instance in terms of the military-industrial complex) turn into entities increasingly becoming independent from the state. I call this development destructive fragmentation since it negatively affects state-society relations. On the other side, we find a more constructive fragmentation at the local level. There, counties were granted more discretionary power in implementing policies according to specific local conditions and a broad range of priority setting ("models") and policy experimenting.[5]

Moreover, many institutional and structural problems such as the discrepancy between rules in form (laws) and rules in use (patterns of implementation), a lack of checks and balances, the persecution of civil rights activists and lawyers acting in the interest of ordinary people (specifically at the local level), the absence of efficient conflict solution mechanisms, the restriction of media reporting, etc. exist. They spawn a growing discontent particularly among Chinese intellectuals. Twists and turns in policy-making, corruption, and disregarding legal rights of the people induce a decrease in trust in governments and party and state institutions. China, therefore, provides a rather ambiguous picture: On the one hand we find a successful economic development increasingly bringing about prosperity for the majority of the people, a process that has spawned the emerging of a middle class; on the other hand an authoritarian single-party state rigidly dealing with political dissent, social protests, and social movements frequently not abiding by its own rules and laws.

In contrast to the growing pessimism among intellectuals (particularly in Beijing) due to long overdue political reforms, governments and people at the local level are rather concerned with finding solutions to urgent local problems such as fiscal woes, land grabbing, social security, poverty reduction, improvement of infrastructure, environmental degradation, etc.

The persecution of civil rights activists and dissidents takes place cyclically. Among the political leadership international events such as the Olympic Games 2008, the "Jasmine Revolutions" in Arab countries or national events such as the unrests in Tibet 2008 or in Xinjiang 2009 may set a spiral of fear in motion and lead to increased repression of dissenting opinions.

However, among the leadership, among ministries and among various regions we find differing positions in terms of political repression. Take, for instance, the developments in spring 2011 when numerous critical authors and artists had been detained. While in April 2011 security chief and member of the Political Bureau Zhou Yongkang (周永康) argued that social control and social management needed to be strengthened meaning that dissidents, the Internet and NGOs should be more strictly monitored,[6] the party's daily *Renmin Ribao* (人民日报) simultaneously published a comment pronouncing that more leeway should be given for deviant opinions. The comment cited the French philosopher Voltaire: "I do not agree with what you say but shall defend to the death your right to say it."[7] This comment referred

4 Compare Canzheng yizheng de Guangdong moshi [Political participation and political discourse in the Guangdong model], http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2011-04-20/15372232 (accessed 2 August 2012).

5 On these developments see e.g. Thomas Heberer and Anja Senz: Streamlining Local Behaviour Through Communication, Incentives and Control: A Case Study of Local Environmental Policies in China. In: *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 3/2011: 77–112; Thomas Heberer and Gunter Schubert: County and Township Cadres as a Strategic Group. A New Approach to Political Agency in China's Local State, *Journal of Chinese Political Science* vol. 17, No. 3 (2012): 221–249.

6 Zhou Yongkang: Jiaqiang he chuangxin shehui guanli, jianli jianquan Zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi guanli tixi [Strengthen and renew social management, establish an outright administrative system with socialist Chinese characteristics]. In: *Qiushi* [Truth], 9/2011: 5–11.

7 *Renmin Ribao* [People's Daily], 28 April 2011.

to a speech delivered by Chinese prime minister Wen Jiabao (温家宝) at a meeting on 14 April 2011 at which he called upon Chinese intellectuals to raise critique in the interest of solving China's core problems. He encouraged the intellectuals to continue in raising critical voices and opinions.[8]

However, diverging interests among the political leadership are less a manifestation of fundamental differences of opinion but rather an expression of diverging prioritization in policy implementation. The political leadership agrees that critique is crucial and necessary. The "red line", however, has to be complied with. I.e., activities aiming at the removal of the CCP rule or against China's national unity are ruthlessly persecuted. Yet, within the "accepted" range critical voices may well be acceptable.

China: A Developmental State

Yet, in spite of all problems and difficulties the Chinese state at both the central and the local level can still be classified as a typical **"developmental state"**.[9] Developmental states differ from so-called developing countries. They are "purposeful" states, because they are characterized by a will to develop top-down, are effectively intervening in the economy, a strong interaction between governments and enterprises, and they are capable to developing successfully and against all odds and obstacles in the domains of politics, economics and society. Moreover, they display the capability to enforce their policies and are relatively independent from the impact of interests of societal groups.[10] Undoubtedly, the Chinese party state is such a developmental state: it is successfully developing the economy and it knows when to withdraw, for instance by reducing planned economy structures and advancing market economy structures or by abandoning the "class character" of the China Communist Party (CCP).

In the last 25 years China's economy has developed very rapidly. The UK needed 60 years to reduplicate its gross national product, the US 40 years, China only 12 years. The Chinese leadership is well aware that central planning excludes people who want to work for a common goal while, in contrast, a market economy integrates those people. China underscores the ways in which political power can contribute positively and effectively to economic well-being, for instance by means of long-term growth and structural change as pivotal goals; by political management of the economy; by institution building and institutional innovation.

Furthermore, the Chinese party state is a strong state possessing "state capacity" to enforce its policies across the country. This capacity encompasses five elements:

(a) ***legitimacy*** in the sense of the legitimization of the political system accepted by its citizens;

(b) ***regulating and controlling capacity*** in the sense of social control and regulation;

(c) ***resources of enforcement,*** e.g. financial and coercive means as well as personnel resources;

(d) ***bargaining capacity,*** i.e. the ability to incorporate new social groups, associations and organizations into bargaining processes and to find a balance between various particularistic interests; and

(e) ***learning capacity,*** i.e. the ability to learn from previous mistakes and failures.

State capacity in this sense is important for implementing a successful development program and for successfully coping with domestic problems and conflicts.

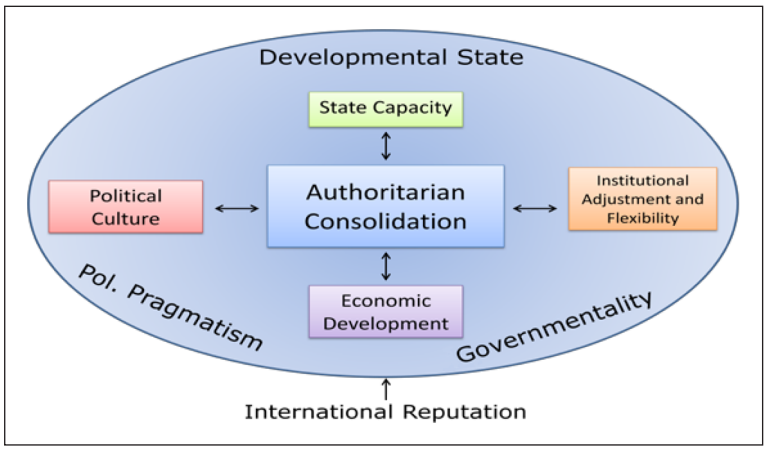
8 The speech has been published under http://www.youcheng.org/pages.aspx?val=1904 (accessed 3 August 2012).

9 On developmental states see Meredith Woo-Cumings (ed.): The Developmental State. Ithaca, London (Cornell University Press) 1999; Anul Kohli: State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery, New York et al. (Cambridge University Press) 2004; from a different perspective: Lynette H. Ong: Between Development and Clientelist States. Local Business Relationships in China. In: Comparative Politics, January 2012: 191–205.

10 See, for instance, Peter Evans: Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation. Princeton et al. (Princeton University Press) 1995.

Stability and Legitimacy of the Party State?

I argue that the central leadership enjoys a relatively high level of legitimacy and that the political system currently appears still to be relatively stable. The meaning of stability here is not an absence of any structural change but rather refers to the capability of a system to adjust its institutions and structures to processes of change and to resolve crises in a way that benefits the regime. In this sense we may speak of stability (even if relative) due to several factors (see diagram):



A successful economic development process, the political pragmatism of China's political leadership and (what Michael Foucault has called) "governmentality",[11] i.e. the policy of instilling into both local cadres and the people a "will to improve",[12] meaning that they consciously implement central policies and have the impression that the projects of the central leadership were their own, self-determined projects, are the three pillars of the system's stability. These pillars are underpinned by a "strong state" exhibiting state capacity, an authoritarian political culture (preferring authoritarian structures), and the capacity and ability of both institutional adjustment and flexible policy implementation. The outcome might be called "authoritarian consolidation" explaining why authoritarian systems like China do not necessarily collapse.

Stability, however, is relative since high growth rates may not last forever, since the political system is highly fragmented, and social disparities and social conflicts are on the rise.

The same is true for legitimacy. According to research findings of Chinese and Western scholars (including my own findings) a strong majority of the urban and rural population supports both the political leadership and the regime.[13] This support is based on successful economic development, the capacity to achieve national goals such as the reunification with Hong Kong and Macao or (in future) with Taiwan, the creation of a "strong" China becoming on par with the US, the preservation of political stability, i.e. a peaceful and stable order, and the conviction that the CCP has rescued China from a fate similar to that of the former Soviet Union.

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11 Michel Foucault: Governmentality; transl. by Rosi Braidotti and revised by Colin Gordon. In: Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds.): The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality. Chicago (University of Chicago Press) 1991: 87–104.

12 Tania Murray Li: The Will to Improve. Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics. Durham and London (Duke University Press) 2007.

13 Compare Bruce Gilley: The Right to Rule: How States Win and Lose Legitimacy. New York (Columbia University Press) 2009; see also: Thomas Heberer and Gunter Schubert: Political Reform and Regime Legitimacy in Contemporary China. In: *Asien* 99 (April 2006): 9–28; Bruce Gilley: Legitimacy and Institutional Change. The Case of China. In: *Comparative Political Studies*, 3/2008: 259–284; Bruce Gilley and Heike Holbig: The Debate on Party Legitimacy in China: A Mixed Quantitative/Qualitative Analysis. In: *Journal of Contemporary China*, March 2009: 339–358; Gunter Schubert: One-Party Rule and the Question of Legitimacy in Contemporary China: preliminary thoughts on setting up a new research agenda. In: *Journal of Contemporary China*, February 2008: 191–204; on trust cf. Wenfang Tang: Public Opinion and Political Change in China. Stanford (Stanford University Press) 2005: 101–118; Wenfang Tang: Interpersonal Trust and Democracy in China. Paper presented to the International Conference "Local governance and regime legitimacy in China", University of Duisburg-Essen, 28 February–2 March 2007; Thomas Heberer and Gunter Schubert: Political Trust and the Case of China. In: *Oriental Archive. Journal of African and Asian Studies*, 2/2011: 189–202.

Yet, Chinese people distinguish between the legitimacy of the central authorities and that of local authorities. As the perceived "benign state" the central government possesses trust whilst the "malign" local authorities are blamed for all grievances and enjoy only a minimum of or no trust at all. In the long run, however, economic growth is no guarantee for an enduring stability and legitimacy. This was one reason why the CCP has developed the new goal of creating a harmonious society and "harmonious legitimacy", i.e. to orient policies towards the needs of the population, harmonizing social interests and attaining social justice by means of redistribution of wealth (view of the party state). However, it may also come to operational errors of the political leadership, i.e. wrong policy decisions with fatal consequences.

Discourses on Political Reforms

Into which direction should China develop? In China there exist various discourses on the country's political future. A dominant position particularly among intellectuals argues that currently fundamental contradictions between the political, the economic and the intellectual elites are absent. The economic elite (entrepreneurs and managers) are primarily interested in calm and successful entrepreneurial activities and less in advancing democracy. China's economic trajectory, the negative effects of the breakdown of the Soviet Union, western anti-China sentiments and the inclusion of intellectuals in political decision-making processes and discourses in recent years have modified the stance of many intellectuals towards the CCP. Citizens – so the argument – are primarily concerned and dissatisfied with corruption, unemployment and growing social inequality. The current political system – so the further argumentation goes – is widely accepted, and the majority of the people are primarily concerned with the solution of everyday problems.

Regarding political reforms we currently can discern four major discourses within the party. First, there is an emphasis on intra-party democratization prior to societal democratization. This entails that the decision-making processes within the CCP have to be democratized by virtue of competitive inner-party elections. Without democratizing the party, its structures and institutions, democratization of the society is currently impossible. Second, there is the option of a gradual bottom-up democratization. This discourse champions that grassroots elections (in villages and urban neighbourhood communities) should be elevated to the township, county, city, provincial and finally the central level thereby initiating a democratic bottom-up process. A third perspective is liberalization through advancing a legal system, which holds that a well-functioning legal system is a vital precondition for more liberality and political change. Lastly, there is the conviction that rapid top-down political reforms are needed to solve key issues. In order to curb corruption and to bring more equality into society – so the fourth discourse holds – democratic structures should be enforced top-down, i.e. by the state, in the near future.[14]

The "Charter 08", drafted by 300 oppositional Chinese intellectuals under the aegis of the former professor of philosophy, author and civil rights activist Liu Xiaobo (刘晓波, who was sentenced to 11 years in prison at the end of 2009) and signed by more than 10,000 people in the Internet, moved in a different direction. It demands a full-fledged democratic system but without explaining how it might become a reality. Many items of the charter have been publicly discussed even among intellectuals close to the CCP for quite some time. The totality of the program is new. Undoubtedly, the charter is an expression of the discontent of many intellectuals with the slow progress of political reforms. However, the charta does not outline in detail how to implement the program. Even Liu Xiaobo has conceded that in the short run he does not see any political force that could change or challenge the political system. Therefore, China's political transformation would be a gradual, long-lasting process full of twists and turns.[15]

14 Weiping Huang: Quanqiuhua yu Zhongguo zhengzhi tizhi gaige [Globalization and reform of China's political system]. In: Weiping Huang and Wang Yongcheng (eds.): Dangdai Zhongguo zhengzhi yanjiu baogao [Research report on China's current politics] I. Beijing (Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe) 2002: 21–30.

15 Liu Xiaobo: Tongguo gaibian shehui lai gaibian zhengquan [By changing society changing the political system], http://www.observechina.net/info/artshow.asp?ID=65195 (accessed 6 July 2012).

The "New Left", another but still larger critical and heterogeneous movement within China is criticizing the "Charter 08". It denounces the neoliberal policies of the party leadership and blames it for growing inequality, corruption, and privatization. An unbridled market economy, the privatizing of state property and globalization are the core evils which should be combatted with the help of Mao's political teachings. In a collusion of the party's elite and economic interests an exploitation of the country is taking place. The "New Left" opposes the "liberalism" of the "Charter 08" and accuses it of representing US interests.[16] I argue that the removal of Chongqing's party secretary Bo Xilai is a heavy blow to the "New Left" and its rather populist convictions.[17]

By the same token, intellectuals close to the party are pondering China's political future. Sociologist Yu Jianrong (于建嵘) from the Chinese Academy of Socialist Sciences, for instance, to mention just a few, has put forward a "Ten Years' Plan for Social and Political Reforms" in March 2012: In a first step eradicating social inequality, creating social security systems and social rights (2012–2015); in a second step installing citizens' rights, and a transition to a democratic constitutional system (2016–2022).[18] Cai Dingjian (蔡定剑) from the University of Politics and Law argues that democracy is an expression of modern life contributing societal wealth, preserving social stability and an instrument to solve China's principal problems.[19]

Yu Keping (俞可平), an adviser to the CCP leadership and one of the most prominent intellectuals, argued in his seminal and popular book "Democracy is a Good Thing" (民主是一个好东西) that democracy is a positive phenomenon and on a global scale undoubtly the best among all political systems developed by humans. Yet, the crucial issue is how and in what way China could achieve this goal. Under the current complicated and heterogeneous structures of China's transformation it would be extremely difficult to establish a stable democratic system.[20]

Larry Diamond, a renowned US scholar working on regime changes has recently argued that "the end of the CCP rule will come … within the next ten years". He primarily argues on the basis of the modernization theory: per capita GDP growth, demanding middle classes, "a stubbornly independent civil society" and a rising educational level.[21]

It is, however, my conviction that establishing democratic structures would not automatically give rise to a **stable** democracy. Democracy cannot simply be imported and is not only an issue of establishing democratic institutions such as separation of powers, an independent law system and a multi-party system. On the contrary, specific preconditions are required in order to develop and stabilize democratic structures, such as basic structures of a civil society – i.e. larger liberties for the media, for non-government organizations and the development of citizen values and attitudes; an independent law system protecting individuals and groups of individuals against arbitrariness by the state; and particularly civilizational competence.[22] Civil society is still in its initial stage, the development of an independent law system is not yet in sight.

By civilizational competence I mean the cognitive precondition of a stable democracy: the emergence of citizens with a society-oriented public spirit and a civic responsibility; learning to accept diverging opinions and political criticism by state and society; handling conflicts peacefully (by both the state and society), i.e. the establishing of patterns of conflict management; and, finally, the development of empathy, i.e. to develop the capability to understand other people's feelings, emotions and thinking.

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16 Compare for instance Li He: China's New Left and Its Impact on Political Liberalization, http://www.eai.nus.edu.sg/BB401.pdf (accessed 12 July 2012); Xu Youyu: Dangdai Zhongguo shehui sixiang de fenhua he duili [Cleavages and antagonisms in social ideologies in current China], http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_475942ab01000b7s.html (accessed 12 July 2012).

17 Thomas Heberer and Anja Senz: The Bo Xilai Affair and China's Future Development. In: Asien, October 2012 (forthcoming).

18 See http://cmp.hku.hk/2012/03/26/20910 (accessed 17 August 2012).

19 Cai Dingjian: Minzhu shi yizhong xiandai shenghuo [Democracy is a kind of modern life]. Beijing (Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe), 2012: 55–60.

20 Yu Keping: Minzhu shi ge hao dongxi [Democracy is a good thing], ed. by Yan Jian, Beijing (Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe) 2006; an English version: Yu Keping: Democracy is a Good Thing. Washington, D.C. (Brookings Institution Press) 2009.

21 Larry Diamond: China and East Asian Democracy. The Coming Wave. In: Journal of Democracy, vol. 23, issue 1: 5–13.

22 Thomas Heberer: Creating Civil Society Structures Top-Down? In: Jianxing Yu and Sujian Guo (eds.): Civil Society and Governance in China. New York et al. (Palgrave/MacMillan) 2012: 63–84.

We should understand that in the difficult and complex conditions of the current transformation process conflicting interests between various social strata and regions as well as a lack of preconditions for a stable democracy, a breakdown of the political system would not automatically and necessarily lead to a stabilization of China. The likely outcome might be political turmoil, inner power struggles, and a protracted economic crisis – with severe consequences not only for Asia but also for the world economy.

Currently, in China a "Jasmine revolution" as it occurred in some Arab countries is difficult to imagine. The middle classes are not yet carriers of a systemic change. A social contract seems to exist: the majority of the people remain relatively satisfied with the current system as long as the political system can guarantee both political stability and a constant improvement of their living conditions. The majority prefers political stability to an uncertain regime change. In addition, we find a different quality of the authoritarian regime, i.e. China is – as shown above – a developmental state successfully pushing economic and social development. Moreover, there is an institutionalized and regular leadership change favoring policy innovations. Even the role of the armed forces is strongly differing since they are strictly acting under the leadership of the Communist Party. Furthermore, China has not only a low foreign debt rate but concurrently the highest foreign exchange reserves of all countries in the world. And finally the state displays a strong state capacity – a phenomenon also explained above.

Conclusion

China is not a pure dictatorship where no societal and political changes have occurred in the last decades, but a country that is gradually advancing towards a more open society with a growing degree of participation, legal security and individual autonomy. Without doubt, the cleavages within China are tremendous. It is, therefore, difficult to predict in which direction China will proceed in the next decades. This, undoubtedly, depends primarily on her domestic development. As long as the economy is booming and the living standard of the majority of the people is continuously on the rise, and as long as participation is enhanced, social and political stability might be preserved and China may increasingly become a trustworthy and accountable partner in world politics. On the other hand, it is easy to imagine the negative consequences for China, Asia, and the world which a failure of the Chinese state could bring about.

US political scientist Joel Migdal has shown that under the conditions of both weakly developed structures of a civil society and a weak society facing a strong state, states can function as "political architects".[23] This is exactly the role the Chinese party state is currently playing. Therefore, the party state is not merely a "development dictatorship" but could rather be classified as a "developmental agency" with "infrastructural power", i.e. coercive power, extracting revenues, effective governing tools, etc.[24] Infrastructural power requires more than pure authoritarian mechanisms of enforcement, i.e. the inclusion of social groups in decision-making processes and the establishing of a corresponding set of institutions. Accordingly, the World Development Report of the World Bank in 1997 ("The state in a changing world") has already emphasized that under conditions of a weak civil society the state has to function as an "activating state".[25] I argue that the Chinese party state has adopted this function and acts as a political entrepreneur purposefully pursuing the modernization of the country. In the interest of social and political development gradual political reforms including the reinforcement of the rule of law and citizen rights, fostering a new societal consensus, new patterns of efficient social management, etc. are indispensable. Containing the falling apart of society by finding solutions for burning issues, a question the Chongqing model has further put on the political agenda, is crucial for further progress. Whether a new leadership after the 18th national party congress will be capable of providing fresh answers to these questions remains to be seen.

23 Joel Migdal: Strong Societies and Weak States. State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World. Princeton (Princeton University Press) 1988.

24 See Michael Mann: The Sources of Social Power, vol. II: The Rise of Classes and Nation-States. Cambridge (Cambridge University Press) 1993: 5.

25 World Bank (ed.): World Development Report 1997. Oxford et al. (Oxford University Press) 1997.

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