

Milan riot and the 2012 Rome march). They can also precipitate even sharper insights into the scope, nature and significance of these changes and a better appreciation of the myriad ways in which micro-level strategies and behaviour can reshape macro-level outcomes.

Zhang Gaozheng's *Migration and the Media* is a tremendous contribution to the fields of media, cultural, migration and Chinese studies and will undoubtedly appeal to advanced undergraduates, graduate students and scholars in these fields. This book emphatically reminds us that while structural variables such as demographic shifts and economic restructuring do indeed matter, so too do words and images. In this way, Zhang has not only filled in major gaps in our understanding of the Chinese migration experience to Italy, but also helped us reassess what we thought we already knew.

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Ambitious and Anxious: How Chinese College Students Succeed and Struggle in American Higher Education

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New York and Chichester, UK: Columbia University Press, 2020

294 pp. \$34.99; £30.00 (e-book)

ISBN 978-0-23154556-3 doi:10.1017/S0305741020000594

For decades, Chinese international students have filled American college classrooms and helped usher in a Golden Age of international higher education, growing from a population of roughly 55,000 in 2000 to over 369,000 in 2019 according to the Institute of International Education. But in 2016, new uncertainties arose between American universities and Chinese international students. From the beginning of his presidency, Donald Trump took an antagonistic stance towards China and advocated for tighter visa regulations in the promotion of his “America First” ideology. In particular, there has also been growing distrust of Chinese international students, with accusations of spying for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Even amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Arkansas senator Tom Cotton suggested that the US government should ban Chinese students from some majors at American universities due to concerns of stealing technology. Against this backdrop, understanding the experiences of Chinese international students has become even more crucial for the American higher education sector.

In *Ambitious and Anxious: How Chinese College Students Succeed and Struggle in American Higher Education* (Columbia University Press, 2020), Yingyi Ma offers an in-depth look at this much-maligned population, humanizing these students and dispelling stereotypes along the way. The methodology used in the book is robust. Through years of research, she combines 65 interviews with a survey of over 500 Chinese international students from across the American higher education sector, along with other data points including fieldwork in Chinese high schools. The author uses both descriptive statistics and multivariate analysis to explore the complex reality of this population, but this work is also buttressed throughout by narrative interviews. The mixed-method approach nicely integrates qualitative and quantitative datasets to maximize the understanding of the students.

Some sections of the book might connect with familiar tropes of Chinese international students, as some of the sample include those from affluent, elite families seeking STEM degrees (a common monolithic stereotype for this population that the book ultimately dispels). For instance, Chinese international students and their parents tend to use university rankings and flock to well-known universities. Indeed, the book does cover attempts to gain admission into Ivy League or other elite institutions. Likewise, the author chronicles how even affluent Chinese international students often choose STEM majors, as the practicality of finding a job remains one of the most important aspects in decision-making for this group. But even in these familiar areas, she adds nuance to the picture, such as gender disparities and socioeconomic inequalities that impact decisions by each student.

The deepest insight from the book comes from the exploration of these divergent characteristics that do not fit the standard mold for this population, such as those Chinese students who opted for smaller, less famous liberal arts colleges or non-traditional universities. In particular, one international school featured by Ma eschewed the essentialist test-centric curriculum that dominates Chinese education and instead embraced an existential approach, allowing students to explore their own interests and find themselves. This kind of Sudbury School with Chinese characteristics acts as a feeder to smaller liberal arts colleges rather than to mega research universities that dominate global league tables. These counternarratives are not tokenized into one chapter either, but rather peppered throughout the book to highlight the deep nuances of the population. These narratives that break the stereotypical model offer a bounty of new insights that are sometimes lost in discussions of this population.

The book covers most aspects of life and decision making for Chinese international students in the US. From why they first chose to come to the American universities, to how they felt and operated at the colleges, and what comes next, filling in the gaps with insights and theoretical connections. Nevertheless, despite the wide scope, the book does miss some potential areas like mental health or academic freedom, explicitly noted as delimitation by the author. Given the growing influence of the CCP on academia around the world, the experiences with this topic would have especially enriched the overall text. Still, the material covered in the volume is of considerable importance, especially as this population faces more scrutiny in the uncertain future of the sector.

One of the key takeaways from the book is that Chinese students in the US are not always fully formed people and, like all other young people, they are trying to find their way. While there are some suggestions of policies universities can take to help better serve this population, namely in the concluding chapter, the book is not a how-to guide, but rather an open account of a diverse population still trying to figure everything out in life. While the Golden Age might be over for international higher education and the numbers of these students could decline from enrolments, they will still be an important part of campus communities for years to come. With a difficult era looming over the relationship between universities and this population, this book helps to humanize a group that has been so important to American higher education, yet often misunderstood or marginalized.

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