

This volume will be a welcome addition to readers who are either unfamiliar with general trends in Chinese social policy or are seeking to update their understanding of developments in the years leading up to and since the COVID-19 outbreak. For those with more specialized or specific knowledge, for example of policy areas like pensions or *dibao*, the text will serve as a general background update but probably feel lacking in the kind of policy detail that might be useful. The arguments made will also feel familiar and not to be contributing anything particularly novel based on studies in the past two decades. This will also be the case regarding specific policy areas where the book does fall short in offering analysis which can add substantially to the current debate. There is a bit of a missed opportunity to link the arguments being made in the book, which are presented as drawing on political economy, to a broader range of contributions in the literature. This would have reinforced the points being made, even if the basis for these other findings might have been from a single policy case study or through the application of different theoretical lenses.

Qian makes extensive use of data visualizations throughout and for the most part these do help to provide additional context, illustrate trends and support particular points being argued. There are times, however, where the reader is left to puzzle out what is meant. In some figures, the axis is not labelled so it is not clear what is being illustrated, and in others, for example when regions are compared, the visualization does not make a particularly clear contribution. In some cases, the figures do not get discussed in a meaningful way in the text, and it is not clear what they add. The book would have benefited from a firmer hand in terms of editing regarding the presentation of these visualizations.

As noted at the start though, however, these are critiques from a reader with a background in the subject area and specialist interest in one policy area. For the more general reader or those who have taken a break from following social policy developments in China, Qian's book will offer either a good introduction or the kind of to-the-point summary that will refresh their understanding.

doi:10.1017/S0305741023001716

People, Place, Race, and Nation in Xinjiang, China: Territories of Identity

David O'Brien and Melissa Shani Brown. Singapore: Palgrave MacMillan, 2022. xv + 353 pp. £109.99 (hbk). ISBN 9789811937750

Darren Byler

Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada
Email: dbyler@sfu.ca

David O'Brien and Melissa Shani Brown's ethnography *People, Place, Race, and Nation in Xinjiang, China: Territories of Identity* examines the way the identities of Uyghurs and Han are shaped by everyday forms of racialization in northwest China. By situating their study in conversation with histories of racialization and ethnicity-making in China and cultural studies examinations of racialization elsewhere, the book presents one of the first systematic studies of the embodied expression of racialized ethno-religious difference in this context. While other studies have looked at ethnic difference and identity in the region, this book, drawing on the lectures of Stuart Hall in *The Fateful Triangle* (Harvard University Press, 2017) among other scholarship, focuses particular attention on the way structures of power are inscribed, reinforced and legitimized through the production of



difference (p. 25). By centring their analysis on power, as the ability to influence and dominate, and by showing how these relations are built between Han and Uyghur citizens of the region, the book offers a convincing theorization of the way new racial formations contribute to banal – or unthought – violence and dehumanization.

The book is the product of a long-term ethnographic research project conducted between 2009 and 2019 in Xinjiang and elsewhere in China. Drawing on interviews conducted primarily in Uyghur and Chinese as well as analysis of media reports, state policy and industry documents, it examines the politicization of public life, tourism and museums. The authors' interpretation of this data as reflecting a racial discourse and practice, reveals the way framings of modernization, secularism and ethnicity actively mask structures of power even as they produce them in time and space.

The first two chapters of the book provide essential information for understanding the contributions of the book. The first chapter contextualizes of the current situation of mass internment in contemporary Xinjiang, situates the text in existing scholarship on the region and maps out the narrative arch of the book. The second chapter provides a conceptual tool kit for understanding terms like racism and ethnicity in the context of China, and the way such modernist projects index certain groups of people into superior positions relative to others. This process, they argue, in conversation with Kuan-Hsing Chen in *Asia as Method* (Duke University Press, 2010), is part of a mindset of "imperialization" which is taken up by Han authorities and citizens in Xinjiang (p. 53). As such a worldview is institutionalized, it becomes common-sense to conflate Han cultural values with civilization and modernity (p. 57). In this manner, Sinicization is internalized as an unquestioned good.

In chapter three, the book turns to the mass internment camp system as a limit case of this unquestioned attachment to Han values as a metric of "social health" (p. 72). The authors show how the logic of the camps centres around "curing cultural difference" by removing "weeds" from Uyghur society and improving the remaining population's "quality" through both Han-centred training and forced integration with Han populations. As this is carried out through arbitrary imprisonment, detention and removal at the scale of the population it produced the ultimate manifestation of an "ethno-eugenic" (p. 90) impulse that forms the end logic of an imperialistic mindset. At the same time, the authors are clear to show how top-down pressure reinforced support for anti-Muslim racism among low-level Han state workers who implemented the campaign.

The chapters four through six examine the way Han settlers in the region territorialize space by inscribing Han-centric values and how Uyghurs respond to this encroachment by measuring time in particular ways and choosing non-participation in aspects of Chinese life. They show how settler senses of time, space and taste were carried with them from home communities in eastern China and reproduced in Xinjiang Han communities, and how over time these values were weaponized by the state as the norm against which Uyghur "separatism" or "extremism" were measured. A threshold moment in this process, as discussed in chapter six, is the way the protests and violence of July 2009 in the city of Ürümqi solidified state protection of Han values. This resulted in a disavowal of the causes of the violence and thereby further perpetuated the structure of racialization that was already in motion.

The final three chapters of the book focus on the way state actors have revised official narratives of Xinjiang history through museumification, tourism and language over the past decade. They show how the Xinjiang Regional Museum, as a central arbiter of the official production of Xinjiang history, has worked to simultaneously indigenize Han in Xinjiang and imagine Uyghurs as descended from Han. This form of knowledge production is simultaneously a pedagogical tool used to "re-educate" Uyghurs and is also used to reshape Han understandings of Xinjiang as it is manifested in Han-centric theme parks, desecrated Uyghur shrines, and through the consumption of commodified versions of Uyghur culture. Together, these forms of symbolic domination produce a naturalization of Han-centric values as civilizational modernity.

This book is a significant contribution to the study of contemporary racialization. It does leave largely unexamined questions regarding the significance of capital accumulation in motivating the state and Han settlers to dispossess Uyghurs of their way of life via racialization – thus missing an opportunity to examine forces other than social power and ideology that motivate racialization as shown in an important body of scholarship on racial capitalism. However, by offering a comparative analysis of both Han and Uyghur encounters with state-directed ethnonationalism, this book shows how racism becomes structural in such a way that it becomes unthought – suffused in the atmosphere. This is significant in itself as a contribution to scholarship on Xinjiang, but it could also be placed in conversation with scholarship on contemporary racialization elsewhere in China and outside China in places like Shenzhen, the Middle East and Africa. Thinking through the way the racialization shown in this book can be related to Chinese anti-Blackness and anti-Islam elsewhere, and in dialogue with Euro-American racialization processes, is precisely how this text could be put to work in college classrooms.

doi:10.1017/S030574102400002X

Chinese Marriages in Transition: From Patriarchy to New Familism

Xiaoling Shu and Jingjing Chen. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. 218 pp. \$28.95 (pbk). ISBN 9781978804661

William Jankowiak

University of Nevada, Reno, NV, USA

Email: jankbill@unlv.nevada.edu

Chinese Marriages in Transition is a book everyone interested in the Chinese family will want on their shelf. It is a tight, compact, nuanced study that is a thoroughly researched overview of the findings and analytical trends that have shaped the Chinese family's configuration and reconfiguration across several historical decades.

The researchers draw upon China's Chinese General Social Survey 2010–2017 to analyse changing patterns of gender, marriage, fertility and family. The authors, who know the culture under study, want to understand how the transformation of the Chinese family converges with, or diverges from, Western patterns. Their analytical focus is longitudinal and highlights, amongst other things, the historic shift in gender ideology as a formalized belief and in actual behaviour.

They note that the second demographic thesis holds that as a society is “modernized” there is an inevitable shift toward late marriage, low fertility and preference for a nuclear family. In addition, individuals increasingly prioritize pursuing more individualistic and expressive fulfilment over family duties. They ask if this “worldwide” demographic trend applies to China, where Confucianism, the society's embedded folk morality, continues to exert a persuasive influence. They find that China, on the one hand, appears to be undergoing a similar demographic transition – increased divorce rate, more cohabitation and an increase in remarriage – while noting there are also persistent patterns that are inconsistent with the second demographic transition thesis: marriage, with women marrying earlier, remains a vital and central institution with childbirth linked to it. However, they point out that any discussion of family variation depends upon which setting and social class is the investigator's analytical focus: a rural or urban setting, college-educated or primary school-educated?