

advantage of existing community strengths. Then, a subsequent question is: why did they fail to do so? In addition to individual or community choice, do structural factors and external reasons (such as political capital, homeownership type and government reaction) matter? How would homeowners in these different communities explain their tactics and differences across communities? The representatives from these communities held meetings together and shared experiences with each other. What would they have to say about differences in organization tactics? In brief, *why* did different communities resort to the tactics they chose?

Furthermore, a main argument of the book is that collective action of homeowners helps build durable community organizations that extend to issues beyond incineration, even for communities of failed cases. This might be true for *some* homeowners in those communities. Yet is it possible that the failure of anti-incineration activism might have disempowered *other* homeowners and undermine civic engagement? Finally, the evidence presented to show enduring environmental activism is from events that occurred *on the heels of* the collective action. Since over ten years have passed and China has transitioned from the Hu-Wen era to the Xi era, how enduring are those organizations and activism today?

Overall, with its rich data, this book is a welcome addition to the burgeoning field of civil society, environmental activism and contentious politics.

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Weibo Feminism: Expression, Activism, and Social Media in China

Aviva Wei Xue and Kate Rose. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. 213 pp. £19.79 (pbk). ISBN 9781350231481

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Weibo Feminism examines the rise of radical feminism on China's most popular and heavily censored microblog platform, Weibo. The spectrum of radical feminism encompasses various aspects, from prioritizing female interests and rights to creating women's words and expressions, distancing oneself from proposals of reforming within the current system to improve gender equality, protesting the male-dominated LGBTQ+ movement paradigm and neoliberalism, and rejecting nation-state-family institutions. The grassroots feminism approach captured in the book critiques elitist feminism, even though many Weibo feminists are highly educated (e.g. PhD students with transnational experiences). The book describes how the emergence of radical feminism in China incorporates distinct Chinese characteristics, while echoing feminist movements in present-day South Korea and showing parallels with global radical feminism in the 1970s.

Weibo Feminism covers a broad range of issues, including the subjugation in representing women in history and in contemporary China, reproductive questions such as single women's preference for having offspring and the problem of surrogacy, women's property rights, the naming politics of children, the anti-marriage movement, the betrayal by male counterparts who sacrifice feminist agendas for other activist goals, women's desires and imaginaries, and new feminist strategies of online contestation. The book is organized with five main chapters on themes and/or theoretical threads: digital feminism responding to the COVID-19 and its control; feminists contesting



online discourses on women; reproductive rights contestations; feminist contestations on the concept of intersectionality; and feminist contestations on the use of Chinese language. *Weibo Feminism* provides rich data and insights into grassroots feminist contestations within China's limited public sphere, focusing on the Xi era.

This review situates *Weibo Feminism's* discussion of new grassroots feminists in the conceptual question of "who are Chinese intellectuals" in the Xi era. Public intellectuals, citizen intellectuals (as discussed by William A. Callahan and Timothy Cheek), citizen intelligentsia (as researched by this reviewer) and *minjian* grassroots intellectuals (as researched by Sebastian Veg) are iconic figures having life-long social influence through print, digital and other new types of media such as independent documentary films. Unlike them, the mass Weibo feminists are ordinary Chinese who have become activists and online influencers. Weibo feminists emerge through direct engagement and contestation with the public and the state. They are new grassroots activists and intellectuals in China's tightened public sphere, democratizing the paradigm of studying the public sphere, both intellectual and activist, by addressing feminist agendas with women as the main leaders and participants in public life. The anarchist feminist approach of radical feminism can be dated back to the theories of He Yinzhen, the birth mother of Chinese feminism, as discussed by Lydia He Liu, Rebecca E. Karl and Dorothy Ko in *The Birth of Chinese Feminism: Essential Texts in Transnational Theory* (Columbia University Press, 2013).

Unlike older generations of contemporary Chinese feminists working on gender equality and women's rights, *Weibo* feminists openly confront misogyny – a system of morality. Establishing a form of morality is the highest level of immorality according to ancient Chinese philosophy (p. 37), which continues to govern Chinese people today. Misogyny defends sexism and patriarchy as it attacks challengers and perpetuates gender discrimination (see Kate Manne's *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* [Oxford University Press, 2017]).

Despite facing censorship, grassroots feminist voices are possibly and widely heard only in this era of self-media (*zimeiti*), a modern digital form of the grassroots Chinese tea house. For instance, a Weibo feminist's questioning and reshaping of the official propaganda anime figure, Jiang Shanjiao, garnered over 10,000 replies and 100,000 reposts before its deletion on the second day (p. 26). Even the illiterate Ma Panyan managed to type and write her story on social media. She had been deprived of family property, forced into child marriage, and sexually and physically abused, which led to her giving birth to two children. Her writing reveals the conspiracy of relatives, village fellows and grassroots officers who wove a network to trap Ma (pp. 156–158). Apart from on self-media, misogynistic intellectual and activist communities, influenced by authoritarianism and patriarchy, tend to agitate, exclude and erase such grassroots, occasionally "vulgar" and "violent," "radical" and subversive expressions of feminism. This underscores how women are trapped in the misogyny of literacy in the Chinese language, exemplified by cases like that of Lin Yihan, who tragically committed suicide after completing an autobiographical fiction which detailed her struggle with sexual abuse by her senior Chinese literature teacher, disguised rhetorically as her "first love" (chapter five). In publications discussing Chinese feminism under (self-)censorship (such as the 2021 Introduction for the forum "Chinese Feminism Under (Self-) Censorship: Practice and Knowledge Production") and forthcoming research on the question of Chinese feminism and Uyghur women's liberation, this reviewer argues that some feminist scholars might also distance themselves from the affiliations of "radical feminism," as shown in how they have cut connections with feminist activists in the rights defence movement of the 2000s and remain silent on feminist issues in current ethnic contestations.

Weibo Feminism is written with the rigour of radical feminist activism, legitimizing women's anger in China's contexts. The meaning of exploring women's anger is discussed in Soraya Chemaly's *Rage Becomes Her: The Power of Women's Anger* (Simon & Schuster, 2018). *Weibo Feminism* does not follow the convention of English academic writing. Considering the political economy of knowledge production in the global North and situated knowledge production in

China, readers can further develop the complex dimensions of interpreting the rich data provided in this book. The authors are encouraged to provide their data for open access and further research. To enhance the book, contextualizing its data reports and engaging with scholarship for a deeper analysis with multiple theoretical dimensions would benefit readers such as undergraduate students. Additionally, the book should have explained the puzzle of what contributes to the rise of radical feminism amidst the state's increasing control over all aspects of Chinese society. Furthermore, *Weibo Feminism* does not explicitly outline its methodology. The book relies on critical discourse analysis of rich text data fetched from Weibo, including content quickly deemed censored.

Considering the above-mentioned features and potential improvements, I recommend *Weibo Feminism* to researchers and postgraduate students in the fields of China studies, gender and sexuality, cultural studies and media studies.

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Feminisms with Chinese Characteristics

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Feminism with Chinese Characteristics is a well-edited volume consisting of original research, translated work, interviews and reprinted articles by a wide range of scholars, writers and activists from multiple locales. The hybrid form is appropriate given both the plurality of feminisms and the multiplicity of Chineseness, as the editors, Ping Zhu and Hui Faye Xiao, emphasize. They set the tone of the volume in the introduction, describing the book's objective as the deconstruction of binary structures in the study and understanding of both feminism and Chinese characteristics. They forcefully argue for "a broader use of 'feminisms' ... to contest and open up 'Chinese characteristics' as a notion constrained by racism, traditionalism, nationalism, or hierarchical spatialization and biopoliticization in different historical periods" and a view of "the ensemble of Chinese feminisms ... as a transnational product that seeks to situate the imaginary notion of Chineseness in the global context" (pp. 3–4). Zhu and Xiao organize the 12 articles into three sections that address three overlapping themes: the ways in which Chinese feminisms are understood beyond the global–local binary structure, the ways in which Chinese feminists theorize and practise plural feminisms, and the production and representation of contemporary Chinese feminisms in creative forms.

The first part, "Chinese Feminisms in the Age of Globalization," includes two essays, an interview and a talk transcript. To begin with, Nicola Spakowski examines various responses by Chinese feminists to the notion of gender imported from transnational exchanges, and Li Xiaojiang, in a talk given at the Women's Institute of Spain in Madrid in 2008, challenges the ethnocentric Western notion of "gender equality" by accounting for plural understandings and practices of this notion in gender relationships in China. Both scholars point to important "Chinese characteristics" that serve to conceptualize gender, identity and equality and, thereby, destabilize the essentialized view of the influence of imported Western theories on Chinese feminism, and they describe various efforts by Chinese feminists to construct theories grounded in specific contexts. Two chapters in