

gradually challenged and evolved, leading to the theorization of news as currency. Similarly, when analysing the removal of the editor-in-chief, Chua describes how her initial impression of the event being a case of state repression is rejected and replaced by an evidence-based story of commercial infighting, which illustrates nicely the *jianghu* imaginary of the news sector. Evidently, doing so shows how scholarly reasoning progresses with new data, making the analysis more compelling. It also makes the book highly accessible to readers outside academia.

As an anthropological work, the book focuses on only one news outlet. Readers may question its representativeness, especially given existing studies on critical journalists. This is a legitimate concern, and the case selection likely has affected the findings. However, given the rich data and convincing analysis this book presents, I believe it represents more future research opportunities than a flaw of this research.

The Currency of Truth is easily one of my favourite books and I cannot recommend it enough. Scholars and students in a wide array of disciplines such as anthropology, political science, communications and sociology will benefit from it tremendously. Policymakers or members of the general public who are interested in media politics in China and beyond will find it educational, inspiring and highly accessible. The book even has an open access version. So go and get it!

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The Political Economy of Making and Implementing Social Policy in China

Jiwei Qian. Singapore: Palgrave MacMillan, 2021. 205pp. £49.99 (hbk). ISBN 9789811650246

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Discussing social policy in a general way is a challenge for any author addressing any country at any given point in time. The breadth of policy that needs to be covered is daunting and presumes a knowledge and interest in social insurance, welfare and assistance, an understanding of the history and politics of a given place, as well as the ability to explain what can be complex policy and programmes which can seem to change dramatically and simultaneously stay the same over time. Which is to say that any criticisms of Qian's *The Political Economy of Making and Implementing Social Policy in China* should be situated in the understanding that the undertaking itself is admirable and that this is a welcome contribution to discussions of social policy in China.

Taking a political economy approach, Qian argues that reform of the various components of social policy in China can be explained by three different but related elements. First, the incentives and capacity of the bureaucracy at all levels of government, especially between central and local government. Second, interagency coordination in government. Third and finally, coordination between government and society. Particular aspects of Chinese governance like the impact of performance evaluations are seen as critical to these explanations. Taken together, these points highlight tensions between the various levels of government in China as well as in the relationships between different interests, including those who ultimately receive or benefit from social policy, and how these impact the relative success of reforms in the policy areas examined.



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.

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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

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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