

Africa's development. In short, that "it was the Chinese who were being exploited, rather than the other way around" (p. 27)

Chapter one, "The push to Ethiopia," describes the Chinese workers who went to Ethiopia to work on road infrastructure and their reasons for so doing: the relatively high salaries offered by Chinese companies in Africa were perceived by Chinese sojourners who were themselves often only precariously in China's new middle classes to be a "way out" to earn enough to establish themselves with a modicum of stability and security upon return to China, despite the boredom, loneliness, and "eating bitterness" that was part and parcel of company life in Ethiopia. Chapter two, "Preserving purity," details the divisions within different categories of Chinese by company worked for, between professionals and "peasant workers," and between Chinese expatriates and Ethiopians. Chapter three, "The politics of intimacy," explores the ways in which this distancing and preservation of boundaries was articulated by high status Chinese managers policing lower status workers' sexual liaisons and sharing of local food. Chapter four, "Fashioning Ethiopian laborers," focuses on the ways in which Chinese managers and foremen understood Ethiopian workers' lack of response to monetary incentives and unwillingness to develop the self and work hard as part and parcel of backwardness and laziness. Chapter five, "Inspiring indiscipline," draws out the ways in which Chinese managerial practices, such as arbitrary pay docking for presumptive labour infractions, seven-day working weeks, and equating efficiency with speed, led to a host of strategies of defiance: shirking, stealing, joking, wildcat strikes and deserting for other companies with higher pay or less onerous hours. Chapter six, "Entangled in lawsuits," describes perhaps the most effective strategy of resistance of all: lawsuits brought by Ethiopians to local courts, who were typically sympathetic to local Ethiopian labourers and often found in their favour. Chapter seven, "Speaking bitterness," reiterates the multiple ways in which Chinese sojourners "stuck between China and Africa, between a rural past and an urban future" (p. 174) both "eat" and "speak" bitterness: loneliness, monotony, separation from family, and the "low quality" of ungrateful local people who cannot be easily fashioned into the diligent, disciplined workforce Chinese managers assumed to be the requirement for, and reflection of, development.

Tales of Hope: Tastes of Bitterness is a must read for all those interested in China–Africa, in China as a new development actor, or in Chinese labour relations. It is already on my course syllabi for the next academic year.

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Migration and the Media: Debating Chinese Migration to Italy, 1992–2012

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Although migration has been a longstanding phenomenon, it continues to elicit heated debate in numerous countries, not least Italy. Over the last few decades, Chinese migration to Italy has prompted many to reassess the benefits and drawbacks of this development. In this light, Gaoheng Zhang's *Migration and the Media* is an

ambitious and path-breaking study of evolving perceptions of the growing Chinese migrant community from 1992 through 2012, a critical period when Chinese migration to Italy peaked and sparked widespread controversy. Incorporating approaches and conceptual tools from sociology, cultural studies and textual analysis, Zhang highlights the factors that shaped Italian media portrayals of the Chinese and traces how and why these depictions shifted in concert with three key developments: the 2007 Milan Chinatown riot, the 2005–2012 “Made in Italy” debates in Prato and the 2012 Chinese march in Rome. Through his nuanced examination, Zhang reveals how these developments reflected broader debates about economic globalization, local production and identity, and also explains how these forces intersect, conflict and eventually recombine in novel and important ways.

Zhang’s analysis builds upon a robust body of scholarship on Chinese migration, but also pushes it in an exciting and consequential direction. Through an investigation of the “specific frames” and “textual mechanisms” that the Italian, Chinese migrant, and even global media used in their accounts of the Chinese (p. 11), he skilfully argues that these transcripts reveal how underlying, sometimes hidden motives can reinforce or undercut pre-existing prejudice. Putting these transcripts in dialogue with one another is no small feat, for it requires a level of linguistic mastery and understanding of cultural processes that only a few scholars like Zhang possess. One example of this is his assessment of how Italian journalists used a criminological perspective to explain the seemingly unexplainable economic success of Chinese entrepreneurs. Throughout Italy, these early depictions became an easy shorthand for making some sense of the unfamiliar. However, they also perpetuated common stereotypes by juxtaposing and equating orientalist images of the Chinese with prevailing sentiments of Italian criminal syndicates such as the Camorra.

Through his three case studies, especially those on Prato and Rome, Zhang convincingly demonstrates that the Italian and Chinese communities are neither monolithic nor static. In the face of controversy and even tragedy, new actors in both groups – academics and migrant entrepreneurs – emerged to create a “cultural polyphony” and alternative ways of seeing, ones which disclosed the common interests and concerns of all residents, regardless of background. This shift was especially apparent in the aftermath of the heart-breaking murder in January 2012 of two Chinese migrants, one a baby girl, in Rome. Zhang traces how understandings of this incident dovetailed with larger narratives of victimhood and cultural trauma and eventually propelled the Chinese migrant community to overcome passivity and marginalization and to reclaim a sense of agency and humanity.

Not surprisingly, what we come to understand through this work is that Chinese migration to Italy is not just the simple result of push–pull factors, but an organic process of becoming, filled with blood, sweat and tears. Still, some questions remain. One wonders why some actors joined ongoing debates at the precise times that they did. For example, what propelled Xu Qiu Lin, a model migrant entrepreneur in Prato (chapter six), to eventually open up about his economic success while others hesitated or remained silent? And to what extent were the perspectives of ordinary, non-elite Chinese and Italians alike affected by these emerging narratives? In other words, how much variation in perspective was there within these respective communities? Such questions, admittedly difficult to answer fully through Zhang’s source materials, nevertheless remind us to consider further the fundamental sources of continuity and change. They can help us delve more deeply into whether the Chinese in Italy have reached a “tipping point” in their development or whether their recent actions were more spontaneous responses to so-called “black swan” events (such as the 2007

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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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.