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Foucault's notions of biopolitics and governmentality grew out of his study of the history of Western political thought and practice. This West-centrism offers one reason why an encounter between these concepts and Chinese politics and society is of particular interest. Considerations of civilizational differences aside, modern and considerably Westernized Chinese politics provide rich fields not only for a Foucauldian analysis of power relations but also for probing the limits of Foucauldian dominant concepts. The study of revolutionary government on these terms has so far remained marginal due to its limited relevance for contemporary Western societies, but it is indispensable for understanding China's past and present. Moreover, a focus on the concrete practices and mentalities of Chinese governance provides a welcome alternative to the oppositional framing of liberal democracy versus China's authoritarian one-party system.

All these issues appear in varying depth in this collected volume. Although the contributions to *Governance of Life in Chinese Moral Experience* do not follow a coherent framework, the diversity of approaches and topics – many of them written from an anthropological perspective – deliver what is promised by the title, providing a remarkable overview of how an “adequate life”¹ in China has been formulated in and through governmental practices. Everett Zhang's introduction clarifies the concept of “adequate life” by placing it within the context of Foucault's terminology of governmentality and biopower²: what is at issue is the inclusion of the biological life of the population into the way societies are governed and power is exercised. Foucault differentiates biopower that seeks to promote life – or at least adequate forms of it – from sovereign power that “makes die” or “lets live.” Zhang complements this binary system with her own concept of revolutionary power based on the sacrifice of life for the revolutionary cause, a governmental rationality that doubtless remains under-examined in the literature. Her chapter in this volume pursues this issue by analyzing the interaction between these three forms of power in the context of the democidal famine³ that resulted from the flawed policies of the Great Leap Forward. She finds that the goal of promoting life was stifled as the combination of sovereign and revolutionary power undermined the center's access to information about the extent and nature of the crisis.

Addressing the same historical tragedy, Stephan Feuchtwang provides further thoughts on revolutionary mobilization for sacrifice as a form of state power, in a chapter that interrogates the role of irony in reconciling moral beliefs and the requirements of success in people's attitude to the Communist Party. Feuchtwang notes that the Chinese revolution should be seen as yet another form of the “state-organized self-strengthening” that have dominated China's policies since the second half of the 19th century (p. 47). This continuity points to a shortcoming of Zhang's otherwise instructive framing of the book. By relying almost exclusively on the biopolitics-sovereignty-revolution distinction, she misses out on an opportunity to put to productive use Foucault's further explorations of governmentality. Above all, both the overall framework and the discussion of revolutionary power lack a more direct engagement with both the distinction between regulatory and (neo)liberal forms of governmentality and the relation of *raison d'état* to their operation.⁴

¹ Although not explicitly defined by the authors, “adequate life” refers to the complex of ethical, political and scientific norms according to which a society evaluates human life at a given time.

² In Foucault's words, biopower is “power over man insofar as man is a living being,” i.e. the incorporation of biological life into technologies of (political) power. Foucault, M. (2004). *Society Must be Defended*. London: Penguin Books, p. 239.

³ Between 1958 and 1962 the policy of forced industrialisation led to a scarcity of food and to 20 to 40 million excess deaths resulting from famine.

⁴ Foucault, M. (2007). *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978*. Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 227-361. Foucault, M. (2008). *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-79*. Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 119-123.

Susan Greenhalgh's chapter – the best in the volume – offers a positive example. Summarizing her extensive research into different forms of population governance in China, it gives a clear account of the geographical distribution and historical shifts of such governance. Moving the discussion of population control away from the usual emphasis on direct coercion by the state, Greenhalgh describes the role of science, technology, disciplinary institutions, and changing rationalities of government in managing the quantity and quality of China's population. The chapter demonstrates not only how from the mid-1990s self-disciplining and the neoliberal logic of the market largely took over from direct biopolitical state-intervention but also that despite its dispersal to a wide range of actors – experts, institutions, individuals –, the exercise of biopower remains tightly controlled by, and dependent on, the state.

Greenhalgh emphasizes how the interaction of traditional family values and the modern biopolitics of population control have generated an unintended gender bias, resulting in concomitant problems for the government of the population. This encounter between governmentality and the traditional role of family in the internal organization of society – including rendering the latter as a target of the former – is a theme running through many chapters. Rubie S. Watson, for instance, discusses how tradition, universal human rights, and “filial-biological” bonds constitute grounds for competing discourses for debates about women's rights in Hong Kong. Wu Fei's account of the activities and experience of a Chinese suicide-prevention NGO not only offers further evidence that the operation of de-centered biopower in China depends on close cooperation with state actors but also argues for the importance of the family as a specific site of intervention for biopower in China. In a further example of the interaction between tradition and modernity, Yang Nianqun's chapter describes how a “barefoot doctor system” applying traditional Chinese medicine functioned between 1965 and the early 1980s as an alternative or parallel medical apparatus to costly Western practices.

This broad range of issue areas is complemented by Joan Kaufman's comprehensive chapter on the transformation of AIDS governance in China since 1985 and James L. Watson's excellent piece on the collectivization of cooking and eating in Maoist China. The latter describes how, by shifting from the family to the community this activity fundamental for the preservation of human life, the Communist Party also took aim at the traditional centrality of the family to the organisation of society. While Watson demonstrates the limits of social engineering through examples of resistance, Liang Zhiping's account of the (now under reform) *hukou* system, which divides China's population sharply into urban and rural segments and subordinates the latter to the interests of the former, shows its extreme power. Both at the level of theory and of empirical content, the chapter is a highlight of the volume. Liang's use of Agamben's theory of “bare life”⁵ is debatable, but it is certainly productive in describing how the Communist Party, having dissolved traditional status distinctions in society, produced through its modern, sovereign political power a new status distinction – with attendant differences in rights and burdens – between peasants and city-dwellers.

Other references to Agamben in the volume seem more gratuitous. Matthew Kohnman puts forward deeply interesting arguments about the role of medicalization, images and discourses of masculinity and good life, and personal memory-making in explaining why China's population places no blame on the government or the tobacco industry for the extreme financial and sanitary costs of smoking. Yet the role of his Agambenian framework remains unclear. Not only do his findings remain marginal to Agamben's core concerns, they actually require no support from the authority of the Italian philosopher.

The compound of traditional social bonds, a living heritage of revolutionary power, and an increasingly dispersed and market-based governing of the population that yet remains tightly under the sovereign power of a statist Communist Party forms what Arthur Kleinman, in his foreword, calls the “new political reality” of China (p. xiv). Using detailed survey data, the chapter by Tony Saich shows that the transformation of the state from an ideological agent to a governing party has

⁵ “Bare life” is Agamben's term for a human life stripped of its ethical and political form. It is different from biological life, since it is defined by this reduction rather than simply as animal existence.

led to a significant increase in citizens' satisfaction levels with the government, indicating the resilience of the current system. In his contribution, Tu Weiming contemplates the possible emergence of a “functional equivalent of a liberal democracy” (p. 268) based not on individual rights but on a combination of public discussion conducted by an intellectual elite, popular protests, and a moral expectation that the government is responsible for providing an “adequate life” for its citizens. This emphasis on governing subjects of interest rather than subjects of right is, of course, precisely what Foucault described as part of the neoliberal rationality of government. This volume, hence, also points to a significant degree of convergence between the West and China in terms of governing societies while remaining wide apart at the level of fundamental political principles. As the chapter by Nikolas Rose demonstrates, this is especially the case since China’s eugenicist policies of the 1990s gave way to more liberal forms of governing through individualized responsibility. Rose's concept of biological citizenship, standing for the right to health and the duty to be well, characterizes the concerns of Western states with sustainable economy just as much as it does those of China.

The wide range of topics addressed – AIDS, suicide and population control, internal migration – and historical periods covered make *Governance of Life in Chinese Moral Experience* a valuable companion to the many facets of biopolitics in China. As such, it is certainly of interest to anyone working on how China is governed and what its form of governance means for its international position. For those coming from governmentality studies, in turn, this book offers not only a range of unusual and original cases but also a confrontation with a non-Western context, revolutionary power, and an authoritarian system combined with a neoliberal rationality of government.

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