

Sociology and Anthropology in Twentieth-Century China: Between Universalism and Indigenism. Edited by ARIF DIRLIK, GUANNAN LI, and HSIAO-PEI YEN. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2012. 384 pp. \$52.00 (cloth).

doi:10.1017/S0021911812001313

Part of the series “The Formation and Development of Academic Disciplines in Twentieth-Century China,” this volume contains thirteen papers by prominent scholars from mainland China and Taiwan, as well as the United States. The main focus is the so-called process of indigenization against the historical background of the formation of the disciplines at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Arif Dirlik introduces the historical development of the disciplines; five case studies on aspects mentioned in his introduction follow: the difficulties of establishing a new discipline in the 1930s (Wang Jianmin), Sun Benwen’s indigenization approach to the Chicago School (Li Guannan), the Marxist approach of Lei Jieqiong (Liang Yue), the frontier anthropology and Tibetology of Li Anzhai (Hsiao-pei Yen), and Huang Wenshan’s attempt to create a “national science” and oppose wholesale Westernization in close cooperation with the Guomindang regime (Li Guannan). These case studies are followed by one broader paper on the difficulty of “regionalism” (*quyuhua*) versus the national narrative (Wang Mingming).

Taiwan is the focus of the next three papers, followed by two papers on discourses in mainland China. An overview of the indigenization discourse of the 1980s/90s in Taiwan (Maukuei Chang) is followed by more focused papers on anthropology and postcolonial discourses in Taiwan (Allen Chun) and *bentu* social research in the framework of “Taiwan studies” (Ya-Chung Chuang). The essays by Sun Liping and Guo Yuhua again are more like case studies, since they discuss their own application of “Western” theories such as those of the Budapest school or Bourdieu (Sun Liping), as well as oral history and postcolonial theories (Spivak, Duara) for the mainland Chinese context.

Arif Dirlik—co-editor and author of the first chapter—is famous for his postcolonial perspective on questions of Chinese Marxism, modernity, and the specific Chinese development of state-society relations. This time, knowledge production is at the core—and therefore a highly political process: From the 1970s to the 1990s, Western social science theory addressed the diversity versus universality debates via postmodern and postcolonial approaches. In feminist studies, such writers as Chandra Mohanty argued that “Western” feminism has had the effect of colonizing other women: many African, Latin American, and Asian women rejected the notion of feminism as an alien “Western” concept. Others look for the indigenization (or authentication¹) of Western women’s

¹This expression was used at the conference “The Indigenization of Women’s Studies Teaching—Asian Experiences” (*Funü xue jiaoxue bentuhua—yazhou jingyan*), organized by the Chinese Women’s College with Ford Foundation support (Beijing, October 19–21, 2002); the Chinese term is “*zhagenhua*.”

studies or the incorporation of appropriate aspects into national approaches to women's studies to form their own brand of feminism. This threefold reaction itself is already based on "false universalities." But it can also be found in the China of the 1990s and 2000s.

Nevertheless, this anthology does not step into the trap of politicized short-sightedness. The state-sponsored search for indigenous roots of Chinese sciences became very much a hot topic in the post-Tiananmen era, especially in the context of the self-strengthening culture debate of the 1990s. The 1980s Taiwanese movement of "*Zhongguohua*" in a way became the blueprint for this new discourse. But the search for Chinese identity, which plays an important role in the formation of the disciplines of anthropology and perhaps to a lesser degree for sociology, is much older.

The first translation of Western sociology, by Yan Fu, was done for self-strengthening reasons. In the early twentieth century, sociology was considered a powerful weapon of the Europeans (pp. 2–3). The later development of sociology and anthropology (often subsumed under sociology) proved this fact: mainly trained in Europe and the United States, the returned students of the first and second generations managed to establish "political" disciplines that served social policies. Indigenization meant to apply imported knowledge to the four areas of rural reconstruction, community studies, Marxism, and syncretic sociology (p. 6). Influenced by Confucian and Christian thought, by scholars from the Chicago School or cultural anthropologists, and by French or German founders of sociology, Chinese sociologists managed to establish only twenty-two sociology departments by 1947. Whereas sociology as a discipline vanished after the establishment of the People's Republic, the political value of anthropology secured its survival. Dirlik's summary of the historical development of anthropology systemizes the broad spectrum of northern, southern, and eastern schools along the lines of materialist, functionalist, and nationalist academic traditions (pp. 12–14), and also discusses the pioneering studies in Tibetology during the Japanese occupation.

Dirlik's overview, as well as most of the other texts, avoids a critical assessment of the "Chinese" and "non-Chinese" categories of scientific movements and of the political implications embedded in these categories. Li Guannan describes very clearly the case of the intimate relationship between the Nationalist government and nationalist thoughts on culture and ethnicity in the process of nation building. He warns: ". . . this process is crucial for us to reflect on our own contemporary academic practices, which often intersect with ideology and politics" (p. 132). Wang Mingming's excellent analysis of the "civilization process" by which religion is used to assimilate "minority nationalities" makes clear that postmodern historiography has not escaped the national narrative (p. 184)—it produced "images" of Han and minorities that in turn are reproduced by foreign anthropologists. He concludes that this will lead to the extinction of the multiplicity and richness of the history of the "minority nationalities." Images of national identities also play a crucial role in Tan Chee-Beng's essay, which analyzes the different meaning of "being Chinese" for "Chinese of different nationalities" in the Chinese diaspora.

Since anthropology and sociology in China are practiced mainly “inside” a multiethnic nation that assimilated and borrowed, produced heterodox narratives, and struggled to resurrect some kind of “indigenous”—non-Western—knowledge, it is hard to judge how these two disciplines will develop. Dirlik clearly envisions a twofold process in which particularities of Chinese societies could lead to some indigenization. This indigenization “requires more than just only an affirmation of a Chinese identity” (p. 31); it must simultaneously be linked to the global context, which could get lost in the indigenization process: “The social sciences as they have developed over the last century and a half from their European origins are clearly at risk [in the indigenization process]” (p. 23). On the other hand, this book clearly proves that Chinese names do not necessarily indicate “scholars from China.” There is nothing to fear if all scholars are as well equipped with knowledge from both systems as the contributors to this volume. The book is full of very dense and rich information on the discourses and struggles of Chinese and Western scholars alike to avoid the traps of “*essentialism*”—inventing tradition or indigenizing modernity in response to political needs. This collection of essays is essential for all “sinological sociologists” and will contribute much food for discussion for graduate seminars in sociology, anthropology, and sinology alike.

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Objectifying China, Imagining America: Chinese Commodities in Early America. By CAROLINE FRANK. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011. xiii, 257 pp. \$75.00 (cloth); \$25.00 (paper).
doi:10.1017/S0021911812001325

While the study of contacts and exchanges between China and non-Asian societies over the past several hundred years is still dominated by variations on the (Western) impact/(Chinese) response model, the recent reemergence of China as a major player on the world stage has led cultural historians increasingly to turn their attention to earlier moments in which China’s presence was powerfully felt well beyond its borders. Their studies have foregrounded the significance of the roles played by Chinese objects and ideas in Enlightenment thought, early modern consumer society, and literary and artistic developments in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe. The colonial American engagement with China has, until now, largely been regarded as merely imitative of British trends.

Caroline Frank, in her eminently engaging and often provocative new book, sets out to redress the consequent neglect of this topic and to challenge a number of misconceptions that have arisen from this oversimplified view. The most