

mainstreaming in the social sciences. He points out that those predicating on the primacy of change over resilience, of connections over autonomy, and on avoiding “savage slots” like the plague actually reject taking a form of temporality seriously that has been crucial for humans over most of their history as defense against submission and exploitation. In a time of ever more pervasive expansion of exploitative structures, the devotees of this academic fashion implicitly bolster this expansion in the name of “change” instead of recognising and supporting cultural patterns serving those under attack as structural footholds of resistance. They thereby reinforce – probably often unconsciously – the ideological pretension of political and economic predators against traditions and people that have managed to resist them for millennia to this day.

The temporality that “allagists,” i.e., those idolising change as *the* appropriate focus of research and thought, whom the author casually refers to as “modernists,” “reject on epistemological and moral grounds is actually the nonmodern time of the subaltern (including indigenous people and marginalized communities)” (16). These grounds, which contemporary scientists, agents of “development” and “progress” partly share with history’s bluntly violent and ruthless conquering systems of human exploitation, are themselves infected by ideologies of inequality and implicitly self-serving biases of contempt for “backwardness” and “outdated (“archaic”) forms.”

For the author as an ethno-archaeologist of societies that have been at least *partly* successful in resisting political and cultural expansionism, it is evident that “some of the essential characteristics of materiality (durability, ability to stabilize collectives, resistance to change) are crucial in constituting nonmodern temporalities and in effecting resistance” (16). In both the case of the people under study and the employed approach, the insistence on cultural autonomy that coincides with resistance to changes that would perceptibly result in a loss of economic and social self-determination becomes a struggle for equity, collective and individual liberty in an environment, both regional and global, fraught with predation of the more powerful on those they are able to coerce or lure into playing along.

But how can resistance to change be “progressive” if *the very notion* of “progress” is defined as a specific – i.e., a “positive” – kind of *change*? The answer is simple: When the impending change – from the perspective of the concerned (individual or collective) human subject – cannot be considered “positive.” Examples are the coercion into slave status or other serious violations of established rights (e.g., to crucial resources like land, or sociocultural order, or to participation in decision-making on crucial matters) by powerful invaders, authoritarian states, reckless commercial enterprises, and other predatory rackets. Resisting *this* kind of change for the sake of preserving higher levels of equity, codetermination, and tried sustainability, is plausibly labelled “counter-hegemonic” by the author. If “true progress” is to be measured in relation to *these* dimensions (and not just to temporarily extracted revenue or hierarchical complexity), societies with more “sophisticated” and diverse material culture and econom-

ic structures might well have a hard time “catching up” with – from a metropolis point of view – “marginal,” “archaic,” and “backward” communities. To show this with an innovative power-conscious archaeology of the present, one that is anthropologically “deeper” than many rather ethnocentric Foucault-styled projects, is a merit González-Ruibal can be proud of. Learning from “subaltern” and cultural *Others* is a potential to which anthropology has long developed cutting-edge keys. He shows us that the edge still cuts if not blunted by exaggerated “progressist” (or rather *allagist*) biases.

Immo Eulenberger and Ameyu Godesso Roro

Goodman, Davis S. G.: *Class in Contemporary China*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014. 233 pp. ISBN 978-0-7456-5337-2. Price: £ 15.00

“Class in Contemporary China” offers a timely and extensive review of the evolution of class both as analytical concept and experienced reality in the People’s Republic of China. As Goodman rightly points out in the beginning of his book, class remains “central to the understanding of social and political change” (1) despite the absence of *jieji*, the Chinese term for class, in both official discourse and everyday conversation in the post-reform era.

The importance of class cannot be overemphasized in Mao’s China. Goodman traces the historical development of class since the foundation of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the 1920s and highlights the mobilizing power of revolutionary class analysis based on Marxist-Leninist ideology for the party-state to establish its sociopolitical control from the bottom level. In land reforms carried out in the countryside in the early 1950s, the label of “landlords” was often created in places where the pattern of landholding was far from being exploitative. Work teams also organized villagers to attend denunciation meetings and learn the language of class struggle, which effectively helped eradicate the power of the local elites.

After Mao’s death, class defined by ideology has lost its political currency. The party-state has shifted away from class struggle to economic development, where its current political legitimacy lies. The CCP, the alleged vanguard of China’s workers and peasants went as far as welcoming entrepreneurs to apply for its membership from 2000 on. The ideology-laden *jieji* consequently gave way to the politically neutral *jieceng* (stratum) in Chinese publications to acknowledge drastic social stratification and tone down criticism of stark inequality after three decades of market reform.

Agreeing with the general trend within sociological studies that combine Weberian and Marxist perspectives on class, Goodman adopts a tripartite framework to analyze the class structure in today’s China: dominant, intermediate, and subordinate classes. His classification is based on “economic configuration, political behaviour, social mobility and symbolic construction” (29). The dominant class includes officials (including high-rank managers of state-owned enterprises), managers of large private or foreign-invested enterprises, and successful en-

trepreneurs. These political and economic elites often collide and sometimes overlap with each other since market socialism is still largely subordinated to the state sector. The intermediate classes gain their positions through “possess[ion of] skills, knowledge and organizational experience” (93) rather than means of production or political power. Goodman uses the plural form of class to stress the fragmentation within this category and highlight how the party-state promotes the discourse of an ambivalent and inclusive middle class to encourage economic development and maintain sociopolitical stability. The subordinate classes, even more diverse than the middle classes, derive their position largely from their manual labor: urban workers, migrant peasant workers, and peasants.

Goodman’s categorizations, though not theoretically innovative, are useful for understanding the implications of social stratification and inequality for China’s political economy and social change. By looking into case studies of protests and contentious politics among different social groups in recent years, he suggests that socioeconomic changes are still unlikely to bring about regime change because of the dominance of the state sector in market socialism. The book nevertheless concludes with a curiously abrupt yet subtle anecdotal comment from a taxi driver who laughed at the idea of being a Chinese Communist Party member because he was one of the “simple members of the working class” and the “Party is not for people like us” (190). As suggested by Goodman, despite the abandonment of class struggle, the language and practice of class have been socialized in schools, shopping sites, and housing markets, which may have substantial consequences in the years to come.

One key concern for class analysis in today’s China is whether the subaltern groups would form political alliances and class solidarity to challenge the status quo. The rural-urban dividing household registration (*hukou*) system since the 1950s has played a particularly significant role in shaping the positions and experiences of these subordinate groups. Under Mao, urban workers enjoyed job security and basic welfare through the work unit (*danwei*) system and formed a strong sense of entitlement and working class identity. Peasants, by contrast, were deprived of both physical and social mobility during collectivization and suffered dearly from famine. In the reform era, the breakdown of the *danwei* system resulted in a large group of laid-off urban workers without pension, while over two million peasants migrated to towns and cities to become the new industrial and service workforce. The competition and antagonism between urban workers and migrant workers will likely prevent them from forming a new working class so long as institutional biases against peasants and migrants persist.

A veteran China scholar who has been studying China since the late 1960s, Goodman demonstrates his formidable command of the vast interdisciplinary literature, mostly in political science, sociology, and anthropology, under and after Mao. This book is well researched and highly condensed, though it sometimes suffers from repetitiveness due partly to its structure and partly to editing. The main strength of this book is its intimate knowledge of

Chinese publications on the issues of inequality and social stratification. This is particularly important because the Chinese party-state has been actively funding, shaping, and co-opting such research endeavours and results. Goodman’s synthesis and evaluation of the Chinese writings on the middle classes are particularly revealing. He demonstrates convincingly, by comparing different sociological studies of the Chinese middle class, how different definitions and calculations among Chinese scholars both contribute and reflect “a powerful state-sponsored discourse of the middle class designed to encourage economic growth, consumption and a rising standard of living” and “to mediate the increasing social inequality” (109).

Overall this book provides a valuable guide for China scholars and undergraduate students as well as non-specialists who are curious about social stratification, inequality, and class formation in contemporary China.

Minhua Ling

Graham, Mark: *Anthropological Explorations in Queer Theory*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2014. 169 pp. ISBN 978-1-4094-5066-5. Price: £ 54.00

“Anthropological Explorations in Queer Theory” (hereafter AEQT) is a fascinating book in which, true to his title, Mark Graham explores how queer theory can inform understandings of social topics otherwise considered outside its purview. In this regard, this book can be situated in a body of scholarship regarding what many have termed “travelling theory.” Against the idea that feminist theory speaks about gender, critical race theory speaks about ethnicity, queer theory speaks about sexuality, and so on, this scholarship examines how, say, feminist theory illuminates economics, or critical race theory illuminates science. Deparochializing theories otherwise assumed to be constrained by identity politics broadens all our conceptual frameworks. AEQT exemplifies the powerful potential of this approach. It exemplifies as well the frustrating limitations of such approaches when they do not fully account for the bodies of work they ostensibly engage. Thankfully, we can work with this insightful text to explore possibilities for a more comprehensive anthropological queer theory.

AEQT begins with an introduction that frames Graham’s goals with regard to both anthropology and queer theory. This introduction, which I discuss below, is followed by seven chapters in which Graham uses queer theory to speak to questions of anthropological interest in the “West,” particularly Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Australia. In chap. 1, “Things,” Graham explores ontology, materiality, and even the fetish, engaging with theories of metaphysics and materiality ranging from Spinoza, Bergson, and Deleuze to more recent scholarship on ontology and the quantum-physics inflected work of Karen Barad. A particular focus for Graham is “the enactment of boundaries around things” (31) and the ways that thingness is thereby socially constituted. These interests extend into chap. 2, “Sexonomics,” particularly through Graham’s careful attention to commodities and gifts as both things and circulating relationalities. Baudrillard is