

leed exploration of how Chinese historians engage with the discipline's theoretical and methodological challenges. Through nine rigorously translated and annotated essays, the editors succeed in showcasing the diversity and depth of Chinese scholarship in global history. The anthology not only invites readers to rethink entrenched Eurocentric paradigms but also advocates for a more multiperspectival and inclusive approach to understanding global interconnectivity.

The essays collectively highlight three key themes central to reimagining global historiography: the critique of Eurocentrism, the integration of Chinese perspectives, and the development of innovative methodologies that bridge national and global narratives. By interrogating foundational concepts like "modernization," "civilization," and "progress," the authors challenge reductionist frameworks and propose alternatives that reflect the complexity and diversity of historical trajectories. This effort to decenter dominant paradigms and embrace alternative perspectives is the anthology's most significant contribution, offering both a critique of and a roadmap for global history.

However, the volume also acknowledges the challenges inherent in these ambitions. A recurring tension in the essays is the call for a "global history with Chinese characteristics," which, while intellectually stimulating, raises questions about the risk of fostering a new form of Sinocentrism. Developing a distinct vocabulary and methodological approach for Chinese global history demands careful consideration of its implications for the discipline's accessibility, universality, and relevance within international academia. Moreover, the in-

creasing politicization of academic research in China, particularly under Xi Jinping, presents additional obstacles. These political dynamics, including efforts to establish "discourse power" in global academia, complicate Chinese scholars' ability to navigate the balance between advancing national narratives and contributing to an open, collaborative global historiography.

Globalgeschichten aus China is essential reading for anyone interested in global history, historiographical debates, or the role of non-Western perspectives in reshaping our understanding of the past. By fostering dialogue, methodological innovation, and a commitment to multiperspectival analysis, the volume sets the stage for future scholarship that fully embraces the complexities of global interconnectivity. It challenges existing paradigms while offering a vision for a more inclusive and equitable global historiography, positioning Chinese perspectives as a vital component of the discipline's evolution.

**Lisa Rofel and Carlos Rojas, eds.,
*New World Orderings: China and the
Global South* (Duke University Press,
2023), 268 pp.**

Reviewed by
Pablo I. Ampuero-Ruiz, Amsterdam

Lisa Rofel and Carlos Rojas's edited volume is a timely and ambitious publication that peruses China's evolving relationship with the Global South, particularly in Af-

rica, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. Through a multidisciplinary lens that integrates anthropology, history, political economy, and cultural studies, the book problematizes the conventional “monster or messiah” dichotomy that often frames discussions about China’s global engagements. Instead, the editors and contributors advance a more nuanced interpretation of China’s transregional relationships, situating them within longer historical trajectories of South-South solidarity, Cold War geopolitics, and the shifting contours of global capitalism.

The book is organized into three main thematic sections: “Geopolitics and Discourse,” “Labor and Exchange,” and “Mobility and Displacement.” Each section brings together chapters that explore different facets of China’s engagement with the Global South, from state-level diplomatic and economic initiatives to the lived experiences of individuals navigating transnational networks. The first section focuses on China’s international relations from a historical and cultural perspective. The second section explores economic and labor dimensions, offering ethnographic insights into how these processes unfold on the ground. Finally, the third section examines cultural exchanges and diasporic movements, highlighting how China’s global reach is reshaping social and cultural identities. Across the diversity of themes distributed in 12 chapters runs a leitmotif of thinking China’s complex relation with the Global South from a comprehensive, grounded, and multilayered perspective. Rofel and Rojas begin by challenging dominant geopolitical narratives by reframing China’s expansion not merely as an extension of Western imperial or neo-

liberal models but as part of a broader, historically rooted process of “worldmaking.” The editors emphasize how China’s engagement with the Global South has been shaped by and, in turn, reconfigures longstanding histories of socialist internationalism, postcolonial nationalism, and developmentalist projects. Importantly, the book does not reduce China’s role to a singular economic or political model; rather, it presents China’s interactions as historically contingent, relational, and fraught with contradictions.

The first collection of chapters, grouped under the theme Geopolitics and Discourse, examine ideological narratives and policy frameworks that shape China’s international relations. Nicolai Volland discusses China’s Cold War cultural diplomacy in Africa and Asia, while Luciano Damián Bolinaga explores the shift from the Washington Consensus to the Beijing Consensus in Latin America. Derek Sheridan interrogates historical comparisons between China-Tanzania relations, and Ng Kim Chew analyzes Southeast Asian sinophone literature in global discourse.

The second part of the book, “Labour and Exchange,” delves into economic entanglements, labor migration, and trade relations. T. Tu Huynh investigates the experiences of African migrants in Chinese manufacturing hubs, and Nellie Chu examines religious and economic networks among West African and South Korean church leaders in Guangzhou. Rachel Cypher and Lisa Rofel assess how Chinese soybean investments impact Argentine agriculture, while Andrea Bachner considers cultural narratives that frame labor relations between China and Latin America.

The final section, “Mobility and Displacement,” explores migration, diasporic identities, and cultural adaptation. Mingwei Huang studies racial imaginaries surrounding Chinese communities in Johannesburg, while Yu-lin Lee examines representations of the sinophone diaspora in Southeast Asian cinema. Carlos Rojas discusses narratives of homeland and diaspora in sinophone Southeast Asia, and Shuang Shen offers a historical perspective on the global circulation of Chinese literary production. One of the key strengths of this collection is its critique of simplistic binaries such as “Washington Consensus vs. Beijing Consensus” or “imperialist vs. benevolent partner.” Several chapters, including Luciano Damiano Bolinaga’s analysis of China’s role in Latin America, underscore the ways in which local elites, economic structures, and political conditions shape the reception and consequences of Chinese engagement. This approach moves beyond a top-down analysis and considers the agency of Global South actors in navigating their relationships with China.

From a historical perspective, the volume effectively situates China’s engagement with the Global South within a *longue durée* framework. The relationship between these regions, as several contributors highlight, has evolved through distinct phases—from limited interactions in the early twentieth century to the ideological and diplomatic alignments of the Cold War—era to, more recently, the economic entanglements driven by China’s demand for raw materials. This historical contextualization is crucial for understanding the persistence of asymmetrical power dynamics despite the rhetoric of South-South cooperation.

From an anthropological standpoint, the book raises important questions about how Chinese investments and labor migration are transforming social and cultural landscapes in Latin America. Although much of the scholarship on China in the Global South focuses on macroeconomic and political considerations, *New World Orderings* also offers perspectives on how local communities experience and interpret Chinese influence, and their agency in producing a distinctive kind of engagement with Chinese actors. This bottom-up perspective is particularly valuable for scholars concerned with issues of identity, mobility, and transnational networks.

New World Orderings successfully enters into a conversation with the broader literature on “Global China.” In both cases, there is an explicit effort to address China’s growing presence across the globe from a grounded perspective that challenges the simplistic formulations seen in geopolitical analyses. While *New World Orderings* does not offer the depth of a monograph dedicated to the role of, for example, Chinese investments in Zambia’s copper and construction sectors like in Ching Kwan Lee’s *The Specter of Global China*, the editors and contributors provide an interdisciplinary framework that will encourage researchers to explore the complexity and specificity of Chinese engagements in different areas and territories across the Global South.

One of the book’s methodological strengths is the diversity of perspectives brought together through the concept of “worldmaking,” which allows it to capture the complexity of China’s global engagements. The combination of historical analyses, ethnographic insights, and political

economy perspectives makes for a compelling and multidimensional account. However, as with any edited volume, the coherence of the contributions varies. While some chapters provide deep empirical analysis, others remain more theoretical and speculative, leaving certain case studies underexplored.

Another limitation is the book's relative neglect of grassroots resistance and contestation. While the volume acknowledges the asymmetries in China–Global South relations, it could have further examined how local actors resist, negotiate, or subvert Chinese influence. For instance, indigenous and environmental movements in Latin America have mounted significant opposition to Chinese-backed extractive projects, a dimension that could have been more fully integrated into the analysis.

New World Orderings is an essential contribution to the study of China's role in the contemporary global order. Its interdisciplinary approach, historical depth, and critical engagement with dominant geopolitical frameworks make it a valuable resource for scholars of social anthropology, history, political economy, and international relations. For researchers looking at China's presence in the different corners of the Global South, the book provides a compelling account of how economic, political, and cultural dynamics are reshaping interregional ties in ways that defy simplistic narratives of dominance or solidarity. While the volume does not offer definitive answers about the ultimate trajectory of China's engagement with the Global South, it does provide a sophisticated analytical framework for understanding the ongoing transformations of global power.

Yaroslav Hrytsak, *Ukraine: Biographie einer bedrängten Nation* (C. H. Beck, 2024), 480 pp.

Reviewed by
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Yaroslav Hrytsak's history of Ukraine, published in Ukrainian shortly before Russia's full-scale invasion of the country in early 2022, is the result of years of work on a synthetic narrative—in the best, i.e. chemical, sense of the word. As is well known, synthesis in chemistry does not mean the mere stringing together of elements, but rather the combination of simple substances (educts) to form a new, more complex structure (product). Intellectually, the novelty of Hrytsak's book lies in its global perspective, politically in its approach to applied history, and stylistically in its use of metaphor.

On the example of Ukraine, Hrytsak shows how national history can be intertwined with global history, surprising the reader with new connections, unexpected convergences, and eye-opening comparisons. One of Hrytsak's main theses is that Ukraine emerged as a “result of globalisation and the rise of the West, which began with the discovery of America in 1492” (p. 7).[1] This argument, which at first sight seems counterintuitive, is plausibly substantiated in the following chapters: “Ukraine emerged from the encounter between two worlds: the world of Columbus and the world of the Cossacks” (p. 89). The assertion that most Ukrainian cities in the